

## Winter Newsletter 2019

Welcome to our latest Liturgy Office newsletter; we hope that you are finding them helpful and of interest. Don't forget that, in addition to this newsletter, there is a wealth of information to be found on the [Liturgy Office Section](#) of the Diocesan Website.

As we begin a new liturgical year (Year A) and journey through Advent we look ahead in preparation, first directing our minds and hearts Christ's second coming at the end of time, and then to the anniversary of our Lord's birth at Christmas. The final days of Advent, from December 17 to December 24, focus particularly on our preparation for the celebrations of the Nativity of our Lord (Christmas).

### Liturgical Diary



With the commencement of a new liturgical year we have a new Liturgical Diary – The 2020 diary is now available. If you haven't bought one before, do consider getting one this year. It's a real bargain at just £6.50 per copy and contains, along with all the information about Liturgical texts for each day, a short piece about each of the saints whose lives are celebrated during the year and a host of catechetical material along with blessings and prayers for various occasions. These can be ordered from [www.cliftondiocese.com/diocese/publications](http://www.cliftondiocese.com/diocese/publications)

### Advent:

The Readers' Guide for Year A, as mentioned in our last newsletter, has now been uploaded to the website – you will also find it [here](#).

### The Christmas Season:

You will find information [here](#) about the Christmas tree and the Christmas crib – both of which are a familiar part of Christmas for the secular world as well as for practicing Christians – along with information about the [Epiphany of the Lord](#) and the [Epiphany Blessing of homes](#). You will also find rites for the [Blessing of a Christmas Tree](#) and a [Nativity scene](#) (some of these blessings will also be found in Appendix Seven of the Liturgical Diary), plus an [Epiphany Carol Liturgy](#) and the [Epiphany Proclamation](#). The Epiphany Proclamation may be sung, ideally by a cantor, on the Feast Day itself - you will find the music file [here](#). This dates back to the time, before calendars were common, when most people did not know the dates for the coming Liturgical year. On Epiphany Sunday, then, the upcoming dates would be 'proclaimed' after the gospel.

The Christmas Season finishes with the **Baptism of the Lord** – this feast was originally observed through the Epiphany, which marked three events from the Gospel. It denoted the visit of the three Magi to the baby Jesus in his crib, the baptism of Jesus by the river Jordan and the wedding at Cana where Jesus is said to have performed his first miracle, turning water to wine. The Magi became the most prominent celebration of the Epiphany, and in

1955 Pope Pius XII instituted a separate liturgical commemoration for the Baptism, on the 13th of January. This was changed by Pope John XXIII and subsequently by Pope Paul VI, to its current date of the first Sunday after 6th January (the Epiphany) or, where the Epiphany is celebrated on 7th or 8th January, the following Monday. The feast marks the end of the liturgical season of Christmastide and the beginning of Ordinary Time.

**The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord**, until 1969, marked the end of the Christmas Season, forty days after the Lord's birth, when the child Jesus was presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph, in accordance with Mosaic Law. It is sometimes referred to as Candlemas, as the liturgy of the day includes the blessing and procession of candles.

#### **Formation opportunities;**

Our Liturgy Formation Course *Understanding and Praying the Liturgy* has proved to be very successful with over 50 people taking part. This was held on one evening each month at the cathedral over the course of a year. We plan to hold a further course in another part of the diocese later in the year so do watch out on the website for details. We have also just run a short course on music at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Stroud and this, too, will be reproduced at a different venue next year.

#### **Some dates for your diary:**

Finally, a couple of reminders of important dates for your diary for the coming year: Ash Wednesday, which is a day of fasting and abstinence, will be on 26 February and the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion - when the bishop meets with all those who will be baptised or received into full communion with the Catholic Church at Easter and their names are entered into the Book of the Elect – will be held, in the cathedral, on Saturday 29 February at 11am.

If there is anything you would like to see included in future newsletters, please let us know as we are always happy to receive helpful ideas.

**Wishing you all a very blessed Advent and Christmas Season**