

## August Meeting

### Review and Evaluate

How is the mission to enquirers from the district/suburb going. Does it need a special event to move it along? It is not too late.

### Current Business

Plan for formation for new R.C.I.A. team or retreat experience/day of reflection/ formation for current team. Firm up strategy for attracting enquirers. Plan enquiry events. Begin Advent preparation:  
Wreaths making or selling

Advent calendar dates discussed, focus for each Sunday

Banners, those to be reused, new ones required

Giving Tree, date to begin display, coordinator

Vigil Mass, general preparation, coordinator

Review rosters, discuss requirements

Choose focus idea for Advent season, Look again at the review of last Advent

Invite a family to create a crib for the church

Discuss carols by candlelight (4th Sunday of Advent) •

## The Liturgy Committee

# Formation

### Part One

#### Focusing on the Task of the Liturgy Committee.

My thesis in this article is:

- most liturgy groups see their role as planning the liturgy
- if liturgy groups stopped planning liturgies and instead prepared them, there would be a completely different approach to what they are trying to do.

During the last five years I have had the opportunity to visit most of the Liturgy Groups in the Brisbane Archdiocese. In the course of these visits I have learnt a lot about how parishes approach the task of liturgical preparation:

- methods of planning or preparation differ widely;
- most groups meet once a month for about 90 minutes;
- most groups set themselves an impossible agenda for this meeting, i.e. to plan four Sunday liturgies;
- few groups have ever expressed or

agreed upon the assumptions out of which they work;

- lack of shared assumptions on what they see themselves doing is a major cause of conflict;
- most groups assume their role is to plan the liturgy;
- few groups see the ongoing formation of liturgical ministers as their responsibility;
- many groups suffer from the burn-out of their members and express difficulties recruiting new members;

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This is the first of two parts of the article "Please Stop Planning Liturgies" by Barry Copley, published in *Liturgy News* Vol 19 No 2, June 1989 .

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*The second part will appear in the next issue of Liturgy.*



- most groups approach the scriptures in order to find a common theme which then forms the basis of selection of hymns, penitential rites etc.;
- conflict between the liturgy planning group and the musicians is not uncommon.

It is out of this experience that I write this article.

The starting point for any liturgy preparation must be the worshipping assembly. And the first question to ask is: What is the assembly doing when it is engaged in public worship?

We are then in a position to ask what the assembly needs to help it in this task. Only then are we in a position to see what the real purpose of a liturgy group might be.

### What is the worshipping assembly doing?

It may seem obvious to say that we worship God but I will say it none the less. It is God who calls us together. We are God's people. And so we gather together. Jesus, our brother, gathers with us since "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their

midst." We worship God through, with and in Jesus our risen Lord.

"Through Him (Jesus), with Him and in Him "

And when we gather, we tell, again and again, the story of our origins as God's people, and what this means to us in our search for value, meaning and purpose in life.

When we gather we come empty-handed, with a prayer that God does not need. Yet we are welcomed and heard because Jesus is present among us and takes us to himself. When we gather we pray as the Jesus people and seek communion with God as we offer our thanksgiving and praise.

### To put this simply, the assembly:

- gathers together, called by God;
- prepares to listen to the Word of God (Introductory Rites);
- listens and responds to the Word (Liturgy of the Word);
- sets the table (Preparation of the Gifts);
- praises and thanks God for the gifts it has received, especially the gift of Jesus (Eucharistic Prayer);
- shares the Jesus food and drink (Communion Rite);
- goes forth (Dismissal).

If we agree that this is what the assembly does at worship, the next question to ask is:

### How can we help the assembly do these things better?

At this point it might be good to have another look of what is already in place, lest we be tempted to think that we have to plan every Sunday liturgy from scratch.

When the assembly gathers it does not start from scratch each time. We know what to expect. There is already a familiar ritual in place.

- The Scripture Readings are already set.
- Texts for the Introductory Rites, Opening Prayer, Eucharistic Prayer, Prayer over the Gifts, Prayer after Communion are in the Sacramentary.
- The dialogue between the presider and the assembly is the same each week.
- The celebration takes place in the same place each week

The good news here is that much of the work of 'planning' is already done for us before we start. There is no need to duplicate what has already been done. Energy should be channelled to more productive endeavours. •

