

Newsletter

Issue 13, March 2022



Image by Giovanni Portelli.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Liturgy spotlight:
the art of celebrating

Sharing good practice:
attend as you participate

News and recent events

Resources for celebration

UPCOMING FOR YOUR CALENDAR

July 2022: Professor Sister Julia Upton RSM of St John's University, New York, USA will lead an intensive offering of the new Master of Theological Studies (Liturgy) unit **THLS603: Liturgy, Prayer and Pastoral Care** for postgraduate students, auditors and professional learners. Stay tuned for further details.

The **ACU Centre for Liturgy Public Lecture Series** will continue in May, July and October 2022. Look for the announcement of our distinguished lecturers and lecture dates over the course of 2022 or email the Centre to be added to our email list.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Many of us are finally returning to regular in-person liturgies following the pandemic's disruption of our public prayer, which has seen us resort to online worship or sporadic in-person participation for over two years. The recommencement of in-person liturgical celebrations can provide a good opportunity to think about *how* we worship when we worship. *That* we worship is always of paramount importance, but once a baseline of regular worship has been established, it is important to consider more closely the ways in which we offer praise to God and become holy in the presence of the Holy One. For those whose regular worship praxis has not been overly disrupted by the pandemic, assessing the quality of our regular liturgical routines and habitual practices is also a worthwhile exercise.

The *ars celebrandi* ('the art of proper celebration') is not a task only for those who are artistically inclined or those who preside at liturgy or undertake liturgical ministries – it is a task for all those who worship, and it pertains both to our

attitudes toward and our actions within the liturgy. This edition of the newsletter explores the *ars celebrandi* in an article by Father Paul Turner (who has recently published an excellent book on this topic), and includes some wise advice from Bishop Paul Bird CSsR along with some practical suggestions to encourage artful celebration. As you read these articles, I encourage you to take some time to think about *how* you celebrate and the ways in which a more mindful approach to the art of liturgical celebration can further enhance the worship we offer to our God.



Professor Clare V. Johnson
Director, ACU Centre for Liturgy
Professor of Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy



Image by Giovanni Portelli.



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FROM OUR BOARD OF ADVISORS

The phrase *ars celebrandi* highlights the fact that the celebration of the liturgy is an art. In the art of painting, or the art of music or the art of writing, the quality depends on the dedication and the skill of the painter or the musician or the writer. Likewise, in the art of celebrating the liturgy, the quality of the celebration depends, at least to some extent, on the dedication and the skill of the celebrants, and these include the priest celebrant and the other ministers and each person

in the congregation insofar as the whole congregation celebrates the liturgy in union with Christ.

The more we develop our skill as readers, the more effectively we will proclaim the Scriptures and offer the prayers. The more we grow in grace of movement, the more our gestures will encourage those around us to be open to the grace of God. How we celebrate is important. I hope this edition of the newsletter encourages us all in the

art of celebrating well, for the praise and glory of God's name, for our good and the good of the whole Church.



Paul Bird, CSsR is Bishop of the Diocese of Ballarat and a member of the Bishops Commission for Liturgy.

NEWS AND RECENT EVENTS

During November and December 2021, the ACU Centre for Liturgy piloted a comprehensive online training program for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion facilitated by Mrs Cathy Murrowood. The program was very well received, and some minor tailoring in response to participant feedback is occurring ahead of its national launch in 2022. Please contact us for further information.

XXX was the lucky winner of the three-volume set *Celebrating the Lectionary: Years A, B, and C* published by Garratt. Her name was

drawn from among those who took part in the Newsletter feedback survey provided through the QR code in the November 2021 issue.

Dr Jason McFarland attended the annual meeting of the North American Academy of Liturgy in Kansas City, Missouri, USA from 2 – 5 January 2022, delivering presentations within two seminar groups. In his capacity as editor of the peer-reviewed *Proceedings of the NAAL*, Dr McFarland delivered a report to the academy membership.

Professor Clare Johnson designed, prepared, rehearsed and facilitated the

celebration of the Mass of Installation for the Fifth Chancellor of ACU, the Honourable Martin Daubney AM, held at (and livestreamed from) St Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane on 11 February 2022.

Dr McFarland has been granted research leave by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) from July – December 2022 and will be in residence at The Catholic University of America as a Visiting Scholar to work on his project *Semper reformanda: Retrieving the Critical Edge in Liturgical Studies*.

LITURGY SPOTLIGHT

The art of celebrating

Literally meaning 'the art of celebrating', *ars celebrandi* is the style a priest uses when he presides at Mass. Style emerges from the priest's own personality, the building where the community gathers, the quality of the musicians and their instruments, as well as the involvement of the people. One priest may notice differences in his style when he moves from one parish to another. The people notice differences from one priest to another. Some diversity is normal. Yet a few standards generally apply.

Mindfulness.

The priest who concentrates on his words and actions will bring more depth to his spiritual life and enhance the participation of the people. A priest typically pays little attention to the actions he repeats at each Mass. However, especially at those moments he can practise mindfulness: "Why am I bowing?" "Why am I kissing this altar?" "What is the sacrifice I offer this day

with humble spirit and contrite heart?" Situating the day's ministry into the day's Mass will help him explore the full meaning of many repeated actions and words.

Engagement.

The people are expected to offer full, conscious, active participation at the Mass. The priest promotes this by the sincerity of his words. The dialogues provide a model of this engagement, in which the priest addresses the people, and they respond. When the priest says, "Let us pray," the people should hear the expectation that this work includes them. Silence at these times also engages people. When a priest waits for the room to quiet down, he respects the responsibility of the people to engage in the words and silences of the Mass. He understands the difference between a celebrant and a celebrity. He draws attention to the sacred mysteries, not to himself.

Preparation.

The priest has opportunities to use his own words at moments such as the introduction to the penitential act, the invitation to the universal prayer, and the prayer that concludes those petitions. Many priests enjoy the freedom of using their own words, but without preparation they may fall into the same wordy patterns and expressions each day. Careful preparation may include writing out the words he wishes to say at such moments. A priest can add as much life to a celebration as his homily.



Image by Giovanni Portelli.

The art of celebrating also applies to the people. They are expected to be mindful of the words they sing and say. When they put away their cellular devices, they concentrate more fully on the duties at hand. When the hymn is announced, their participation signals to God, their neighbour, and the priest that they have come intending to celebrate. When they listen attentively to the readings, they let the Word of God form them in the moment. They too engage in the dialogues. They too prepare for the celebration by daily prayer at home and meditation on the readings. A priest can set a good example, but the people's participation will also improve his *ars celebrandi*.

The *motu proprio* of Pope Francis, *Traditionis custodes*, summons the Catholic community to a more devoted celebration of the eucharist according to the missal received as a fruit of the Second Vatican Council. In his accompanying letter to the bishops of the world, he joined Pope Benedict XVI in lamenting avoidance of the prescriptions of the new missal and unauthorised creativity. One reason the earlier missal retained many adherents was its ability to create a sense of reverence through thoughtful attention to rubrics and through silences observed in common. Those traits can develop even more meaning within the current missal if priest and people give attention to its words and actions in a deep spirit of full, conscious and active participation.



Fr Paul Turner is Pastor of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, and author

of *Ars Celebrandi: Celebrating and Concelebrating Mass* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2021).

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

Attend as you participate

Prior to Vatican II, the faithful had a duty to 'attend' the liturgy. Following the implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), the faithful have a duty to participate in the liturgy fully, consciously and actively (SC 14). Being 'conscious' as we participate in liturgical celebration means more than just staying awake. If we are truly conscious of what we are doing, strive to understand why we are doing it, and analyse how we are doing it, then we are 'attending' to the liturgy as we participate in it. Attending while participating is different from simply attending liturgy to fulfill an obligation. When we 'attend' or pay close attention to our ways of participating liturgically, we open ourselves up to the experiential fullness the liturgy offers, cognisant of the reality of God's presence and the activity of the Spirit therein. When we 'attend' to how we celebrate, fully aware of the immense privilege of being in the presence of the God we worship, that worship experience

can become ever more meaningful. Our modes of participation consequently can and should deepen as we engage in the art of celebration.

When we attend to how we engage our bodies physically in the liturgy's prescribed postures, gestures, and movements, our kinetic expression demonstrates our awareness that we are in God's presence. When we attend to how we raise our voices in the liturgy's spoken or sung prayers, responses, acclamations, hymns and songs, our vocal expression reflects our understanding that we call or sing out directly to our God. When we attend to the proclamation of God's Word and the formal reflection on it given in the homily, our open, attentive attitude should enable our enrapturement by the God who speaks directly to us in that moment. When we attend to how we receive the most sacred Body and Blood of Christ into our own bodies, our humble appreciation of this immense gift

of spiritual nourishment should enable our appreciation of its enrichment in numerous ways.

Truly attending as we participate fully, consciously and actively in the liturgy is one way to start practising the *ars celebrandi*.

Professor Clare V. Johnson is the Director of the ACU Centre for Liturgy.

Resources for celebration

Thomas O'Loughlin. *The Rites and Wrongs of Liturgy: Why Good Liturgy Matters*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2018.

Paul Turner. *Ars Celebrandi: Celebrating and Concelebrating Mass*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2021.



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The Liturgy Nexus and Liturgy Nexus for Schools

Are you a postgraduate-qualified liturgist, currently studying liturgy or working in a liturgy-related profession, e.g., liturgical architecture, art or music? Consider joining the Liturgy Nexus, an online subscription-based closed network for conversation on liturgical issues, resource sharing and problem solving. Memberships and associate memberships are available depending on your qualification level.

Does your work in Catholic schools involve preparing liturgies? The Liturgy Nexus for Schools is where you can ask questions and develop your expertise in preparing engaging and prayerful liturgical celebrations for school communities.

To join the Liturgy Nexus or Liturgy Nexus for Schools, apply on the ACU Centre for Liturgy website. Membership is granted to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria. The membership fee is \$30 per year (not pro-rata), renewable on or before 1 March each year.

Support our work in rural and low-income parishes

You can support the crucial work of the ACU Centre for Liturgy by making a donation through the [Give Now](#) portal on our website. ACU is a not-for-profit institution, and all gifts of \$2 or more to the ACU Centre for Liturgy are tax deductible. One hundred per cent of your gift will be utilised to provide essential formative education in liturgy and sacraments in areas of need. Endowments, pledges, bequests and gifts in kind are welcome.

Engage our expertise

Improve liturgical celebration in your parish

The ACU Centre for Liturgy provides specialised training and formation workshops for parish ministers and liturgical musicians on a variety of topics. We can conduct a parish liturgy audit or a parish liturgical music audit to help you to identify specific ways to enhance your liturgical celebrations.

Help your teachers and religious education leaders to deepen their understanding of the liturgy

We tailor workshops and professional development sessions to the specific needs of schools and Catholic education offices.

Develop your skills as a presider at liturgy

Clergy can engage in our specialised professional development sessions on a range of topics from presidential singing to the art of presiding at worship, and the craft of preaching.

Bring our experts to you

Our academics and specialists are available to deliver keynote addresses, public lectures and conference workshops tailored to meet the needs of your organisation or event.

Study liturgy and sacramental theology

You can study academic courses or undertake higher degree research in liturgical studies and sacramental theology through ACU's Faculty of Theology and Philosophy. Contact us for further information.

Contact us

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Sr Prof Julia A. Upton rsm, St John's University, New York

Very Rev Peter Williams, Vicar General, Diocese of Parramatta

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