

DIOCESAN LITURGY COUNCIL

The Liturgical Year

An increasingly challenging balancing act

Parish Leaders, Presiders and Liturgy Teams

Those of us who have been around for a while might once have thought that the Liturgical Year and the Calendar was pretty straight forward. There are seasons and feasts, and a clear table of precedence. We have good resources that include:

[*The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*](#) [GNLYC]

Paschale Solemnitatis [PS]

The Ordo which is issued annually, available in booklet and digital form and on LiturgyHelp.

Over recent years, the Liturgical Calendar seems to be increasingly populated by what the Ordo refers to as 'special commemorations'. These originate from a range of sources including the Holy See, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, the Australian Calendar, and the United Nations.

These special commemorations have been an item of discussion at the National Liturgy Council for some time. Recently one of the Council's consultants suggested that they would be more appropriately named 'awareness days', given that by and large they are not 'commemorated' in the Sunday Liturgy with set texts. I don't know about you, but we found this clarification helpful.

The Accompanying Calendar

This pastoral note accompanies an Excel spreadsheet prepared by the Diocesan Liturgy Council (DLC) to help parishes view the Liturgical Year on one page, including all the 'awareness days.' Reading left to right you are able to see: celebrations that belong to the universal church and the world, the Australian church, our diocese, and finally your parish community.

We hope this assists you with planning the liturgical year and calendar in line with its intent of celebrating the Paschal Mystery, so that across the year we become more deeply the Body of Christ shaped for community life and mission. We hope it also helps you avoid clashes.

The Parish column allows you to add the important celebrations for your local community. These would include the anniversary of the dedication of individual church buildings and the patronal feast of your parish. Both events are celebrated as Solemnities in your parish. There may be other feasts that hold significance for your parish. If so, these would be celebrated as local feasts.

The calendar in the Excel spreadsheet is colour coded as follows:

- Items in black belong to the official liturgy of the church and are celebrated liturgically using the texts that are proper to them.
- Items in this blue colour in the diocesan column are celebrations particular to our diocese that are not found in the liturgical books.
- Items in this pink colour in the diocesan calendar are anniversaries particular to this diocese.
- Items in this orange/brown colour are the 'awareness days' noted above. They are not in fact liturgical celebrations. They may be mentioned in the liturgy, but they do not overtake the liturgy that is proper to the day.

It is up to local communities to determine which of these they wish to highlight and how. 'Awareness days' that hold special significance for the community might be marked simply in the Sunday liturgy in the Introductory remarks, with petitions in the Universal Prayer and at times perhaps with a blessing, e.g., for Grandparents.

Awareness days that are significant for the local community can be celebrated outside the official liturgy in any way the community determines. Raising our awareness regarding significant issues is essential to our life as missionary disciples. These days provide wonderful opportunities for mission and outreach to those who are not part of the worshipping community.

The listing of all these days on one page helps you view the big picture as you plan the parish liturgical calendar. You are not at the mercy of those often late emails advising you of these days.

The last column includes some notes, often referring to resources. Links to resources can also be found here: <https://www.catholic.au/s/article/Calendar>. The resources provided for 'awareness days' vary in quality and are not always suitable for the liturgy.

The same site has two articles on the liturgical year that you may find helpful:

<https://www.catholic.au/s/article/Liturgical-Celebrations-An-Introduction>

<https://www.catholic.au/s/article/Appeals-and-Special-Intentions-in-the-Sunday-Liturgy>


Conclusion

Some of you will remember fondly Fr John Woods, one of our diocesan priests who was a well-respected liturgist both here and nationally. John longed for us to develop our diocesan liturgical calendar. We hope that this resource and accompanying note is an initial step towards his dream.

As we engage in further listening, we hope to develop our diocesan calendar, so that through the celebration of the liturgy, we the faithful are indeed formed into Christ for the sake of God's mission in this land.

All comments, feedback and suggestions are welcome. If you would like assistance in developing your parish liturgical calendar, please make contact.

Wishing you every blessing,



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