

Rublev's Icon of the Trinity

Ministry for Welcome and Hospitality

National Conference of Pastors and Pastoral Associates

Shoal Bay 2009

Presenter: Janette Davidson

A Tradition of Welcome

- The icon was painted around 1410 by Andrei Rublev.
- From left to right, we see
 - The Father – in shimmering robes
 - The Son – in brown and blue
 - The Holy Spirit – in green and blue.
- The whole icon is a scene of hospitality; the space at this table is on our side. We are invited to join the group at the table and abide in the life of the Trinity and the fullness of their love.



Importance of Welcome/Hospitality

- Hospitality is at the heart of the Christian tradition.
- A welcoming community is the heart of an evangelizing parish.



Outcomes

This session will help participants to:


- encourage all people to see themselves as welcomers;
- assess the way their parish welcomes and consider how welcome is made a deliberate action in the life of the community;
- develop practical ways to improve parish welcoming policies and practices.

‘Church Door’ Reflection



**“Welcome
one
another as
Christ has
welcomed
you”**

Romans 15:17



Growing awareness of the importance of Welcome.

- NCLS – Less than 15% of Catholics are regular Mass attendees. 85% of the Catholic community do not attend regularly.
- ACBC - Pastoral Strategies Document
“.....which welcome them in rites of hospitality and which follow through with them beyond Eucharist liturgy”.



Key Questions

- Who do we Welcome?



- What opportunities do we have to Welcome?



In the scriptures Jesus draws special attention to certain people who are to be welcomed...

- Strangers (newcomers)
- Visitors (foreigners)
- Children (families)
- Marginalized (poor and disabled).

**"Whoever
welcomes you
welcomes me,
and whoever
welcomes me
welcomes the
one who sent
me."**

Mt 10:40

Who Welcomes?

- Individuals
- Ministry Groups
- Parish Team
- Parish Staff
- Parish Priests



An Examination of Conscience

Am I a welcoming person?

Is there any room in my busy life for others? Do I extend a welcoming gesture? Do I go out of my way even when it is not convenient to do so? Do the words I use set out to impress or include others? Am I a team person? Do I make an effort to encounter Jesus in the people around me? Am I sensitive to the poor in my midst?

Let us respond in silent prayer.

Bitsche

Adapted from Sherry
in *The Ministry of Welcome*.
Liturgical Press 1989

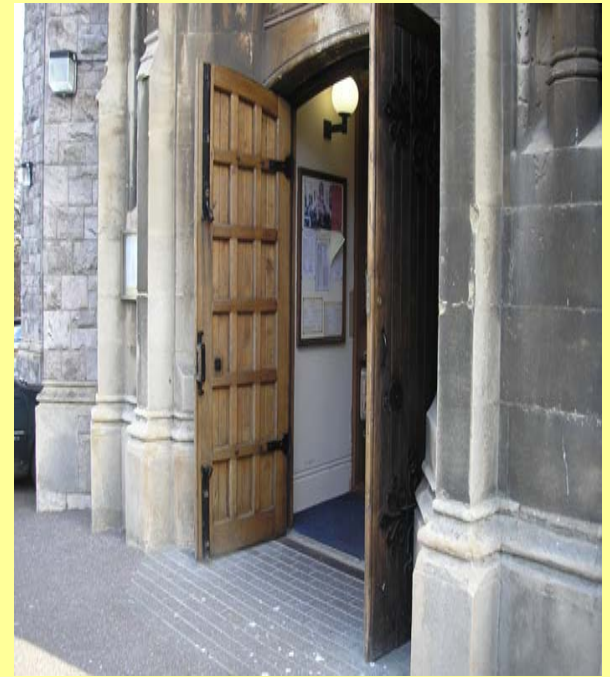
Consider

- Encouraging Parish Ministry Groups to look at how they welcome e.g. Sacramental Programs, Baptism Preparation, etc;
- Encouraging Parish Ministry groups to look at how they welcome others into their ministry.



When Welcoming

What do we find difficult?



How do different people and circumstances present us with different challenges, the late comer, the one who wants to be left alone, the family on holiday?

Do we need to develop any new welcoming habits?



Welcome/Hospitality

- Is an attitude; the attitude of servant.
- It is an environment; it involves creating a warm, welcoming space for people.
- It is an action; the willingness to be open, receptive and responsive to people – to reach beyond ourselves, beyond our fears and stereotypes.
- It is a way of life for each of us.



Consider

- What does the parish do to welcome newcomers and encourage them to return?
- How does the parish sustain a welcome to longer standing parishioners?
- How different family types, situations and stages are made to feel welcome and at home in the parish?



“There is some evidence that one person’s warm and friendly parish is another person’s clique.....

.....parents seem particularly vulnerable to feelings of exclusion and judgment”



National Report from Listening 2004

Is this ever true in your parish?



- No matter how welcoming our official welcomers may be, people will not feel truly welcome unless they are made welcome by all.
- We need to develop not simply a limited ministry of welcome, but welcoming communities. That is far more of a challenge, but essential. What is most needed is a change of heart, so that we become people of welcome, joyful in our faith and open to all.



Parish Assessment

This involves an assessment of the ways in which the parish already welcomes newcomers and existing parishioners to church. The aim of this exercise is to celebrate good practice and to look for ways of becoming more welcoming.



We need to consider the nature of our welcome, with an empathy for the stranger rather than the comfort of those who are familiar.

Resources

- Folder of resources
- Welcome Team/Ministry
- Training and Formation Programs
- www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk
- Books

- Welcoming Parish by Donal Harrington



- If need assistance/clarification please call me on (02) 9907 8997 or email janette.davidson@dbb.org.au

Leader: Father, we ask that in these conversations and plans for the future you will help us to bring about a truly welcoming threshold.

May our welcome extend through all that we do until we become the community of love and faith you want us to be.

**In welcoming everyone may you be glorified and your name held holy.
Amen**

