

A teacher's guide to **The Priest**

The priest: Sacrament of Christ's presence

In the celebration of the Eucharist, Christ is present in the person of the presiding priest, ordained for this ministry. Every authentic celebration of the Eucharist is presided over by the Bishop or a priest, presiding in the person of Christ.

As so often, in the Mass, what we see is less than we get. We see the priest, a man among men. But by virtue of the sacrament of Ordination and the ministry entrusted to him by the bishop, this man is the symbol of Christ present for us.

We need to cultivate a reverence for that presence of Christ in the ministry of the priest. This is one way in which we help ourselves to keep aware that the Mass is something that involves our relationship with Christ. It is not a merely human work, something we do. It is something richer by far than only that.

The role of the priest

The priest's role at Mass is to lead the people in prayer, in listening and responding to God's word and in offering the Sacrifice through Christ in the Spirit to the Father.

Through his prayerfulness and his relationship to the Mystery of the Mass and to the people assembled the priest is to assist the congregation in their praying of the Mass. It is a challenging thing that is entrusted to him. It is important to recognise that to do this the priest needs to take overall responsibility for the celebration of the Mass, though he should always also work collaboratively with other ministers.

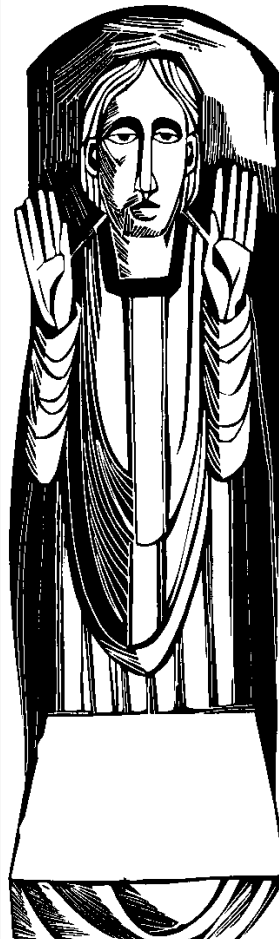
His role is more integral to the celebration than the necessary minimum of leading the presidential prayers and ensuring the Sacrament is validly ministered.

How to get the best out of your priest

- Ensure you have consulted with him in good time about the forthcoming celebration. This will help avoid clashes with Feast Days/Solemnities which might not 'fit' with the focus of your celebration, but may have priority on a particular day.
- Discuss with him what he will prepare and what he expects others to prepare - eg choice of readings, music. Agree how decisions are to be shared about what is prepared by priest and others.
- Let him know about particular pastoral issues within the group that is celebrating that he should know about so that he may be pastorally sensitive. For example has there been a recent bereavement in the class, or major difficulties in the family life of a pupil? He does not need to know all the details, and will treat information with professional confidentiality. He will not refer to these things

during the Mass, if it is judged best not to. But sometimes knowing what not to refer to is as important as knowing what should be acknowledged in prayer.

- It is sometimes appropriate for the priest to help the smooth running of the Mass by inviting forward ministers by their name at the appropriate time - eg 'John is now going to read the first reading to us...' If this suits your situation, let the priest have a typed list of who is doing what.



A teacher's worksheet for

The Priest

Information

Mass for

on

at

in

Coordinator for Mass is.....

Priest is

How to contact the Priest

His phone:

His email:

A meeting has been arranged for:

Background notes for the priest

1. Pastoral sensitivities

2. Additional relevant information (eg issues that have come from children reflecting on the read- ings; details of symbols in opening procession...)



Information
should be passed to.....
for approval before.....