



Working Parish



Newsletter of NSW Clergy, Religious, Pastoral Associates and all involved in parish ministry.
Seeking to support and develop collaboration and leadership in parish settings

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Sacramental Preparation: Catching the Flame



Source: www.christianphotos.net

“Thank you, Father, it was a beautiful First Communion. We will see you again for our child’s confirmation!” This comment, made at a recent celebration, epitomises the challenges facing our church in the area of sacramental preparation. Another parent recently shared this view on enrolling their child for kindergarten: “Why would anyone go to Mass these days? At least at this school the teachers will look after the stuff for the sacraments so we won’t need to do anything.” At another parish, with family-based preparation, a young father muttered: “I don’t see why they make us jump through all these hoops. I can’t wait till after first communion, so we won’t have to come back anymore.”

Certainly, these comments are balanced by many positive experiences, yet this article seeks to identify the issues around sacramental preparation as we wrestle with the reality that the flame of faith is “caught and not taught”.

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Sacramental Preparation

Identifying the issues as we wrestle with the reality that the flame of faith is “caught and not taught”

Reflection on New Translation of the Missal

Carmel Pilcher rsj

Resources for the New Missal

Violence in Australia

Reflecting on the ACBC Social Justice Statement and featuring a Peace Movement offering to run parish retreats

New Resources

- *Today’s Parish Website*
- *Advent Program*
- *Lenten Program*

Upcoming Events

- *Vatican II Seminar on Church Today with Fr Frank Moloney*
- *National Pastoral Planning Conference in 2011*
- *NAPPA Conference 2011!*

Date Claimer (See back page for flyer)
NAPPA Annual Conference, Tuesday 1 March 2011
Topic: Approaches to Sacramental Preparation

Sacramental Preparation

From page one

Four-Way Collaboration

The success of sacramental preparation has been described in terms of a tripod where school, parish and home are the three legs. Take away any of these supports and the whole falls over. However, a fourth support can sometimes be overlooked, the place of the Catholic state school children, their parents and catechists. So too, there are other members of parish teams who could be included at the outset (eg baptism team, RCIA) to ensure a shared vision.

Are representatives from each of the bodies gathered at the outset of any discussion of how sacramental preparation is to be approached? Do they each understand their essential and complementary roles?

Agreeing on the Principles

Do all those involved in sacramental preparation agree on the principles underlying a given approach? Without a clear, shared vision by all involved, confusion, tension and muddled outcomes may result.

For instance, the school may consider they have the primary duty of preparing the children. The parents may not think they have any role. The parish team may be expecting the parents to be very much involved. The catechists may wish to be part of a united process but are being prepared separately.

Some of the questions below can also become part of the underlying principles.

Program or Process?

Are we pushing people through programs or are we making disciples?

Calling something a “program” may suggest it has a clear start and finish and has some steps you need to take in order to complete it successfully. It is for this reason that the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults avoids any use of the word “program” but invites inquirers into a process which ultimately is part of a life-long journey.

Sacramental Preparation as a process suggests that the preparation has been taking place since the child was a baby. The lead up to a particular

sacrament of initiation then becomes termed as “Immediate Preparation” and rather than suggesting that children can magically be prepared through a series of lessons, the principles of RCIA can be emphasised. RCIA offers four threads of initiation: catechesis, prayer, community life and mission. Catechesis for children and their families should not be emphasised at the expense of a deepening prayer life, community life or involvement in mission.

An Event or an Initiation?

How much emphasis is placed on First Communion Day to the detriment of the entire process of preparation?

When I went through marriage preparation, we were asked how we were preparing for marriage. One couple listed the photographer, car, dress and shoes as ways they were prepared... for their marriage.

Role of Parents?

The role of parents can sometimes become pushed to the sidelines. Parents are told they have primary responsibility for the formation of their children, but then may not be given the formation or opportunity to help with the preparation of children.

There was a mother in Blackheath with ten children, nine of who went through a “school-based” preparation. When the parish shifted to “family-centred” preparation for her youngest child, she became the greatest advocate, saying, “I wish I could have prepared the other nine in the same way!” In the parish of Shellharbour, a parent questioned whether she would need to attend preparation for her second and third children. Another parent said, “I will certainly go. Last time it was Karen, this time it is Jill!” It was a reminder that if the process moves beyond information-only to an encounter, then each experience of preparation will be unique.

One parish made the gentle shift from children going through the sacraments by default, to introducing an enrolment form which parents would have to sign and return. Of course, the introduction of an enrolment ritual can be even more powerful. This would echo the RCIA’s Rite of Welcome, where enquirers, after enquiry and discernment officially become catechumens.

Continued page 3

Sacramental Preparation

From page two

Homework or Formation?

How can the time spent in immediate preparation be distinguished from homework? One preparation actually listed “pray for fifteen minutes” as a homework item. Suggesting a sacred space, a different spot to where homework is normally done, and a time with minimal interruptions, may all help.

Pastoral Issues Surrounding Preparation

Are the pastoral needs of families given space and support within the sacramental preparation?

One sacramental coordinator shared how she would interview each family separately ahead of the immediate preparation timeline. She tells of a number of families with specific issues that were identified through this process. They were able to be put in contact with either appropriate parish support groups or diocesan social welfare agencies (eg CatholicCare, Centacare).

One lady was the grandmother of the child being prepared. Her grandchild was part of a single-parent family dealing with the effects of sickness and disability with the mother often absent. The grandmother was unwell herself. The coordinator assured the grandmother she would not have to go to the normal sessions. The grandmother said, before this interview, she would have tried to attend the sessions, even at great personal cost.

Children living with disability may be unwittingly excluded from the preparation. However, programs are available for children with disability. Contact Patricia Mowbray (Disability Projects Officer, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference)

An Opportunity for RCIA and Catholics absent from Sunday Worship?

How might sacramental preparation be tied in with the promotion of pathways to either full initiation for adults, or to reconnecting with Sunday worship? Is there a way of coordinating these ministries with sacramental preparation?

Engagement in Community Life and Mission?

In the material sent to families, is there a listing of the various ministries and groups in the life of the community with clear indications of how to find out more? Perhaps a speaker from the local play group or family group could address the parents of children in sacramental preparation.

More intentional strategies include adoption of a prayer sponsor, or even a sponsor family, who will support the family preparing for the sacrament and follow up afterwards.

Continued page 4



Photo by Daniel Hopper

Sacramental Preparation

From page three

The Power of Language

How do address those who present for the sacraments. Given the statistic that only about ten percent of Catholics attend Sunday worship, there is a temptation to welcome those who come as “visitors”. Equally, immediate preparation which invites families to come along to Mass during the lead up to the sacrament gives tacit approval to their non-involvement outside of the process. To put it another way, if you did not pay taxes, do you think the Government would invite you to pay taxes just for a certain period? The expectation that Catholics participate in the Mass should be reflected in what we say and the letters we send.

This does not mean we berate Catholics who do not worship on Sunday, but if we assume participation as the norm, then it can stir some to consider why they are acting outside of the norm.

Not a Roman Catholic? What to do?

Almost two in three Catholic families may have one parent who is non-Catholic. This fact alone should cause pause for thought. Do we presume all who attend parent sessions or sacraments are Catholic? How can we make those who are not Catholic feel welcome?

What of children in class groups who are not Roman Catholic? The other three Catholic traditions receive sacraments of initiation at Baptism. Are these traditions respected, or do we bring these children into the Roman Catholic process? How can the dignity of other Catholic traditions be upheld rather than swallowed up in our preparation?

More difficult, is the involvement of children who are not Catholic. In a class group, they may go through all the preparation which their Catholic classmates do. Are they to be left behind on First Communion Day while their friends all celebrate the sacrament? Sometimes they are seen to go up and receive a certificate, dress in the same outfit as their friends, or participate in a liturgical movement offering thanksgiving for the gift of Holy Communion.

Again, the dignity of other Christians, or those of other faiths or none, needs to be upheld alongside the dignity of the sacrament. Rather than treating them the same, could this not be an opportunity for children to learn that they are different from one another, and to respect these differences? Also, if all children learn to swim, not all join the swim squad. The others may be invited to come along to support, but not everyone is invited to jump in the water.

Conclusion: Evangelisation or Initiation?

In the early church, people would have a conversion experience, be inspired to undertake a time of catechesis which culminated in initiation. Nowadays, with infant Baptism, we begin with initiation, move through a period of catechesis and hope somewhere along the way there will be a conversion. There is a challenge for those involved in sacramental preparation to recognise both the opportunities and challenges which this landscape offers.

Richard McMahon

Nowadays, with infant Baptism, we begin with initiation, move through a period of catechesis and hope somewhere along the way there will be a conversion

The new translation of the Roman Missal – What could it Mean for my parish?

Carmel Pilcher rsj
Liturgical Consultant

‘This gives me so much food for thought’; ‘I’ve had to unlearn a lot but I’m so glad I came’ and ‘I know now that I am a holy person’ – are just some of the reactions to a four week long renewal of the Sunday Eucharist that took place in the northern part of the diocese of Maitland Newcastle. The sessions were repeated nine times over a four week period at different parish communities. The process – initiated, fully supported and attended by all the priests and pastoral leaders, was the beginning of a formation programme to introduce the new translation of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal that will be the official prayer book for our Eucharist by the end of 2011.

A second phase of the preparation will focus more directly on the texts and will be supported by various resources that are currently being prepared, including the new international DVD, *Become one Body one Spirit in Christ*. While the DVD is now available for purchase, it is hoped that other resources will soon be posted on the Archdiocese of Melbourne website. These will assist parish leaders to ensure that a smooth transition takes place from the current Mass prayers to the newly translated Missal. Dioceses with active liturgy commissions are already working to provide direction and support in this process. Some liturgical specialists (including myself) will be available to assist more remote and less resourced dioceses.

The Australian bishops have opted for a gradual introduction of the new texts into Sunday worship over several months, but that a complete changeover must occur on the first Sunday of Advent 2011. This might mean that the dialogue prayers are a focus for a certain period, then when they have become familiar one or other of the revised Eucharistic Prayers is introduced. The prayers will definitely sound different because the way they have been translated from the Latin is more

literal. Not only will certain words and phrases be unfamiliar and need explanation, but the style of the prayers is quite different from conversational English. The proposed process of introduction by our leaders will allow us to move slowly and so enable a better opportunity for all of us to be ready to pray in a new way.

There have been mixed reactions to the much anticipated revised English translation of the Roman Missal. Some firmly believe that the Vatican is introducing a more sacral liturgical language that will enrich our worship with a deeper sense of mystery. Others believe that the new translation is a retrograde step that will alienate the faithful by further rupturing liturgy from life. Yet others probably won’t be at all concerned and will simply pray the new texts. But regardless of our reactions or opinions, the reality of change will soon be upon us. And with every change comes opportunity!

It is now four decades since the church called us to fully participate in the liturgy. From teaching in different dioceses it seems to me that the implications of this invitation are only now being fully understood and realised by worshippers.



The challenge to worship as one church and to bring our daily lives to the Eucharist to be offered as Christ’s sacrifice has serious implications. To remember truthfully requires that we no longer approach Sunday Eucharist as individuals but seek to enter into communion with each other in Christ.

Continued on page 6
page 5

New Translation of Missal

From page 5

Consequently at the table we pledge to live in harmony not only with our family and friends, but with all of creation. Our encounter with Christ in the Eucharist enables us to recognise Christ's face in the poor and suffering. And so we leave strengthened to reach out to the lonely and dispossessed and are obliged to share our abundant gifts and possessions with all those in need.

We are soon to pray with a new edition of the Missal. Let's make the most of the opportunity to revisit the wonderful treasure that is ours and seize the moment to renew our appreciation and understanding of the Eucharist. And who knows, we may find that our parishes will also prosper and grow in the process.

Resources for New Missal

Preparing Your Parish for the Revised Roman Missal Part 1: from the editors of Pastoral Liturgy
Chicago, Liturgy Training Publications, 2010

A practical guide for parishes in United States. It includes a preparation timeline, a sample parish letter and homily, a how to spread the word effectively, a discussion of financial preparation, a listing of resources and much more.

Understanding the Revised Mass Texts

Paul Turner

Chicago Liturgy Training Publications 2010

An introduction to the revised Mass texts. It explains why we have the new texts and how it was done and explores the changes. The present texts and new texts are printed alongside each other.

There is also a leader's version.

DVD Resource for New Translation of Roman Missal

This interactive DVD makes accessible the depths and riches of the layers of meaning of the new English translation of the Roman Missal.

Five commissioned foundational essays provide the themes and pathways of this resource which uses video, text, graphics and music to help the user enrich their understanding and deepen their appreciation of the Eucharist.

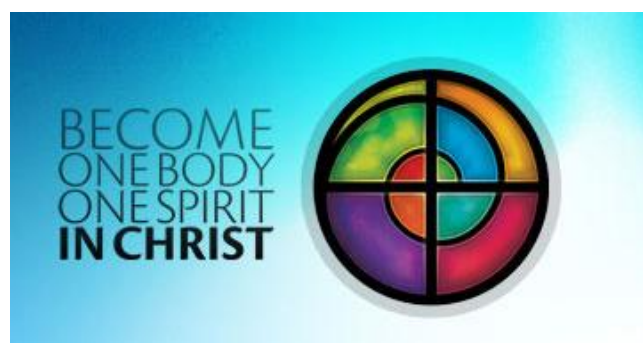
Filmed in churches and cathedrals in the USA, Ireland, England, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa and with expert commentary from translators, academics, liturgical consultants and practitioners, this beautifully produced resource evokes biblical imagery which is foundational to these texts.

Designed for a range of audiences including Priests and Deacons, Liturgical Ministers, Educators and Catechists, Parishioners, including families and adult faith groups, for the whole Catholic community.

The five pathways are:

- Exploring the Mass
- Receiving this English Translation
- Crafting the Art of Liturgy
- Celebrating the Eucharist
- Living a Eucharistic Life

You can visit the website and take a video tour of the resource. Costing around \$30, it makes this an affordable resource for both individual and group use. www.becomeonebodyonespiritinchrist.org



Contact us!

NAPPA is always interested in your feedback. What is happening in your pastoral setting? Is there a way of collaborating that works for you?

Tell us about some useful resources, books or websites.

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New to Working Parish? What is NAPPA?

Are you a pastor in a parish, or work closely with the leadership in a parish setting? More and more we are being encouraged to consult, collaborate and communicate with others as we seek to support our faith communities.

The NSW Association of Pastors and Pastoral Associates (NAPPA) is a network of clergy, religious and lay leaders committed to fostering shared models of leadership in pastoral settings.

Whether you are a priest with a team of lay volunteers, a pastoral leader attempting to minister to two parishes or a pastoral associate or lay leader involved in some aspect of parish life, NAPPA offers support, ideas, formation and advocacy.

The association was formed in 1995 at a gathering of over 200 priests and pastoral associates who saw the need for mutual support. It was given a seeding fund from the NSW Bishops' Conference and Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, and now relies on the annual support of its members.

NAPPA provides a quarterly newsletter and an annual forum for members to enjoy some time of formation and networking. The executive team meet during the year to discuss developments and provide representation to diocesan bodies as required.

Your NAPPA Executive

Bob Bossini SDB, PP, St Mary's

Greg Byrne, PA, Forster/Tuncurry (Treasurer)

Helen Saunders RSJ, PA, Orange

John Pearce CP (chair), PP, Marrickville

Kate Bartlett, PA, Maitland-Newcastle (chair)

Paul Mason, PA, Lower North Shore

Richard McMahon (Sec./Ed.), Wollongong Diocese,
Bishop's Office

Events and Resources

“Do Not Neglect the Parish of Your Own Soul”

Would you like me to teach you how to grow from virtue to virtue and how, if you are already recollected at prayer, you can be even more attentive next time, and so give God more pleasing worship? Listen, and I will tell you. If a tiny spark of God's love already burns within you, do not expose it to the wind, for it may get blown out. Keep the stove tightly shut so that it will not lose its heat and grow cold. In other words, avoid distractions as well as you can. Stay quiet with God. Do not spend your time in useless chatter.

If teaching and preaching is your job, then study diligently and apply yourself to whatever is necessary for doing the job well. Be sure that you first preach by the way you live. If you do not, people will notice that you say one thing, but live otherwise, and your words will bring only cynical laughter and a derisive shake of the head.

Are you in charge of a parish? If so, do not neglect the parish of your own soul, do not give yourself to others so completely that you have nothing left for yourself. You have to be mindful of your people without becoming forgetful of yourself.

-St Charles Borromeo



Light of the World

Being Church in the 21st Century

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Fr Francis Moloney sdb
Eminent Australian scripture scholar and author

This seminar continues our Vatican II Seminar series breaking open the vision of the document *Lumen Gentium* (The Church) and inviting us to consider its implications for both our personal lives and the life of the Church.

Saturday 27 November 2010
9.30am—3.30pm

Chevalier College Moss Vale
Cost: \$30 / \$15 or by donation (includes morning tea and lunch)
Registration essential to Jane Edwards
email jane.edwards@woll.catholic.org.au or tel (02) 4253 0899

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Today's Parish provides practical and proven best practices as well as inspiration for pastors and lay ministers to inspire and strengthen effective parish ministry and organization so that the people of God will be better able to live their faith and grow closer to God. To accomplish this, *Today's Parish* seeks out the best pastoral methods to help parish ministers live and teach what the Church lives and teaches.

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Violence in Australia: A message of peace.

This year's ACBC social statement emphasised the call to peace. The statement along with associated resources offers a great resource for parish adult faith, youth and social justice groups.

The title of the Statement is *Violence in Australia: A message of peace*. The Statement speaks about violence at all levels – at the personal level, in families and communities and in our national structures. It emphasises how peace is not simply the absence of conflict, it entails the true development of people. It means ensuring individuals have the right and means to participate fully in community life and to realise the spiritual, cultural, social and economic potential of their lives.

We are all too familiar with interpersonal violence – street fights, assaults or road rage, for example. But violence can also be seen, with tragic results, in family situations; in bullying in the schoolyard and online; and in divisive political rhetoric and sensationalist media reporting.

One example is the recent demonisation of asylum seekers as a threat to our national security. The bishops call on our national leaders to adopt a bipartisan approach to meeting our international obligations to some of the most vulnerable people in our world. The statement calls on all people to consider how they can build peace at all levels of society and to identify where exclusion, oppression and violence remain in the life of our nation.

The Statement celebrates those who have worked courageously in the cause of peace, and asks Australians to reflect how we can respond in concrete ways to the Gospel's call to bring peace to our world.

Contact:

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/>

Pace e Bene Australia promoting the spirituality and practice of active nonviolence

"...one the most powerful, positive, actively peace-making experiences I have had in a very long time."

The Need for Skills for Personal and Social Change

Every day, throughout the world people face the daunting challenge and consequences of violence and injustice. Some people confront this violence with violence. Others remain passive in the face of this destructiveness. Neither of these approaches, in our estimation, lead to long-term solutions because they often fail to address the root causes of violence or stop the cycle of destruction, resentment, and retaliation that violence and injustice create.

There are a growing number of people around the world, however, who are using the more effective approach of creative nonviolence, the subject of our study program, to bring about change in their societies. People are also using nonviolence to challenge personal, interpersonal, and social patterns of violence in their own lives. The more we are equipped with the vision and skills of nonviolence, the greater the chance for the emergence of effective nonviolent solutions in our lives and in the world. Our three programs have been created for this purpose.

Pace e Bene Australia invites you to join us on a journey, exploring nonviolent living...

Through the provision of educational materials and community workshop facilitators, we provide a study and action program that explores nonviolence as a creative, powerful and effective process for addressing and resolving the conflicts in our lives and in the life of the world. These programs offer your church, school, community, or group resources to deepen the journey from fear to freedom, from despair to hope, from violence to wholeness.

Contact: <http://paceebene.org.au/>

Advent Reflection

Taken from "Advent Vigilance" – Diocese of Wollongong Program

A Spirituality of Vigilance - The God who comes

There can be something slightly predictable about Advent programs. After all, they are all about waiting - taking the time to prepare for the coming of Jesus. This is as it should be.

The onslaught of pre-Christmas consumerism can be overwhelming. Finding the time to focus on what this season is all about can be all but impossible.

And yet it is important that we try. This time of the year can be like the experience of panning for gold - intently looking for what's valuable in the midst of all the rubbish.

As Advent begins we are in danger of missing what's being offered to us by God. We may feel buffeted by society, by the media, by the demands of family and friends - so much so that some of us can't wait for December to be over so that the real time of peace and joy can begin!

The time has well and truly come to claim back this season. It is our hope that these series of weekly reflections will help us all do just that. This is the beginning of a new liturgical year, and the spiritual nourishment God seeks to give us now will, if we can but respond to it, carry us through the entire year.

Jesus Christ wishes to be reborn in our lives and to walk with us through all the ups and downs of 2011. To this end he needs us to learn to recognise and respond to his presence. We are to adopt a spirituality of vigilance – by which is meant that we are to be ever attentive to his coming.

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Catholic Diocese of Wollongong
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For more information contact Vin Dillon
(03) 5337 7121 or vin.dillon@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Catching the Flame

Sacramental Preparation

Join with clergy, religious and lay workers to identify together guiding principles in sacramental preparation. Also, workshops featuring a variety of parish approaches.

Keynote Speakers:

- * John Frauenfelder
Lecturer BBI
- * Kathy Horan,
RE Coordinator, Author and practitioner

NAPPA Conference

Tuesday 1 March 2011

10.00am – 4.30pm

Includes morning tea and lunch

St Patrick's Cathedral Hall,
Marist Place, Parramatta



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For those wishing to attend conference only - \$20.00

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Return slip and payment to: **NAPPA Membership, c/- Greg Byrne, PO Box 67, Forster NSW 2428.**

Contact Richard on 4253 0976 or email nappa2@bigpond.com for more information.