

Liturgical Content in Newsletters from Selected Catholic Parishes in Bedford

Bedford is a county town located in the eastern region of United Kingdom; with a population of around 80,000 and 160,000 residents living in the Borough of Bedford. There are many Christian communities and churches, six of which are Roman Catholic. Four of these are English parishes: The Holy Child and St. Joseph and Our Lady of Ransom; Holy Cross; Christ the King, SS. Philip and James. The parish of Saint Francesca Cabrini serves the large local Italian community, and there is also the Polish parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Cuthbert. All the parishes are in the diocese of Northampton under the pastoral charge of His Excellency Bishop Peter Boyle.

In 1850 Pope Pius IX re-established the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in Great Britain with the Bull of *Universalis Ecclesiae*, and the Diocese of Northampton was created. At that time it covered a larger area than it does currently, as it included the whole of East Anglia. In 1976 the diocese was made smaller by the creation of a separate Diocese of East Anglia covering Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire¹. In order to gain an insight into the life of these parish communities it is instructive to examine the parishes newsletters and bulletins, and of the six Bedford parishes, four publish a newsletter on a regular basis.

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¹ PAULUS VI, *Constitutio apostolica "Quod Oecumenicum"*, AAS 68 (1976), 311-312, PAUL VI, *Decree "Quod Ecumenicum"*, in: <https://www.rcdea.org.uk/previous-bishops/>, [12. 09. 2017]; B. DUNSIRE – P. WYMN, *Northampton. Diocesan Directory 2013*, Northampton 2012, 1: "The Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton, in southern England, consists of «the counties of Bedford, Buckingham and Northampton, and that part of Berkshire (formerly in Buckinghamshire) that lies to the North of the River Thames». (This last part means the town of Slough)".

1. In this Section, the Non-liturgical Content of the Newsletters will be examined

In the parish of St. Joseph and Our Lady one can detect a flourishing Christian community as evidenced by the many activities and events organised by this parish. The newsletter itself is titled *St. Joseph's, Bedford and Our Lady's, Kempston*. It is printed weekly and comprises one A4 printout with information on both sides. Information regarding the clergy and how to contact them is presented beneath the heading.

There exist several groups that promote religious life and formation by arranging meetings, often on a weekly basis. The programme includes a variety of activities ranging from Bible Studies, DVD presentations and talks given by invited guests. Here are some examples:

There are few groups that cultivate religious formation through various meetings usually with the weekly occurrence. The programme they incorporate concerns a different topic, from bible studies through the DVD presentation and ending with talks by invited guests. Here are some examples²:

- a/ «Bible Time Line Course» - this is a course on the history of salvation, which takes the participants along on a journey starting from the beginning of the Bible and ending with the Messianic fulfilment;
- b/ «Life in Spirit» is a series of DVDs which discusses the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The presentation is displayed in the church of Our Lady;
- c/ «SPUC Talks» - these are organised by SPUC which is the oldest and largest Pro-Life group in the United Kingdom, and includes monthly quiet vigils of prayer held outside the local hospital;
- d/ «CAFOD Retreat» is an event organised by the Catholic charitable organisation. CAFOD, where Pope Francis' pronouncements on poverty, inequality and global family are discussed. Money is raised to provide overseas aid to people living in poverty.

The Newsletter regularly contains information about upcoming pilgrimages organised by the parish or by a Catholic travel agency. In the July 2017 issue, for instance, there is mention of pilgrimage to Krakow, one to Lourdes, and three separate pilgrimages to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham (one to pray for the sick; the second is a pro-life pilgrimage and the third a general parish visit)³.

² *Newsletter St. Joseph's, Bedford and Our Lady's, Kempston*, 11 June 2017, 2, in: <http://www.stjosephsbedfordchurch.com>, [20. 09. 2017].

³ *Ibidem*, 18 June 2017, 1-2; *ibidem*, 4 June 2017, 1; *ibidem*, 10 September 2017, 2.

Occasionally at the end of the newsletter, a quote a spiritual message from the Pope or a saint can be found, as in the newsletter issued on the 12th Sunday of the Year, where the following quote of reassurance from St. Frances of Assisi was included: “Do not fear what may happen tomorrow. The same loving Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and every day. Either he will shield you from suffering or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace then and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings”⁴. In the newsletter of the 14th Sunday, Pope Francis exhortation to prayer and meditation is included: “Men and women of contemplation, who, with the eyes of the heart fixed on the Lord, can see what others, caught up in the concerns of this world cannot”⁵.

At the bottom of the second page information about the preceding week’s offertories is provided as well as a message of gratitude and acknowledgement.

The next parish is that of Christ the King, and at the top of the newsletter the usual information as to name of the priest and means of contact can be found, together with a small illustration of the church.

This parish also organises quite a few pilgrimages, two of which deserve particular mention. Both are to the Shire of Our Lady at Walsingham, but the first is specifically for those who are sick and all the local parishes can participate, whereas the second pilgrimage is aimed at grandparents, and is an initiative which seeks to promote healthy and strong family relationships. In the last message, the participant is encouraged to bring a picnic⁶.

The parish encourages individual and community prayer, providing considerable information about special intentions. Firstly, prayers for the sick are included in every issue and a list of those in poor health is published. In the event of the death of a parish member, there is always a message expressing condolences to family and friends with reassurance of remembrance in prayers. There are also invitations to participate in prayer meetings, such as the Catholic Prayer Festival, Young Catholic Adults Weekend, Annual Rosary Rally. Young adults are particularly exhorted to pray⁷.

⁴ Ibidem, 25 June 2017, 2.

⁵ Ibidem, 9 July 2017, 2.

⁶ *Newsletter Parish of Christ the King*, 1-9 July 2017, in: <http://www.christthekingchurchbedford.com/news.htm>, [16. 07. 2017].

⁷ Ibidem, 19-27 August 2017, in: <http://www.christthekingchurchbedford.com/news.htm>, [12. 09. 2017].

One interesting feature in the newsletter is the information relating to Charitable organisations. One example is a joint event, the Golf Charity Day, organised in collaboration with the Parish of St. Philip and James. There are also requests for help and active participation in parish organised events, such as the requests for “wheelbarrow operators” during building work, assisting in decorating the house of an elderly parishioner or providing a lift for children to and from school⁸.

At the end of the newsletter (just as in the parish of St. Joseph) there is the customary expression of thanks for the parishioners’ generosity, and the amount collected is stated.

The third parish under consideration is that of the Holy Cross. Firstly, the newsletter features general information which is a common denominator in all such bulletins (church address, mailing and phone number of priest and deacons). Beneath this, there are two distinct columns, with the first containing the Mass time-table for the week and the second features the readings for that Sunday’s Masses, the Psalm response and the Gospel Acclamation. There is also time to celebrate sacrament of confession⁹.

The rest of the newsletter includes information about the sacramental life within the Parish, especially dates of planned celebrations such as First Holy Communion and Confirmation, and all the details relevant to these ceremonies.

Participation in parish life is encouraged by means of invitations to a variety of meetings, such as «Tea at the Priory», «Welcomers’» group meeting, «Sunday Evening Ecumenical Services» and the «Jubilee Celebration»¹⁰. There are also clubs and events such as «The Friendship Club» which allows parishioners to come together in a relaxed setting and simply enjoy themselves. The «Catholic Grandparents Association» seeks to integrate the more elderly members of the Catholic community. Regular «Nights Quiz» are also held and a warm invitation is issued¹¹. In parish newsletters, the timing of these meetings and the details of their organization are given.

The last page is divided into two columns and includes mostly liturgical information to be described in the following section. However, it also

⁸ Ibidem, 17-25 June 2017, in: <http://www.christthekingchurchbedford.com/news.htm>, [29. 06. 2017].

⁹ *Holy Cross Parish Newsletter*, 6th -7th May 2017, 1, in: <http://www.holycrossbedford.org.uk>, [20. 09. 2017].

¹⁰ Ibidem, 5th -6th August 2017, 2-3.

¹¹ Ibidem, 8th -9th July 2017, 2-3.

includes the names of the sick in parish, of those recently deceased and other special intentions (for example anniversaries important event). The lists of names appear to be longer than in other parishes in Bedford¹².

The fourth parish to be described is the Polish Parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Cuthbert. It produces a two-sided newsletter once a fortnight. In addition to the information about the priest and provision of contact numbers, there is a request from the parish priest for the parishioners to provide him with their email address so that the newsletter can be sent electronically, in the hope that this will encourage active participation in parish life.

Equally, in order to revive spiritual life and promote a living faith, the newsletter includes information about the Catholic Press, giving details of the names and prices of the various Catholic magazines on sale, such as «Gość Niedzielny», «Mały Gość», «Rożaniec», «Tak - Rodzinie» and «Anioł Stróż». The bulletin of the Polish parish in Bedford also contains e-mail addresses of pages with interesting biblical commentaries and reflections on Christian life¹³.

There is also an announcement about the availability of hymn books and missals, encouraging parishioners to make use of them in order to be able to participate more fully in Holy Mass, but also a reminder that they should leave them in the church when leaving as they are church property. The newsletter also mentions a list of names placed in the porch of people who have made donations for the upkeep of the church. These are given in alphabetical order and the amount donated is specified, together with a message of gratitude to all those who support the church. At the end of the calendar year, the newsletter features a financial report for the preceding year¹⁴.

2. In this Section, the Liturgical Content in the Newsletters will be discussed

2.1. Parish of St. Joseph and Our Lady

At the top of the newsletter, the name and number of the Sunday's position in the liturgical year is given accompanied by a relevant illustration. One example of this is a picture of the gathering of the apostles

¹² Ibidem, 11th -12th March 2017, 4.

¹³ *Wiadomości Polskiej Parafii w Bedford* 1479, 1481, in: <http://ppb.org.uk>, [20. 09. 2017].

¹⁴ Ibidem 1464; ibidem 1477.

together with holy Mary as they await the Holy Spirit on the feast of Pentecost¹⁵. Another example is an illustration of the hand of God the Father, with God the Son blessing the earth and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove hovering above the world on the feast of the Holy Spirit¹⁶. On the 12th Sunday of the Liturgical Year the picture showed the apostles St. Peter (holding keys) and St. Paul (holding a sword) to commemorate the feast of the two apostles¹⁷.

Beside the name of the Sunday position and illustration, there is a timetable for the weekly masses, and beneath that, printed in bold font, there is the line of the chorus for the responsorial psalm for that particular Sunday. Equally in bold is information regarding the times of confession. Parishioners can also discover from the first page information such as which Sunday of the liturgical year it is, who is responsible for the floral arrangements and cleaning in the week, and who is responsible for the children's liturgy.

The major part of the newsletter is dedicated to the organisation of the everyday life of the parish and provides vital information about upcoming events and the need for both participants and volunteers to help in the planning stage. A typical example of this is information relating to the celebration of the First Holy Communion, such as the date, the need for prayer, a request to leave sufficient space in the pews for family and friends of the communicants, together with an expression of thanks to the catechists and parents and all those involved in preparing for the occasion.

There are details about forthcoming pilgrimages and a request for volunteers to welcome parishioners as they enter the church and join the «Welcomers'» group. Children, especially new communicants, are invited to join as altar servers. In this place, the newsletter provides information which testify about the concern for the development of the spiritual life of parishioners.

2.2. Parish of Christ the King

This newsletter's liturgical content starts with the liturgical calendar, including times for confessions. In this calendar, days and times of Latin Masses celebrated in the extraordinary rite are given. To assist

¹⁵ *Newsletter St. Joseph's*, 4 June 2017, 1. It is a scene of Pentecost; Mary is in the middle, usually in a higher or more dominant position than the rest of the Apostles.

¹⁶ *Newsletter St. Joseph's*, 11 June 2017, 1.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 25 June 2017, 1.

active participation the Mass attendant can follow the main prayers of Mass, such as the Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation and Agnus Dei from the newsletter («Today's Sung Mass»). The rota for those responsible for cleaning the church and for the altar linen is also given¹⁸.

During the spring season a considerable section of the newsletter is dedicated to the celebration of First Holy Communion. This includes details as to the organisation and planning of the event, the names of participants and times of meetings. Similar information is included regarding preparations for Confirmation, but in less detail.

2.3. Parish of the Holy Cross

In this parish newsletter, as in the other parishes' newsletters, prominence is given on the first page to the Mass timetable, to special intentions together with a brief summary of the Liturgy of the word, covering both the first and second readings, the responsorial psalm, the Gospel and the acclamation. There is also an invitation to all members of the parish to attend *Morning prayer of the church* which take place each day just before Mass. On Mondays and Fridays, there is also Exposition of the Sacrament together with Benediction.

The newsletter also contains instructions regarding children's participation at Mass. They are divided into 2 age groups: 3-5 and 6 years old, so that they are assisted to take part at a level appropriate for their age. One example of encouraging active participation and enhancing understanding is the opportunity for children to dress up as followers of Christ, holding real palms, on Palm Sunday. Another example is the programme for children of «Growing through the Lent» whereby the children were asked to prepare drawings relevant to Lent, which are then stuck on the wall in the form of leaves at the back of the church. With each week the number of leaves increases, thus symbolizing the spiritual growth throughout Lent¹⁹. Adult parishioners are encouraged to meditate daily on the word of God, and a website address is provided to refer them to the readings for each day with an accompanying sermon, delivered by Fr. Francis Maple, a Capuchin priest who has dedicated his life to evangelisation²⁰.

¹⁸ *Newsletter Parish of Christ*, 1-9 July 2017, 1.

¹⁹ *Holy Cross*, 8th - 9th April 2017, 2.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 6th -7th May 2017, 3; *ibidem*, 29th - 30th July 2017, 3.

Following these announcements there is an appeal to adults to assist in running the additional children's liturgy, as well as information as to when altar servers meet to learn about and practise their duties at Mass.

In addition, there is an announcement directed at the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at the Sunday Masses. They are required to fill in a chart to indicate when they are able and willing to serve. The need for more such ministers is stated. Equally, the names of the readers for the week are given. Time is given for them to prepare properly as they are listed two weeks' in advance of when they are assigned to read. Finally, the cleaning groups (of which there are six) are reminded the date of their rota²¹.

2.4. Parish of Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Cuthbert

At the top, there is general parish information (contacts details and the name of the parish priest) and the number of the Sunday within the liturgical calendar. Occupying most of the page, there is a short sermon or meditation, often associated with the readings for that particular Sunday, focusing on a selected truth of the faith and Christian life.

This often includes an explanation of one of the readings and how it relates to the development of the spiritual life. To give a specific example, in the newsletter of the 3rd Sunday, the meaning of Christ's journey with his disciples from Jerusalem to Emaus is expounded upon²². On the feast of the Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, there is an article which teaches about God's forgiveness as evidenced in the dialogue between Christ and the penitent thief²³. Occasionally, there is clarification of catechismal content, as for instance, in the newsletter of the 5th Sunday in Lent, where there is an explanation of faith in the Resurrection and in eternal life²⁴. The implications of the sacrament of baptism are considered on the feast of Jesus's baptism²⁵.

²¹ Ibidem, 8th - 9th April 2017, 4.

²² *Wiadomości Polskiej Parafii w Bedford* 1493. The title of this meditation is: "Sens zawiedzionej nadziei. Rozważanie na Trzecią Niedzielę Wielkanocną".

²³ Ibidem 1473. The title of this meditation is: "Chrystus – Król wszechświata. Rozważanie na Uroczystość Chrystusa Króla".

²⁴ Ibidem 1490. The title of this meditation is: "Wskrzeszenie i zmartwychwstanie. Rozważanie na Piątą Niedzielę Wielkiego Postu".

²⁵ Ibidem 1449. The title of this meditation is: „Prawa człowieka ochrzczonego. Rozważanie na Uroczystość Chrztu Pańskiego”. In the meditation there was committed a

Sometimes the meditation concentrates on the living of a true Christian life. In the article published on the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, how we can experience the reality of the heavenly Kingdom by acquiring it through acceptance of Christ in our hearts is presented²⁶. On the feast of the Three Kings' Day the theme is about the Grace of God and how "not lose what is the most important – the grace of God"²⁷.

As there is variation in times Masses are held each newsletter specifies the times of Masses for each day of the coming week, as well as the special intention of that day. Beneath the time-table there is a summary of events of recent occurrence, such as the day of the First Holy Communion, the first anniversary of the First Holy Communion, Confirmation Mass as well as granted the sacrament of Baptism.

3. In this Final Section the Actual Meaning and Significance of the Information contained in Parish Newsletters will be analysed

In the Catholic Church the liturgical year is a cycle of recollections of the history of Redemption and is based on the events of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, within that annual cycle which marks the life, death and Resurrection of Christ, there are specific days pertaining to saints and events in the life of the Church. The first day of every week is called a Day of the Lord. On this day the Church celebrates the Paschal Mystery in accordance with tradition originating from the times of Christ's redemption and the Early Church. Consequently, Sunday is the principal Feast Day. The provision of times of Masses is a regular feature in all parishes, and is especially important (esp. Sunday Mass) for all newcomers or visitors to the town, or if any changes are introduced.

The inclusion of special intentions is an age-old practice which unites the parish in collective prayer. In publicising an individual's special intention, the whole community is exhorted to prayer, thus developing and deepening the spiritual life of all and engendering a sense of

mistake – twice – naming wrongly the rank of the celebration of Baptism of Jesus, as it is a feast not the solemnity.

²⁶ Ibidem 1495. The title of this meditation is: "Niebo w sercu. Rozważanie na Uroczystość Wniebowstąpienia Pańskiego".

²⁷ Ibidem 1478. The title of this meditation is: „Uroczystość Trzech Króli - Objawienie Pańskie”.

true Christian community life in accordance with the will of God, in accordance with the fulfilment of the great commandment to love one's neighbour. It is worth mentioning that when believers ask for a Mass to be said in a particular intention, they call upon the fruits of the Eucharist to sustain them in their lives: "Having passed from this world to the Father, Christ gives us in the Eucharist the pledge of glory with him. Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with his Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints"²⁸.

By providing specific times for confession, the parish priest is carrying in the Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium* from the 25th of May 1967 which states: "The faithful are to be constantly encouraged to accustom themselves to going to confession outside the celebration of Mass, and especially at the prescribed times. In this way, the sacrament of Penance will be administered calmly and with genuine profit, and will not interfere with active participation in the Mass"²⁹. This rule is also quoted in the ritual penance rites: "The reconciliation of penitents may be celebrated at any time on any day, but it is desirable that the faithful know the day and time at which the priest is available for this ministry. They should be encouraged to approach the sacrament of penance at times when Mass is not being celebrated and especially during the scheduled periods"³⁰.

Regarding pictures and images used as relevant illustrations for the Sunday in question, they can be said to make the information more vivid and appealing so that they help capture the reader's attention and make it easier to remember the text.

In accordance with the rules of liturgical law, the verses of the psalm should be read or sing by one person, to facilitate comprehension, and

²⁸ CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 1419.

²⁹ SACRA CONGREGATIO RITUUM, *Instructio de cultu mysterii Eucharistici "Eucharisticum mysterium"* 35, AAS 59 (1967), 561: "Fideles instanter ad eum usum adducantur ut extra Missae celebrationem, praesertim horis statutis, ad sacramentum paenitentiae accedant, ita ut eius administratio cum tranquillitate et ipsorum vera utilitate fiat, neve ipsi ab actuosa Missae participatione impediuntur", SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES, *Instruction on Eucharistic Worship "Eucharisticum mysterium"*, in: <https://adoremus.org/1967/05/25/eucharisticum-mysterium/>, [20. 07. 2017].

³⁰ *Rite of Penance. Introduction* 13, in: <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Penance/Penance-Intro.pdf>, [20. 07. 2017].

the chorus should be repeated by the whole congregation. It is worth mentioning that the singing of the psalm is more than just ornamental but constitutes a meaningful prayer. Singing enhances the depth of involvement and conveys our faith to other, serving as a testimony of faith. Its purpose is to allow the participant in the liturgy to be drawn closer to God. The repetition of the chorus encourages contemplation and an identification of one's own experiences and emotions to those expressed in the psalm³¹. Inclusion of a psalm dates back many centuries and its kerygmatic meaning sheds light on the first reading, which is often a text from the Old Testament containing a message of comfort, or warning, of promise and hope. The appropriate response to the first reading is encompassed in the chorus of the psalm.

Mention of the decoration and cleaning of the church are regular features in all the newsletters, with a rota given for the cleaning groups and flower arrangers: "the character and beauty of the place and all its furnishings should foster devotion and show forth the holiness of the mysteries celebrated there"³².

Equally, all newsletters list the names of the readers and ministers, in keeping with the Instruction of the Missal: "In the absence of an instituted lector, other laypersons may be commissioned to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture. They should be truly suited to perform this function and should receive careful preparation, so that the faithful by listening to the readings from the sacred texts may develop in their hearts a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture"³³.

A fairly recent innovation is that of the institution of «Welcomers'» groups, and all the parishes appear to need more volunteers. Their role is to help others, especially newcomers, in participating in the celebrating of the liturgy: "liturgical function [...] who, in some places, meet the faithful at the church entrance, lead them to appropriate places, and direct processions"³⁴.

In some of the newsletters there can be found mini-sermons or meditations and explanations of the principles of Christian life and also com-

³¹ *Psalm responsoryjny*, in: *Leksykon liturgii*, ed. B. Nadolski, Poznań 2006, 1258-1259.

³² CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* 294, in: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20030317_ordinamento-messale_en.html, [20. 07. 2017].

³³ *Ibidem* 101, in: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_2003_0317_ordinamento-messale_en.html, [20. 07. 2017].

³⁴ *Ibidem* 105, in: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_2003_0317_ordinamento-messale_en.html, [20. 07. 2017].

mentaries on the day's readings. These texts promote contemplation of one's relationship with God and gives directives as how to put into practice true Christian values, and they are more than just of explanatory value, but serve as an adhortation to adhere to the commandments and fully embrace a Christian way of life. It is worth recalling the verses in the New Testament which describe how two disciples met Jesus on their way to Emaus, following His death. The Risen Lord explains the Scriptures to them (Luke 24, 13-33) and such explanations were already regular practice in the synagogues, so the current practice follows a long tradition.

In some newsletters the readings are briefly alluded to, whereas in others, they are printed in full together with the Gospel Acclamation. Indicating where the readings can be located or even printing them in full allows the reader to cherish these words and meditate upon their content throughout the day and in the course of the week. In such a way, Sunday is seen as the first day of the week and as a spiritual starting-point with the reading providing spiritual nourishment and inspiration for the days to follow, for as stated by the dictum in the Ethiopian liturgy of St. Athanasius, Sunday is "the day that guides the whole week"³⁵. The function of the Gospel Acclamation is to prepare for the reading of the Gospel. These acclamations convey a respectful greeting towards the Lord, who is especially present in the words of the Good News³⁶.

In some of the parishes, parishioners are invited to attend morning prayer said before Mass. Such prayer encourages a living faith by expressing love for God, teaching about sacrifice and awakening hope. In the morning prayer there exists also an element of thanksgiving, supplication, praise and glorification of God. All these motifs are elaborated upon and perfected in the celebration of the Eucharist³⁷.

The involvement of children is a recurrent theme in the newsletters. This concern to encourage their participation in the Mass corresponds to the implementation of guidelines expressed in the liturgical document of the Second Vatican Council, which states that the liturgy should be adjusted to the state, age and background of the participants. In the case of children, this can be achieved by special catechists teaching the children the Liturgy of

³⁵ B. NADOLSKI, *Liturgika. Tom drugi. Liturgia i czas*, Poznań 1991, 39; cf. J. WIERUSZ-KOWALSKI, *Liturgika*, Warszawa 1956, 173.

³⁶ M. KUNZLER, *Historia liturgii*, trans. L. Balter, Poznań 1999, 341.

³⁷ *General Instruction Liturgy of the Hours* 12, in: <https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Rites/GILH.pdf>, [20. 07. 2017]; W. GŁOWA, *Modlitwa liturgiczna. Liturgia Godzin*, Przemyśl 1996, 169-170.

the word separately. In addition, by engaging children in the liturgy allows for the introduction of new expressions of the teaching of the faith³⁸.

Most newsletters include reference to the ministry of altar servers. It is an expression of the care given for the beauty of the celebration of Mass and is instrumental in the religious formation of children and adolescents. The newsletters provide the times and dates of meetings during which altar servers learn to perform certain functions during the Eucharist. Each of servers must be very familiar with the Mass. They must understand why the Mass is important, and what happens during Mass. Training will be scheduled regularly for all new altar servers. Once servers have completed the initial training, they will be able to begin serving as an Apprentice. After a server has qualified to serve, they will be added to the regular altar server schedule. Each of them continue to participate in ongoing training through³⁹.

From the newsletters, it can also be seen that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion play an important role. They assist the celebrant in the distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ and their activities have a significant impact on the life of the parish community. Through such involvement of the laity, a practical and visible indication is conveyed to all participants in the liturgy, that every member of the congregation makes a contribution to a communal celebration, depending on the function they have been assigned. By each person carrying out their duties the true structure of the Church is expressed as it cares for the salvation of the People of God. Within the parish community there should never be a lack of those who serve at Holy Communion and distribute the Eucharist, both during Mass and by bringing the Eucharist to the sick and dying. Their own personal love of the Eucharist will, however, be deepened by reflection and prayer, so that they may be more effective ministers of the Sacrament to others and thereby help to build up the Body of Christ, which is the Church. It is therefore important that the names of such Extraordinary Ministers is publicised in newsletters so that parishioners are aware whom they can turn to⁴⁰.

³⁸ CONCILIIUM VATICANUM II, *Constitutio de sacra liturgia* "Sacrosanctum concilium" 19, AAS 56 (1964), 105; ibidem 38, AAS 56 (1964), 110.

³⁹ A. NEVINS, *Called to Serve. A Guidebook for Alter Servers*, Huntingdon 2008, 1-2.

⁴⁰ K. RILEY – P. TURNEY, *Guide for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. The Liturgical Ministry Series*, Chicago 2007, 29-30.

Conclusion

This article on the *Liturgical content in newsletters from the Catholic parishes in Bedford* confirms the use of newsletters in parish ministry, points to the need for their systematic delivery and underlines the important role they play as informative and evangelistic tools. They help the members of the parish community to be made aware of the truths of the Christian faith and principles.

Newsletters can be seen as an integral part in the religions formation of the faithful and the attempt to build a strong parish community. Every parish community is strengthened by its participation in liturgical celebrations when this is done properly, namely, fully, actively and consciously. Consequently, a newsletter can be seen as something essential which allows the Christians to draw spiritual gifts, Divine Grace from the sacred liturgy.

Liturgiczne treści w biuletynach katolickich parafii w Bedford Streszczenie

W tekście zaprezentowano treści umieszczane w parafialnych biuletynach wydawanych przez katolickie wspólnoty w Bedford w Anglii. Dokładniej opisane zostały zamieszczane w tych pismach informacje dotyczące życia liturgicznego; wśród nich wymienić należy te, które odnoszą się do roku kościelnego, celebrowanych mszy świętych, udzielania pozostałych sakramentów, możliwości adoracji Najświętszego Sakramentu, udziału świeckich w sprawowanej liturgii, charakteru organizowanych pielgrzymek, nieustannej potrzeby angażowania się parafian w poprawną celebrację świętych obrzędów. Artykuł składa się z trzech zasadniczych części: w pierwszej, wskazane zostały umieszczane w biuletynach treści nie związane bezpośrednio z celebracjami liturgicznymi; w drugiej, wymienione zostały te, które odnoszą się do sprawowania świętych obrzędów; w trzeciej, opisano znaczenie podawanych w pismach parafialnych treści liturgicznych dla każdego z parafian i tworzonej przez nich wspólnoty.

Dokonana prezentacja umieszczanego w rzeczonych biuletynach liturgicznego przekazu potwierdza prawdy o jego znaczącej roli w życiu człowieka. Treści te spełniają zarówno funkcje informacyjne, jak

i formacyjne. Wykorzystywanie pisma parafialnego w działalności duszpasterskiej wskazuje na to, że warto publikować je systematycznie. Dokonujące się w ten sposób informowanie i ewangelizowanie sprawia, że członkowie danej wspólnoty parafialnej stają się z nią nie tylko coraz bardziej związani, lecz także za nią odpowiedzialni. Jako chrześcijanie coraz dokładniej znają prawdy wiary i wartość przestrzegania w codziennym życiu ewangelicznych zasad. Efektem formacji liturgicznej wiernych jest ich stały wysiłek w budowie konkretnej społeczności parafialnej. Każda taka wspólnota staje się silniejsza wtedy, kiedy tworzący ją uczestniczą w obrzędach liturgicznych we właściwy sposób, czyli pełni, aktywny i świadomy.

Słowa kluczowe: biuletyn parafialny, media kościelne, opieka duszpasterska, życie liturgiczne.

Keywords: Parish newsletter, church media, pastoral care, liturgical life.

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