



Image Hopetoun Falls

Newsletter

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UPCOMING FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Ministry of the Word – a new online training program. ACU Centre for Liturgy is preparing an exciting new online training program for Ministers of the Word. Further details will be on our website in early 2023.

THLS502: Liturgical Music – for postgraduate students, auditors, and professional learners, taught by Professor Clare Johnson, **3 – 6 July 2023, 9am – 5pm** in person at ACU’s Melbourne Campus. More information will be available on our website.

Public lectures 2023 – The ACU Centre for Liturgy will host a range of fascinating public lectures in 2023. Details will be available on our website soon.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

In 2015 Pope Francis focused the world’s attention on humankind’s ethical responsibility to care for our common home. In *Laudato Si’* Francis echoed widely held sentiments on the climate crisis and the importance of caring for our world, placing scientific findings in alignment with effective and meaningful theological vision to produce a powerful call to action in the quest to protect and preserve our precious environment. Years prior to *Laudato Si’* Australian theologian Father Denis Edwards’ pioneering work in ecological theology placed concern for the environment at the heart of faith and called for the development of a “genuinely ecological ethos” in all believers. Writing about the Eucharist, Edwards noted that “when humans come to the Eucharist, they bring the fruits of creation, and in some way the whole creation, to the eucharistic table. In the Eucharist, creation is lifted up to God in offering and thanksgiving” (*Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 2006, 58).

In this newsletter we consider liturgy and ecology, exploring with Msgr Kevin Irwin how the texts and rites of the

liturgy call attention to creation’s gifts at the heart of our liturgical celebrations. Cathy Murrowood investigates how God’s glory expressed in the beauty of creation contrasts with our present lived ecological realities to provide a poignant opportunity for spiritual reflection on our shared responsibility to care for the world and each other. Our eucharistic celebrations both ground us in our earthly experience and elevate our spirits to the heavens. Our beautiful works of prayer in the liturgy need to be accompanied by actions that reflect a deep understanding of our reliance on and responsibility to sustain the gift that is God’s creation.



Professor Clare V. Johnson

Director, ACU Centre for Liturgy
Professor of Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy



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FROM OUR BOARD OF ADVISORS

The celebration of the liturgy brings about the integration of the whole of creation in Christ. The word ecology was coined from the Greek for 'house' which in its essence looks at the earth as a house in which all is related.

The celebration of liturgy is dependent upon the interrelationships of the whole of creation. "The Sacraments are a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life. Through our worship of

God, we are invited to embrace the world on a different plane." (LS 235).

In every celebration of the Eucharist we acclaim: "Heaven and earth are full of your glory". In the Liturgy of the Hours the praise of God sanctifies the whole day and all human activity. The Sacraments touch the totality of human life using earthly elements as does the Book of Blessings. Liturgy cannot be divorced from ecology. In liturgy all is gathered up in Christ in a continual Trinitarian perichoresis.

The study of ecology and the study of liturgy need to be related so that all those who celebrate are impelled to live in harmony in the house of creation. In and through Christ all are caught up in the mystery we celebrate.



Judy Foster SGS is a Sister of the Good Samaritan and Liturgical Consultant for the Townsville Diocese.

NEWS AND RECENT EVENTS

August 9, 16, 23, 30: Professor Clare Johnson presented a short course via Zoom in collaboration with Garratt Publishing on "**Gospels for the Liturgical Year**" with co-presenters David Hughan, Garratt, Dr Janine Luttick, ACU, Elizabeth Fort, Brisbane Catholic Education and Dr Emmanuel Nathan, ACU. The short course highlighted Garratt's Celebrating the Lectionary Years A/B/C books (adapted for Australia) for which Professor Johnson was contributing editor.

October 10: **Professor Julie Hanlon Rubio** presented "Does the Catholic Sacrament of Marriage Have a Future?" live from Berkeley, California as part of our public lecture series. Recent ACU Ph.D. graduate Daniel McGrath offered a response based on his doctoral thesis which focused on marriage.

November 2: Professor Clare Johnson presented a workshop on '**Creating Liturgical Spaces**' as part of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools' formation day for teachers: Fanning the Flames, at the Catholic Leadership Centre, Melbourne.

In 2023 ACU Centre for Liturgy will be offering a new online training program for **Ministers of the Word**. This four-week interactive program will introduce you to the spiritual and technical preparation needed for ministry and feature practical examples and exercises. The program will also examine key aspects of Ministry, Sacred Scripture and the Church's Liturgy. Led by an experienced liturgy expert, the program incorporates face to face Zoom classes and interaction with your local community. More details will be on our website in early 2023.

LITURGY SPOTLIGHT

Liturgy and ecology – four thoughts

1. Fellow creatures, not things.

In line with the thought of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*, I argue that all creatures on our common home are brothers and sisters. They are not things. To celebrate liturgy and sacraments does not mean that we shun the world and our fellow creatures. Rather it means that we raise up our fellow creatures in our common home in worship; we do not 'use them'. In raising them up, we engage the world at a deep level of reality through which we experience nothing less than the living God. After *Laudato Si*, I would argue that we should no longer employ verbs



such as use to describe how we engage fellow creatures in the liturgy: earth, air, fire, water, bread, wine. Nor should we refer to fellow creatures as 'things.' Rather we should use phrases such as **raise up**, **acknowledge**, and **reverence**, elements from **our common home** (light, water, fire, oil, bread, wine, etc.). This terminology matters a great deal as it signals a major shift away from objectification and utilitarianism to profound respect and respectful engagement which the liturgy expresses in its unique way.

2. 'Texts and rites.'

The Liturgy Constitution from Vatican II called for the reform of the 'texts and rites' of the liturgy. In retrospect we can only marvel that the end result in the Latin versions was done so swiftly. The initial English translations of these rites went comparatively smoothly. None of us needs to be reminded of the protracted debates over the second and third versions of these translations. But for me this emphasis on

texts, as legitimate as it is, has eclipsed the fact that liturgy is comprised of texts and rites. While I might judge that the reformed liturgies are insufficiently primal (e.g., whatever happened to Rogation Days?), I will also say that many actual celebrations of the liturgy do not express sufficiently what the reform envisioned with regard to ecology. To speak of 'liturgy and ecology' is actually imprecise. Rather our rhetoric should speak of liturgy as inherently ecological because it is through 'texts and rites' that we are engaged in the sacred mysteries.

3. Baptism in Water – a primal element.

In *Desiderio Desideravi* (n. 13) Pope Francis speaks of the intrinsic relationship of baptism and water. He accommodates the rite for blessing water when he speaks about the intrinsic relationship of water and baptism.

What would happen to our theology of baptism and catechesis for baptism if they were suffused with the 'texts and rites'

found in the baptismal liturgy, especially the prayer to bless water (both the text and rite). Further what would happen if we catechized about and engaged in immersion baptism? In addition, what would happen to our understanding of baptism if we raised up the life giving and yet also death dealing quality of water (drowning, flooding). What a theologically rich way to appropriate that the liturgy is always paschal. What would happen if our theology and catechesis on water baptism included the Catholic teaching that we all have 'the right to potable water' with water scarcity abounding in our world.

4. Bread and wine for the Eucharist – “the work of human hands.”

The relationship of liturgy and ecology is not only about nature. It is about those gifts which are manufactured (literally by hand). The very presentation of the gifts and preparation of the altar reflect the paschal mystery because they are the “work” of paschal processes. A farmer plants a grain of wheat is planted



(Jn 12:24 “unless a grain of wheat fall and die...”). Another tills it, harvests it, crushes it for flour and bakes. These are paschal processes of dying and rising, making bread and wine important and fitting “works of human hands” to celebrate Christ’s paschal mystery and the paschal mysteries of our lives.

What would happen if the admonition at the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper about collecting gifts for the poor were to be part and parcel of our celebration and understanding of what Eucharist is and means each and every day. This includes local food distribution, overcoming ‘food deserts’ especially in

urban areas, challenging the reality of how politics hinders food distribution as we face the statistic that one out of every seven children goes to bed hungry every night. Even as we hunger and thirst for righteousness (Mt 5) we also need to attend to those who simply hunger and thirst, sometimes unto death. The links between liturgy and ecology are undeniable and imbued with profound meaning that demands just action.



Msgr. Kevin Irwin is Dean Emeritus of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America where he has served

since 1985. He is the author of over twenty books – the latest of which will be published soon by the Paulist Press entitled *Ecology, Liturgy and the Sacraments*.

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

Ecology, liturgy, and the Australian seasons



Drought affected paddock on the Hay Plain

The seasons of Advent and the Australian summer bring into stark contrast the glory of God and the reality of our present ecological circumstances. God’s glory is expressed in the cosmos and the diversity of all creation, but how have we received these gifts?

The final weeks of the Liturgical Year and Advent look to the coming of Christ at the end of time. There is an urgent need to reflect on our lives. Are we awake and ready to meet Christ face to face?

The Word of God is replete with images of creation and emphasises the need for good stewardship. In the Advent Year C readings, Matthew reminds us of the destructive days of Noah and the flood, while Isaiah speaks of the green shoot sprouting from the stump of Jesse. The liturgy holds both these images before us and invites us to respond as people of faith.

Careful hymn choices, well-crafted intercessions and homilies that break open the Word assist the community to reflect on conversion, growth and stewardship, and our readiness to meet Christ at the end of time. There is no need to attack, accuse or deny. God has blessed us with creation’s gifts so that we can build his kingdom on earth. Advent invites us to reflect on how we care for those gifts and the impact of their destruction, especially on the poor, as we look to the coming of the kingdom.

The shoot of Jesse is reflected in Advent wreaths and Christmas trees. When using these symbols, we humbly return to God the gifts that we have been given. Substitute materials, such as plastic, cannot adequately evoke or express these living symbols.

The Australian summer instills fear in many communities, especially those ravaged by drought, floods, and fire. Others are wary of what the hotter months will bring. The Roman Missal and the Lectionary (see Volume 3) contain prayers and readings designed for our unique Australian conditions, including Masses: In Times of Bushfires, Drought, Floods and Cyclones. Other general texts reference Earthquakes, Rain, Fine Weather, and an End to Storms while optional texts for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions can encourage communities during such times. These texts are also a rich source for those who prepare prayer services in school, parish, and other settings.



Cathy Murrowood is a liturgy educator with ACU Centre for Liturgy. She is a member of the National Liturgical Council and has extensive experience

as conference presenter, diocesan coordinator, liturgy consultant, resource writer and internet publisher.

Engage our expertise

Online training program for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

ACU Centre for Liturgy's online training program for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is an innovative and comprehensive five-week program incorporating live Zoom classes, extensive online learning resources, and interaction with your parish priest and a local practicum to prepare you well for this special ministry. This rich and engaging program is run multiple times per year and is supported by the Bishops Commission for Liturgy. See our website for future dates and enrolment.

Parish training and formation workshops

ACU Centre for Liturgy provides a variety of specialised training and formation workshops for parish ministers and liturgical musicians. We can provide detailed advice and specific strategies to improve liturgical celebrations in your parish through a comprehensive liturgy or liturgical music audit.

Professional development for teachers and religious education leaders

We tailor workshops and professional development sessions to extend knowledge of liturgical celebrations and sacramental preparation for 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 designed 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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The Liturgy Nexus and Liturgy Nexus for Schools

The Liturgy Nexus and Liturgy Nexus for Schools are online subscription-based closed networks run by the ACU Centre for Liturgy and designed for conversation on liturgical issues, resource sharing and problem solving. The Liturgy Nexus links postgraduate-qualified liturgists, current students of liturgy and those working in a liturgy-related profession, e.g., liturgical architecture, art or music (membership is granted to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria). The Liturgy Nexus for Schools links those preparing liturgical celebrations in school communities. To apply for membership or associate membership (depending on qualification level) of the Liturgy Nexus or to join the Liturgy Nexus for Schools see our website. Membership costs \$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 (tax-deductable over \$2) through the [Give Now](#) portal on our website. ACU is a not-for-profit institution, and 100% of your gift will be utilised to provide formative education in liturgy and sacraments in areas of need. Endowments, bequests and gifts in kind are welcome.

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