

The Way of Communion

I invite the whole Church to rediscover, to safeguard, and to live the truth and power of the Christian celebration.
Pope Francis.

Liturgy and Worship is one of the four priorities singled out in Archbishop Bernard's Pastoral Vision that informs and guides the current work of looking at how we work now to prepare more solid foundations for the Church in Birmingham in coming decades. It is also the focus of the **Prayer and Liturgy** Directory recently issued for Catholic Schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales.

Liturgy, Worship, Prayer: each of these are profound resources to help us deepen our life as Church – called together by God, and turned toward the world in ministry and care.

However, the opportunities for easy to access guided learning in this area are few and far between. This can frustrate collaborative working and mean that the opportunities for personal and community growth can pass us by.

The Way of Communion (TWC) offers a new opportunity for such guided learning. It is offered particularly to lay ministers – readers, musicians, those who prepare liturgy and prayer in parishes, schools and elsewhere, catechists, RE Coordinators. But clergy are welcome too. And there is much to be said for a forum that allows ministers of all sorts to learn together and learn from each other.

TWC is a new initiative. It is a process that helps participants to reflect together on two texts that have come from the Bishops Conference of England and Wales in recent years.

- The first is *Catholic Liturgy* (CL), a study guide written by pastoral and academic liturgists that covers the history, content and debates around the use of Liturgy in the Catholic Church.
- The second is the already mentioned *Prayer and Liturgy Directory: To love You more dearly*, (PLD). Each was written with a broad and non-specialist readership in mind.

TWC will be based around a series of 12 meetings on Zoom. Each meeting explores a single chapter of CL, and the relevant sections of PLD. Participants are asked to read the relevant material in advance of the meeting. The meetings give an opportunity to explore people's questions and reflections, and help participants consider how the various subjects connect with the situation of our different parishes, schools and communities.

There will be two meetings each month (on first two Mondays of each month) beginning in May and ending in December (with a break in August). Meetings will run from 7.30 – 8.30pm, but those who wish to are welcome to stay on beyond the hour to continue and broaden the conversation, with nothing off limits!

The Cost? Too often formation opportunities put a strain on personal budgets, and are judged unaffordable by those responsible for school or parish budgets. The good news is that **TWC** is free. All that participants will need is access to Zoom, and to their own copies of CL and PLD (*nb PLD is available free to download on-line.*)

TWC is offered in the first place to members of the parishes, schools and communities of 'Catholic Sutton Coldfield' but is open to all members of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

It is led by Fr Allen Morris, parish priest of St Nicholas, Boldmere, a member of the Birmingham Liturgy Commission, and former Secretary of the Department for Christian Life and Worship of the Bishops Conference of England and Wales.

To register for the course please contact Fr Allen directly at stnicholas.boldmere@rcaob.org.uk

Please apply before 29th April to receive the Zoom link and details of the reading for the first meeting.

- *Catholic Liturgy* ed by Peter McGrail and Martin Foster. 2018, SCM Press, London.
- *To love You more dearly. The Prayer and Liturgy Directory*, Catholic Education Service. 2023, Catholic Education Service, London. The Directory can be freely downloaded from https://catholiceducation.org.uk/images/PLD_FINAL.pdf or <https://bit.ly/3VCTIK>

