LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

There are a variety of resources available for those in schools or parishes who are involved in the preparation of Eucharistic celebrations. Chief among these are the official liturgical documents of the Church. These books, along with the counsel of the bishop of the diocese (the chief liturgist for the diocese), provide guidance and direction for our celebrations. The bishop of the diocese offers his counsel through his many curial offices. Just as catechists work through the Office of Religious Education and Catechesis, those who plan liturgies should be working with either the parish priests or the Office of Liturgy to insure that our Catholic tradition is also being followed properly and, that not only the faith formation of our children is enhanced, but, that our own faith continues to grow as well.

Eucharistic celebrations with children should lead young people to participate in the liturgical life of the parish. Those planning liturgical celebrations are to avoid creating novel elements within the celebration or directing the focus away from God in any way. No one, not even a priest, is to add or take away from the prescribed celebration of the Eucharist.

We are called to be a “people of prayer.” Through baptism, we have a serious responsibility to pray the prayer of the Church, to intercede for the world, to offer praise to our God and to grow in holiness as God’s people. The Church is to pray always. The Liturgy of the Hours is the prayer of the Church, sometimes called the Divine Office. Through this prayer we celebrate that we are raised up to new life through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we are planning a prayer service, the Liturgy of the Hours should be our first choice.

Devotional prayer is an important part of our faith tradition. Devotional prayer flows from our celebration of the Eucharist and leads us back to the celebration of the Eucharist. While devotional prayer is often celebrated as private prayer, there are times when a communal celebration may be appropriate.

Special blessings are also important throughout the year. The Book of Blessings should be consulted in planning use one of these blessings. Planners should always keep in mind the liturgical season and the environment in which all the different celebrations will take place.