

Liturgy Office Newsletter – Spring 2023



This Spring newsletter finds us already part way through Lent, hopefully having been able to keep to our Lenten Resolutions so far. The word ‘Lent’, as we know, comes from the old English word for Spring, Lencten, which means to lengthen. As we progress through the season of Lent the days of daylight gradually lengthen until the cold days of February and March are transformed into the brighter days of April. For many people Lent is when we ‘give something up’, which can make Lent feel a somewhat negative, deprived time in our lives, instead of something that is positive and will enable us to grow closer to God. Perhaps, this year, we could think in terms of ‘taking something up’ – either instead of, or as well. For example, if we give up social media for one day, or part of a day, each week, we could instead visit a sick friend, or someone who is alone or feeling isolated.

Liturgies of Reconciliation

Lent is a time when we, perhaps, are keen to avail ourselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and, once again, Bishop Declan will be celebrating Liturgies of Reconciliation during the Season of Lent at venues across the diocese. These Liturgies are a beautiful way of celebrating God’s love and mercy for us, especially during this season. Each liturgy will start at 7pm. Priests will be available at each venue to celebrate sacramental reconciliation. There are three sessions still to come:

Thursday 16 March (*St Catharine of Alexandria, Frome*),

Thursday 23 March (*St Mary, Swindon*),

Thursday 30 March (*Corpus Christi, Weston-Super-Mare*).

An Examination of Conscience, which might help us to prepare ourselves for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and based on Saint Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians (13:4-7), is available below. Don’t try to go through the whole list but pick two or three areas that you might reflect upon.

An Examination of Conscience

Examination of Conscience based upon the words of Jesus and the Apostle Paul

based on Saint Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians (13:4-7)

The examination may be read silently as you prepare for your confession.

Jesus said: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

Love is patient, love is kind . . .

- Do I love the Lord with all my heart, soul and mind, or do I hold back because of my love of possessions or status or because of my own fear? Have I used the Lord’s name in vain?

- Do I express my love for God with daily prayer and participation in the Mass?
Do I keep Sunday as a holy day?
- Do I patiently wait for the Lord to hear my prayers?
- Am I patient in putting into practice those things which God calls me to do?
- Am I patient with my family, friends and co-workers?
- Do I treat others with true kindness? Am I generous with my time and talent with those in need?
- Am I true to my family relationships? to my friends? Do I act or speak one way in their presence and another when they are gone?
- Do I honour my parents and show them respect and love?
- Do I empathize with others, especially those who are poor and vulnerable or who seem difficult to love?

Love is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude . . .

- Am I jealous of other people? Do I covet their popularity, money, or possessions?
- Do I look down on others of different races or financial status?
- Am I quick to judge others?
- Do I treat all people with respect and love?

Love does not seek its own interest, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury

- Do I put aside my own wishes and desires to serve God, as well as my family, parish, and community?
- Do I become angry if things do not go “my way?”
- Am I quick to speak harshly to others—those I love as well as strangers?
- Am I able truly to forgive others? Or do I hang onto pain and mistrust?
- Have I committed violence against others? Have I struck someone in anger?
Am I abusive — physically or emotionally — of a spouse or child?
- Have I stolen from someone or kept something that does not belong to me?
- Have I been faithful to my spouse?

Love does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth . . .

- Do I rejoice in others’ achievements or do I rejoice when others fail or are wronged?
- Do I expect the best or the worst from other people?
- Do I cherish the truth above all things? Am I true to my own word?

- Do I gossip? lie? cheat?

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things . . .

- Do I bear the crosses in my life with patience and joy in the Lord?
- Do I believe the tenets of the Catholic faith?
- Do I live out the Church's beliefs in all facets of my life?
- Do I wait in joyful hope for our Lord's return in glory?
- Am I hopeful, even in the midst of the world's uncertainty?
- Do I endure the trials of my life in faith? Am I willing to bear the cross of Christ?

A Prayer of the Penitent

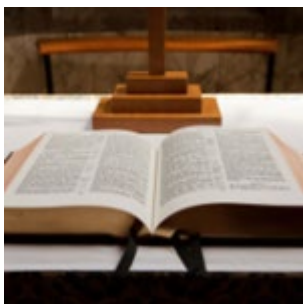
Lord Jesus, you chose to be called the friend of sinners.
 By your saving death and resurrection free me from my sins.
 May your peace take root in my heart and bring forth a harvest
 of love, holiness, and truth. Amen.
 —from the Rite of Penance

We also include articles on Holy Communion under both kinds, Holydays of Obligation, Lent and Easter Music, the Chrism Mass (which, this year, will take place on Wednesday 5 April at 11am in our cathedral), Liturgies of the Word and Art & Architecture.

Holy Communion under both kinds

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales now states that the practice of receiving both the Body and Blood of Christ may be resumed on Maundy Thursday or, if that is felt to be too early, Corpus Christi. An information leaflet is attached. Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion can be found here <https://cliftondiocese.com/liturgy-office/> under the 'Ministries' tab. If you wish, members of the Liturgy Office will be happy to provide formation to deaneries or groups of churches.

[Communion under both kinds A4](#)



Liturgies of the Word

We have received a number of queries about Liturgies of the Word with and without Holy Communion. Bishop Declan has made it clear that, certainly on weekdays, he does not wish parishes to celebrate Liturgies of the Word with Holy Communion. However, there are some Sundays when this might be appropriate, such as when supply cannot be found for a priest and there is no other church nearby that the faithful can attend. The parish priest will have had to make sure that there are sufficient consecrated hosts in the

tabernacle to accommodate this. There is a suggested Liturgy of the Word for Sundays here <https://cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Lit-Word-for-Sundays.pdf> . This envisages that Holy Communion will not be included but watch out for an additional document for a Liturgy **with** Holy Communion on Sundays – coming soon! Do remember, too, that there is a section with suggested Bidding Prayers for each Sunday here <https://cliftondiocese.com/liturgy-office/> , under the Prayer of the Faithful tab.

Lent and Easter music



If you're one of our Diocesan musicians I've no doubt that you're currently right in the middle of practising and learning music for the latter part of Lent, Holy Week and the Triduum. It's music which deserves a lot of thought and planning, a lot of concentration and sometimes, in my experience, a lot of nerve during the celebrations themselves. I wish you the best of luck for this most important time of the liturgical year. Sing and play with passion, understanding and accuracy.

But while the Holy Week celebrations are pivotal, can I put in a plea for the Easter season which follows. Don't forget about it. I'm sure you already have plans for some excellent, uplifting, resurrection-filled music on Easter Sunday itself, but what about the weeks that follow?

The Easter Season gives us the chance to fill the church with Alleluias and happy singing. Those Alleluias are not only for the Gospel Acclamation – many other parts of Mass can be adorned with them. Look for songs and hymns which use the word 'Alleluia'. Use seasonal indexes in hymn books and in online resources to seek out Easter songs. The responsorial psalm during the Easter season can simply have the response 'Alleluia'.

There are other ways to highlight the Easter Season. This might be a thought for the future, rather than this year as it would require research, planning and rehearsing: why not have a Glory to God which is only used during Easter (and maybe at other major feasts during the year). Other Mass parts can benefit from this idea, too. It might not just be the Glory to God, but a whole Mass setting, which you can employ in this way.

One other thing that you can do is spruce up your singing during Easter. It is, after all, springtime, so fill yourself with the joys of the season. Take a deep breath – both when you step outside your front door, and when you are about to sing.

Above all, enjoy the Easter season and its music!

Holydays of Obligation

During the pandemic, and for some time afterwards, our obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy days was suspended and this continued until November 2021 when we were encouraged to pick up that obligation once again. It is helpful if we can view that 'obligation' as a gift, rather than an imposition, an invitation to grow deeper in love with God. During the pandemic, we had to find other ways of honouring Sunday and for many this was via a live-streamed Mass – indeed a live-streamed Mass is still a God-send for countless people who are physically unable to get to Mass. But, if we can get to Mass, we should not view 'watching Mass' a suitable alternative.

Our Sunday Mass obligation is based on the Third Commandment: “Remember the sabbath day — keep it holy” (Ex 20:8). All of the commandments of God are serious matter, so to deliberately miss Mass on Sunday — without a just reason — would be sinful. But, of course, there are reasons that will excuse us from the Sunday obligation. The Church recognises that there will be exceptions, such as the physical or moral impossibility of attending Mass. Physical impossibility would include the person who is too ill to attend or just lives too far away; moral impossibility would be higher extenuating circumstances for a higher act of charity, such as caring for the sick, or a young mother having to care for infants. We are not asked to neglect such responsibilities in order to attend Mass on a Sunday or other Holyday of Obligation.

The Holydays of Obligations for England and Wales are:

- Every Sunday
 - Nativity of the Lord (25th December)
 - Epiphany of the Lord (6th January*)
 - Ascension of the Lord (Thursday after 6th Sunday of Easter)
 - St Peter & St Paul (29th June*)
 - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15th August*)
 - All Saints (1st November*)
- * According to a decision of the Bishops’ Conference (1984) Holydays which fall on Saturday or Monday are transferred to the Sunday and, since 2006, Corpus Christi (the Body and Blood of the Lord) has been transferred to a Sunday.

For 2023, the remaining Holydays of Obligation, which do not fall on a Sunday, are: **Saints Peter and Paul – Wed 29th June and All Saints – Tues 1st Nov.**

Art & Architecture



The Liturgy Office is responsible for advising the bishop and our parishes on matters of liturgical Art and Architecture – building, re-ordering, alterations and additions and artistic commissions – for the churches of the diocese. Any proposed changes which affect the liturgical and devotional life of the parish or community will 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).

Is Diocesan Permission Needed?

Permission is required for all works that affect the liturgical and devotional life of the parish or community. This is wide-ranging and may range from the construction of a new church building to a major re-ordering or even provision of works of sacred art. It may also extend to the grounds of the church especially where this area includes the approach to the

building, its use for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy (burials, Palm Sunday Liturgy, Eucharistic processions etc), devotional areas and where such grounds are the context for works of sacred art.

The interior of the church or chapel includes the narthex, nave, sanctuary, baptistery, Blessed Sacrament chapel, sacristy, places for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, shrines, galleries and other places. This will include such things as

1. the overall liturgical environment;
2. the provision of altar, ambo, font, presidential chair, place for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Oils, musical instruments, seating, altar rails, confessionals and also substantial brass and silverware;
3. décor, lighting schemes, furnishings, floor coverings, glazing, sound systems, heating, memorial plaques etc;
4. works of Sacred Art including stained and etched glass, statuary, Stations of the Cross, icons, paintings, mosaics, murals, banners etc;
5. any item that is intended to be a permanent fixture. 'Permanent' is understood to refer to placing of an object, whether fixed or moveable, in the church for a continuous period exceeding three months;
6. the restoration, removal or disposal of any work of art, historic vestments, plate and furnishings from a church or chapel belonging to the Clifton Diocese.

Early Consultation

It often saves time and frustration if you approach the Liturgy Office at the outset, before submitting a formal application. Please do contact the Liturgy Office for comments and advice about your plans as early on in the project as possible. The Liturgy Office seeks to serve our communities and offers a consultancy service on the various aspects of sacred space and the general liturgical environment.

Site Visits

It may be that the Liturgy Office will wish to send a member or a small group to discuss your proposals on site or to meet with the parish priest, members of the PPC and other parishioners or members of your community. It will help if you can send as much information as possible, such as sketch plans, brief etc. in advance if you have reached such a stage of development.

Please remember

Any works carried out without approval may have to be reversed. Furthermore, no work is to be commenced in a listed church until a faculty has been received from the Historic Churches Committee.

For further information please contact liturgy@cliftondiocese.com

Update on New Translation of the Lectionary

We are now advised that the New Translation of the Lectionary will not be available this year and the current estimate is that it will be introduced next year, either on Trinity Sunday or on the First Sunday of Advent. Watch this space!

Wishing you a very blessed Lent and Easter