



*Foundation 5*  
**WORSHIP**



While they were eating, He took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it He broke it, gave it to them, and said, ‘Take; this is my body’. Then He took the cup, and after giving thanks He gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God’”.

Mark 14:22-25

Worship is the primary purpose of the Church, the source and summit of all else the Church does.



Worship is also foundational for parishes seeking to be faithful to Jesus’ mission, for in worship we do as Jesus invited His disciples to do: give praise to the Father by the Son in the Holy Spirit and entrust our lives to God’s care.

Our conscious decision to place the Great Commission, the command to ‘make disciples’, at the heart of our identity and action means discerning and enacting new ways to strengthen our worship of God.

Worship, both public and private, is intimately connected with our love for God and also what is right and just to give to Him because of His ‘worth’. Indeed ‘worth-ship’ is the ancient root of ‘worship’. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains:

*‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength’ (Deuteronomy 6:5). The first commandment summons man to believe in God, to hope in Him, and to love Him above all else. ‘You shall worship the Lord your God’ (Matthew 4:10). Adoring God, praying to Him, offering Him the worship that belongs to Him, fulfilling the promises and vows made to Him are acts of the virtue of religion which fall under obedience to the first commandment. The duty to offer God authentic worship concerns man both as an individual and as a social being.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2133-2136.



## Encounter and Evangelisation

In worship we encounter the Lord who is “always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations”<sup>2</sup>; in the sacrifice of the Mass, in the Blessed Sacrament, in the Word proclaimed and in the priest. Christ is always present “when the Church prays and sings”.<sup>3</sup> We also encounter Christ in the personal worship we carry out in the ‘secret’ of our ‘private room’ (Matthew 6:6).

There is an essential dynamic between the contemplation of and encounter with God in worship and the active mission of the Church:

*“Action relies upon contemplation for its fruitfulness; and contemplation, in its turn, as soon as it has reached a certain degree of intensity, pours out upon our active works some of its overflow. And it is by contemplation that the soul goes to draw directly upon the Heart of God for the graces which it is the duty of the active life to distribute”.<sup>4</sup>*

This dynamic is experienced most profoundly in the Eucharist.

## The Sacraments and Discipleship

The Great Commission given by Jesus as He ascended to the Father was four-fold in its mandate to the Church: to evangelise so as to make disciples (“go out to all the world preaching the Gospel”, “go and make disciples of all nations”); to sacramentalise that discipleship (“baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”); to catechise those disciples (“teach them to obey everything I commanded you”); and to memorialise His presence with us (“remember that I am with you always...”) (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20). In this, we see the intimate connection between the initial disciple-making encounter with the Lord, the sacraments which follow upon this, and the further teaching that is elicited by these encounters.

<sup>2</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7.

<sup>3</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7.

<sup>4</sup> Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard OCSO, *The Soul of the Apostolate*, 1946/1962.

## The Eucharist

As our primary act of worship, the celebration of the Eucharist brings us into an encounter with Christ who in His Great Commission promised to be with us always. The Eucharist draws us into the mission of evangelisation, as we are sent forth from the Mass to bring Christ to the world and invite others to encounter Jesus, and so experience the fullness of communion with Him and His Church.

As Pope Benedict XVI has affirmed, “[t]he love that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its very nature it demands to be shared with all. What the world needs is God’s love; it needs to encounter Christ and to believe in Him. The Eucharist is

thus the source and summit not only of the Church’s life, but also of her mission: ‘an authentically eucharistic Church is a missionary Church’”.<sup>5</sup> It is primarily by the witness of our lives, our actions, words and way of life that the Christ we encounter in the sacred mysteries becomes present to others, as the gift of the very presence, love and outreach of God.

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Indeed, active and intentional discipleship is the soil in which the Eucharist bears its intended fruit, as shared by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “[t]he sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church: it must be preceded by evangelisation, faith, and conversion. It can then produce its fruits in the lives of the faithful: new life in the Spirit, involvement in the mission of the Church, and service to her unity”.<sup>6</sup> It is when we have been evangelised and moved to the personal, conscious and active decision to follow Jesus in the midst of the Church that the grace of the sacraments is received most fruitfully and the abundant charisms, vocations and gifts that God seeks to bring about in us become manifest in our individual lives and in the life of our parishes and communities.

This intentional discipleship – the personal, conscious and active decision to follow Jesus – is also an important part of fruitful participation in the liturgy and is an expression of ‘active participation’, expressed as a spirit of conversion, an examination of one’s life, the fostering of one’s interior life, and a commitment to mission, for “there

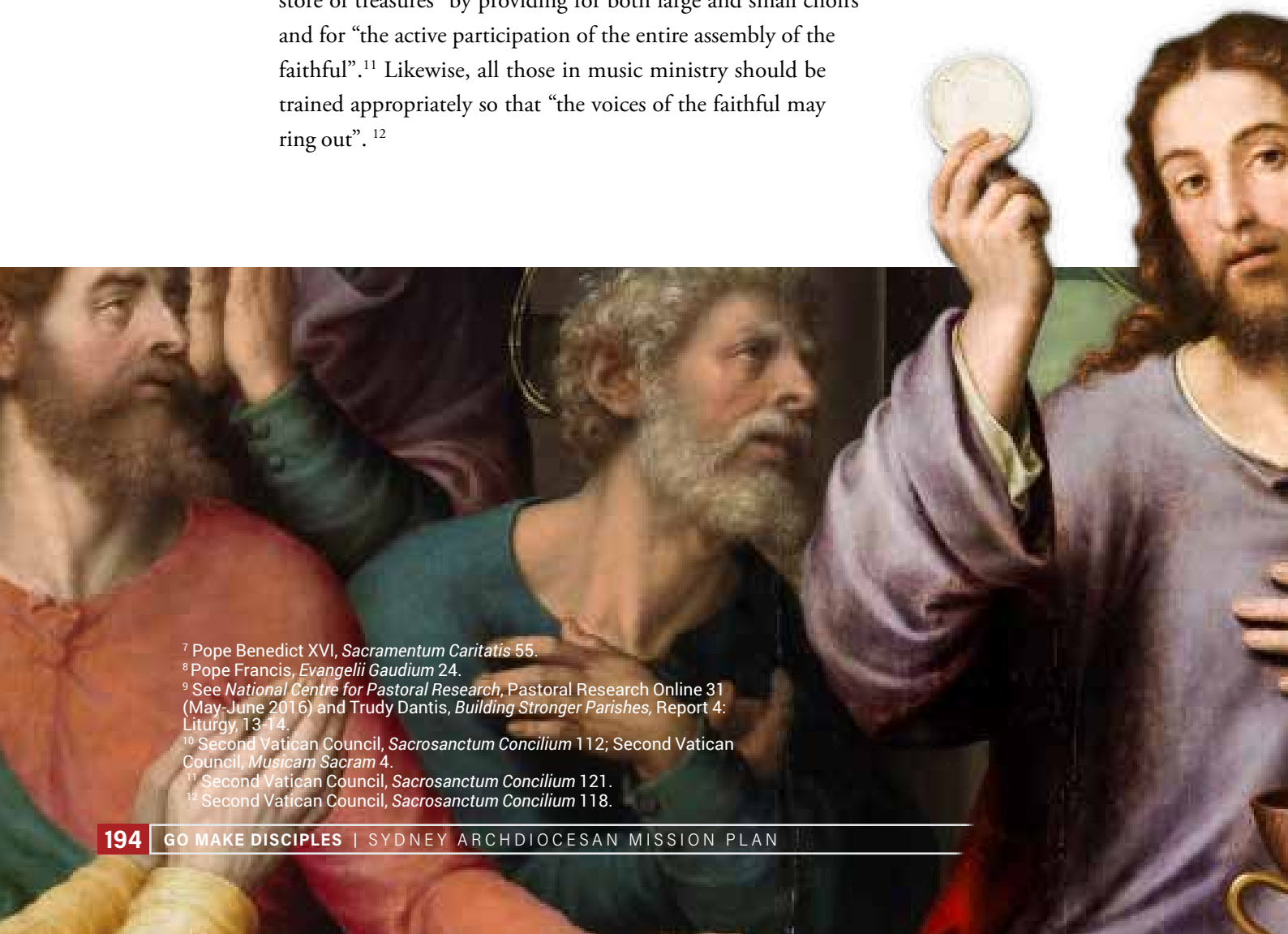
<sup>5</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* 84.

<sup>6</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1072.

can be no *actuosa participatio* [active participation] without an accompanying effort to participate actively in the life of the Church as a whole, including a missionary commitment to bring Christ’s love into the life of society”.<sup>7</sup>

The **invitation, beauty and solemnity of the liturgy** form an integral part of our evangelising mission as Pope Francis declares, “Evangelisation with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelises and is herself evangelised through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelisation and the source of her renewed self-giving”.<sup>8</sup> For this reason the **‘homilies, hymns and hospitality’** in the celebration of the Eucharist are critical to the engagement of the liturgical assembly and the transformative encounter with Christ at the heart of the Mass. National surveys bear this out, with music and singing being important elements of church worship for Mass attenders of all ages while engaging homilies are an integral dimension of strong parishes.<sup>9</sup>

**Sacred music** in the form of Gregorian chant, sacred polyphony, sacred music for organ and popular sacred music has an evangelising power when it “adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites”.<sup>10</sup> Composers today should “cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures” by providing for both large and small choirs and for “the active participation of the entire assembly of the faithful”.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, all those in music ministry should be trained appropriately so that “the voices of the faithful may ring out”.<sup>12</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* 55.

<sup>8</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 24.

<sup>9</sup> See *National Centre for Pastoral Research, Pastoral Research Online* 31 (May-June 2016) and Trudy Dantis, *Building Stronger Parishes*, Report 4: Liturgy, 13-14.

<sup>10</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 112; Second Vatican Council, *Musicam Sacram* 4.

<sup>11</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 121.

<sup>12</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 118.

**Preaching** is fundamental to the mission of the Church as it is by the faithful proclamation and teaching of the Word of God that Christ becomes known. In the Liturgy of the Word, and especially the homily, the faithful are exhorted to receive God's Word and put it into practice. The Sunday homily is a powerful tool of evangelisation and conversion, as a "heart-to-heart communication" through beauty, goodness and truth.<sup>13</sup> Pope Paul VI observed that many parochial communities live and are held together through the Sunday homily when it is "simple, clear, direct, well-adapted, profoundly dependent on Gospel teaching and faithful to the magisterium, animated by a balanced apostolic ardour coming from its own characteristic nature, full of hope, fostering belief, and productive of peace and unity".<sup>14</sup>

In the richness of our Catholic tradition, our worship of God also includes the preparation to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist through the Sacrament of Penance, the regular practice of Eucharistic Adoration, and forms of personal and communal prayer including devotions that raise our hearts and minds to God.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that "[t]he Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sin of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members".<sup>15</sup> One of the means by which the Church continues the healing of her own members is the **Sacrament of Penance**. This is essential to the spiritual path of the disciple for the Sacrament restores us to God's grace and joins us with Him in an intimate friendship.<sup>16</sup> Among the many spiritual effects of the Sacrament of Penance is "an increase in spiritual strength for Christian battle"<sup>17</sup> which is essential not only for deepening discipleship,



<sup>13</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 142.

<sup>14</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 43.

<sup>15</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1420.

<sup>16</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1468.

<sup>17</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1496.

but for the powerful witness to others of the change brought about by a relationship with God.

The practice of **Worship of the Blessed Eucharist Outside Mass (“Adoration”)** draws disciples into a more intimate encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist and thereby leads to greater fruitfulness of mission. The act of Adoration prolongs and intensifies all that takes place during the liturgical celebration itself. Indeed, “only in Adoration can a profound and genuine reception mature. And it is precisely this personal encounter with the Lord that then strengthens the social mission contained in the Eucharist, which seeks to break down not only the walls that separate the Lord and ourselves, but also and especially the walls that separate us from one another”.<sup>18</sup>

The spiritual writer Fr Jacques Philippe also explains the important role that the worship of God in **prayer** has in receiving the grace of the sacraments:

*“There is no spiritual progress without contemplative prayer... The testimony of the saints is unanimous on this point.” He goes on to explain: “Now, some people might object that sanctifying grace also – indeed, mainly – comes to us through the sacraments. This is true, but without a life of prayer even the sacraments will have only a limited effect. Yes, they will give us grace, but that grace will remain unfruitful in part because the ‘good soil’ it needs is missing”.*<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* 66.

<sup>19</sup> Fr Jacques Philippe, *Time for God*, 24-25.









ANGELS PLAYING MUSIC

- HANS MEMLING, c. 1480s

PHOTOGRAPHER: RIK KLEIN GOTINK/LICENSECC0

## Strengthening the Foundation of Worship

If communities of missionary disciples are built on a strong foundation of worship, this means adoration of God the Father in Jesus and through the Spirit should be central to our identity, and this should be reflected in the priorities and actions of our community. We strengthen worship in our communities when we attend to deepening the encounter of our public and private worship.

Below is a four (4) step process which your community may choose to undertake to **reflect** upon the place of worship in your identity as a community of disciples, **review** how that identity is being expressed in the actions and priorities of your community, **discern and decide** how God might be calling your community to strengthen this foundation, and take particular **actions** with the help of the support and resources outlined in this Mission Plan.

This can be led by the parish priest with his parish leadership team and liturgical committee, or through attending a *Parishes for Mission* day offered regionally and online by the Parish Renewal Team within the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation. These days will provide leaders with formation in mission, strategies to assess and strengthen foundations for mission, and practical ways to create and implement a vision for the community. For more details, visit [www.gomakedisciples.org.au](http://www.gomakedisciples.org.au) or contact the Parish Renewal Team on (02) 9390 5330 or at [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org).

## *Step 1:* Reflect on Worship

1.1 Our worship should draw us into relationship with the Father, in Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit. As this is our goal, and the aim of our worship, it may be helpful to reflect on the relationship of Jesus with the Father:

- The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8)
- Jesus' Farewell Discourse (John 17:6-8, 20-26)

Questions for reflection:

- a. What word or phrase struck you?
- b. Did this offer insight on Jesus' relationship to the Father?
- c. How do you think the disciples felt as they witnessed these events?
- d. What insight does this offer you about worship?

## *Step 2:* Review the Various Aspects of Worship in Your Community

2.1 There are a variety of resources you can draw upon to review how aspects of your worship can be enhanced to lead people to a deeper encounter and relationship with Jesus. The questions in paragraphs 2.2-2.5 below can help your parish leaders and relevant ministry teams to examine what is working well and what can be strengthened, so that the worship in parishes gives glory to God and nourishes the discipleship of our people.

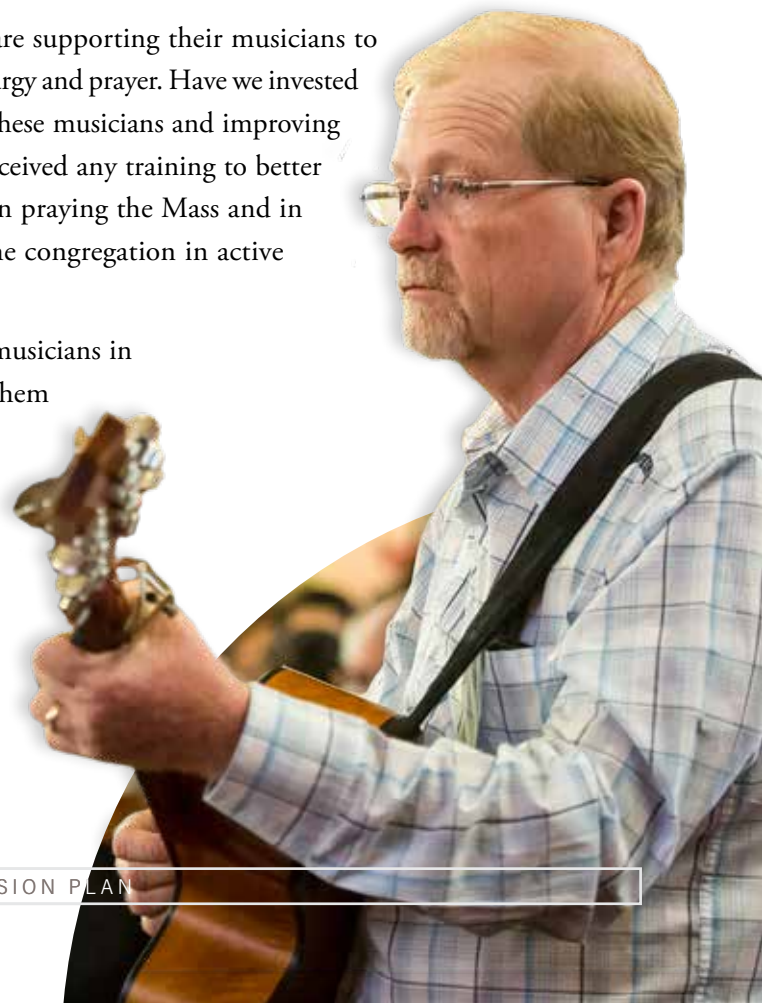
2.2 Review the use of sacred music in your parish worship. This sacred music leads us into deeper prayer, raising our hearts and minds to God, and stirring and expressing our grateful reverence. As it speaks to people at all stages of life and faith, music can also be powerful in pre-evangelisation, during initial proclamation where it can be a form of proclaiming the Gospel, as part of initiatory catechesis, and in nourishing the faith of maturing disciples.<sup>20</sup>

- a. What are the ways in which sacred music is growing and strengthening the faith of people in our local community?
- b. Do we cultivate active participation by singing the parts of the Mass such as the entrance rites, the acclamation of the Gospel, and prayers during the Eucharistic Liturgy (for example, the 'Sanctus', the final doxology and the Lord's Prayer, among others)?

<sup>20</sup> Sherry Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 181.



- c** Does the music in our liturgy help people to pray? For example, what is being expressed through the words of the hymn, and how are we encouraging appropriate periods of silence in the liturgy to help people reflect and pray?
- d** Does the sacred music in our parish help people to enter more deeply into the Mass by reflecting and enhancing the readings of the day?
- e** Does the sacred music in our parish encourage congregational singing by, for example, being set in a key that people can sing and being of a style that people can pray with?
- f** Is our music of a good standard? Is it beautiful? At times it can be uncomfortable to ask these questions as often we do not want to criticise generous volunteers. However, one way to honestly assess the quality of our music is to ask: 'If I wanted to reach out to someone and invite him or her to Mass, would our music encourage and nourish that person because of its beauty?'
- g** The desire for beautiful sacred music also invites other questions, such as 'Are our musicians technically proficient? Do we have the type of musicians we need for the genre of music we are playing? Does the sound system enhance or detract from the music? Do the musicians know how to lead the parts of the Mass as well as having knowledge of a good range of hymns that suit the liturgical seasons and can express the beauty of the liturgical actions?' Parishes need to know and draw upon the Church's rich musical patrimony and not rely merely on those composed in the 1970s and 1980s. More recent, better sacred music, as well as older hymns, can be drawn upon.
- h** Parishes can also consider how they are supporting their musicians to improve the music as it supports the liturgy and prayer. Have we invested any parish resources into supporting these musicians and improving their musical repertoire? Have they received any training to better understand the role of sacred music in praying the Mass and in their important role in supporting the congregation in active participation in the Mass?
- i** Do we work to identify the talented musicians in our parish and personally appeal to them (and not through general bulletins or notices alone) to serve in this important ministry?



**2.3** Review the welcome and hospitality of your parish. The welcoming and hospitality of a parish communicates and embodies the presence, love and reconciliation of Christ who reaches out to all people.

- a** In what ways does the parish seek to welcome parishioners and visitors at liturgy?
- b** As well, how does the parish seek to welcome non-Catholic relatives and friends who gather for funerals, weddings, baptisms and other sacraments of the Church? Do we appropriately support the active participation of newcomers and visitors by placing some of the parts of the Mass in print or on screen?
- c** How do we welcome the penitent to the Sacrament of Penance and place people at ease, including with music or in other ways in the Second Rite of Reconciliation? How do we also welcome and celebrate Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Masses in schools, children's liturgies, the seasons of the year, and mark parish and liturgical feasts with welcome, care and beauty?
- d** If a new person came (or came back) to our parish, would anyone notice? What would we do, or could we do, to welcome that person? If a regular attender stopped coming would anyone notice? What would or could we do to inquire into his or her welfare and ensure we communicated that he or she was missed?
- e** Is our parish environment easy to navigate? Can visitors easily find parking, the entrance of the church, a text to follow along with, a warm welcome from the parish, parents' rooms and bathrooms, literature on Mass times and parish activities, and invitations to connection, community and spiritual conversation?
- f** A part of Christian hospitality is creating a beautiful environment in which people can gather and feel welcomed. Is our church beautiful? Is the church including the sanctuary free of unnecessary clutter? Is the church kept tidy and clean? Are our church and our parish properties in good repair?

*“A part of Christian hospitality is creating a beautiful environment in which people can gather and feel welcomed. Is our church beautiful?”*



Charles Poësson  
The Predication of Saint Peter, c. 1642

2.4 Review the homilies. St Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews proclaims, “[t]he Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

- a. In our liturgies as well as beyond, how do we communicate God’s Word and its ability to change lives?
- b. Do our homilies invite our congregations into deeper discipleship with Jesus by teaching important elements of Christian discipleship and suggesting practical steps we can take to deepen this personal relationship with Jesus in the midst of the Church?
- c. On the topic of homilies, Pope Francis requested from our priests that despite the busy-ness of parish life, “I presume to ask that each week a sufficient portion of personal and community time be dedicated to this task, even if less time has to be given to other important activities”.<sup>21</sup> In planning the week, is enough time being allocated to preparation of the homily? If the ordained minister is short of time, what can be done to help him so that this time becomes a focus of each day and week?
- d. Do we invest in our priests’ and deacons’ preaching by ensuring that they have the time and funds to participate in workshops and other formative activities through which preaching can be constantly renewed and enhanced?
- e. Can the preaching be clearly heard and received by the assembly?

<sup>21</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 145.

- 2.5** A practical evaluation tool to review the foundation of worship in your community is to consider how much practical support, time and priority the community gives to worship.
- a.** Are there any paid staff whose role explicitly includes support of worship? (This does not include the priest leading your community, an assistant priest or deacon).
  - b.** How much of the annual parish budget is spent on worship and the support of worship such as the formation of leaders and volunteers in liturgical ministries? Do we have funds to support this foundation for parish renewal?
  - c.** Of the ministries and groups in our parish or other Eucharistic community, how many of them are specifically engaged in supporting worship?
  - d.** Do we have any formation for our people on essential aspects of worship such understanding the Mass, deepening our appreciation and commitment to regular participation in the Sacrament of Penance, Adoration, and private prayer?
  - e.** Do we offer the Sacrament of Penance at times and for a duration that encourages and enables people to attend? Are people catechised on the sanctifying grace of Penance and encouraged to encounter the mercy of Jesus in this Sacrament? Do we increase the offering of Penance during penitential seasons such as Lent and Advent?
  - f.** Do we offer any formation for those involved in liturgical ministries including lectors, extraordinary ministers of communion, altar servers, acolytes, and musicians? Do we have funds available to invest in staff or programs who offer such formation?
  - g.** Do we have a Liturgy Committee to coordinate our worship together with the parish priest and other clergy?
  - h.** Do we take time and effort to discern which parishioners have talents and charisms for these liturgical ministries and invite them into this important service?





### *Step 3:*

## **Discern and Decide**

- 3.1 By now, you should have a clearer sense of how worship is expressed in the actions and priorities of your community. The next step is to discern and decide how God might be calling your particular community to strengthen its foundation of worship.
  - 3.2 We recall that discernment is about prayerfully separating good things you *are* called to do at this time from good things you are *not* called to do at this time. It involves gathering information and then, through prayer and discussion, making a decision about what you discern God is calling you to do. This involves being detached enough from your own plans and opinions that you have the freedom and docility to listen and respond to the Holy Spirit.
- Your parish or community may already be doing many of the good things outlined. However, there will also be actions that your community can take up to strengthen worship as a foundation of your identity as a parish. Many of these actions will also be applicable to migrant chaplaincies, shrines and ecclesial movements in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

## Strategy 1:

### Provide Formation for Volunteers in Liturgical Ministries

**Provide formation for all those involved in liturgical ministries** to help them to understand, in their minds and hearts, what they are doing. This includes formation for lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, musicians, acolytes and altar servers.

#### Resources

- The Archdiocese of Sydney's Liturgy Office is available for advice and formation in all areas of the liturgical life of the Archdiocese. Workshops can be provided on request, particularly in the areas of liturgical ministries or in any other area of liturgical education. For assistance, contact [liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9307 8360
- An excellent series of brochures is available from the Archdiocese of Melbourne on the following ministries: *The Reader of God's Word; Leading the Liturgy of the Word with Children; Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion During Mass; Ministry of Communion to the Sick; Ministry of Priest Celebrant; Commentators and Readers of Prayers of the Faithful; Ministry of Cantor and Song Leader; Ministry of the Sacristan; Ministry of Pastoral Visitation; Ministry of Preaching the Homily; Ministry of Liturgical Environment; Ministry of Serving at Mass; Ministry of Parish Music Coordinator; and Ministry of Parish Master of Ceremonies.* To order brochures, visit [www.cam1.org.au/evangelisation/News/NewsView/Article/21496/Liturgical-Brochure-Series#.X6PCXmgzZaR](http://www.cam1.org.au/evangelisation/News/NewsView/Article/21496/Liturgical-Brochure-Series#.X6PCXmgzZaR) or contact Proclaim: The Office for Mission Renewal, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, on (03) 9926 5761 or [mission@cam.org.au](mailto:mission@cam.org.au). Alternatively contact the Parish Renewal Team on (02) 9390 5330 or [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org)





## Strategy 2:

### Establish a Liturgy Team

Each parish can **establish a liturgy team, committee or similar** if not already in place, bringing together appropriate parish team members, music ministers, youth representatives, and other suitable lay leaders. The work of this liturgy team or committee is to include the preparation, coordination and the periodic evaluation of the beauty and solemnity of the liturgy, and the organisation of formation for liturgical ministers. This liturgical committee could also be represented on the Parish Pastoral Council.

#### Resources

- The Archdiocese of Sydney's Liturgy Office can help parishes establish liturgy teams and assist with other liturgical needs. Contact the Liturgy Office at [liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org), on (02) 9307 8360 or visit the website [www.liturgy.sydneycatholic.org](http://www.liturgy.sydneycatholic.org)



## Strategy 3:

### Provide Beautiful, Inspiring and Appropriate Liturgical Music

#### Action 1

**Musicians require formation in their ministry.** They need spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation to understand the Mass more deeply, and the purpose of their ministry; they also need to be aware of how to choose appropriate music and widen their repertoire of hymns, as well as how they can hone their technical skills.

#### Resources

- Arrange for your musicians to attend a liturgical music formation workshop in your area provided by the Parish Renewal Team within the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation in liaison with the Liturgy Office. Contact the Parish Renewal Team on (02) 9390 5330 or [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org)
- Parishes and other faith communities can engage with the conferences and resources of the Australian Pastoral Ministries Network, which promotes religious music in service of the Church in Australia, with a special focus on the use of Australian composition. For more information, visit [www.apmn.org.au](http://www.apmn.org.au) or contact Chris Janssen at [secretary@apmn.org.au](mailto:secretary@apmn.org.au) or 0410 345 367

#### Action 2

Consider combining with a number of nearby parishes to **employ a liturgical musician** to help support the liturgical music in your parish by coordinating practices, putting music in an appropriate key, widening the repertoire, and helping with the preparation of significant feasts and holy days. By combining with other parishes, local communities can defray the costs of such support. Parishes can also consider making an appeal in their community for financial support for this expertise, as there may be individuals who feel called to support this endeavour.

#### Resources

- The Archdiocesan Development and Fundraising Office can offer support in making financial appeals for particular ministries and works of your parish. For more information regarding such fundraising, email [fundraising@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:fundraising@sydneycatholic.org) or phone 1800 753 959
- The Archdiocesan Parish Support and Development Team can provide parishes with recruitment support such as clear job descriptions, and contract and remuneration advice for roles. For more information and support, contact the Parish Support and Development Team at [parish.support@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parish.support@sydneycatholic.org) or on (02) 9390 5233

## Strategy 3 (continued):

### Provide Beautiful, Inspiring and Appropriate Liturgical Music

#### Action 3

Consider how the parish can **identify new musicians to contribute to this important ministry**. Instead of only making general appeals for volunteers, it can be worthwhile to take the time to discover the musicians in your parish, invite them personally to be part of the ministry, address any concerns they might have, and underline the importance of this ministry in the worship and discipleship of the parish community. Sometimes it can be helpful to create smaller groups that can serve on alternate weeks, so that different leaders can bring their gifts to the enrichment of the liturgy. Some parishes also designate a Sunday when parishioners are invited to nominate ways that they may be able to volunteer and support the parish – musicians should be included in the list of volunteers invited.

#### Action 4

**Provide formation in mission** to the leaders of your music ministries.

Resources

- Invite the leaders of your music ministry to be part of forming your parish vision at a *Parishes for Mission* day, or include them in any leadership formation you provide in the parish through the initiatives identified in the chapter on Leadership. For example, encourage them to attend the Areté Centre for the ‘Missionary Leadership’ course discussed on page 103

#### Action 5

**Assess the sound equipment in your parish.** Do you have the right microphones and speakers? Does music distort through the speakers? Is the music too loud or too soft? Are there poor acoustics or ‘deaf spots’ in the church? Does your church have a hearing loop?

Resources

- For support regarding parish sound equipment, contact the Parish Support and Development Team at [parish.support@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parish.support@sydneycatholic.org) or on (02) 9390 5233



## Strategy 3 (continued):

### Provide Beautiful, Inspiring and Appropriate Liturgical Music

Parishes should **engage sacred music** that corresponds to the solemnity of the occasion, provides for the active participation of the assembly, lifts the heart toward God, and expresses the prayer of those assembled. The lyrics, composition and performance of this sacred music should relate to and illumine God's Word and saving action. Great importance should be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of peoples and abilities of each liturgical assembly. Live music is always preferred to recorded music, noting that the human voice and the organ are the Church's two favourite instruments. Consider investing in resources that can help you with the range of sacred music available to your musicians.

*Note: It is necessary to comply with copyright requirements for using and streaming liturgical music.*

#### Resources

- *Catholic Worship Book II* which can be ordered from [www.mustardseed.org.au](http://www.mustardseed.org.au)
- Liturgia, available at [www.liturgybrisbane.net.au](http://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au)
- LiturgyHelp, available at [www.liturgyhelp.com](http://www.liturgyhelp.com)
- For a list of recommended songs approved by the ACBC, go to <https://catholic.org.au/nlmc/recommended-hymns-and-songs-approved-by-the-acbc>



## Strategy 4:

### Offer More and Varied Opportunities for Worship

Action 1

**Offer regular Adoration in your parish.** Many parishes offer this in conjunction with the Sacrament of Penance so that parishioners can encounter the love and mercy of God in the Blessed Sacrament as well as in the sacrament of forgiveness.

Resources

- For prayers and related resources, visit <http://www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/link/e-pea.html>
- The Liturgy Office of the Archdiocese of Sydney can offer support for fostering other celebrations of prayer that prepare for and harmonise with the Sacred Liturgy. For more information, contact the team at [liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9307 8360

Action 2

**Review the times and availability of the Sacrament of Penance.** Where this Sacrament is only offered once a week, consider the people who might be excluded from attending due to work and family obligations and consider making additional times available. For example, many people can be excluded from attending when the Sacrament is only offered on a Saturday morning.

If the Sacrament is not well frequented, you might consider raising awareness and opportunities during Lent, provide catechesis on Penance, and survey the parishioners on when would be a good time to offer this Sacrament or why they are not attending.

Coordinate confession times with surrounding parishes and advertise these so penitents have maximum opportunity to participate. Consider doing and advertising confessional swaps or getting a visiting confessor so that parishioners who feel awkward confessing to their parish priest have another option from time to time (e.g. the Second Rite of Reconciliation).



**Strategy 4 (continued):****Offer More and Varied Opportunities for Worship**

Without diminishing the role of the priest as the leader of the community's worship, each parish can **provide formation for lay people in leading prayer** within parish groups and ministries as well as open opportunities for experiencing different ways of prayer.

## Resources

- 'Faith Circles' is an initiative of the Diocese of Wollongong for small groups to meet weekly to pray with Scripture. For more information and downloadable resources, visit [www.dow.org.au/media-resources/faith-circles](http://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/faith-circles)
- Sycamore offers a short course in prayer and the spiritual life. Videos and additional resources are available at no cost at [www.sycamore.fm/pathways/b-formation-pathways/how-to-pray](http://www.sycamore.fm/pathways/b-formation-pathways/how-to-pray)
- Consider including some other forms of prayer in your parish that can be led by individuals or small groups:
  - *Lectio Divina* ('divine reading'), a form of prayer with Scripture. For a step-by-step guide, visit [www.jamberooabbey.org.au/prayer/lectio-divina-praying-with-the-sacred-scriptures](http://www.jamberooabbey.org.au/prayer/lectio-divina-praying-with-the-sacred-scriptures)
  - Liturgy of the Hours. For the full text, visit <https://universalis.com/Australia>
  - Novenas. For a comprehensive list, visit [www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/novenas-75](http://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/novenas-75)
  - The Rosary. For prayers and scriptural reflections, visit <https://mycatholic.life/catholic-prayers/the-most-holy-rosary>

Action 3

Action 4

**Review the opportunities for personal and group prayer** beyond the liturgy of the Mass including Eucharistic Adoration, the Rosary, the Divine Mercy devotion, *Lectio Divina*, the Angelus, novenas, and Christian Meditation, fasting and penances, praise and worship, among others.



## Strategy 4 (continued):

### Offer More and Varied Opportunities for Worship

#### Action 5

Make available **introductory resources on prayer and spirituality as well as devotional items** for purchase within the parish, in collaboration with Catholic booksellers and retailers.

Resources

- Resources on prayer and devotional items are available at the Mustard Seed Bookshop ([www.mustardseed.org.au](http://www.mustardseed.org.au)), Pauline Books and Media ([www.paulinebooks.com.au](http://www.paulinebooks.com.au)), St Paul's Publications ([www.secure.stpauls.com.au](http://www.secure.stpauls.com.au)), and Church Stores ([www.churchstores.com.au](http://www.churchstores.com.au))

#### Action 6

Consider a commitment to at least **one Holy Hour each week to pray for vocations**, including to the priesthood, consecrated life and married life.

Resources

- The Archdiocesan Vocation Centre is available for advice and resources for promoting such an initiative. For more information, go to [www.vocationcentre.org.au](http://www.vocationcentre.org.au) or contact the Vocation Centre at [vocations@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:vocations@sydneycatholic.org) or on (02) 9307 8424

#### Action 7

Offer a **retreat day** or reflection half-day to **help people to learn to pray** or deepen their prayer life.

Resources

- Support for this can be found through the Parish Renewal Team in the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation. Contact the team at [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5330



## Strategy 5:

### Invest Time in Preparing for Feast Days

Every act of worship is important but feast days relating to your own parish are a particularly special time to rejoice, to reflect on the identity of your parish and on what your patron means for your mission. Such days provide the community with a chance to meet, pray and celebrate together. **Take extra time to prepare the music, readings, homily, and hospitality**, and decorate the church, so that this feast day has a great significance for all people within the parish and is known by those beyond the parish as a form of invitation and evangelisation.

## Strategy 6:

### Organise a Procession

**Processions give testimony to the joy and beauty of the Christian life.** They have a wonderful evangelising influence on both those who are active and involved in the procession as well as those who witness them. They are a way of giving praise and also allowing the wider community to witness a beautiful, creative and joyful demonstration of Catholic life. Many parishes and ethnic groups in Sydney already hold processions on the feast day of their parish's patron, or some other saint who is significant to the community. They can also be held on a significant Marian feast such as Our Lady Help of Christians who is the patroness of Australia, or another significant solemnity such as on the feast of Corpus Christi, Christ the King or Palm Sunday.



*HEALING AND PROCESSION  
AGAINST THE PLAGUE IN 1604*

- ONBEKEND VLAANDEREN, c. 1480s  
PHOTOGRAPHER: DOMINIQUE PROVOST  
CC BY-NC-ND 4.0



## Strategy 7:

### Provide Formation in Worship

**Provide the faithful with good formation** concerning the Mass, the Sacrament of Penance, Adoration, sacred music, and prayer so that they can grow in discipleship.

#### Resources

- The Archdiocese's Liturgy Office provides formation and support for clergy and laity in the theology and practice of the Sacred Liturgy. For information, contact [liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9307 8360
- Word on Fire ministry has produced a number of outstanding series on worship including *The Mass*, *The Sacraments*, *Untold Blessing: Three Paths to Holiness*, *Conversion: Following the Call of Christ*, and *The Eucharist*. For more information, visit [www.wordonfire.org](http://www.wordonfire.org) or purchase DVDs at [www.mustardseed.org.au](http://www.mustardseed.org.au)
- Dr Brant Pitre has created an excellent resource, *A Biblical Explanation of the Mass*. His talks can be streamed online at [https://catholicproductions.com/collections/brant-pitre/digital-video?sort\\_by=created-descending](https://catholicproductions.com/collections/brant-pitre/digital-video?sort_by=created-descending)
- At the St Paul Centre for Biblical Theology, Dr Scott Hahn has produced a range of biblical studies, including on Scripture and the Mass, which can be accessed via streaming or DVD and are accompanied by a leader's guide for small group discussion. For more information, visit [www.stpaulcentre.com](http://www.stpaulcentre.com)
- Sycamore provides series on a range of topics, and these can be used to provide formation for small groups. The resource is adaptable with optional modules, and covers topics including sacramental preparation. Sycamore resources are free of charge. For more information, see [www.sycamore.fm](http://www.sycamore.fm)



## Strategy 8:

### Provide Liturgical Resources

#### Action 1

**Liturgical resources can be shared and exchanged** between parish liturgical teams or committees and Religious Education Coordinators in associated schools, including approved liturgical music and the interchange of school and parish choirs as suitable and opportune. The liturgical and musical expertise of our schools can be a pathway for parents into the life of our parishes.

#### Action 2

Encourage preparation for and full participation in the Mass by **making available the revised Weekday and Sunday Missals** for use or purchase, and/or **publishing the readings in the parish bulletin**. The **Divine Office**, available in hardcopy and online, is also to be made available for prayer.

Resources

- Missals and the Divine Office are available for purchase from the Mustard Seed Bookshop, at [www.mustardseed.org.au](http://www.mustardseed.org.au)
- The Daily Readings and the Divine Office are available online for free on the Universalis website, at [www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com)

#### Action 3

Invest in a **subscription to a liturgical resource** that assists in the preparation of liturgies.

Resource

- 'Liturgia' is an excellent tool for accessing liturgical texts and preparing liturgies, with associated booklets and PowerPoint presentations. It provides resources for preaching, music suggestions, liturgy preparation tools, and texts for every liturgy of the year. For more information, visit <https://www.liturgia.com.au/for-parishes> or use the contact form at <https://www.liturgia.com.au/contact-us>

**Strategy 9:****Improve Homilies**

Consider ways of prayer and planning that can assist in the **preparation of homilies**.

**Resources**

- Some ordained ministers may find it helpful to prepare homilies with the assistance of a preparation group, inviting four or five trusted priests and/or laity with whom they can work easily, to pray and reflect on the Scriptures and to be closely attuned to the ordinary experiences, questions and concerns of parish or community members
- Pope Francis provided extensive instruction on preaching in *Evangelii Gaudium* because “so many concerns have been expressed about this important ministry, and we cannot simply ignore them”. Spend time studying Pope Francis’ word on preaching so that it might further strengthen worship in the community: [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)
- Homilies are prepared by prayerful reading and listening to the Scriptures that enables the homilist’s interpretation in the light of faith. This preparation includes close study of the text, consultation of Scripture commentaries and homiletic aids, clear composition of the homily with due emphasis on the life of Christ, review, and practice of its delivery. It is important to be attentive to the context and lived realities of those to whom the Word is preached. Ordained ministers who do not have sufficient time to prepare due to other demands might consider whether they need additional staff, or to delegate some tasks in order to invest more time in preaching
- The Holy See’s Congregation for Clergy provides homily notes for each Sunday of the year at [www.clerus.va/content/clerus/en/biblioteca.html](http://www.clerus.va/content/clerus/en/biblioteca.html)

**Strategy 9 (continued):****Improve Homilies****Action 2**

**Seek constructive feedback** from parishioners who will, in charity, be honest, so as to improve preaching in the Mass and within the life of the community.

**Action 3**

**Create a way in which parishioners can freely report** any difficulties in hearing the preaching or the music that supports the community's worship, such as via a member of the parish liturgy committee. It is important to assess the quality of sound systems and ensure there is a 'T loop' installed. PowerPoint slides can be used with prudence if parishioners struggle with hearing or understanding the homily.

**Strategy 10:****Create a Culture of Hospitality****Action 1**

**A culture of hospitality** at every level is vital to parish renewal, **including at Mass and other liturgical celebrations** where people are gathered and newcomers can be welcomed. Parishes are encouraged to consider layers of welcome, extending from the car park, to church entrances and inside the church, as shared in the chapter on Community on page 137.

**Action 2**

A number of **practical actions for welcome and hospitality** are also suggested in the chapter on Community including parish welcome packs, projected or printed versions of the Order of Mass to support participation, and welcome initiatives following Masses to enrich the experience of welcome and Christian belonging.

## *Step 4:* **Act**

In building up our worship and union with Christ, the parish priest can work together with others such as those involved in liturgical ministries or the Liturgy Committee to support the encounter with Christ, for those who regularly participate and those who can be invited to rediscover the beauty of meeting Christ in the celebration of His mysteries and in practices of prayer and devotion.



