

# Spirit of the Season

## Winter 2004

Liturgical Year C

[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk)

# Candle power

Wintertime can be such a time of dreariness and darkness. Maybe this is one reason that the Church gives such attention to the Feast of the Presentation (2 February). Its traditional title of Candlemas points to one of the highlights of the feast, the blessing of candles and processing with them. This simple ritual symbolises the light of Christ come into the world, and also the way that we are called to be bearers of light. We are invited on a journey from darkness into new life, not only in our prayer but in our lives too.

And we make this journey not by ourselves but in the communion of the Church. The gospel of the Feast of the Presentation presents us with the family of the child Jesus, Mary and Joseph, but also the extended family of faith represented in the old man, Simeon, and the old woman, Anna. The gospel reminds how we learn from each other - the young being a gift to the old, and the old bearing wisdom and love, gifts for the young.



*Lord, let your servant now die in peace, for you have kept your promise.*

*With my own eyes I see the salvation you prepared for all peoples.*

*A light of revelation for the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel.*

Song of Simeon – Nunc dimittis  
Luke 2: 29-32

*God our Father, source of all light, today you revealed to Simeon your Light of revelation to the nations.*

*Bless these candles and make them holy. May we who carry them to praise your glory walk in the path of goodness and come to the path that shines for ever.*

*Grant this through Christ our Lord.*

Prayer of blessing for Candles  
Roman Missal: February 2nd

## FAQ

Can I photocopy *Spirit of the Season*? Yes, pass it on to colleagues who may find it useful.





**Meaning:** Hosanna—Praise to you!

**From:** This is a Hebrew word. (Kept in translation from Hebrew to English: eg: Matthew 21: 9b )

**Usage:** The word was used to announce the triumphant and joyful arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem. We sing it at every Mass as part of the Holy, Holy and to accompany the Palm Procession

**Word colour:** Red

**Singing:** Gathering Mass—Paul Inwood (*Laudate*); Hosanna—Taizé (*Laudate*); Hosanna, Children's Eucharistic Acclamation—Chris Walker (*Calling the Children*). Use as a joyful acclamation by itself or to accompany a procession.



There are two patterns of numbering the psalms. This can often be confusing. In the Lectionary used at Mass in England and Wales the psalms follow the numbering found in the Latin translation of the Bible – the Vulgate. Most bibles, however, follow the Hebrew bible. Most bibles use the Hebrew numbering but often the other number is indicated in brackets. So the twenty-third psalm The Lord is my shepherd is Psalm 22 in our liturgical books but in the bible it would be Psalm 23(22); the Old Hundredth which we look at below is Psalm 99. When looking for a psalm text or musical setting it is often good to double check it is the right psalm.

Psalms are the Church's first hymnbook. Our tradition has always been to sing psalms to accompany the processions at Mass: Entrance and Communion. The text of the chosen psalm reflected what was happening. So as we gather in our Entrance Procession we sing Come before God singing for joy from Psalm 99 (100). A musical setting of this psalm to look at is All the earth proclaim the Lord by Lucien Deiss.



Giving proper space for worship is important. Liturgy is not something we just do in our heads: **we do it with our bodies too**. We need to be sure that there is proper space for the main actions of our liturgies—the proclamation of the readings, the offering of the Eucharistic prayer at Mass, the prayers offered by the priest presider - so that they can be performed worthily not in a cramped way but with room for graceful movement by all the ministers, servers, readers, cantors, priest. We need to provide proper space for the presider's chair, so that he can be seen as presiding at our common prayer even when he is seemingly not doing anything, but 'just' joining with us in listening to the word proclaimed, joining in the communion thanksgiving song, or praying quietly.

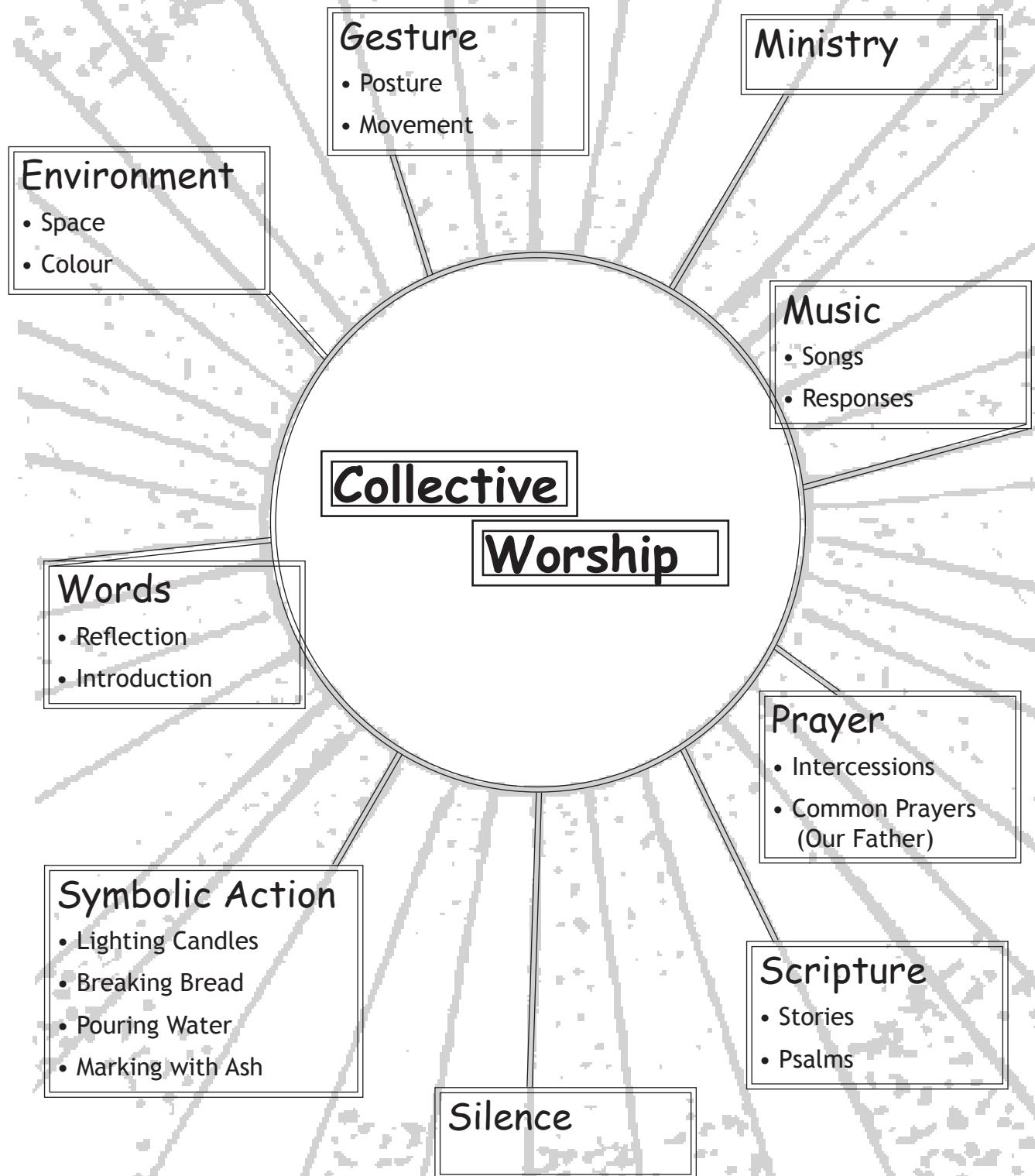
But we need to provide **proper space** for all of us too. We have things to do and they take space. We stand and sit, sometimes we kneel. We come in procession to receive holy communion. We need space for these things, not just for comfort but also because **these things are prayer** and if we do not have space, then we are going to end up being more mindful of not tripping over one another than prayerfully engaging with what we are doing.

## Gathering together

How we begin a liturgy can set the tone for the whole celebration. Our gathering can be made up of different moments. On this page last time there were ideas about 'making an entrance'. Children can enter into a prayerful atmosphere on silence or singing. Any music should be sung by heart to allow people to enter into the liturgy. Just the refrain of *We come to share our story* (David Haas) for example or *We sing your glory* (Bernadette Farrell - Share the Light) as a more upbeat beginning. To begin may not require words but could be an action such as the lighting of a candle or the placing of symbols.

# Building Blocks

This is the third in a series looking at developing good practice related to Collective Worship. Any liturgy is made up of a variety of elements which provide the building blocks to creating an act of Collective Worship. Not every celebrations will include every element (though some may be repeated) nor will they all have equal prominence. Just as in any lesson a whole variety of learning styles will be used what is important is to provide an experiences of prayer that engage people in different ways. Each of the blocks is a way of participating in the liturgy. Some parts will be done by everyone; others by individual ministers.



For every building block there are many ways it can be used. The points above are just some examples to spark off your ideas.

# Proclaiming Christ – the Ministry of the Word

In the last issue of *Spirit of the Season* the importance of preparing liturgical ministers was stressed. This issue focusses on the reader. Read it first for yourself and then consider how you might put into practice in your school.

There a range of ministers of the Word: the readers, the cantors, the homilist, the person leading the Prayer of the Faithful. Here we focus on the Reader.

"In proclaiming the word of God, readers exercise their responsibility in mediating the presence of Christ. God speaks to the assembly through them, and the impact of God's message will depend significantly on their conviction, their preparation, and their delivery."

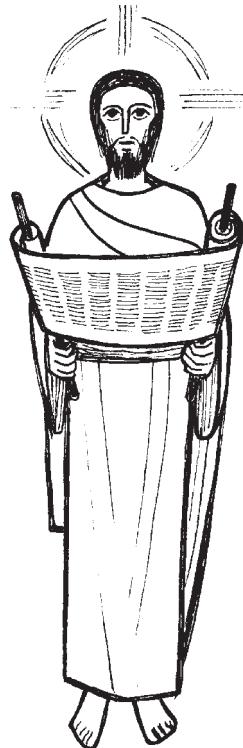
*Celebrating the Mass, 41*

## The Minister

Christ is present in his word. The minister is responsible not just for speaking the word, but assisting Christ to speak in and through the words.

The word proclaimed is a living word. The reader reads not just words, but ministers those words to the assembly, words which invite for each one present to a fresh and personal encounter with the living Lord.

The reading is a testament of faith. To proclaim a reading well it is not enough to be technically proficient one also has to communicate Christ's saving presence.



The minister needs to have prepared how to read the reading. Different readings require different styles of proclamation—so that we hear a story read differently to how a poem is read, a letter differently to a conversation.

## Intercessions

Announcing the intercessions or bidding prayer is to invite people to pray. The reader addresses the gathered assembly, the priest, at the end, addresses God. (See page on Writing Intercessions at [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk))

## The Congregation

Through the readings from the Bible the people of God receive the power to be Christ's living witnesses before the world. However this happens not just when the readings are read well, but when they are heard well too.

The task of the congregation here is especially that of listening with understanding so that they will begin to respond to the reading, and by the reading be changed.

## Good practice

Using good readers—who can read well and who can engage those who are listening to them.

One reader for each reading—and more than one reader for a single reading only when this really helps the congregation to hear and engage with the nature and meaning of this particular text.

Reading a reading twice, so that those listening can hear more deeply

Using silence to give time for people to reflect on what they heard and to give a sense of flow to the liturgy.

Inviting those who have listened to identify for themselves the phrase or word that has spoken to them, and spend time quietly repeating it to themselves, savouring its meaning for them.

As the reading from scripture has a special place within the liturgy so the book that is used should also be special. How the reader treats the book will convey a message.



### A Special Book for the Word

If you do not have a Lectionary, make a worthy book for proclaiming the Word. Stationery suppliers offer many types of folders that could be covered and decorated. Why not make a pair: one for the Word, one for the priest or leader of prayer: the one for Word should be more significant.

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