

# How we pray together

Liturgy Notes for Sunday 19 January 2020



## Introduction to the Mass

Today we celebrate the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary time. As we begin this Ordinary time we also begin discerning, as a Parish, as an Archdiocese and as Church, the proposals for action that we believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to look at under the Theme of 'How we pray together'.

## Homily Notes / Ideas

As we consider our theme I'm reminded of Jesus' words, in Matthew's Gospel, that 'where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them' (*Matt 18:20*) and again when St. Paul tells us that 'your bodies are members making up the Body of Christ'.

God took on our flesh that we might learn to see God in ourselves and each other. So every time two or more of us gather we believe Jesus is truly present!

And if Jesus is there, with and in us, how can we not pray?

But as the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, who has taught us to pray?

From where do we take inspiration for our prayer?



The Second Vatican Council said in its document on the liturgy that ‘the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows’<sup>1</sup>.

So the source of all our prayer is the Church’s liturgy and the summit towards which all our prayer leads is meant to be our liturgy.

Every time we celebrate the Eucharist we enter into the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus and therefore we find in the struggles, sufferings and deaths in our own lives meaning and learn to trust in God’s saving Grace and promise of resurrection.

The fundamental question is how do we help people to engage more profoundly with and understand how they fully and actively participate in the celebration of the Eucharist in our Parishes?

How full refers to the whole of our being, mind, body, emotions, history and spirit.

How active refers to not so much ‘what we do’ but ‘our attitude’, are we actively praying, are we actively giving the whole of ourselves to this celebration, are we engaged actively in the mystery we say we are celebrating?

Or do we come along pre-bored?

Can we with John the Baptist say, when we see the Eucharist, Jesus’ Body and Blood, “Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world”

Can we with John the Baptist say, when we hear the scripture’s, Christ, the Word of God, “Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world”

Can we with John the Baptist say, when we look upon the Priest acting ‘in persona Christi’, in the person of Christ, “Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world”

Can we with John the Baptist say, when we look at our brothers and sisters in Church, “Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world”

For this is what we believe.

Can we then say, with John the Baptist, as we are sent forth from our Celebration of the Mass, ‘Yes I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God’.

The question then is; are the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacraments truly the font, the source from which all our prayer flows?

And is it also the Summit the high point of all our prayer?

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<sup>1</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium §10



If not, then we must ask the question why?

What are the things that get in the way of it being the summit not just of our prayer but the whole of our lives?

When it comes to prayer God has no favourites, each of us is just as important as each other, for as St. Paul reminds us today “the holy people of Jesus Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours.” (*1 Cor 1:1-3*)

Prayer is meant to be an integral part of each of our lives?

In Baptism we are called to share in Christ’s Priesthood and it is in the universal Priesthood of all that we are given the dignity, the gift of prayer, of being a child of the one, true and living God.

So how do we develop into praying communities?

So who is the God to whom you pray? What is your image of God? Is your image different from your neighbour?

Where do you find God? In silence? In other people? Only in liturgical prayer? Is God ‘up above’ you, transcendent and distant to you? Or do you experience God’s intimate presence in your life?

Because by knowing how we can pray and how it may be different for other people can we truly come together to pray.

For if the high point of prayer is Liturgy and ‘Liturgy is inherently linked to beauty’ as Pope Benedict XVI says then why are we surprised that different forms of liturgy and prayer work for different people? Because we accept readily that each person sees beauty in different things and people!

Finally in all of this it is important that we make sure we always pray with open windows, with an ear to the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears of our daily lives and those of the brothers and sisters we gather together with. As for prayer to be living, it needs the fresh air of people’s lives.



## Bidding Prayer

for weeks discerning 'How we pray together' (19 January – 16 February)

Let us pray for all in our Archdiocese of Liverpool

<Pause>

That we open our hearts, minds and souls to the rich diversity and depth of prayer that leads people to a deeper relationship with our Loving God.

Lord Jesus' teach us to pray; Lord in your mercy...

