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UPCOMING:

New liturgy unit at ACU—Rev Prof Mark R. Francis, Catholic Theological Union President and expert in liturgy and culture will teach THEL620: Liturgical Inculturation in intensive face-to-face mode at ACU's Strathfield campus and online (6, 7, 9, 10 July 2020). Register as part of your Master's degree or Graduate Certificate, or audit the unit by contacting ftp.pg@acu.edu.au.

Mark Francis will offer public lectures and clergy formation days: 13–14 July (Sydney), 16–17 July (Melbourne), 20–21 July (Brisbane).

The Australian Academy of Liturgy will host liturgical experts Paul Turner on 11 March and Mark Francis on 8 July at ACU Strathfield from 4.30–6.30pm. Contact liturgy.cathedral@cdob.org.au.

Please email us for more information, or to register to hear about upcoming events.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The rate of screen-usage in Australia's churches is among the highest in the world.

Shifting social norms regarding the place of technology in our daily lives and expectations of interactivity in education, entertainment, and almost every aspect of society, means that attention must be paid to the extent, purpose and appropriateness of technology's increasing presence in liturgy.

In this issue, Stephen Downs calls for balance in our approach to incorporating technology's possibilities in liturgical celebrations. While not allowing technology to become a distraction from God as the main focus of liturgy, can we also consider how clever innovations used appropriately can facilitate effective worship?

Rather than enacting a mobile-phone ban during liturgy, Fr. Paul Turner describes how embracing the possibilities of mobile

technology can work to draw assembly-members into the liturgy via their devices.

Eileen D. Crowley's feature article invites us to consider how technology can serve as art through projected still-photographs which transform liturgical spaces for celebration in creative, beautiful and moving ways.

As we acknowledge the continued and increasing role of technology in our lives, thoughtful analysis of its organic (i.e., non-intrusive) and artistic use in our liturgical celebrations is essential.



Professor Clare V. Johnson

Director, ACU Centre for Liturgy
Professor of Liturgical Studies & Sacramental Theology, Faculty of Theology & Philosophy

FROM OUR BOARD OF ADVISORS

Technology has not only changed the material world but the way we relate to the world and to each other.

At the very least we need to engage critically with it, including its role in the liturgy. On the one hand technology has the potential to implement in ways previously unknown, Vatican II's famous call for the People of God to take "full, conscious, and active part in liturgical celebrations". For many of us this has been limited to improved sound systems and digital slides of hymn and prayer texts, though it can be much more. On the other hand, technology can quickly take control of our environment and shape our feelings and thoughts - even a humble Sunday Mass "slide show" can feel like this. A

major reason for being cautious is liturgy's call for us to be attentive to the gracious presence of God in our lives, which is unpredictable and beyond human control. This is another reason why formation in how to celebrate the liturgy is more important than ever.



Associate Professor Stephen Downs

Head of School, Theology, Australian Catholic University



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NEWS AND RECENT EVENTS

Vatican II research

In December 2019, Professor Clare Johnson was invited to present a paper on 'Scripture in the Prayer of the Church (Lectionary)' at a colloquium at Villanova University USA, on the preparation, celebration and reception of Vatican II, as part of a large international research collaboration spearheaded by University of Tübingen, Philosophische-Theologische Hochschule, Vallendar, and Osnabrück University. This project will produce new commentaries on the documents of Vatican II and papers on the reception and continuing relevance of the Council from five continental research groups.

North American Academy of Liturgy

Dr Jason McFarland attended the annual meeting of the North American Academy of Liturgy in

January in Atlanta USA. Along with Dr Lim Swee-Hong (Emmanuel College, Toronto) Jason convened the founding gathering of the Asia-Pacific Academy of Liturgy. Jason has also been named the new Editor of the *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy*.

Speaking Awesome Words for School Lectors

Preparing liturgies takes considerable time and effort, particularly in school communities. Students and staff involved in the ministry of Lector have an opportunity to proclaim God's Word in a way that can inspire and form the assembly. Investing in a group of trained Lectors within the school community ensures that the Liturgy of the Word can penetrate the heart effectively and powerfully. *Speaking Awesome Words for School Lectors* is a three-hour workshop which seeks to develop the skills of Lectors in Catholic secondary schools.

If you are interested in hosting this workshop at your school, please contact the Centre for Liturgy.

Pastoral Formation Day Be not afraid: preparing and celebrating sacraments of healing

In this valuable day of liturgical formation, ACU Centre for Liturgy experts and leading practitioners investigate Catholic beliefs about the healing power of prayer and sacraments. All are welcome. Cost is \$60 (including lunch) and registration is essential. To host this day in your area or for more information please contact the Centre for Liturgy. For the current schedule of offerings go to acu.edu.au/pastoral_formation_days.

LITURGY SPOTLIGHT

Large-scale photography can serve as liturgical art for night-time liturgies

If your liturgy committee wanted to create a soothing, healing environment for a night liturgy for people who were suffering from stress, depression, grief, trauma, or other emotional consequences resulting from life's hard times, how might you engage the arts to create that space?

Of course, gentle prelude music selected and played by sensitive pastoral musicians would help to create a calming sonic environment as people enter.

What about the visual environment? Often, churches at night can be poorly lit or just a bit dreary, since any stained glass or art glass might be invisible. How might we integrate into dark worship spaces some art that is bright and beautiful? And what might that art be? Photography, I suggest.

Research shows that being in the midst of the greenery of nature can help reduce people's blood pressure and stress. Intriguingly, related research shows that even looking at photographs of nature can be soothing to people, including people recovering from surgery. So, how might a liturgy committee bring photographs

of nature into that proposed night-time worship at a scale larger than just a vase or two of live flowers?

Using high-quality photographs of nature projected at an unexpected scale across the church walls has proven valuable in helping to create a calming environment for four ecumenical Liturgies for Hard Times on which I recently collaborated with member of, All Saints Episcopal Church in Chicago.

Photographs of this projected media art do not do justice to what it is like to walk into this light 'painted' space at night. Here is a comment from a participant: 'The large-scale nature photos have been a beautiful surprise. They make me feel as though people have made a special effort to create a welcoming space.' Another said the photography created 'a beautiful context.' Still another wrote afterward, 'I loved that it was a feast of the senses—visual of trees, rich music, intentional reading, candles, quiet (and later) treats.' Others expressed delight and wonder after experiencing the photography as just one of the many liturgical arts integrated within the worship.



Late-afternoon text projection



Before the first liturgy in September 2019



Projection on bell tower walls

For the fourth Liturgy for Hard Times, held in late January 2020, the liturgy committee's question was, 'What kind of nature imagery might be truly welcoming to people coming into this liturgy from the deep darkness and cold of a winter's night?' After testing many possible images (a process that needs to happen many weeks before any liturgy, because you can never predict what will work), the answer came: copyright-free photos of crocuses, the flowers that signal the arrival of Spring across many US states that experience harsh winters. The idea of the symbol of a crocus then gave

inspiration to the theme of that night's liturgy, 'Hold on to Hope.' Connecting to the photography within the service, a photograph of yellow crocuses rising out of snow crystals graced the cover of the worship aid. (See Newsletter cover photo taken before the January 2020 liturgy.)

Using borrowed media projectors (two 3000- and one 5000-lumen), we had experimented and learned over time that we could almost cover the width of the chancel/choir area walls and apse with a single photograph. Because this worship community had decades ago unscrewed and arranged their 19th-century pews in a diamond shape around the altar, choir members on the chancel side asked that they, too, might look at something beautiful. For the fourth liturgy, we found we were able to nestle photos of yellow crocuses in the corners opposite where the singers were leading the assembly's song.

Two decades ago, I coined a name for the use of media art integrated into worship spaces. I call it 'liturgical media art.' Although many churches have since used media art—whether photography or videography—for *communications* purposes, the photography used in the case of these Liturgies for Hard Times represents the use of media that functions as art, in fact, as *liturgical art* for worshipers' contemplation and as liturgical environmental art.

The simple environmental use of high-quality, large-scale photographs used throughout liturgy—as unchanging liturgical art—worked well for these

Liturgies for Hard Times. Because the images were projected on a scale appropriate to the worship space, the nature photography brought beauty into our night liturgies. And, as worshipers gazed occasionally at these photos before or during the service, these nature images, we hope, allowed stressed-out participants to unwind in the beauty of God's creation and to enter more deeply into the community's prayer.

The photos in this article were all taken by Eileen D. Crowley who gives permission for their one-time use in the ACU Centre for Liturgy's March 2020 Newsletter's "Liturgy Spotlight."



Eileen D. Crowley, PhD

Associate Professor of Liturgy, Arts and Communications, Catholic Theological Union (Chicago)

She is the author of many articles on the topic of liturgy and technology, and two books, *A Moving Word: Media Art in Worship* (Augsburg, 2006) and *Liturgical Art for a Media Culture* (Liturgical, 2007).

CONTEMPORARY QUESTIONS

Mobile phones at mass

Asking the assembled faithful to put away their mobile phones before the beginning of mass is counterproductive.

Many people use their devices to review the scripture readings, pray the Liturgy of the Hours, or pursue spiritual reading. Of course, some abuse these privileges, but at the cathedral for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph in the United States of America, the cantor greets the people at every weekend mass with a reference to their phones.

For example, 'Good Morning. Welcome to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception to celebrate the Fifth Sunday of Lent. I invite you to look up our website kcgolddome.org. Under "Today" you will find the music and readings for today's mass. You will also find guidelines for receiving communion, our tour book, and the location of restrooms. Please silence your devices.'

The announcement aims to engage media, not eliminate it; to include the proper use of smart devices, not to ignore them.

Under "Today" the cathedral hosts much practical information: the opportunity to submit requests for prayer, options for electronic giving, the history of the cathedral, the mass schedule, a blog, a listing of petitions in the Universal Prayer, and information about the young adults' group.

'Today' has become one of the most visited pages on the parish website. Upon hearing the announcement, only a few people can be seen to pull out their phones, but the statistics indicate that they do—whether before they come to church or during the course of the mass. In this simple way, the cathedral aims to seamlessly incorporate the benefits of technology into the practical needs of the faithful at worship.



Fr Paul Turner

Pastor of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, and director of the Office of Divine Worship for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. He holds a doctorate in sacred theology from Sant' Anselmo in Rome and is the author of numerous books, including *Guide for Celebrating Sunday Mass* (Liturgy Training Publications, 2019) and *Light in the Darkness: Preparing Better Catholic Funerals* (Liturgical Press, 2017).

Engage our expertise

Can we help you to improve liturgical celebration in your parish?

The ACU Centre for Liturgy provides specialised training and formation workshops for parish ministers and liturgical musicians on a variety of topics.

Would your teachers and religious education leaders like to deepen their understanding of the liturgy?

We tailor workshops and professional development sessions to the specific needs of schools and Catholic education offices.

Would you like to develop your skills as a presider at liturgy further?

We provide specialised professional development sessions for clergy on a range of topics from presidential singing to the art of presiding at worship, and the craft of preaching.

Bring our experts to you

Our academics and specialists are available to deliver keynote addresses, public lectures, and conference workshops on topics of interest to your organisation.

Study liturgy and sacramental theology

Through ACU's Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, we offer academic courses in liturgical studies and sacramental theology, and we supervise Higher Degree Research students in liturgy, sacramental theology and the sacred arts.

The Liturgy Nexus

The Liturgy Nexus is an online network for professional Catholic liturgists and those working in areas related to liturgy, sacraments and the sacred arts. It is a subscription-based, closed network for conversation on liturgical issues, resource sharing and problem solving.

Contact us

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The Liturgy Nexus for Schools

It is vital that children and young people in Catholic schools experience rich liturgies to nurture their spiritual and liturgical life. Teachers and those tasked with the responsibility of preparing liturgies often need enhanced liturgical training. The Liturgy Nexus for Schools offers support and information and is a 'go to' place when teachers have questions about celebrating liturgies in Catholic schools. The Liturgy Nexus for Schools is a highway of communication that goes from strength to strength. Recently a large group of Religious Education teachers from Sydney Catholic Schools joined the Nexus. Commenting on this development, Louisa Cataldo from *Sydney Catholic Schools* said, 'I highly recommend Liturgy Nexus for schools as a most convenient and professional forum for all things liturgy. Whether you are a seasoned REC or beginning teacher faced with preparing liturgy for the first time, this forum will be able to answer questions and provide a network to assist the development of liturgical knowledge and practice.'

To become a member of the Liturgy Nexus or Liturgy Nexus for Schools, apply on the Centre for Liturgy website. Membership is granted to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria. The membership fee is \$30.00 per year, not pro-rated, and can be renewed on or before March 1 each year.

Support our work in rural and low-income parishes

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