

Newsletter Summer 2022



We begin this newsletter with some exciting news – Fr Paul Turner, an internationally known and widely respected liturgist, who has recently been appointed by Pope Francis as a Consultor for the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, will be coming to our diocese in November. He will be talking to some of our clergy in the cathedral on Thursday 10 November and then to lay people on Saturday 12 November so, please **save the date** and watch out for further details nearer the time.

We have just had the great joy of Fr Joseph Meigh's priestly ordination in our cathedral, on Saturday 9 July, and you will find some photos of this wonderful occasion [here](#). Fr Joe kindly compiled some thoughts about his impending ordination, and his preparation for the liturgy, which we include below.

Fr Joseph Meigh



How often are you given the invitation to prepare a whole liturgy: readings, music, and all? One such occasion is on being ordained a priest! As there is only one of me being ordained for Clifton, I have felt some trepidation about the Ordination liturgy, and the inevitable feeling of being 'in the spotlight'. People have very kindly asked me if I'm looking forward to 'my big day'... but my greatest hope is that it will not be *my* day at all, but rather a day of celebration for the diocese, thanking the Lord for the gift of the priesthood to the Church, as it is conferred on another one of her unworthy sons.

In this regard, I was very grateful to find that the ordinary daily Mass readings for Saturday 9th July happen to be just perfect for an ordination. In the first reading, Isaiah stands in the throne room of the Lord, where the angels cry *Holy, holy, holy*. Conscious of his unworthiness, he cries, 'Woe is me!', but an angel purifies his lips with a coal, so that when the Lord asks, 'Whom shall I send?', Isaiah can reply, 'Here I am, send me.' The Gospel, meanwhile, records Christ saying that, 'it is enough for the disciple that he should grow to be like his teacher'. What better way to express the gift of ordination, that the priest receives that such a deep conformity to Jesus in His own priesthood?

From there, all the suggestions I put forward for the liturgy were intended to bring out that theme of God's holiness, and the way in which He heals and transforms us, so that we can accept the task He gives us. Hence hymns like *Love divine*, asking God to 'finish Thy new creation', and *My God accept my heart this day*, rich with appropriate imagery: 'behold I prostrate fall', 'anoint me with Thy heavenly grace', and 'that life may be Thy service'. I wanted to avoid anything 'triumphalist', that might smack more of 'coronation' than ordination! I hope also there may be something represented from the different liturgical traditions which have formed me: from Gregorian chant, to a song from the modern Charismatic Renewal... and I'm looking forward to the choir drawing us into the Eucharistic prayer with an Orthodox-style setting of the *Trisagion* ('Holy God, holy Mighty One...'), which my Dad and I adapted from the original Russian. This is also a heartfelt prayer for peace, in the Church and in the world, and especially where Russia is concerned. In everything, I hope that people's gaze will be directed away from me and towards the Lord who, in His mercy, has called me into His service. At its best, the Liturgy can be for

us that same experience of Isaiah stepping into the throne room of Heaven, being healed and purified, strengthened and inspired, and sent out on mission to a world dying of thirst for the beauty and goodness and holiness of God.

On Friday 15 July we also had the joy of seeing seven of our men in formation for the permanent diaconate receiving ministries, at St John the Evangelist Church in Bath: Andrew Bent, Jose Almeida, Bart Kowaleski, Charles Hickman and John Andrews received the Ministry of Acolyte while Dale Curson, Dariusz Derewonko and Robert von Hawrylak received the Ministry of Reader. Photos of this lovely occasion can be found [here](#):

And still on the theme of preparing for liturgy, if you haven't yet read Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter ***Desiderio Desideravi***, it is well worth doing so. He speaks of the need for liturgical formation for the entire gathered assembly, emphasizing that the liturgy is the guaranteed place of a real encounter with Christ, a privileged theological source and the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed. He ends with an appeal: "Let us abandon controversy to listen together to what the Spirit says to the Church; let us preserve communion, and continue to be amazed by the beauty of the Liturgy". Just click [here](#) for the letter.

In our parishes we are still having to consider Covid, unfortunately. Whilst we haven't waved it goodbye – it seems that we will be living with it for quite some time to come – we are, at least, working towards some kind of new normality and can enjoy, for example, communal singing once again in our liturgies. The bishops of England and Wales issued guidance for us (see [here](#)) once the government announced that their 'Plan B' restrictions would be lifted. They also issued a document encouraging us to return to Mass at Pentecost (see [here](#)), rather than using online viewing as a substitute, now that most of the reasons which have prevented Catholics from attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation no longer apply.

In spite of the sadness and deprivation that Covid has caused we have, too, had the opportunity to reflect and to rethink our relationship with Christ and with the Liturgy. The enforced 'back-to basics' nature of our liturgies reminded us, perhaps, of the importance of the Divine Liturgy for the life of Christians and gave us space to re-think and recapture, precisely in that new, simple, stripped-back nature of those liturgies, something of their true meaning. It gave us an opportunity to pause and take stock. We were reminded that, in the midst of all our fear, all our anxiety, all our uncertainty, the person of Christ had been our anchor all along. We remembered, or re-discovered, our hunger for the Eucharist. To help us to reconnect with the liturgy and its meaning for us and our lives the Liturgy Office created a series of videos entitled '*A Call to Love*' and you will find a link to these at the top of the page. If you've already viewed them, it might be worth taking another look and, if you haven't, why not venture a look now?

As we said in our last newsletter, Covid has taught us to expect the unexpected, so we include a reminder about what to do if we suddenly, and unexpectedly, find ourselves without a priest when we are faced with a full congregation anticipating Mass. As long as we have readers, a minister willing to lead the community in prayer and generous hearts we can still have a rich and meaningful celebration of the Liturgy of the Word. For a little more information read page eight of the current Liturgical Diary (every sacristy should have one!) or see the proforma on the webpage [here](#).

Synodal Way

Most of our parishes took part in the Synodal Way conversations and the feedback, unsurprisingly, included many thoughts on the liturgy itself and our desire and need to celebrate the Eucharist. A brief summary of this is included here:

The Centrality of the Eucharist for Catholic Lives

It is perhaps not surprising that in the recent Synodal conversations in which many of our parishes participated (80%), the centrality of the Eucharist was almost universally commented on. The joy of coming together for Mass was highlighted many times. As one person put it, "The Mass is the foundation of the community, without Mass there is no community". It will also not come as a surprise that there was a great deal of sadness and sense of loss when the pandemic caused the Churches to be closed. Across the diocese and where possible, parishes responded creatively to the situation, maintaining the life of the community using technology, specifically to live-stream Mass.

While it is clear from the experience of the Synod that the Mass is important to people, many reports also highlighted a desire for a wider range of prayer opportunities to be offered, both formal and informal. Regular adoration and more frequent opportunities for confession were specifically mentioned.

Three themes were focused on during the Synodal process. These three themes of Communion, Participation and Mission are not separate islands but weave in and around each other. One cannot have true Communion if participation is weak. Mission will not flow from our liturgy and life as parishes if the impetus does not come from being nourished in our faith. The theme of Participation reflected particularly on the sacramental life of our Church and specifically our coming together on a Sunday or for other sacramental moments and the prayer life of people more generally. The impact of the pandemic has caused people to re-evaluate their prayer life. Many commented on the variety of resources that started to appear online which facilitated this. These resources ranged from retreats, opportunities to pray the Divine Office and groups gathering to pray the rosary are just a few of the things which happened. It was reported that families found new ways and a desire to pray together. The online experiences in particular has led to people wanting their parishes to facilitate a variety of prayer opportunities such as lectio, shared prayer and Taizé and for there to be regular prayer groups offered at different times of the day to cater for different needs.

Music at Mass was a great loss during the pandemic and highlighted for people the importance of music in the liturgy, especially how music "helps parishioners to pray and to engage in the Mass." At the same time some expressed a desire for more silence in the liturgy. The desire for developing a high standard of music and an appreciation of the role of music in the liturgy was also expressed.

Despite the on-going work of the Liturgy Office to provide liturgical formation, the desire for greater opportunities to understand the Mass continues to be a need with one person among many saying, "many or most Catholics have grown up with the Obligation to attend Mass – it is what we do - but more explanation should be given to the nature of Eucharistic celebration, as a united action of the local (or wider) assembly of the People of God".

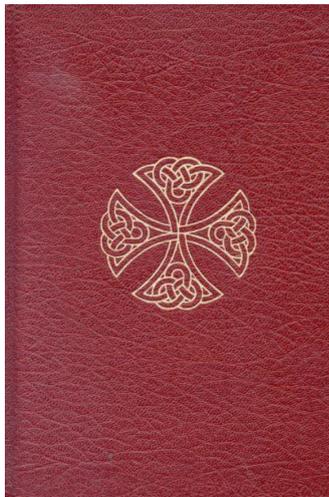
Currently on the Liturgy Office page of the Diocesan Website is a series of short videos which focus on different aspects of the Mass. As parishes start to rebuild after the pandemic this is an ideal resource to gather people together. Why not take a different video each week,

watch it together and then have a group reflection, discussion and time of prayer? In the pipeline is another series on the role of music in the liturgy. Again, this could be a great opportunity not just for musicians but all parishioners to gather for some formation in this important dimension of our liturgical life.

The Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation is happy to offer any parish interested in understanding the different schools of prayer and how groups and individuals can utilise these at different times during the Liturgical year. Please contact adult.education@cliftondiocese for more information.

There will be area gatherings in the Autumn for parishes to have further conversations on how to move forward with the reports.

New Translation of the Lectionary



For a number of years we have been promised a new translation of our Lectionaries but, as we know, the wheels of the Church do turn slowly. At last it seems that publication will be towards the end of next year, with the New Translation actually in use beginning on the First Sunday of Advent 2023. It has now been agreed that it will use the ESV Catholic Edition with the Deuterocanonical books, published by SPCK in the UK. The text itself will appear in 'sense lines' in order to aid public proclamation but this will, of course, take up more space so it is envisaged that there will be four volumes, rather than the three we are used to.

As with the New Translation of the Roman Missal, there will be formation prior to its introduction, which will probably begin early next year.

Art & Architecture

Our Liturgy Office is responsible for advising the bishop and our parishes on all matters of liturgical Art and Architecture – building, re-ordering, alterations, additions and artistic commissions – for the churches of the diocese. This includes such things as lighting schemes, sound systems, organs, new or repaired stained glass, moving fonts etc. The Liturgy Office seeks to serve and help parishes and other communities to explore how they can make better use of their church buildings and chapels for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

Any proposed changes which affect the liturgical and devotional life of the parish or community do need to be referred to the Liturgy Office for advice and permission where necessary. This may also require diocesan approval and possibly approval from the Historic Churches Committee (in the case of a listed building) so it is advisable to make contact at the very beginning of the process to avoid costly errors. For further information please see the Liturgical Diary, pages 159-160, or contact us at the Liturgy Office by email to liturgy@cliftondiocese.com or by telephoning 0117 902 5595.

Meanwhile, if there is any way that the Liturgy office can be of help, please just let us know by emailing liturgy@cliftondiocese.com.

Wishing you a wonderful Summer