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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR CATECHISTS, TERM 4, 2010 20

Contributors
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From the Editor

The focus for this edition of Good News for Catechists is on prayer and Liturgy. You will find helpful articles on liturgical prayer, the prayer of Jesus and personal prayer. These will provide nourishment for your own background reading as well as suggestions for the classroom.

By the time you receive this edition of Good News for Catechists, Australia may have celebrated the canonisation of its first saint, St Mary of the Cross. This is an important milestone in the history of Australia, and one worthy of much celebration with the children in your classes. It’s easy to love Mary MacKillop. Her desire to teach the faith to young Australian children is an inspiration for all catechists.

Catechists’ Formation and Support Services

We are here to help you.

Kaye Clancy – responsible for the deaneries of the Southern Region.

Sharon Freeman – responsible for the deaneries of the Eastern Region, as well as the deaneries of Western Plains and Sunshine.

This Team provides a comprehensive professional development program for catechists, parents and parish faith development personnel throughout the year. Members of the team are also available, when needed, to provide assistance to catechists in parish or deanery groups. Phone: 9267 0228

Tricia Murray – Tricia’s role at the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) is now Education Officer: Prayer and Liturgy. She remains responsible for the deaneries of the Northern Region, Westgate, Central West and Geelong.

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Commitment to a Community

Nearly 16 years ago, as the mother of quite a large family with a part-time job and plenty of local commitments, I began to be concerned about how little exercise I was getting. I always rode my bicycle around (because I don’t drive) but I couldn’t get into a rhythm of exercise apart from occasional efforts to go for a walk. Then some friends told me about how they had begun to gather every second morning at 6.30 to walk 4 km in 40 minutes followed by a cup of coffee together. Sixteen years later we are still meeting every second morning, walking, talking and finishing up with a cup of coffee. We have not only branched out to other ways and means of exercise, but we have formed a small community, shared each other’s joys and sorrows, illnesses and bereavements, and the great and small dramas attendant on growing families. We have planned community events and social justice outreach. We’ve organised support for new mothers and families with sick children, outings for elderly people, community New Year celebrations, weddings and funerals. But – most amazing of all – supported by each other we have kept to our aim of getting some regular exercise, something I am 100 per cent certain I would not still be doing if I was trying to go it alone!

A Sacred Commitment

While this seems a mundane way to begin talking about the Liturgy, it holds the key to an appreciation of the poetry and glory of its texts and sacraments: *If we are not there we cannot be aware.* And what helps us be there is the presence of the others. For 2000 years, Christians have shared a sacred commitment to gather on the Lord’s Day for the Eucharist, the summit of the Church’s liturgical prayer, to be united in the person and work of Jesus and to give thanks and praise to God, through him, with him and in him. In doing this we are united not just with the people who have happened to turn up to that particular Eucharistic celebration but to all the others who have ever offered thanks and praise to God in the Eucharist throughout history and all who will celebrate it in the ages to come.
Relaxing Into the Mystery

While active participation in the Mass has been the great privilege of Catholics since Vatican II, another helpful insight suggests that engaging in the Liturgy is a kind of ‘relaxing’ into the Mystery:

Giving thanks allows the gaze to relax. After all, the giving thanks, which is the most active thing we do in the Mass, and the basis for its proper name – Eucharist – is directly dependent on our confidence that Our Lord has given himself for us, once and for all, to be a perfect living sacrifice, that this is now done, and he is ascended to where he is triumphant, as a lamb slaughtered, on an altar in heaven, surrounded by a festal chorus of angels and of those who have gone before us in the faith. Giving thanks is our mode of presence to the reality which is going on constantly in heaven, and goes on even if we don’t know about it.

As we relax or surrender ourselves into our thanksgiving, so that everything we see and hear and take part in – the words of Scripture and song, the prayers, the priest, the gestures, the bread and wine – becomes the contour of something transcendent, and we find ourselves actually participating in Christ’s eternal Liturgy with the Communion of Saints, whom we know to be just there, but cannot actually see.

Jesus, the Protagonist of the Eucharist

In the Eucharistic Prayer, the Holy Spirit is invoked and Jesus’ words are repeated in the first person,

‘Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which will be given up for you.’

What we find is that, rather than this being something we are doing, we are in the presence of a divine giver, giving himself, body and blood, to us. It is the crucified and risen Jesus who is the protagonist of the Eucharist.

Becoming One Body, One Spirit in Christ

Saint Augustine also had a vivid sense that the sacramental Liturgy of the Church is not something we do so much as something which is done to us. It was his intuition that the Eucharist makes the Church and, in one of his memorable Easter sermons, he explored the symbolism of the bread used in every Eucharist. Speaking to the newly baptised he explains that any loaf of bread consists of many grains,

… moistened by the waters of baptism and thus shaped into the one loaf, [we have been] baked in the fire of the Holy Spirit into the Lord’s loaf of bread.

Quoting from St Paul, Augustine tells them that they are now on the altar and in the cup along with all the faithful:

‘You are the body of Christ and individually members of it’ (1 Cor 12: 27). When they hear the words ‘Body of Christ’, ‘Blood of Christ’, they are to say ‘Amen’, because they give their assent to who they are receiving and what they are becoming.

Augustine tells them ‘to be what you see and receive what you are’ (Sermon 272) and to live as the Body of Christ so that their ‘Amen’ will be true.

And that is the hardest bit of all, little by little letting ourselves be shaped by the words we have heard, the worship we have participated in, the food and drink we have partaken of, as we become ‘the Body of Christ’ in our own particular place and time and circumstance for the good of our world.

But, just like in our little walking group, nothing can happen if we aren’t there in the first place.

Catherine Place

Footnotes:
2. St Augustine, Sermon 272, On the Eucharist
Matthew is particularly interested in showing his Jewish-Christian audience that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Scriptures. He, therefore, often uses the expression, ‘to fulfil the scriptures’ in his Gospel. He also uses places to make this point. One of the features of Matthew’s Gospel is the sermon on the mount (Chs 5–7). Matthew carefully sets it on a mountain so that his Jewish-Christian audience might immediately think of Moses receiving the ten commandments from God on Mount Sinai. Matthew also places the sermon on the mount in a particular context, i.e. after Jesus’ wide-ranging campaign with his new disciples throughout Galilee proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom and curing the sick (4: 18–23). The result of Jesus’ missionary sweep through Galilee was that ‘great crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan’ (4: 25) flocked to follow him, not as disciples, but as petitioners for healing. It is only after Matthew has carefully set the scene for his readers that he introduces the sermon on the mount, ‘When Jesus saw the crowds he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him’ (Mt 5: 1). Thus Matthew depicts Jesus addressing the sermon to his disciples not, as I have often imagined it, to the crowd. Matthew makes the sermon his great exposition of who Jesus is and what a follower of Jesus is.

Relationship with God

God is the centre of Jesus’ life and he wants his disciples to make God the centre of their lives too because such a relationship with God will guide their living and will help them to have an open-hearted acceptance of life’s difficulties. Living in a way guided by intimacy with God gives strong witness, as strong as the taste of salt and the illumination of light in the darkness. Jesus wants their relationship with God to find expression in the way they live. They will express their relationship with God through action. Hence they will give alms without ostentation. They will pray and fast, privately and interiorly, without ostentation.

This is the setting in which Jesus gives his major teaching on prayer. Disciples go into their rooms and close the door to pray privately, secretly, to their Father who sees and rewards such prayer (6: 6). Jesus wants his disciples to be people of genuine prayer, prayer which is intimate, filial, and springs from a
relationship. It is important to notice that Jesus tells them to pray to their ‘Father’. This is a new way of expressing their relationship with God; now he teaches them that God is their father, not an impersonal far-off being, but a father who knows and loves as fathers do. Jesus not only teaches where disciples should pray but he also teaches them how they should pray. Their prayer should be simple and trusting, an act of faith in the presence of God. Perhaps it should be wordless because Jesus says, ‘your Father knows what you need before you ask’ (6: 8). Thus Jesus paints a picture of a God who is so paternal, so interested in his people, so generous and loving that he anticipates what is needed and grants it without being asked.

**A Model for Prayer**

Jesus, the great teacher, realises that telling people how to do something does not necessarily result in action. Therefore he goes on to give the disciples a formula or a model to use in their prayer. He says, ‘Pray then in this way: Our Father …’ (Mt 6: 9–13). By using the plural possessive pronoun ‘our’ Jesus sets forth his intention that he wants to form these disciples into a community which will be open to and share in the relationship that he himself has with God. Such a community will give alms, will pray and fast out of love for their Father, not for being noticed by others. Jesus teaches that prayer is more about how disciples prepare their hearts for the inflowing of God’s love and grace than it is about trying to get God to do something for them.

The Lord’s Prayer, as we call the prayer Jesus taught his disciples, consists of two sets of petitions, one focused on God, the ‘you’ petitions and the other focused on human need, the ‘we’ petitions. It begins by inviting petitioners to raise their hearts and minds to God. Jesus invites them to pray that God’s plan, God’s scheme for humankind, the kingdom, will be fulfilled, and that their desire for God will be renewed in the hearts of all. Thus the first part of the Lord’s Prayer is centred totally on God.

Jesus concentrated the second set of petitions more around the disciples’ human needs. Jesus invites the community of disciples to pray for their daily bread, bread that is both literal and figurative. A community which has enough food has the strength to do things, to work for the good of each other, to travel together towards a common end, to aspire for more than the physical. But Jesus knows that any community is imperfect, that the kingdom has not yet been fully inaugurated, that members sin against each other. Jesus therefore invites the disciples to acknowledge their need for forgiveness, forgiveness from God and forgiveness from each other. Jesus wants them to draw strength from the daily bread of their contemplation of God to live in harmony with each other and forgive each other. Jesus also wants them to pray for their Father’s protection in the time of trial.

**Ask, Search, Knock**

The next section of the sermon on the mount consists of a set of short proverb-like teachings about the attitude disciples have towards priorities in life and attitudes towards others. In the last of these teachings Jesus returns to the subject of prayer.

Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened (7: 7–8).

The language Jesus uses is commanding: ask, search, knock. Jesus follows each of these commands with consequences which are logical developments, ask, receive, … search, find, … knock, it will be opened. Jesus wants his disciples to be people who pray with a confident expectation of an answer, who pray to a loving Father who answers his children’s prayer readily and enthusiastically.
Jesus Withdraws to Pray

Matthew places all this early in Jesus’ ministry. It is programmatic for all that follows. The rest of Matthew’s Gospel fills out and amplifies Jesus’ teaching and his hopes for his disciples.

Matthew’s description of Herod’s murder of John the Baptist concludes: ‘[John’s] disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus. Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself’ (Mt 14: 12–13). Matthew then launches into a description of Jesus seeing the crowds and having compassion upon them, a compassion that culminates in feeding them from the five loaves and two fish. Then Matthew shows Jesus sending the disciples back in the boat while he dismisses the crowds and goes up the mountain to pray. Matthew follows up this story with the account of Jesus walking on water to his disciples who are in the storm-tossed boat (Mt 14: 13–33). Usually, and understandably, we concentrate on the miracles but, by paying attention to the context, a different picture of Jesus emerges.

After Herod had John the Baptist killed, John’s disciples broke the news to Jesus. Matthew shows Jesus reacting by getting into a boat and withdrawing to a deserted place, to be by himself. He needed time out, to grieve, to pray, to start to get used to the death of the man who was his forerunner, the one who had baptised him. But the crowds thwart Jesus’ plan, for they anticipate where he is going and are waiting for him when he comes ashore. Jesus sees the crowds and their need overcomes his desire for solitude. He sublimates his sorrow and not only heals the sick but feeds the crowd of more than five thousand. Jesus then sends the disciples away in the boat while he dismisses the crowd. At last he is free to be alone. He goes up the mountain, a traditional meeting place with God, and prays. Matthew gives no detail of Jesus’ prayer but we can imagine it was an outpouring of grief and a communion with his Father. Jesus’ prayer was not solely for himself for Matthew tells us that he walked on the lake to his disciples embattled by the storm. Jesus, true son of the Father who loves his children so much that he anticipates their requests, once again reaches out in compassion and goes to the disciples. Looking at the context helps us to see that Jesus’ reaction to grief is to pray to his Father in a deserted place, but also to serve his Father in the crowds and the disciples.

Prayer at Gethsemane

Matthew provides us with another image of Jesus at prayer. After their celebration of the Passover, Jesus and the disciples go to the Mount of Olives to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus takes Peter, James and John with him while he prays. Jesus needs the disciples’ companionship at this time of deep grief and agitation. He prays three times to his Father for the cup to pass from him, if possible. Three times, he turns to the three disciples for support, but he prays alone. His intimate relationship with his Father wins the day and he accepts his Father’s will. This prayer at Gethsemane shows the disciples (and us) what Jesus’ prayer ‘your kingdom come’ (6: 10) means in his life: the kingdom can only come if Jesus accepts the cross.

Matthew gives us a profound insight into Jesus’ prayer by placing before us his great teaching on prayer, which he reinforces by showing us his practice of prayer. Jesus did what he instructed his disciples to do: he withdrew to a lonely place, to Gethsemane, where he could commune with his Father. He asked, sought and knocked and somehow received, found and had the door opened, for he met his betrayer with equanimity and faced his trial and death with calm acceptance.

Kaye Clancy
Changes in the Mass
What will be Different?

A New Translation
The translation of the Missal is changing, but the Order of Mass is not. This seems like a simple statement, but it is a critical point. Most of the changes in the Mass will affect the texts that priests will proclaim rather than the texts that belong to the assembly as a whole. However, congregations will notice the change. The new translation seeks to correspond much more closely to the exact words and sentence structure of the Latin text.

‘And with Your Spirit’
One of the most publicised of the new texts occurs just after the Mass begins and recurs several times throughout the Mass. Whenever the priest says, ‘The Lord be with you’, the new assembly response will be ‘And with your spirit’. This is a more direct translation of the Latin and matches what many other language groups have been using for years. It will obviously take some adjustment, since we are used to saying, ‘And also with you’, but it is a minor change.

A Teaching Opportunity
Change always poses a challenge. The changes will require us to learn some new responses. At the same time, the arrival of the new missal offers us a prime opportunity to deepen our understanding and appreciation of the Mass. The new translation will give us an opportunity for catechesis. It will reconnect us with the centrality of our Sunday worship. Much, of course, will depend on how well English-speaking Catholics receive the new texts that have been prepared for them. A wide range of reactions is expected. Some will welcome the revisions. Others will not. In the middle are the great many Catholics who will say whatever they are asked to say, will make the adjustments, and life will go on. On one hand, their loyalty is admirable; but on the other hand, catechesis may help them to understand and embrace the changes with more vigour.

Closer to the Original
The new translation is happening because, almost 45 years since Vatican II, translators have learned more about the origin and meaning of the texts we have. Many of the prayers we hear the priest read from the Sacramentary are over 1000 years old. Many of our responses date to the very first Christian centuries, e.g. ‘The Lord be with you,’ is found in the Bible, and in liturgical texts by the 4th century; ‘Lift up your hearts’ comes from Cyprian around the same time.

When we make our responses and hear our prayers we are standing on the shoulders of hundreds of generations of Christian worshippers. We owe it to them to echo their words as best we can. In addition, a new translation will make the English closer to other vernacular languages, allowing the many tongues of earth to unite in common praise of God.

No Human Words are Adequate
Perhaps the best lesson we can learn is one of humility. None of us has the right words to use whenever we celebrate the Eucharist. There are no words adequate to address God. And even if there were, we would be too consumed by our own inadequacies to know them, to agree to them, or to use them with meaning. Fortunately, the God who made us also loves us, just as we are. And God is probably more concerned with our efforts than with our results!

The Australian bishops are hoping for a gradual introduction of the new texts from the middle of 2011, so that they can be fully implemented by Advent 2011.
# The New Texts – Changes in the People’s Parts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART OF MASS</th>
<th>PRESENT TEXT</th>
<th>NEW TEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GREETING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priest: The Lord be with you. People: And also with you.</td>
<td>Priest: The Lord be with you. People: And with your spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PENITENTIAL RITE Form A</strong></td>
<td>I confess to almighty God, and to you, here present, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do; and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, here present, to pray for me to the Lord, our God.</td>
<td>I confess to almighty God, and to you, here present, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, here present, to pray for me to the Lord our God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PENITENTIAL RITE Form B</strong></td>
<td>Priest: Lord, we have sinned against you: Lord, have mercy. People: Lord, have mercy. Priest: Lord, show us your mercy and love. People: And grant us your salvation.</td>
<td>Priest: Have mercy on us, O Lord. People: For we have sinned against you. Priest: Show us, O Lord, your mercy. People: And grant us your salvation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GLORIA</strong></td>
<td>Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.</td>
<td>Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ. Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NICE CREED</strong></td>
<td>We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfilment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.</td>
<td>I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

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I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

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I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

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I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

### Suscipiat Dominus

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.

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May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

### Preface Dialogue

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.
**People:** And also with you.

**Priest:** Lift up your hearts.
**People:** We lift them up to the Lord.

**Priest:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
**People:** It is right to give him thanks and praise.

---

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.
**People:** And with your spirit.

**Priest:** Lift up your hearts.
**People:** We lift them up to the Lord.

**Priest:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
**People:** It is right and just.

### Sign of Peace

**Priest:** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
**People:** And also with you.

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**Priest:** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
**People:** And with your spirit.

### Lamb of God

**Priest:** This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.

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**All:** Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

**Priest:** Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

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**All:** Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

### Concluding Rite

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.
**People:** And also with you.

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**Priest:** The Lord be with you.
**People:** And with your spirit.

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**Sources**

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 
[<http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal/samples-people.shtml>].

Articles by Fr Paul Turner:
- The Roman Missal: Preparation and Reception
- Parish Practice: Shock of the New
- What is the Church?
- The Forthcoming Revised English Translation of the Missale Romanum.

Fr Paul Turner’s articles are readily available on his website <www.paulturner.org>.

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Tricia Murray
Learning from Christ – The Liturgy as Teacher

Liturgy, the official public worship of the Church, celebrates Jesus Christ as saviour and redeemer of us all. When we share or participate in the Liturgy, we focus on Christ as both the object and the purpose of our celebration. Liturgy offers us a wonderful opportunity to enter into our faith at the point of worship and engage with Christ in his true nature. As the Council Fathers said in Sacrosanctum Concilium – The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC) – ‘every liturgical celebration … is the action of Christ the priest and of his body’ (n.7).

The Liturgy is authorised (official) by the bishops in accordance with Rome; it is always a visible gathering of those who believe (public); and always entails prayer (worship). Engaging in the Liturgy, therefore, gives us access to the truths and the essence of our faith. Reflecting on and deepening our understanding of the Liturgy facilitates a deeper faith response while strengthening our relationship with God through Christ.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, ‘the Liturgy is also the work of the Trinity’. It is through the will of the Father and the action of the Son and the Spirit that we can enter into the mystery of God’s saving action. It is in the Liturgy that we share in this saving action and celebrate the salvation won for us in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Working with young students demands that we are clear about what we are inviting them to participate in when we welcome them to the liturgical action of the Church. Primary age students will be participating in the Sacramental life of the Church celebrated in the Liturgy. These students will be preparing to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist for the first time and in Year 5 or 6 will be preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is not just in the preparation for these sacraments that students learn about the person and message of Jesus Christ; it is the regular participation in and exploration of the meaning of the liturgical action of these sacraments that ensures a deeper understanding of God and what God wants for each of us. All liturgical gatherings have as their central focus the Paschal Mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection, and frequent sharing in this mystery enables greater opportunity for learning.

When the students explore the reasons why the parish community gathers to celebrate the Eucharist, they are growing in an understanding of the importance of their faith response within their faith community. They learn that in being present to each other in the community – gathering in faith – they are sharing in the presence of Christ. All liturgical gatherings enable the faith community to share in the presence of Christ. Eucharist in particular offers the greatest opportunity of sharing in Christ’s presence and in the mystery of his life, death and resurrection. We can all deepen our understanding and knowledge of Christ through our participation in the Eucharistic Liturgy.

When we listen to the Word of God, we enter into the story of God’s involvement in history and plan of salvation, first through the Hebrew people of the Old Testament, then through St Paul’s blessing, prayer, remonstration and direction given in his letters to the growing communities of the early Church. Most especially, when we listen to the Gospel proclaimed and expanded upon in the homily, we can enter the world of Jesus and expand our understanding of the message of Jesus Christ for each of us and for the Church.

In listening to the Priest and watching his actions during the Eucharist – or in fact during any liturgical celebration – we know that Christ is present also ‘in the person of the minister’ (SC #7). The words spoken by the priest make Christ present to the celebrating community helping them to gain greater insight in to the saving power of God’s Word.
In addition, when the priest has spoken the words of consecration, Christ is present to the worshipping community in his fullness and glory – in the bread and wine changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

All sacramental liturgical rites engage the believer in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The nature of this relationship also provides profound learning opportunities for the students. The Sacrament of Reconciliation provides the opportunity to learn about God’s relationship with the chosen people of God. The frequent experience of expressing sorrow and asking for and receiving forgiveness through this sacrament, strengthens the student’s capacity to forgive and be forgiven. Moreover the students deepen their understanding of the call of Jesus Christ to ‘love one another … as I have loved you’ (Jn 13: 34).

Not only is it in the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy that learning can occur. The seasons of the Church’s year provide a great learning opportunity. Each season focuses on an aspect of the mystery of God’s saving action in the life and message of Jesus Christ. During Advent and Christmas, we deepen our appreciation of God Incarnate, while during Lent we learn of the necessity and value of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Helping students to explore the different emphases of the Liturgical year will provide valuable learning about the key message and meaning of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, as well as the call to take the message of Jesus Christ to others.

Liturgy is a central part of our faith and our Christian experience. It is also a valuable tool for learning. Not only is there value in students participating in liturgical celebrations on a regular basis, but there is also significant learning gained when students explore the symbolism and action of the Liturgy and the power of the liturgical seasons.

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**This article supports the following Teaching Points from the catechist syllabus, available from CEOM:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I was baptised I was made a member of God’s family – the Church.</td>
<td>We discover more about Jesus through special seasons of the Liturgical year.</td>
<td>The Sacrament of Penance is the sacrament of forgiveness.</td>
<td>In the sacrament of Penance we celebrate and receive God’s forgiveness.</td>
<td>We use liturgical signs and symbols.</td>
<td>The <strong>Triduum</strong> is the most important time in the Church’s year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church celebrates Ash Wednesday to begin Lent.</td>
<td>Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent.</td>
<td>The priest is the teaching minister of the word.</td>
<td>We prepare for the sacrament of the Eucharist.</td>
<td>Participation in the Eucharist increases our union with Christ and one another.</td>
<td>In the Liturgy we celebrate Jesus’ saving works, God’s action and our participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Sunday God’s family gathers to celebrate the Eucharist.</td>
<td>The water of life and the light of Christ are key symbols of Baptism.</td>
<td>The Sacraments of initiation draw us more deeply into the life of the Church.</td>
<td>In the Liturgy we remember the stories and life of Jesus.</td>
<td>In the Sacrament of Marriage, the Christian community celebrates the love between husband and wife and God’s love.</td>
<td>The Eucharist is the centre of Christian life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Christmas day the Church remembers and celebrates the birth of Jesus.</td>
<td>When we celebrate the Eucharist we are worshipping God through a holy meal.</td>
<td>The Advent season is the beginning of the Church’s celebrations of Jesus’ life and mission.</td>
<td>We prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References:**

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (St Paul’s: Homebush, 1994)

Sharon Freeman

*Good News for Catechists* Term 4 2010 11
Dadirri is a special quality, a unique gift of the Aboriginal people. It is inner deep listening and quiet still awareness. Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is within Aboriginal people. It is something akin to contemplation.

The contemplative way of Dadirri spreads over the whole life of the Aboriginal people, renewing them and bringing peace – a feeling of wholeness. The Aboriginal people are not threatened by silence and are completely at home in it. They let things follow their natural course – like the seasons.

‘We watch the moon in each of its phases. We wait for the rain to fill our rivers and water the thirsty earth. When twilight comes we prepare for the night. At dawn we rise with the sun. We watch the bush foods and wait for them to open before we gather them. We wait for our young people as they grow; stage by stage, through their initiation ceremonies. When a relation dies we wait for a long time with the sorrow. We own our grief and allow it to heal slowly. We don’t worry. We know that in time and in the spirit of Dadirri (that deep listening and quiet stillness) the way will be made clear.’

A reflection on Dadirri adapted from the writings of Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann from Daly River, NT

Experiencing Dadirri

Make a regular time, perhaps about five minutes, at the beginning or end of your lesson, to take your students into the grounds or garden outside the room.

Direct them to simply sit and look at and listen to the earth and the environment that surrounds them. Have them focus on something specific, such as the trunk of a tree, a blade of grass, a rock, the earth, a flower, bush or leaf, an insect or a cloud in the sky – whatever they can see.

Or just let something find them, be it a leaf, the sound of a bird, the feel of the breeze, the light on a tree trunk. There is no need to try too hard. Encourage them to just wait a while and let something find them, and spend time with them. Invite them to be still and silent, to really listen!

Following on from this quiet time, there may occasionally be some value in allowing the students to give expression to their experience of this quiet, still listening. They may wish to talk about the experience or write in a journal, write poetry, draw, paint or sing … This needs to be done without expectations being placed on the activity or on particular outcomes – the key to Dadirri is having a contemplative attitude, and simply listening!
A Dadirri-Inspired Reflection

We gather on this ancient land to find the quiet place.
Where the people sit in peace,
Listening to the gentle sounds of the bush.
Standing where others
have stood before them
Connecting to past stories
as we begin new journeys.

In this silent place,
The earth calls out to us to come and be still.
She listens.
Dadirri is near.
The silent communication commences under
the canopy of eternity.
Breath by breath.
Heartbeat by heartbeat.
Thought by thought.
Slowly inhale the sacredness that is all around you.
We bear the dreams of the old ones.
Let the knowledge flow through your veins
carrying generations of stories,
songs and dances.
Contemplate the lore
as you feel the wind on your face
Follow the season,
Read the stars.
Re-establish your
spiritual bond to the land
and its creatures.
Listen to the heartbeat
of creation

The birds, the wind, the animals,
The silence.

Smell the fragrance of the bush.
Image the sounds from a time long gone:
The ancient sound of the clap-stick as it
keeps beat to the rhythm of creation.
The voice of the Elder telling the stories once
written in the land.
A time when the land and the people
were one.
See the mystery of creation unfold its wisdom
and love.

This is my home; this is where my identity began.
This is where I belong.

In this place, in silence, come to know this land.
It is deep; it is complete.
Listen to the story as it moves your spirit.
Let what is true seep into your mind,
into the sacred centre of your being.
Open your soul to creation’s dreaming.
Know how to walk into the rituals of seasons.
Listen.
Mother answers.
Take your place in the ceremony of the world, and live.

Delsie Lillyst
Education Officer, Indigenous Education
Catholic Education Office Melbourne

You lived your lives in spiritual closeness to the land, with its animals, birds, fishes,
water holes, rivers, hills and mountains. Through your closeness to the land, you
touched the sacredness of man’s relationship with God, for the land was the proof of a
power in life greater than yourselves. You did not spoil the land, use it up, exhaust it, and
then walk away from it. You realised that your land was related to the source of life.

Extract of homily of Pope John Paul II to Aboriginal Peoples at Alice Springs in 1986
Jesus provides us with the best model for prayer. Guiding students in the way of prayer taught by Jesus opens up for them a realm of prayer forms that seek to confirm and strengthen the individual’s relationship with God.

The following strategies offer some direction for us to ‘pray as Jesus prayed’.

**How Did Jesus Pray?**

Jesus prayed at different times, he prayed kneeling, he prayed as a Jew would have prayed, he prayed his formal prayers as well as informally. Jesus would have prayed aloud as well as silently in his heart.

**Prayer and posture**

When we pray we can choose different postures. When Jesus prayed he stood, knelt and probably sat as well. When praying with students in your lessons, take up different postures.

**When Did Jesus Pray?**

Jesus would have prayed in the morning (Mk 1: 35), throughout the night (Lk 6: 12), after a busy day (Mk 6: 46), or in the synagogue on a Sabbath day (Lk 4: 16). Jesus prayed regularly. He prayed before making decisions or when he wished to enter into deep communion with his Father.

When praying with your students, encourage them to pray at different times of the day. Pray at different times during your lesson. You might occasionally pray at the beginning of the lesson and sometimes pray at the end of it. You might also stop and pray during your lesson when it is appropriate.

**What Can We Learn From the Way Jesus Prayed?**

A. **Jesus Taught Us To Pray in the Quiet of Our Hearts**

But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret (Matt 6: 6).

Help the students to gain the inner stillness necessary to listen for the silence of God in their hearts. Try the following exercise:

- **Decide upon a time in your lesson when you will pursue this inner silence.** At the beginning or at the end are good times, but not the only times, for introducing silence into the lesson. Tell the students what you are going to do and why. Explain that it is in silence that we can hear God. Remind them that Jesus spent many times silently praying to his Father and listening to what God was saying to him. Tell the students that they will be doing this every time you meet.

- **Repeat this exercise at the same time each time you meet.**

- **Have the students sitting comfortably with nothing in their hands or near them.** They could be cross-legged on the floor or sitting upright on a chair. It would be good to have them gathered around a prayer focus that was visible to everyone. You should have a candle and bible as the focus and something that reflects the message of the lesson (or scripture) you are exploring.
• **Invite the students to close their eyes.** This will be comfortable for some and novel for others. If you have students who giggle, just move them very quietly to sit beside you.

• **Invite the students to sit in silence and listen to the different sounds around them.** Be silent for just two minutes to begin with. Students who are unused to sitting still will find this difficult at first. Persevere with this stillness and silence.

• **At the end of the two minutes, invite the students to speak to God quietly in their hearts, to say thank you for this quiet time and to ask God to be with them for the rest of the day.** Always conclude your silent time with the students in this way.

• **Invite the students to gently open their eyes and bring their attention back to the room.** Affirm their ability to sit quietly. Encourage them to try these few moments of silence in their own time at home.

• **After a few weeks of practising the two minutes’ silence, extend the time by a minute or two, depending upon the group.** The younger students will probably only be able to sit for a maximum of five minutes, but older students can be still and silent for a longer period, up to 10 minutes.

• **As the students become more comfortable with the silence, you can add a reading from Scripture for them to think about.**

**B. JESUS TAUGHT US TO PRAY TOGETHER WITH OTHERS**

After the disciples found Jesus had been at prayer all night, they asked him to teach them to pray. We are very blessed to have the prayer that Jesus taught them – The Lord’s Prayer.

There are many ways to work with the Lord’s Prayer.

• **Saying it regularly** means that students will become familiar with the words and will remember how to say the prayer without the words before them.

• **You might like to explore the meaning of the words,** taking the prayer phrase by phrase.

• One way would be to **take one phrase and invite the students to think about** what it means during the silent time you have with your students.

• Depending upon the age of the students, **invite the students to prepare actions to go with each phrase** and then rehearse them with the other students.

• **If you have access to recording devices** – mobile phones, ipods, etc. Then you could have the students practise putting the words of the Our Father to music.

  – This activity is best undertaken as part of a lesson about the Our Father.
  – Divide the group into four smaller groups and divide the Lord’s Prayer into four parts.
  – Give each group one part and ask them to put the words to music or a tune with which they are familiar.
  – The students might like to create a rap, or use a familiar tune. They will need to practise and then record for playback to the whole group.
  – Put all four together in the correct order. The students might like to learn one tune and apply it to the four sections of the prayer and learn the whole prayer in that form.

**The most important thing we can learn about prayer from Jesus is that it is through prayer that we come to know God. Jesus prayed often to his Father. Jesus communicated with God through his prayer. We can do the same. Students need to learn from Jesus that prayer is the path to God and that through prayer we will come closer to God.**

*Sharon Freeman*
Reader: Create in us, O God, a new heart and renew a fresh spirit within us. Through the life and example of St Mary of the Cross stir into flame the gifts you have given to each of us and the faith to use them without reserve.

All: Let love guide us all our lives.

Readers: Mary, a woman of faith,
        Mary, a woman with foresight,
        Mary, your life made a difference,
        Mary, you were prepared to live among those whom you served.

All: Let love guide us all our lives.

Readers: Mary, you experienced the strains of family life,
        Mary, you did not need bricks and mortar to know you belonged to the Church,
        Mary, you spoke out in society when the opinion of women mattered little,
        Mary, you never saw an evil without trying to overcome it.

All: Let love guide us all our lives.

Readers: Mary, you worked for the dignity and equality of all people,
        Mary, you challenged people beyond themselves,
        Mary, an inspiration for all Australians,
        Mary, a woman of your time.

All: Let love guide us all our lives.

Readers: Mary, a woman of vision,
        Mary, a woman with inner strength,
        Mary, a woman of prayer,
        Mary, a woman who dared to be different.

All: Let love guide us all our lives.

Readers: Mary, a woman of dignity,
        Mary, a woman of patience,
        Mary, a woman of suffering,
        Mary, a woman of compassion.

All: Amen. Alleluia!
In the final few weeks of Ordinary Time, the Liturgy directs our attention to the coming of the Kingdom of God, thus ending the liturgical year with a focus on the ‘end times’. That is also one of the predominant themes of the season of Advent. The theme of the ‘end times’ is not an easy one to convey to children. The following suggestions may help in your preparation for Children’s Liturgy of the Word during those final weeks of Ordinary Time.

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time
HUMBLE PRAYER

If you have very young children in your Children’s Liturgy group, it may not be necessary to use the terms ‘Pharisee’ and ‘Publican’. Simply talk about the two men who went to the Temple to pray. As you read the Gospel, invite the children to listen carefully to the ‘prayer’ of the first man, then to the prayer of the second man. What is the difference?

The first man was big-noting himself before God. The second man knew he needed God’s mercy. (Mercy means loving-kindness.) Jesus is saying that our prayer needs to be more like the second man’s prayer.

Allow a few moments of silence for children to close their eyes and pray the prayer of the second man, ‘My God, have mercy on me’.

Ask the children if there has been a time in their lives when they have felt they really needed God’s help, or loving-kindness, and prayed fervently for it.

Give each child half a sheet of A4 paper. Invite the children to create a ‘Mercy’ prayer book by writing or illustrating a prayer for God’s mercy (for themselves or for others who need God’s help). Staple the pages to form a small book. These prayers may be read as intercessory prayers at the end of the Children’s Liturgy. After each prayer is read aloud, sing a simple version of the ‘Lord, have mercy’, or the antiphon ‘Lord, let your mercy be on us as we place our trust in you’, by Fr Kevin Bates.
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time
THE STORY OF ZACCHAEUS

Prepare beforehand a large poster sheet, cut in the shape of a house. Paste on it a paper ‘door’ that can open and close. Draw a sign on the door that says ‘My House’. Inside the house draw or paste an image of Jesus.

In today’s Gospel, the unpopular Zacchaeus is described as a little man, perhaps because he was not big-hearted. The story of Zacchaeus is appealing because it describes a rich man who was ready to change his life. He was wanting to see Jesus and find out about him. It is Jesus, however, who makes the first move. He talks to Zacchaeus and plunges into his life. Zacchaeus is never the same again.

Read the gospel story of Zacchaeus and discuss it with the children. Then invite them to decorate the house with the words of conversation that might have taken place between Jesus and Zacchaeus, after Jesus had gone inside his house.

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
THEY ARE TRANSFORMED

Today’s gospel reading is about life after death. No one knows what that will be like but Jesus assures us that, after we die, we will become like angels. Therefore there will be no such thing as marriage or ordinary life as we know it now. Everything is changed, or transformed.

After you proclaim the Gospel, invite the children to tell you what they heard. Do they ever imagine what life after death could be like? The concept of resurrection is a difficult one for children so it will need to be treated symbolically. One of the great illustrations of being changed or transformed to a new life is that of the caterpillar in a cocoon (like a small death) breaking out as a butterfly. Discuss this concept with the children.

If possible, have some colourful cut-outs of butterflies on the back of which the children may write their prayers of intercession. The children may read these prayers aloud and alternate them with an antiphon giving glory and praise to God. Assist the children to staple the butterflies to plastic straws, so that they can be held high and carried back to the assembly.

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
THERE MAY BE DIFFICULT TIMES

Collect, beforehand, newspaper images of earthquakes, floods, wars, etc. Also bring along some reflective music.

As we near the end of the liturgical year, the readings begin to focus more strongly on the ‘end times’. Today’s gospel reading is perhaps the most difficult one you will ever read to children, so it is important to focus on the positive message that, no matter what happens, nothing can take us away from God’s love.

After reading the Gospel, ask the children to tell you what they heard. How does it make them feel? How might the very first Christians have felt when they heard those words 2,000 years ago? Discuss how the people of today might feel when they are confronted with the hardships we see almost daily in our newspapers (refer to the newspaper images).
Play some very reflective music. Invite the children to close their eyes and imagine themselves in a very safe place surrounded by God’s light. Allow a few minutes for this. Then invite the children to pray for all those who are suffering because of wars or floods or earthquakes, that they too will be made safe in God’s love and light.

The newspaper images might then be glued to a sheet of poster board. Invite the children to write words of hope around the pictures. While this is taking place you might play or sing the song, ‘O God, Nothing Can Take Us From Your Love’ from Music for Children’s Liturgy of the Word, Year C by Christopher Walker. The poster might then be carried back to the assembly.

**Feast of Christ the King**

**Jesus, Remember Me**

Have the worship space set up with a white cloth and a large cross. Sing or proclaim with the children a joyful psalm, e.g. Psalm 97, acclaiming God as King.

Before proclaiming the Gospel, discuss with the children what they know about the kingdoms of this world and ask them to describe how they think a king/royalty might live. Is this the way Jesus lived? Why do we call Jesus a ‘king’? Listen to the children’s responses. Ensure the children understand he is the ‘king’ of the poor, the ‘king’ of love, the ‘king’ of peace – and that his kingdom is seen today when we create peace, when we forgive, care for the poor and create a world of love.

Ask the children if they know anyone who is bringing the Kingdom of God into our world in this way. Perhaps they know of people like Moira Kelly or Jim Stynes who have worked very hard to create a better life for other people. Discuss for a few moments.

After proclaiming the Gospel, invite the children to tell you what they heard about ‘king’ and ‘kingdom’. Was the criminal talking to Jesus about a kingdom here on earth or a kingdom after death? The kingdom (or reign) of God is with us now, but it is complete in the life to come. Sing together the Taizé chant, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom’.

Invite the children to look at the cross and imagine they are talking to Jesus, just as the criminal did. What would they say to Jesus? The children may wish to vocalise their prayers before carrying the cross back to the assembly.

**Points to Keep in Mind**

- Make sure that you have some understanding of the Scriptures for the day and have spent some time praying with them.

- Follow the established rhythm of the Liturgy of the Word with adults. You don’t have to reinvent the ritual every week. Remember! This is Liturgy, not a lesson.

- Create a prayerful atmosphere with candles, cloths and book. Provide visual helps towards getting the gospel message across. Arrange seating to allow full involvement of the group.

- Welcome everyone and introduce the theme of the day. Choose antiphons, or a gospel acclamation for the day and run through a short practice with the group.

- Occasionally write two or three prayers for the needs of the world, along the theme of the day. You may compose a response for the Creed.

- Proclaim the Gospel clearly and with expression.

Tricia Murray
Mary, the First Disciple

DATE: Thursday 14 October and Wednesday 27 October from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm.

PARTICIPANTS: This two-day program is for catechists wishing to explore the role of Mary as the first disciple. It will consist of scriptural and theological reflection as well as workshops and suggestions for the classroom.

Registration essential

Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Teaching of Scripture

DATE: Wednesday 10 November from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm.

PARTICIPANTS: Catechists interested in approaches to teaching Scripture at various age levels

Registration essential

Children’s Liturgy Support Group

DATE: Friday 22 October, 10.30 am to 12.30 pm.

VENUE: Cardinal Knox Centre (Cathedral and Lansdowne Rooms) 383 Albert Street, East Melbourne

PARTICIPANTS: Parish leaders of Children’s Liturgy of the Word on Sundays. Register by completing the brochure sent to parishes.

The Contemplative Parish (day 2)

DATE: Friday 29 October from 10.00 am to 3.30 pm.

VENUE: Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre 362 Albert Street, East Melbourne.

PARTICIPANTS: Catechists, Parish RECs and Pastoral Associates who have already enrolled in the program.

Please Note: this program will be repeated next year.