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to make those inner connections so that when at Mass they are helped not harmed by what we do! And, of course, making those inner connections and engaging with the Mass that way is equally important for us all!! You would be hard pressed to find such concern in the Tridentine about the participation of the lay faithful. There the focus is very much on what the priest does for everyone else present. The congregation did not really have a part to play, and their presence was sort of incidental to the action of the Mass. The shorthand is that then people were encouraged to pray, privately, at Mass and now we are urged to pray the Mass together and as one, in and with Christ, by virtue of and making use of our sharing in the Royal Priesthood.

The role of the ministerial priest remains essential to the celebration of the Mass in its current form too, of course. No priest, no Mass. But the role of the congregation is also essential. The priest is there to help the people join with the Church's prayer - that together we might all "do this in memory of him".

The Mass is our work, as Church. And so it is expected that in addition to the priest there will be lay readers and ministers of all sorts and - again, and equally importantly - that every one present will take an active part. Indeed in the Missal we read "The faithful should not refuse to serve the People of God gladly whenever they are asked to perform some particular ministry or role in the celebration." There is quite a lot to ponder on there!

The Mass is far from being a place for individualism or to keep our distance from one another. On the contrary we are called to work to enter into our common identity - in shared action, with one voice. This takes a certain effort - but we should be anxious to do it, because when we do we are joined with the Church's prayer and not just on the sidelines. So we listen to each other, follow the rhythm of the text and speak, sing in one voice, with Christ's voice.

The preparation and introduction of the current form of the Mass was a huge task. It is now some 50 years after that work was begun. We can look back with some amazement and gratitude at what has been achieved. But when we look again at what the Church asks and expects of us in our celebration of Mass we will notice our present shortcomings. Without necessarily intending to - we have sometimes slipped back into old ways, or settled for a minimalist approach to the new form. These things have their consequences and prevent us benefiting from the fullness of the fruits of the Mass.

There is no particular shame in this. The Church is always called to renewal. And when we recognise our shortcomings it is a graced moment that provides us with a fresh opportunity to choose to be who and what we are called to be, and to more profoundly appreciate the gifts God offers.

This time is one such time filled with opportunity - as we begin to leave behind the still-more constricted ways of celebration forced upon us by the Pandemic.

Already I have started to work with deacon John and soon-to be deacon Gary in looking at how we might begin this work. And I have written to all of our ministers of the word of God and of Holy Communion suggesting how we might be able to better support them in their important role. You will know that every one has been invited to join with us in this time of discernment and reflection - and there is still time Next begins the work of looking at how best to begin to re-introduce song to our Sunday worship. There is much to do, but there is no great rush.

The bigger task, though, is not to change the practical or external things that we do. Rather it is to more carefully work for what Pope Saint Paul VI back in 1965 said was a movement from being simply spectators at Mass to becoming active participants. He said if we join ourselves to that movement it will open us up and help us find the great joy, reward and blessing of a genuine spiritual renewal.

He urged those listening to him to pray the *Angelus*, pray to Our Lady, and ask that she would fill us with a desire for an intense and authentic spiritual life, with a reawakened sense of community, of being a family, an assembly praying together, of being the people of God. This is something we too might do: praying to Mary for ourselves and for each other.

Let me suggest something still more specific. Saturday is a day traditionally associated with Mary. Perhaps we could all begin to pray the *Angelus* each Saturday, by ourselves or with our families, as a first confident and hopeful act in our preparation to keep and celebrate of Sunday and to participate - full, conscious and active - in Sunday Mass.

The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary...

And the Word was made flesh: and dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Fr. Allen



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Praying as Church

The continuing place of the Tridentine rite - the former rite of the Church - has recently been a matter of discussion again. Pope Francis has made it clear that its continued use is anomalous, and that the proper form for Roman Catholic Liturgy is the form revised and established after Vatican Council II.

Sometimes those two forms are contrasted as one is in Latin and the other in English. It is true that the older form could only be celebrated in Latin, and that in this country Mass is now mostly celebrated in English, but Latin remains the first language of the Mass, and other versions are only translations.

The most *important* difference between the old and current forms is something else entirely. If you look at the differences between the two forms you quickly see just how carefully the fashioners of the renewed rite have taken every opportunity to enable what the Council put such priority on - namely that "all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy."

The reason this is 'demanded' by the liturgy, is that the liturgy is the work of the Church, the whole Church. And so all who are part of the Church - all the baptised - have our part to play.

Sometimes our part takes external form - like our singing or joining in the responses, or reading, welcoming, or helping distribute Holy Communion, or even being the priest presider at Mass! But always the most fundamental form of participation is our joining in the action of the Mass - for example receiving and being nourished by the word of God, or being at one with Christ in the re-presentation of his Sacrifice, or being at one with those others gathered with us at prayer.

This 'inner' but real participation is at the heart of everything. Without the active and conscious participation of those present - our liturgy fails.

One of the Church's teaching documents says of children taking part in the Mass - "External activities will be fruitless and even harmful if they do not serve the internal participation of the children." This points to the vital role parents have in assisting their children *Continued on p 4.*

Seating arrangements at Mass

From Sunday 15th August we will increase the seating available at our Masses.

Fully one half of one aisle of the church will continue to be reserved for those who are socially distancing. This will allow those who sit there - as at present - to be seated fully 1-metre from those not in their 'bubble'. This block of 5 benches will be on the right hand side of the church (as you face the altar) - beginning with the bench in front of the organ.

Relaxing the seating arrangements in this way is in line with Government guidance and in line also with the, stricter, Church guidance.

Making this change will avoid us having to turn people away from Mass because all seats are taken, as has happened over a number of recent Sundays.

This new arrangement will be kept under review. And should it be necessary to reinstate the tighter control over seating, we will of course do so.

- The track and trace system will continue to be used for all those coming to church.
- Anyone coming into the church is required to apply hand sanitiser.
- All those attending are required to wear a face-mask while in church (unless they are under 5, or have written evidence of a medical exemption)

PARISH MASSES DURING THE COMING WEEK				
Sa	7	6pm	19th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Family Intention (Smith)
Su	8	9am 11am		James and Marcella McGrath (McG) For the parish
M	9	10am		George Crouch - Ints (Foster)
T	10	10am	St Lawrence	Descd O'Neill & Caffauerwass families
W	11		St Clare	
Th	12			
F	13	7pm		Service of Word and Holy Communion
Sa	14	6pm	ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	For the parish
Su	15	9am 11am		Margaret O'Brien RIP (O'Gorman) James Gallagher RIP (Lawlor)
<p>Please pray for sick parishioners including Brenda Davies, Elizabeth Barker, Lyn Hunt; Joan James; Thomas Stevenson. Please pray for Pauline Butler who died recently and for Margaret O'Brien whose funeral is here at 1045 on August 25 and for Tony Prescott, Krzyztof Starzewski, Theresa Astley, and all whose anniversaries occur at this time. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may they rest in peace.</p>				

Lord, giver of lasting life,
satisfy our hunger
through Christ, the Bread of Life,
and quench our thirst with your gift of belief,
that we may no longer work for food that perishes,
but believe in the One whom you have sent.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Introductory Rites help us come together as one, establish communion and prepare ourselves to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

The Penitential Act

The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect

The Liturgy of the Word: *The word of God invites us into the unending dialogue between God and his people, a dialogue sealed as we share the Eucharistic food and drink. A brief silence after the readings helps us take the word of God to heart and begin a prayerful response to what we have heard.*

Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15

1 Kings 19:4-8

Elijah went into the wilderness, a day's journey, and sitting under a furze bush wished he were dead. 'O Lord,' he said 'I have had enough. Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down and went to sleep. But an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked round, and there at his head was a scone baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. But the angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, or the journey will be too long for you.' So he got up and ate and drank, and strengthened by that food he walked for forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

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Psalm 33(34):2-9

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

Glorify the Lord with me.

Together let us praise his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free.

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

This poor man called, the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress.

The angel of the Lord is encamped
around those who revere him, to rescue them.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He is happy who seeks refuge in him.

Ephesians 4:30-5:2

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God who has marked you with his seal for you to be set free when the day comes. Never have grudges against others, or lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody, or call each other names, or allow any sort of spitefulness. Be friends with one another, and kind, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ.

Try, then, to imitate God as children of his that he loves and follow Christ loving as he loved you, giving himself up in our place as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him. *Alleluia!*

John 6:41-51

The Jews were complaining to each other about Jesus, because he had said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' 'Surely this is Jesus son of Joseph' they said. 'We know his father and mother. How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?' Jesus said in reply, 'Stop complaining to each other. No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me, and I will raise him up at the last day.

It is written in the prophets: They will all be taught by God, and to hear the teaching of the Father, and learn from it, is to come to me. Not that anybody has seen the Father, except the one who comes from God: he has seen the Father. I tell you most solemnly, everybody who believes has eternal life.

'I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and they are dead; but this is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that a man may eat it and not die. I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.'

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,

Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

*At the words that follow,
up to and including 'the Virgin Mary', all bow.*

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayer of the Faithful

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the re-presentation of the Sacrifice of Christ to the Father, and his gift of life renewed to the Church, for the service of his mission.

The Offertory: *There is no collection during Mass. Instead, please put your offerings in the basket at the entrance to the church as you arrive, or as you leave.*

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is a memorial proclamation of praise and thanksgiving for God's work of salvation, a proclamation in which the Body and Blood of Christ are made present by the power of the Holy Spirit and the people are joined to Christ in offering his Sacrifice to the Father

The Preface Dialogue

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right and just.

Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The mystery of faith.

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE: *The Lord offers reconciliation in and with the invitation to share in the food and drink that is his Body and Blood. Love and mercy are the condition and the fruit of communion in the Lord.*

The Lord's Prayer

Invitation to Communion: *Please keep social distance of 1m when processing to receive Holy Communion.*

Prayer after Communion

The Concluding Rites send us out live in our daily lives the Mystery of Christ's Death and Resurrection and the unity in Christ we have celebrated. Our mission is to witness to Christ in the world and to bring the Gospel to the poor.

Blessing and Dismissal

What do you think about the renewal of the interior of the parish church?

As we begin to think about this - with a view to having plans in place next year... please have a look round, have a think. What are the strengths and weaknesses of how the interior of the church presently is.

We can all see it is time to clean and redecorate the interior of our parish church. However as we prepare for that it is also opportune for us to consider all sorts of other things.

- Is this also the time to renew our heating system, and what are the opportunities to put in a 'greener' system?
- Adaptability of the church for other forms of liturgy and prayer, and for use by small groups. Ease of access to building and worship space for those with particular needs - eg people using wheelchairs or other mobility aids.
- An alternative placement of the organ and musicians so we can be better served by them.
- The statue of our Lady was moved to its present place to provide better and safer access during the pandemic. Some think it is now in a better place (although the temporary arrangement can obviously improved on!) In addition the other statues in the church are not necessarily in the best place for their proper use.

There are surely other things to consider and improvements that might be made.

Incidentally there is a rumour going round that it is proposed to move the altar from the present sanctuary into the nave of the church. It is good to consider all possibilities, but there are many reasons why this is not something that would be a suitable change at St Nicholas. It is not a matter under consideration.

If you have comments or thoughts that you would like to be taken into account as this project develops, please write them down and put them into the comments box on the side of the left hand side aisle of the church.

Ordination to the Diaconate

Gary O'Brien will be ordained deacon by Archbishop Bernard at St Chad's Cathedral on Sat 4th Sept. Very few 'tickets' are available for people to participate in the liturgy directly and in person. However it will be livestreamed on the Cathedral website for those who cannot attend in person.