



**A resource
to help us all live
Life in Communion**

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Introduction

Welcome to this resource which has two purposes.

The first is to be a help to the parents of children who this year will complete their preparation to receive the second and third of the Sacraments of Initiation: the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

The process of preparation for these Sacraments was entrusted by the Church to parents and godparents when they asked for baptism for these children. This year, for the parents, godparents and children alike that work of preparation steps up a gear. This resource is especially for those parents, godparents and children, and designed with them particularly in mind..

The second purpose is to be something useful for all of us in St Nicholas parish. Some of the material provided will be less directly useful to those who live alone, or whose children are now adult — but it should not be hard to adapt any of it to our various and particular situations. The themes have a direct relevance to all of us who are called, and seek, to live in the communion of the Church, communion with Christ.

As many readers will know, Archbishop Bernard has called the whole Church that is in Birmingham to a work of renewal, and a fresh embracing of our mission.

This booklet is designed to help us respond to his call. He wrote to us all setting before us the vision of the renewal that he invites us to commit ourselves to.

We have a mandate given to us by Our Lord to spread the good news and serve and grow the faith for the coming decade and beyond.

Pope Francis is encouraging us to do something new to help us achieve this.

In [his letter] 'Evangelii Gaudium' he encourages us, the Christian faithful, "to embark upon a new chapter of evangelisation marked by this joy [of the Gospel] while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come."

Pope Francis urged the entire Church "to embark on a new chapter of evangelism". The Church must understand itself as a "community of missionary disciples", who are "permanently in a state of mission". He says that "'mere administration' can no longer be enough."

I have commissioned a number of groups who are looking at how we work in our parishes and in the Archdiocese to increase the opportunities that enable us to do God's work and to fulfil the promises of our baptism.

I want us to look at how we will individually respond to God's call to be missionary disciples in the Church and in our local communities, working joyfully together to spread the Word and the work of God. In essence, how will we unfold God's plan for our diocesan church?

When I look ahead, I envisage a Catholic diocese which is:

- *Faithful to the mission entrusted to us by Jesus Christ*
- *Full of intentional disciples in vibrant communities of faith, joyful in their service of God and others*
- *Where many more lay people are engaged in collaborative ministry*

How can it happen and what will that look like given the challenges we face?

There are four areas I am asking us all to focus on: Evangelisation, Formation, Liturgy and Worship and Social Outreach.

In our work on the four themes it is important that young people and families are a particular area of focus for all that we do. The universal call to holiness finds its first expression within families and its first recruits among young people. Catholic education and our diocesan youth services play an important role in serving families and young people. The links between the family, the parish and the school are vital to ensure that the faith is handed on.

I invite you to join me in looking with fresh eyes at our mission. We must take this opportunity to do all we can to make sure the Gospel is seen and heard through the example of our daily Christian lives.

This resource invites us to make the most of the opportunity to engage in a fresh way with the significance to us of our community, of the word of God, of the ministry of the Sacraments and of the Eucharist in particular.

The hope is that reminded of the value and virtue of these things we will each of us want to make fuller use of them for ourselves, and be ready to take up the call to be ministers for Christ in building up the Church of God in Birmingham and helping to further her mission to our wider society.

And to help parents and godparents help establish their children still more firmly in the life of Christian discipleship that Baptism signifies and makes possible for us.

The privileged work of giving witness to Gospel Life

At the end of the Rite of Baptism for Children the blessings of parents speaks of the importance of their vocation

*God is the giver of all life, human and divine.
May he bless these parents who will be the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith.
May they also be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do....*

May they give good example so that their children will grow to be mature Christians in all the fullness of Jesus Christ...

What a privilege parents have: to be the ones who first tell their children the story of God's love; of the wonders of the birth of Jesus; and of his Passion and Resurrection; of the help offered us in the Sacraments; and to be the ones — above all — who help their children to learn to benefit from that help, and how to live from the Sacraments.

Parents have such a key role in helping children to learn to live our faith. It is they especially who help establish a sense for the rhythms of the Church Year, which sets before us the life and mission of Jesus. And they who help to show what it means to be ready to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who helps us imitate Jesus Christ in the way we live.

Parents sometimes wonder where to start! This booklet offers some suggestions. But it is not all down to parents. Hard-pressed parents might like to invite the children's god-parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends and fellow-parishioners to join in — or even take the lead in some of what is suggested in this booklet.

Others have a role too! But habits learnt at primary school can easily be discarded when a child moves to secondary school; and good practices engaged with at secondary school can be left behind when progressing to further education and the world of work.

The habits and practices and values of a family are not so easily discarded. They will not always be welcome to a child, but if they are lived in the family they are not so easily escaped either.

Sometimes parents 'do faith' for the sake of the children — to get them into a Catholic school; to ensure they 'make' their Communion or 'get' Confirmed. But this can be pointless and even harmful if a child's experience of the 'things of faith' are not integrated into life in faith, life in Jesus Christ.

Role of Parents, OK. What about everyone else?

With the gift of baptism comes the call and responsibility of bearing witness to the Gospel, of continuing the work of Christ to the world.

This work is entrusted to us all. Today 'ordinary' Catholic Christian folk are often able to reach places and people in our wider society that the institutions and 'officials' of the Church cannot reach.

Famously Pope St Paul VI said "Contemporary man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, or if he listens to teachers, he does so because they are witnesses." Frightened of falling short?

None of us are perfect, and all of us will do things with mixed motives. But the Church's call, expressed again in the Diocesan Vision, is for us to look again at how we presently are, and how we might need to raise our game as individuals, as parish, and Diocese.

Such a call can sometimes feel threatening and too challenging. However whatever we do will surely be responded to generously by the Lord. Often we will be presently surprised at how much we find ourselves valuing the results of what we do and try to do.

This booklet is offered to help us all respond to the call of Christ — not to ask anyone to do the impossible.

It is designed most especially to help us to **TALK** about faith and the things of faith.

It is in conversation and dialogue that helps us most fruitfully engage with faith and memory and meaning. It is when we talk with each other and the Lord that we find ourselves most easily and naturally making and seeking the connections that build up Communion.

Such conversation and dialogue are at the very heart of the Communion of the Church

- God speaks to draw us into Communion with himself and each other.
- God's Word takes flesh as Jesus to speak with us through his life and actions, his words and his deeds.
- We speak God in prayer
- We speak with each other to share and develop our Communion with each other and with God.
- We are missioned to speak with others, taking up our responsibility to let the Gospel be heard throughout the world

Communion is God's gift to us, and Communion is what we are called to live and to share: called to take responsibility for that together we might live and share.

Communion of the Church

Communion in Eucharist

Holy Communion

The words 'Holy Communion' are generally used to refer to the Eucharistic food and drink. That food and drink which truly is Christ with us. They are also a good description of what the Church is, and what the Church and all her members are called to be.

The Body of Christ

We often use the phrase 'the Body of Christ' to refer to the Bread of the Eucharist. 'The Body of Christ', too, is also a description of what the Church is, and what the Church is called to be.

Symbolic realities, symbolic actions

As this usage suggests, the realities of Church and Eucharist are closely bound together. It is sometimes said that 'the Eucharist makes the Church, and the Church makes the Eucharist'.

Sometimes the words and phrases 'Holy Communion', 'Body of Christ', 'Church' and 'Eucharist' are considered simply as 'things'. But it is better to think of these realities not as 'things' but 'actions' – ways of being – in which Christ makes himself present and active us. Christ makes himself present to us, and we have the opportunity of making ourselves present as Christ as we respond to him in faithful living and prayer.

It is in the celebration of the Mass that the two realities – Holy Communion and the Body of Christ – become visible.

The Body of Christ becomes visible in the coming together of the faithful. You might say we are more or less 'anonymous' as we go about much of our daily lives. But when we assemble in church we identify ourselves as his disciples: members of his Body by Baptism!

- Jesus' sacrifice, his self-gift of himself to the Father at Calvary, is re-presented in the bread and wine that truly becomes his Body and Blood in the Church's great prayer of Thanksgiving (Eucharist).

We are members of his Body; we are fed from his Body and Blood that Christ can live in us and we might have life in him.

That 'we' might have life in him. Jesus knows and speaks to each human heart individually, but he does not call us to individual and private relationship with him. He calls us to himself together — to be in communion with him and in each other: to be his Holy Church, the Body of Christ.

Jesus present to us and for us

Jesus' personal presence for us in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood is one of the greatest treasures of the Church. How could it be otherwise?

But Jesus is not only present for us in the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist. The Church teaches at Mass Jesus is truly and personally present for us in several other ways also. Several equally real but distinctive ways for Jesus to be present to us.

- He is present to the community that comes together in prayer and song, and indeed, he is present, **as** the community of the baptised who are the Body of Christ
- He is present in the Scriptures 'It is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church.'
- He is present in the ministry of the priest, 'the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross.'
- He is present in the sacramental food and drink

Present to us in each of these ways, Jesus seeks to use them to engage with us and draw us to the fullness of life.

Back to this booklet and its purpose

This booklet offers a brief overview of each of these ways in which Jesus is present to us. It can reinforce our awareness of the richness of the Mass and the many ways in which the Mass offers us help to live in Christ.

- **This booklet and families...**

It offers a brief overview of each form of presence, and it proposes a variety of some simple activities that families, especially, can do together, to help prepare their child for a deeper participation in the life of Christ and in the life and mission of the Church.

For each 'way' there is an activity which children are invited to complete and submit for display in the church. (Completed activities should be handed to Fr Allen, on the Sunday *AFTER* the theme is explored at Mass, either before or after the Mass. These dates are published on the programmes' timetable.)

Each month there will be two prizes. One each for the best submission from a child preparing to receive Holy Communion and the other for the best submission from a child preparing to receive Confirmation.

Families are — of course — also free to explore any of these 'ways' and do the exercises at their own pace. Sometimes they

will also find it more suited to their circumstances to do them in a different order to that which is presented here.

- **This booklet and the parish...**

The booklet is principally aimed at families preparing children for first Sacraments. But it is hoped that its contents the booklet will also be of interest to all parishioners.

There are be all sorts of ways in which it can be put to use by anyone of us.

During the coming year and beginning in September, at Sunday Mass each month we will focus on one of the ways in which Jesus is really present to us - and to which presence we are invited to respond. This is part of the parish sacramental programmes for the children being helped prepare to receive Holy Communion and Confirmation — but it can serve as a refresher for us all.

In addition these various themes are also going to be explored in a series of parish meetings over these coming months

These are to help us as parish most explicitly discuss the implication of these themes for parish life. They will also help us continue to respond to the Vision for the Archdiocese set out by Archbishop Bernard.

All parishioners are warmly invited to take part in these meetings. What is discussed will have implications for all of us, and each of us will have something to contribute to our reflections and decision making. Taking part, marking your contribution is one way in which our Communion can be built up and made fruitful.

Details of these meetings will be given in the parish newsletter.

Communion with the Church: What is our Church community?

Christ is present to the community that comes together in prayer and song, and, indeed, present as the community of the baptised who are the Body of Christ.

When we pray at Mass we pray not only as ourselves, but most importantly we pray 'in', 'with' and 'as' Christ. Our prayer is joined with his prayer, and we give thanks and make offering of ourselves to the Father, with him.

The community is Christ...

Who prays the Mass? First and foremost it is Christ. We pray in and with him, because of our baptismal identity with him. We share in his priesthood, and we participate in his prayer.

Others can attend Mass, of course, but only the baptised can fully participate. This is not because we are so wonderful. Indeed sometimes we are far from wonderful - but because of the grace given us in baptism that makes us members of his Body.

In the early centuries of the Church, because of this profound effect of baptism, those who were not baptised were required to leave the celebration of Mass after the readings and the homily – and before the Prayer of the Faithful. Not being members of the Body of Christ, they lacked the capacity to join themselves with the prayer of Christ, the prayer of the Church that is the Eucharistic Prayer. And that prayer was for participants not spectators.

We do not maintain that discipline today - although in many places enquirers or catchumens (adults preparing for baptism) continue to be dismissed after the homily (for continued reflection on the readings in preparation for their being ready to receive Baptism).

The Prayer of the Faithful which follows is so-called precisely because it is the prayer of the Faithful, i.e. the baptised. It is not 'any old prayer' but might be seen as the first instance in the Mass of the faithful praying in, with and as Christ. The Prayer of the Faithful has a dignity and sacramental depth that is often overlooked. Christ prays and the Church prays in him.

And Christ is for the world...

He came that we might have life and have it to the full. We surely know that. It is why we confess him our Lord and Master.

But he comes not just for us. He comes for the whole world. And as he came, so the community that is the Body of Christ is called to be as Christ for the world.

St Theresa of Avilla put it this way
*Christ has no body now on earth but yours,
no hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes with which
he looks compassionately on this world.
Yours are the feet with which
he walks to do good.
Yours are the hands,
with which he blesses all the world.*

We will come back later to the mission of Christ, and our part in that. For now let's stay with our being at one with Jesus, through our baptism, our being 'in Jesus'.

Living 'in' Christ

The language of living 'in' Christ comes to us from St Paul. In his letters he uses it to express both the intensity of Jesus' relationship with us (as individuals and as the community of the Church), and the intimacy that we (as individuals and as the community of the Church) are called to in our relationship with him.

- **The Church on earth**

The community of the Church on earth extends to the four corners of the earth, formed from all the baptised.

As Catholics we are fully in communion with all Christians who are fully in communion with the Pope – Roman Catholics, Catholics of the Eastern Catholic churches and so on.

We are also closely united through baptism with Christians of all denominations – Orthodox, Anglican, Methodist and so on. Our unity in Christ is more profoundly based than any 'separation' brought about by history, or how we understand or practice aspects of faith and by our different histories and cultures.

- **The Church in all time**

The community of the Church extends through history. It extends back to the time of Jesus and then further back still through the history of the Jewish people, And it extends forward already joined with the community of love that is one with God for all eternity.

The community of the Church includes all the faithful - we might say the living and the dead. But for the Christian 'death' is relative. The 'dead' live still in Christ.

When the Church gathers for prayer it is not only us who we can see, we gather with the Church in heaven with the faithful departed, with saints and angels. The Church extends across time and beyond this visible world.

Exploring the community of the Church in Birmingham

There are a number of ways in which you can explore enjoy, and share with your children, how you and your family relate to the community of the Church

The Church at St Nicholas, Boldmere

What do you know about the history of our parish community and the church we worship in? You can find an outline of our history at www.stnicholasboldmere.co.uk/parish-history.html

How long has your own family history been part of our history? What stories of the past can you remember and share - or your parents and grandparents?

Do you remember who helped you learn about our faith? Maybe priests or catechists, teachers, leaders of parish groups etc.? Or, of course, members of your own family and friends – parents and grandparents, god-parents and sponsors. What do you remember of those who helped you learn? And what did you learn for which you are most grateful.

The local Church

Have you or your family had connections with other parishes in our deanery or Archdiocese? Where were they baptised? Where did they go to celebrate Mass? Where were they confirmed or married? Where were they buried? What stories can you uncover and share?

Which of the bishops of the Archdiocese have you met or known? Who confirmed you or your parents? If you don't know – see if you can find out.

You can find out about the present Archbishop and his auxiliary bishops at www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/our-bishops

And if your family history has connections outside of Birmingham what were they? Down through the centuries, through immigration, the Church in Boldmere and in Birmingham has received fellow Christians from all over the world. What might we learn from the history of the Church elsewhere?

The history of the Church in Birmingham

The Church in Birmingham has a rich history – going back at least to St Chad who was the first Bishop of this area, and around whose shrine Lichfield Cathedral was built.

Other local saints from before the Reformation include St Wulstan, and Birinus and Kenelm. And during the tragic times of the English Reformation there were many Catholics in these counties who kept the

faith during the times of persecution, including many who were martyred because they were Catholic - for example St Nicholas Owen, St John Wall and , .

In the years since particularly notable have been Blessed Dominic Barberi and St John Henry Newman, who lived for a time at Maryvale and served as priest in Birmingham.

- Do you remember the visit of Pope Benedict to Birmingham and Oscott when Cardinal Newman was beatified? Share your memories with your family — or read about it at <https://thepapalvisit.org.uk/replay-the-visit/>
- Make a visit to Lichfield Cathedral or to St Chad's, the current Catholic Cathedral of Birmingham. (Helpful parish guides, to make sure you don't miss out some important things, are available at www.stnicholasboldmere.co.uk/saint-chads-and-lichfield-cathedrals.html
- Visit one of the historic houses that played such an important role during the time of persecution
 - Harvington Hall: www.harvingtonhall.co.uk/
 - Moseley Old Hall: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/shropshire-staffordshire/moseley-old-hall
 - Boscobel House: www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/boscobel-house-and-the-royal-

Projects for children preparing for Confirmation or to receive Holy Communion

Either

- Write a short account of what you have learnt about your history, our history.

Or

- prepare an illustrated map of places associated with the Christian lives of your family.

Communion through the Scriptures

For Christian the Word of God is Jesus Christ.

One of the places where we can have personal encounter with the living Word is in the words of Scripture.

Most especially the Word of God speaks us with through those words when the Scriptures are proclaimed. The words themselves are not God, no more than what is visible of God's faithful people gathered in worship, or what is visible of the consecrated Bread and Wine are God. But God speaks to us through them.

More than that, we believe that the words themselves are inspired. Their authors wrote what they wrote – histories, letters, poems, stories – under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They wrote as human authors – and with the regular limitations of human authors. But what they wrote to describe God's relationship with humankind is now used by God for God's purposes – to draw us into fresh relationship with him, to write salvation history now with our lives.

Recently Pope Francis wrote the following Preface to an edition of Scripture for Young People:

My dear young friends:

If you could see my Bible, you would not be particularly impressed. What—that's the Pope's Bible? Such an old, worn-out book!

You could buy me a new one for \$1,000, but I would not want it. I love my old Bible, which has accompanied me half my life. It has been with me in my times of joy and times of tears. It is my most precious treasure. I live out of it, and I wouldn't give anything in the world for it.

I really like this new Youth Bible. It's so colourful, so rich in testimonies: testimonies of the saints, testimonies of young people. It is so inviting that when you start to read at the beginning, you can't stop until the last page. And then ...? And then it disappears on a shelf, collecting dust. Your children find it one day and bring it to the flea market. It must not come to that.

I'll tell you something: There are more persecuted Christians in the world today than in the early days of the Church. And why are they persecuted? They are persecuted because they wear a cross and bear witness to Jesus. They are convicted because they own a Bible. The Bible is therefore a highly dangerous book—so dangerous that you are treated in some countries as if you were hiding hand grenades in your closet. It was a

non-Christian, Mahatma Gandhi, who once said: "You Christians look after a document containing enough dynamite to blow all civilization to pieces, turn the world upside down, and bring peace to a battle-torn planet. But you treat it as though it is nothing more than a piece of literature."

So what do you have in your hands? A piece of literature? Some nice old stories? Then you would have to say to the many Christians who go to prison or are tortured because they own a Bible: "How foolish you are; it's just a piece of literature!" No. By the word of God has Light come into the world, and it will never go out. In Evangelii Gaudium (175) I said, "We do not blindly seek God, or wait for him to speak to us first, for 'God has already spoken, and there is nothing further that we need to know, which has not been revealed to us.' Let us receive the sublime treasure of the revealed word."

So you have something divine in your hands: a book like fire! A book through which God speaks. So notice: The Bible is not meant to be placed on a shelf, but to be in your hands, to read often—every day, both on your own and together with others. You do sports together or go shopping together. Why not read the Bible together as well—two, three, or four of you? In nature, in the woods, on the beach, at night in the glow of a few candles ... you will have a great experience! Or are you afraid of making a fool of yourself in front of others?

Read with attention! Do not stay on the surface as if reading a comic book! Never just skim the Word of God! Ask yourself: "What does this say to my heart? Does God speak through these words to me? Has he touched me in the depths of my longing? What should I do?" Only in this way can the force of the Word of God unfold. Only in this way can it change our lives, making them great and beautiful.

Pope Francis underlines the importance of reading the Bible.

Do you have a Bible at home to read? If not why not set about buying one and beginning to read?

The translation of the Bible presently used at Mass is the Jerusalem Bible (1966 version, NOT the more recent revisions). Shortly the translation for use at Mass will be changed to the English Standard Version - if buying this be sure to be the Catholic edition, so it includes the books in Catholic and Orthodox Bibles but omitted in most Protestant Bibles.

I want to tell you how I read my old Bible. Often I read a little and then put it away and contemplate the Lord. Not that I see the Lord, but he looks at me. He's there. I let myself look at him. And I feel—this is not sentimentality—I feel deeply the things that the Lord tells me. Sometimes he does not speak. I then feel nothing, only emptiness, emptiness, emptiness.... But I remain patiently, and so I wait, reading and praying. I pray sitting, because it hurts me to kneel. Sometimes I even fall asleep while praying. But it does not matter. I'm like a son with the father, and that is what's important. Would you like to make me happy? Read the Bible!

- What encourages you in what Pope Francis says?
- What challenges you?
- What is there in his words to share with your child(ren)?

What is the Bible?

It is a library of books. Maybe we often think of it as though it were two libraries. The first, the ancient Jewish Library that we generally call the Old Testament. The second, the collection of Christian writings that the Church combined with the more ancient writings, that we call the New Testament.

The library that is the Bible contains all sorts of different sorts of writings. It contains

- works of fiction such as the books of Job and Jonah;
- mythical and legendary stories such as the stories of Creation and the Flood in Genesis.
- letters – many of them written by St Paul.
- poems and songs – such as the Psalms, including the famous Psalm 23 ‘The Lord is my shepherd...’
- prophecies such as the Book of Isaiah that offers challenge and encouragement to Israel and to us.
- And the Gospels that tells us of the saving life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

All of these different sorts of writing are inspired by God so that in their different ways, they invite us to live as faithful children of the Father. God speaks through the Scriptures, calling us to know, trust in and receive his goodness, love and care.

The Scriptures invite us to learn from our history how to live our relationship with God today, how to receive and enter into the fullness of communion with God in Jesus Christ.

Good practice

Wednesday Word is a good resource to help prepare for hearing the Scriptures at Sunday Mass.

Good practice is to ensure that at Mass children encounter things that they are already familiar with.

There are clearly practical difficulties in doing this with songs and homily, etc. But with the readings especially we can help. When we listen to the scriptures we are especially invited to listen to what Jesus is saying to us in and through the reading - not only the reading itself.. The meaning of the word at Mass is not so much what it says in itself - the information it contains, but what it says to us.

Chatting about the Sunday readings as a family is a great way of helping us all to focus on this - and particularly helpful for children to learn to get the most out of our Sunday readings now and in the future.

Sharing your appreciation of Scripture

Choose a favourite story from the Bible – and tell the story to your family in your own words. Be sure to say what you learn about God from the story.

Perhaps particularly with older children, they may find it helpful for parents/sponsors etc. to share with them how the scriptures have been helpful to them at different times. May a reading chosen for a wedding, or a funeral, maybe a reading from Sunday Mass that just ‘appeared’ at just the right time.

Projects for children preparing for Confirmation or to receive Holy Communion

Either

- Design a cover for a favourite book (or story) from the bible

Or

- Prepare a poster featuring a favourite quotation from the Scriptures.

The ministry of the priest and the Sacraments

The Church teaches that, by virtue of his ordination, the priest serves *in persona Christi*, in the person of Christ. Jesus is present for us by virtue of the priest's ordination.

Jesus is still Jesus, and the priest is still himself. But in the same way that all of the visible and measurable features of bread and wine remain after the bread and wine become Jesus in the Eucharist, so with the priest in his ministry.

The priest is still himself in all his visible aspects. But when he exercises the ministry entrusted to him he ministers in Christ's name. It is truly Christ who ministers in the priest, as him.

This is particularly the case when the priest presides at celebrations of the Sacraments - the priest ministers to us, and through him, as him Jesus ministers to us

Jesus works through the Sacraments

In each of the Sacraments Jesus reaches out to us, and also takes up what we bring in praise and thanksgiving to God and gifts it back to us, infinitely enriched by his grace.

He does all this to help us live life faithfully and well. What is given us is for our own good, and also to help us in what as Christians we are called to do and be for the world.

Confirmation

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ...And they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ... We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

... Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ...in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, ... before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'"

cf Acts 2

Through the Sacrament of Confirmation — what gifts do we receive from the living God and what does the Sacrament call us to?

Baptism

Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

Through the Sacrament of Baptism — what gifts do we receive from the living God and what does the Sacrament call us to?

What about Eucharist?

Don't worry. It's not been missed out.

It gets its own special section in two pages time!

Reconciliation

On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Luke 5.1-11

Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation — what gifts do we receive from the living God and what does the Sacrament call us to?

Matrimony

Jesus said to his disciples "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 7:21, 24-25

Through the Sacrament of Matrimony — what gifts do we receive from the living God and what does the Sacrament call us to?

Some tricky questions?

Some Sacraments do not have to be ministered by a priest. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate for the Sacrament to be ministered by a deacon or a lay woman or lay man. Which might these be?

1.

2.

And one of these, under the current law of the Church may not be ministered by a priest. Which might this be?

1.

Anointing of the Sick

And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

Mark .21-31

Through the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick — what gifts do we receive from the living God and what does the Sacrament call us to?

Ordination

And through the ministry of the Bishop (the high priest of the local Church) at ordination?

Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

John 21:15-19

Through the Sacrament of Ordination — what gifts do we receive from the living God and what does the Sacrament call us to?

Project for children preparing for Confirmation or to receive Holy Communion

Design an A4-sized poster dedicated to a sacrament of your choice - any one of the seven. Your poster should help people understand what Jesus does by the sacrament - and what the sacrament helps us to do/be in our turn.

The Eucharist

The disciples and Jesus (who as yet they had not recognised) drew near to the village to which they were going.

He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Luke 24:28-35

Through the Sacrament of the Eucharist— what gifts do we receive from the living God and what does the Sacrament call us to?

What are we talking about, when we talk of Eucharist?

The word 'Eucharist' describes the whole action of the sacramental celebration that is the Mass. It includes - our gathering, our prayer and song, the ministering of word and Sacrament, and our being sent out to continue the mission of the Church entrusted to us.

As noted on page 5, all of the Sacraments of the Church are principally actions, symbolic actions, in which Christ acts and by which he is personally present to us.

This page opens with the story of disciples on the first Easter day, journeying to Emmaus and meeting with the Lord, present to them, but also hidden from their sight.

It is a story that offers many points of connection with what happens when we celebrate Mass - communion in dialogue and presence, word and Sacrament: Eucharist.

We also use the word 'Eucharist' to refer specifically to the Eucharistic food and drink itself. And it is especially that Eucharistic food that is focussed on in these next pages.

Sacrifice and Communion

At Mass bread and wine is taken and used so that Christ might give himself to us as food and drink.

- The food and drink becomes Jesus present to us.
- Bread broken and Wine poured out become Jesus giving himself as Sacrifice to the Father, in loving service of God and of humankind.

This is no new sacrifice. It is the once and for all sacrifice of Calvary again made present in sacramental action. In the Mystery of the Eucharist we are present to Calvary.

Symbols of Jesus, symbols of us.

But before the bread and wine are transformed through the prayer of the Mass and become Jesus, they first symbolise us - for, although it is rare that we ourselves will have 'made' them, they are truly work of human hands.

Work of human hands

We do not bring wheat grain and grapes to the altar, but bread and wine. Bread made from wheat by human beings. Wine made from grapes by human being.

The wheat and grapes are gift of God, fruit of the harvest. (Though farmers might say they have something to do with it too!) The bread and the wine are those gifts when they have been worked on by human hands.

An this work of human hands, which will become Jesus for us, is first symbolic of us and the work we do.

At the Offertory the priest says

*Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the bread we offer you:
fruit of the earth and work of human hands,
it will become for us the bread of life.*

Time was when the faithful did themselves make the bread and wine used at Mass, rather than having it bought from some religious supplier. People brought to church loaves of bread and flasks of wine. Bread was commonly baked in a community oven, and was

stamped so you could be sure to get your own bread back when it was baked - and the flasks of wine would bear your mark also.

Some would be used at Mass, and what remained would be distributed to those in need. So there was every possibility that at Mass the bread consecrated and in which Jesus gave himself to you, was the very bread you had made and brought to Mass.

The sense of connection between ourselves and the Lord through the Eucharist could hardly be stronger. We offer fruit of our lives to God in bread and wine: Jesus takes that bread and wine and transforms it into himself, gifted to God, gifted to us.

Made and re-made

St Augustine had further thoughts about how the bread relates to us and us to the bread. He offered a long reflection on many points of comparison between the making of bread and the making of us as Christians.

Augustine wrote at a time when it was less common for people to be baptised as infants. It was more common for people to be baptised as adults. Augustine himself was born to a Christian mother, but his conversion to Christ came when he was in his 30s. He made a clear and definite decision to change his way of life and to live faithfully as a Christian, and to seek Baptism.

So, in those days conversion preceded Baptism. Today, when most children born to Catholic Christian families are baptised as infants, personal conversion needs to come later! At their children's Baptism parents and godparents promise to help their children grow into Christian faith. No easy task!

But reflecting on what was normal back in the late 4th / early 5th C Augustine reflected on how Christians are made and how bread is made.

St Augustine wrote:

*Having suffered the passion,
the Lord gave us
his Body and Blood in the Sacrament,
so that we should become these things.*

*In fact we are his body
and through his mercy we are what we receive.*

*Just think what the element of bread was when
it was still in the field:
the earth germinated the seed
and rain nourished it;
then it was taken to the threshing floor,
sifted and placed in the granary.
Later it was ground and baked
and bread was made of it.*

*Think now of yourselves:
you didn't exist and you were created;
you were placed on the Lord's threshing floor
and threshed by the 'oxen',
that is by those who told you the good news.
As catechumens you were stored in the granary;
when you were given your names at baptism
you began to be 'ground' by fastings and exorcisms;
then finally, you came to the water, you were
kneaded and you became one.
The fire of the Holy Spirit came upon you
and you were baked
and became the bread of the Lord.
This is what you received.*

*As you see, the bread is one, so you too are one,
loving one another, keeping the same faith,
the same hope and undivided charity.*

Being made Christian

St Augustine describes quite some process of change. What might we usefully take from what he says? Perhaps, first of all, we might take encouragement to recognise that Christians are made, not born.

Being baptised as infants does not guarantee that we will be or become Christians. At Baptism we will certainly have received all the gifts God offers us through the Sacrament. In the same way we will have received gifts of grace when we celebrated the other Sacraments of Imitation – namely Confirmation and Eucharist. God's generosity is not in question.

However we ourselves need to learn to recognise and to make use of those gifts, and to move into a personal relationship with Christ – accepting his Lordship, and offering ourselves in his service.

Of course we will do that in different ways. Being a disciple at 7 or 8, is not the same as being a disciple at 11 or 12, or 30 or 40. But at each age we are invited to be personal relationship with Jesus, to seek his help so we might live our lives as he calls us to.

The Church speaks of the universal call to holiness. We are called to be holy, called to be saints. However old, however young.

Project for children preparing for Confirmation or to receive Holy Communion

You are invited to make a batch of cakes using a recipe of your choice (some simple recipes are given on the next page. And then bring the cakes to the cake sale being held after Mass on January 20 and 21.

Projects for children preparing for Confirmation or Holy Communion

Have a go at baking bread – or cakes – for our charity stall raising money. Use a recipe from below or any other you choose. Sale date is given on Preparation rota.

Easy to make Bread

Ingredients

- 500g strong white flour, plus extra for dusting
- 2 tsp salt
- 7g sachet fast-action yeast
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 300ml water

Method

1. Mix 500g strong white flour, 2 tsp salt and a 7g sachet of fast-action yeast in a large bowl.
2. Make a well in the centre, then add 3 tbsp olive oil and 300ml water, and mix well. If the dough seems a little stiff, add another 1—2 tbsp water and mix well.
3. Tip onto a lightly floured work surface and knead for around 10 mins.
4. Once the dough is satin-smooth, place it in a lightly oiled bowl and cover with cling film. Leave to rise for 1 hour until doubled in size or place in the fridge overnight.
5. Line a baking tray with baking parchment. Knock back the dough (punch the air out and pull the dough in on itself) then gently mould the dough into a ball.
6. Place it on the baking parchment to prove for a further hour until doubled in size.
7. Heat oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas 7.
8. Dust the loaf with some extra flour and cut a cross about 6cm long into the top of the loaf with a sharp knife.
9. Bake for 25-30 mins until golden brown and the loaf sounds hollow when tapped underneath. Cool on a wire rack.

*Recipe taken from
www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/easy-white-bread*

Carrot cake cupcakes

Ingredients

- 175g light muscovado sugar
- 100g wholemeal self-raising flour
- 100g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2 tsp mixed spice
- 1 orange, zested
- 2 eggs
- 150ml sunflower oil
- 200g carrots, grated
- orange coloured sprinkles, to decorate

For the icing

- 100g butter, softened
- 300g soft cheese
- 100g icing sugar, sifted
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Method

1. Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and line a 12-hole muffin tin with cases.
2. In a large mixing bowl, mix the sugar, flours, bicarbonate of soda, mixed spice and orange zest.
3. Whisk together the eggs and oil, then stir into the dry ingredients with the grated carrot.
4. Divide the mixture between cases and bake for 20-22 mins until a skewer poked in comes out clean.
5. Cool on a wire rack before icing.

For the icing,

1. Beat the butter until really soft, then beat in the soft cheese, icing sugar and vanilla.
2. Use a palette or cutlery knife to swirl the icing on top of the cakes, then decorate with the sprinkles.

*Recipe taken from
www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/carrot-cream-cheese-cupcakes*

Easy to make Banana cake

Ingredients

- 3 very ripe medium bananas (around 225g peeled weight)
- 3 large free-range eggs
- 100g soft light brown sugar
- 150ml sunflower/vegetable oil
- 275g white self-raising flour
- 1 tsp ground mixed spice
- 1 tsp baking powder

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/160C Fan/Gas 4 and grease and line a 900g/2lb loaf tin with baking parchment or use a loaf tin liner.
2. Peel the bananas and mash with a fork. Tip into a large mixing bowl and add the eggs, sugar and oil. Use a fork or whisk to combine.
3. Add the flour, spice and baking powder and whisk together until thoroughly combined. Pour into the prepared tin. Bake for 40 minutes, or until the cake is well risen and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.
4. Cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack. Serve warm or cold in slices. Spread with butter if you like.

*Recipe taken from
www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/easiest_ever_banana_cake_42108*

Called to be Holy

When he visited England in 2010, Pope Benedict spoke to all the students of all the Catholic schools of England, Wales and Scotland at the same time. Perhaps you remember. He urged the students to be holy...

There is something I very much want to say to you. I hope that among those of you listening to me today there are some of the future saints of the twenty-first century. What God wants most of all for each one of you is that you should become holy. He loves you much more than you could ever begin to imagine, and he wants the very best for you. And by far the best thing for you is to grow in holiness.

Perhaps some of you have never thought about this before. Perhaps some of you think being a saint is not for you. Let me explain what I mean. When we are young, we can usually think of people that we look up to, people we admire, people we want to be like. It could be someone we meet in our daily lives that we hold in great esteem. Or it could be someone famous. We live in a celebrity culture, and young people are often encouraged to model themselves on figures from the world of sport or entertainment. My question for you is this: what are the qualities you see in others that you would most like to have yourselves? What kind of person would you really like to be?

When I invite you to become saints, I am asking you not to be content with second best. I am asking you not to pursue one limited goal and ignore all the others. Having money makes it possible to be generous and to do good in the world, but on its own, it is not enough to make us happy. Being highly skilled in some activity or profession is good, but it will not satisfy us unless we aim for something greater still. It might make us famous, but it will not make us happy. Happiness is something we all want, but one of the great tragedies in this world is that so many people never find it, because they look for it in the wrong places. The key to it is very simple – true happiness is to be found in God. We need to have the courage to place our deepest hopes in God alone, not in money, in a career, in worldly success, or in our relationships with others, but in God. Only he can satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts.

Not only does God love us with a depth and an intensity that we can scarcely begin to comprehend, but he invites us to respond to that love. You all know what it is like when you meet someone interesting and attractive, and you want to be

that person's friend. You always hope they will find you interesting and attractive, and want to be your friend. God wants your friendship. And once you enter into friendship with God, everything in your life begins to change. As you come to know him better, you find you want to reflect something of his infinite goodness in your own life. You are attracted to the practice of virtue. You begin to see greed and selfishness and all the other sins for what they really are, destructive and dangerous tendencies that cause deep suffering and do great damage, and you want to avoid falling into that trap yourselves. You begin to feel compassion for people in difficulties and you are eager to do something to help them. You want to come to the aid of the poor and the hungry, you want to comfort the sorrowful, you want to be kind and generous. And once these things begin to matter to you, you are well on the way to becoming saints.

So where do you feel you are on that journey?

And in communion...

And what about other members of your family? Or friends?

What might you do to help them?

What might be help for you yourself?

Project for children preparing to receive Holy Communion or to receive Confirmation

- Find out from family and friends what saints name they chose as their patron saint - and what they most admire about that saint.
- Do you have a favourite saint who you pray to, and who you ask to pray for you?
- Prepare a poster with your an image of the saint of your choice and describe one way in which they lived the Gospel life, lived the life of love.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is vitally important for us as Christians, and for all that we do as Church.

The Spirit is gifted to the Church in a special way by Jesus, who himself received the Holy Spirit in a particular way at his Baptism. Jesus, anointed in the Spirit, is revealed as the Christ, the Anointed One.

At Baptism we share in that anointing and the ministry that it prepares us for.

*The God of power
and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
has freed you from sin
and brought you to new life
through water and the Holy Spirit.*

*He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation,
so that united with his people,
you may remain for ever a member of Christ
who is Priest, Prophet and King.*

We hear from Scripture also

- how Jesus gifts the Holy Spirit to the disciples on the day of Resurrection,
- and how at Pentecost the Spirit is poured out on the gathered Church in a new way

We ourselves first receive the Spirit in our Baptism. And then at Confirmation the Spirit is given to us in a new way.

*Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who brought these your servants to new birth
by water and the Holy Spirit,
freeing them from sin:
send upon them, O Lord,
the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;
give them the spirit of wisdom and understand-
ing, the spirit of counsel and fortitude,
the spirit of knowledge and piety;
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.
Through Christ our Lord.*

But we continue to need the help of the Spirit after Confirmation! So when the Eucharistic Prayer is prayed we invoke the Holy Spirit – twice!

- The first invocation is calling on the Spirit to make holy the bread and wine brought to the altar - to be agent in its change to become Christ for us in Holy Communion
- The second invocation is ask the Holy Spirit to make us holy and one - a Holy Communion with Christ.

In Eucharistic Prayer IV, for example, the priest prays.:

*Therefore, O Lord, we pray:
may this same Holy Spirit
graciously sanctify these offerings,
that they may become
the Body and ✠ Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And then:

*Look, O Lord, upon the Sacrifice
which you yourself
have provided for your Church,
and grant in your loving kindness
to all who partake of this one Bread
and one Chalice
that, gathered into one body by the Holy Spirit,
they may truly become a living sacrifice in Christ
to the praise of your glory.*

Another example, taken from the first form of the Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs and Occasions, has the priest pray first:

*Therefore, Father most merciful,
we ask that you send forth your Holy Spirit
to sanctify these gifts of bread and wine,
that they may become for us
the Body and ✠ Blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

and then again, pray to the Father:

*Look with favour on the oblation of your Church,
in which we show forth
the paschal Sacrifice of Christ
that has been handed on to us,
and grant that, by the power
of the Spirit of your love,
we may be counted now
and until the day of eternity
among the members of your Son,
in whose Body and Blood we have communion.*

*Lord, renew your Church
by the light of the Gospel.
Strengthen the bond of unity
between the faithful
and the pastors of your people,
together with Francis our Pope,
Bernard, our Bishop,
and the whole Order of Bishops,
that in a world torn by strife
your people may shine forth
as a prophetic sign of unity and concord.*

We pray for the Holy Spirit to come and to change things. To change bread and wine so we may receive Holy Communion, to change us so that we might live in communion, united with Christ, united with each other, as Church.

As we seek to live our lives faithfully; as we take up our various responsibilities - including as parents, spouses, in our homes, in our place of work - it is good to include a prayer to the Holy Spirit amongst our daily prayers, praying for the Spirit's care of ourselves and each other.

Resources for Prayer

In addition to your copy of the Bible (see page 9) there are a variety of resources that can be a great help.

To prepare for Sunday Mass, and to continue to draw nourishment from the prayers and readings of the Mass, it is helpful to have a Sunday Missal.

HOWEVER a new edition of the Lectionary - the collection of readings for Mass - is in preparation. The new edition will use a new translation of the Scriptures.

If you have a Sunday Missal already, that is fine: you will get maybe a further year's use from it. But if you do not have one, then rather than buy one now and get perhaps only one year's use from it, it is probably best to wait for the publication of the new Lectionary and new editions of Sunday Missals which will include the new Lectionary.

In the meantime, if you do not have a Sunday Missal you can make use of *Universalis*, an on-line prayer resource. This gives the readings for Mass for everyday, and can be used on a PC, smart-phones and tablets. You have to pay a one-off fee to access it, but only once, and can then use it on all your devices.

Universalis can be accessed at <http://universalis.com/> and costs c£10. A free trial for a month is also available.

Universalis also includes the texts for the Daily Prayer of the Church - arrangements of psalms, readings and prayers for prayer through the day, e.g., Morning, Evening and Night.

Members of the parish pray Morning Prayer each Monday to Saturday using Zoom. You are welcome to join them. Details are at on the Home Page of the parish website (www.stnicholasboldmere.co.uk). You will also find there details of other parish on-line prayer times, for example Rosary on Monday evenings and Lectio (meditation using scripture) on Sunday afternoons – all of which you are very welcome to join in.

Finally, anyone who would like a refresher to help them understand the prayers and shape of the Mass - so that they can best help their child with their understanding - is likely to find help in either *A Beginner's Guide to Praying the Mass* or *How we pray the Mass*. (*A Beginner's Guide...* is aimed at younger children, and *How we pray..* aimed at teenagers and adults). Both are available from the parish repository.

Project for children preparing to receive Holy Communion or to receive Confirmation

Write out and decorate one of the two prayers to the Holy Spirit given below, so that they might be displayed in your home for your family to use.

For the competition take a photo of your prayer, and ask your parents to email it to

stnicholas.boldmere@rcaob.org.uk

putting '*Prayer to the Holy Spirit*' in the subject bar.

Father, pour out your Spirit
upon your people and grant us
a new vision of your glory,
a new experience of your power,
a new faithfulness to your Word
and a new consecration to your service,
that your love may grow among us
and your Kingdom come.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen

God the Holy Spirit,
Comforter and Sanctifier.
Melt our hearts
that we may accept your love.
Renew our minds
that we may know your truth.
Strengthen our will
that we may serve you faithfully.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen,