



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF NORTHAMPTON

# *Prayer and Liturgy Policy*

*'Sing a new song unto the Lord, Proclaim his help day by day' Psalm 95 V1-2*



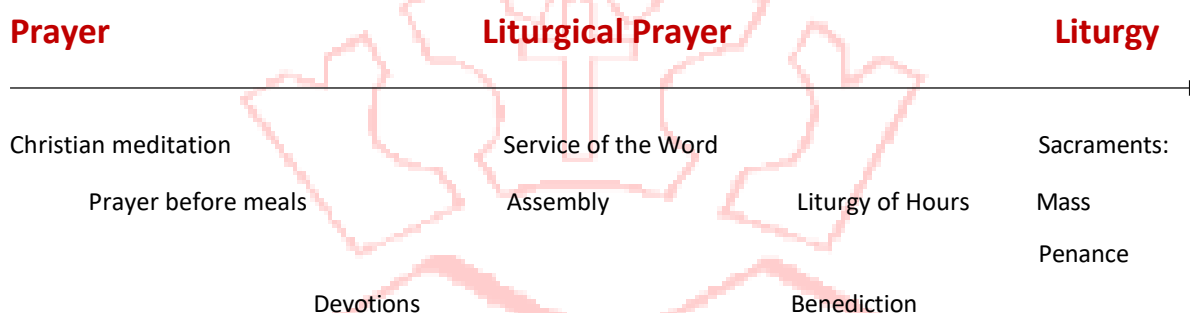
## Introduction

### Understanding Prayer and Liturgy

*In any school there will be a range of prayer and liturgy: classroom prayer, meditation, assemblies, devotions, special services for times in the school year, celebrations of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each form of prayer and liturgy will have its own character dependent on the circumstances, size and age of the group, the place of celebration and its content.*

### Definition of Terms

*Prayer, Liturgical Prayer, and Liturgy form a continuum with silent meditation at one end and a celebration of Mass on a Solemnity of the Church (e.g., Ascension of the Lord) at the other. Of course, there are areas of overlap between the categories.*



Prayer	Liturgical Prayer	Liturgy
Simple structure	Structured (often 4 part)	Taken from official books
One or two elements	Elements drawn from liturgy	Complex structure
Balance of familiarity & creativity	Places of Scripture	Many elements
	Contrasts and creativity	Range of ministry

*In Catholic terminology 'worship' is not generally used to name and describe a distinct type of prayer or event. Worship is about living our lives in a way that recognises that everything we have is a gift from God and that everything we do gives glory to God. That, of course, does include prayer but the scope is broader. With that understanding of worship it will be seen that the purpose of education in a Catholic school is to know and love Christ and to open the vision and imagination of all pupils to the wonder of living in God's world, and the responsibilities that follow from this.*

Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 there is a statutory duty to inspect and report on denominational education (that is religious education) and collective worship in schools designated as having a religious character. For this reason, the term 'Collective Worship' has been kept as the headline judgement by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate but throughout the framework it is referred to as prayer and liturgy. This model policy addresses the shift in vocabulary and is an interim response to the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory. When the Directory is published it will contain a model policy which the Diocese of Northampton will adapt for schools.

# St Mary's Prayer and Liturgy Policy

## Mission Statement

*St Mary's a place of educational excellence with Christ at its centre.'*

## The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.'<sup>1</sup>

## Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily 'act of worship' offered for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single 'act of worship' for all pupils, or separate 'acts of worship' in school groups. Holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Prayer, liturgical prayer and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between will always be made clear.

The 'act of worship' is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. Responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from 'Collective Worship'. However, given the importance of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured, within Come and See RE curriculum.

## The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St Marys School

Prayer and liturgy is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Prayer and liturgy takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church;
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church;
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none;
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

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<sup>1</sup> Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

## The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in St Marys School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

## Principles

All acts of prayer in St Marys School will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead prayer times;
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.<sup>2</sup> Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

## Planning, content and celebration

Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Holocaust Memorial Day.

Parish and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

## Organisation

In this school prayer is understood as communicating with God and opportunities are provided for, both individually and collectively, formal and informal prayer.

**Formal Prayers** are taught throughout the school and progress in complexity of language and conceptual understanding. All children are encouraged to learn, unprompted, the prayers which are considered suitable for their age.

**Informal Prayer**, both silent and open, is encouraged throughout the school. Opportunities are given during most prayer sessions for an individual response, privately or publicly and all respect this practice.

**Individual Prayer** is encouraged through the provision of a spiritual focus in each classroom and the two Reflection Areas. This is available to staff and children, during break and lunchtimes and allows for private or shared reflection.

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<sup>2</sup> Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

**Collective Prayer** encompasses both formal and informal praying and usually included sung prayer in the form of a hymn or psalm appropriate to the liturgical year. Practise is on a daily basis in several ways:

- Daily class prayers at the beginning and end of each day. – children are often encouraged to offer their prayers out loud or are given time for silent reflection
- Thanksgiving is said before lunch each day and on returning to the classroom after lunch
- KS2 say the Angelus daily between 12- 12.15pm
- During assemblies and at the end of the school day children are encouraged to examine their conscience and say sorry for things they have done wrong.
- Weekly Hymn practices linked to the upcoming Mass/Service or Feast day celebration,
- Once a week a whole school Gospel assembly is led by the Head teacher. The theme is usually based on the Sunday Gospel and is attended by all staff and visitors in the school.
- All children are encouraged to pray for the dead in the month of November.
- The children are encouraged to say the Rosary during October and May and weekly, in the season of Lent, children in KS2 go to Church to follow the Stations of the Cross or lead a Passion service. Children in KS2 are taken to confessions during Lent.
- During Advent and Lent the children in KS2 follow 'Walk With Me' and younger members of the school use the children's calendar for these periods in class
- Staff Meetings always begin with prayer.

### **Liturgical Celebration**

**The Eucharist celebration** is the prime acknowledgement by the school of its membership of the Church and is therefore its central worship. It is essential that the children are included in the celebration in a meaningful way and begin to develop an understanding of the Mass.

- A half termly Mass alternating between school and in Church is prepared by one of the KS2 year groups. The children are at times involved in writing the Bidding Prayers.
- Readings are taken home to practice and many parents attend the Mass. A copy of the Mass readings and music is given to the celebrant a few days before the service.
- Non- Catholic children in KS2 are encouraged to receive a Blessing.
- The Mass dates and times are included in the Church Bulletin and the weekly school letters so all parents and parishioners are invited to attend.

### **Responsibilities**

- The head teacher leads the whole school assemblies weekly.
- Each class teacher leads their own class prayers.
- Head teacher is responsible for the children preparing to receive First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

**The Timetable of Prayer and Liturgy is as below:**

Class	Prayers	Practices
Farmers Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Father</li> <li>• Hail Mary</li> <li>• Prayer before meals Night time Prayer Children's Morning Offering</li> <li>• Simple responses in Mass</li> <li>• Greeting the Gospel</li> <li>• Simple litanies of thanks and praise</li> <li>• Advent prayers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes the sign of the</li> <li>• Cross</li> <li>• Give the sign of Peace</li> <li>• Know that the Church is</li> <li>• God's house</li> <li>• Visit the Church Bless themselves with</li> <li>• Holy Water</li> </ul>
Fishermen Year 2-3	<p>All of those listed above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning Offering</li> <li>• Act of sorrow</li> <li>• Mass responses</li> <li>• Lenten prayers</li> <li>• Angelus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know that God is present in the Tabernacle</li> <li>• Genuflect facing the Tabernacle</li> <li>• Respond to the Blessing Use Rosary Beads to follow prayers</li> <li>• Join in singing responses in Mass</li> </ul>
Carpenters and Shepherds Class Years 4-6	<p>All of the above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confiteor</li> <li>• Gloria</li> <li>• Angelus</li> <li>• Morning Offering</li> <li>• Take my hand</li> <li>• School Creed</li> <li>• Magnificat (sung)</li> <li>• Mysteries of the Rosary</li> <li>• Stations of the Cross</li> <li>• Prayer Of St Richard of Chichester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive the Blessed Sacrament appropriately</li> <li>• Make a good confession Join in spoken and sung responses in Mass Follow readings in Mass</li> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Read at Mass</li> <li>• Serve at Mass</li> </ul>

	<p>Prayers at Mass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offertory prayers</li> <li>• Eucharistic prayers for Masses</li> <li>• Holy Holy Holy</li> <li>• Lamb of God</li> <li>• Rite of dismissal</li> <li>• Prayers used for Sacramental Rites</li> <li>• Blessing and giving of ashes</li> <li>• Saints' prayers</li> <li>• Simple phrases from the psalms</li> <li>• The Creed</li> <li>• Come Holy Spirit</li> <li>• Oh Sacrament Most Holy</li> <li>• Memorare</li> <li>• Hail Holy Queen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to the Gospel blessing (triple cross) Join in all responses at</li> <li>• Mass</li> <li>• Know Rosary Mysteries Find and give Bible references</li> <li>• Participate in Stations of the Cross</li> <li>• Prepare Altar for Mass</li> </ul>
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### **The Role of the Headteacher and RE / Worship & Liturgy Leader**

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship which may at times form part of the school development plan
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the governors to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship

### **Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating**

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an Act of Collective Worship
- Monitoring standards and developments in Collective Worship
- Prayer and liturgy is recorded via an electronic file stored by the head teacher and the RE subject leader file.

### **Communication**

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors regarding matters of concern and development

- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Collective Worship
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Collective Worship
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre

### **Professional development / Ongoing formation**

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

### **Responsibility for resources in school:**

#### **The subject leader will:**

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Collective Worship including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently

#### **Resources available to staff and pupils:**

- A variety of resource books on assemblies, prayer, meditations and feast days is kept in the Staffroom.
- Resources for meditative activities linked to the Liturgical Year are kept in the R.E area of the resource cupboard.
- Bibles are in every classroom and additional Bibles, including those for young children, can be found in the KS2 classrooms.
- 'Celebrations for Everyone' hymnbooks are in each classroom and spare copies are in the library.
- Words on Screen is available on the shared drive
- Come and See electronic resources are available on line
- Subject leader provides packs of resources for key liturgical times of the year

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Prayer and liturgy is monitored using prayer and liturgy monitoring form.

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the school's CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).

### **The learning environment**

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment'<sup>3</sup>

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

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<sup>3</sup> Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005



### **Retreats**

The children preparing to receive First Holy Communion and Confirmation are sent on a retreat to Blaze or Alton Castle.

### **Other opportunities**

The school will join diocesan celebrations and Parish events where ever possible.

### **Eucharist**

**The Eucharist celebration** is the prime acknowledgement by the school of its membership of the Church and is therefore its central worship. It is essential that the children are included in the celebration in a meaningful way and begin to develop an understanding of the Mass.

- A half termly Mass alternating between school and in Church is prepared by one of the KS2 year groups. The children are at times involved in writing the Bidding Prayers.
- Readings are taken home to practice and many parents attend the Mass. A copy of the Mass readings and music is given to the celebrant a few days before the service.
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- The Mass dates and times are included in the Church Bulletin and the weekly school letters so all parents and parishioners are invited to attend.

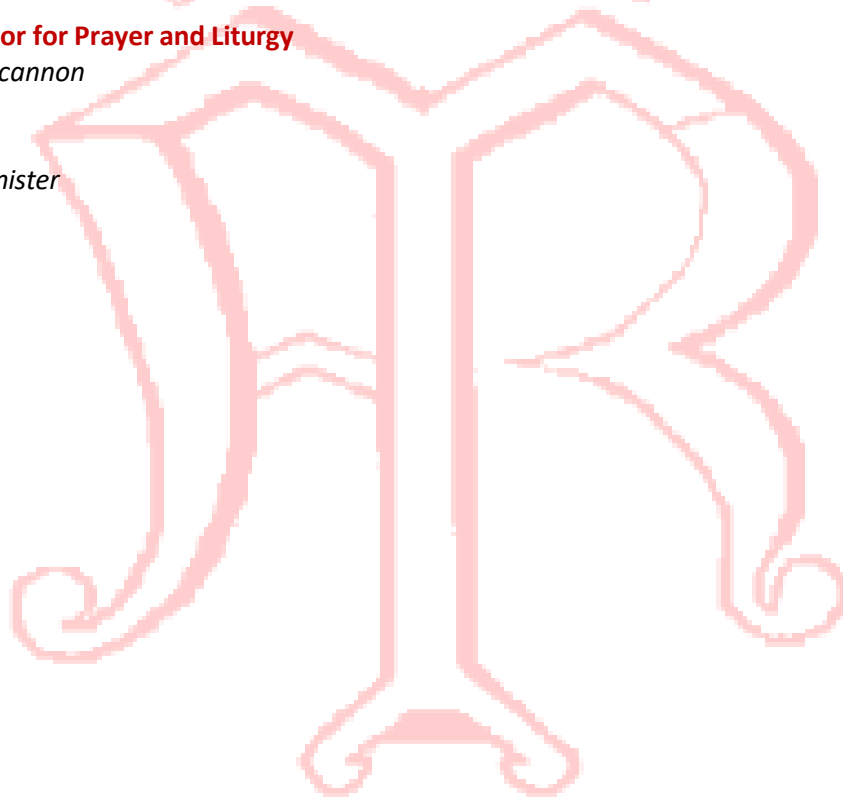
### **The Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy**

*Mrs Laura Concannon*

*Head Teacher*

*Catchiest*

*Eucharistic Minister*



## Appendix 1

### **The Role of the Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy**

- Formulating a written policy for prayer and liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for prayer and liturgy included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for prayer times
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to prayer and liturgy including withdrawal from Collective Worship
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

#### **Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating**

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Prayer and Liturgy and providing feedback
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in prayer and liturgy

#### **Communication**

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of prayer and liturgy
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding prayer and liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan Education Service

#### **Professional development/Ongoing formation**

- Leading and organising inservice training and ongoing formation for prayer and liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

#### **Resources**

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for prayer and liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently