

# WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!



National Youth Sunday 2008  
The Solemnity of Christ the King – 23rd November 2008  
(Liturgical Year A)

## Resources for the Sunday Eucharist

### Introduction

This year's National Youth Sunday takes the theme **Reclaim the future!** It continues the *livesimply* message of recent years by inviting us to think about how we can live sustainably in our communities. Green issues and environmental concerns remain constantly in the news: we continue to hear about the effects of global warming; we're encouraged to consider how we use the world's resources; we are told to recycle more and more, and so on. Living simply and sustainably reminds us that these aren't just trendy, eco-friendly actions but God-given responsibilities. As God's creation we've been given the task of caring for the earth. Our actions have a consequence not only on ourselves, but also on the environment and, crucially, on our sisters and brothers throughout the world.

To **Reclaim the future!** means to look forward with hope and expectation, recognising the power we have as young people to make a positive impact on our world. What we are able to do here and now makes a difference to the way the world is for future generations.

Alongside living simply and sustainably, the third part of *livesimply* is to live in solidarity with the poor. So it's important that we acknowledge the fact that we are part of a global community. Our faith encourages us to want to change the fact that people live in poverty. We cannot be satisfied or content until people are able to live with the basic needs of water, food and shelter.

### About this resource

The resources in this pack are intended to help parishes celebrate National Youth Sunday during the Sunday Eucharist for the Solemnity of Christ the King (Sunday 23rd November.) This Sunday we celebrate Christ as the king of all creation.

We recognise that every parish is different and that liturgical practice varies from place to place. So we've offered different suggestions and ideas in the hope that communities will use those that are both possible and appropriate.

Preparation is essential in the presentation of any liturgy. Hopefully, the young people in your community often help prepare the Sunday liturgy, but if not and you are organising a special 'youth Mass', then you might want to invite young people, catechists and leaders to gather together to plan and prepare beforehand. We hope that the resources provided here will inspire you to celebrate National Youth Sunday in a creative, prayerful and Spirit filled way. It is not envisaged that you try every single idea – be selective

and discerning! It can be more effective to just highlight one or two aspects of the liturgy, rather than try to animate every single part. Be realistic and choose what is appropriate to your community. And don't be afraid to use your own ideas and creativity too!

We've offered suggestions for the following parts of the liturgy:

- Gathering and Welcome
- Penitential Rite
- The Liturgy of the Word
- Prayer of the Faithful
- Preparation of the Eucharist
- Post-Communion Reflection

## Gathering and Welcome

It's a good idea to display copies of the **Reclaim the Future!** poster around the Church – perhaps even designing banners that highlight some words.

A warm welcome goes a long way – so invite young people to greet parishioners as they enter the church, handing out service sheets or hymn books as they come in.

### Idea

Many parishioners enjoy a time of quiet prayer and personal reflection as they arrive for Mass, so it's important to respect this. But you may also wish to invite people to make *livesimply* promises or **Reclaim the Future!** commitments as they arrive, the week before or with the Mass sheet and explain it all later. You'll obviously need to explain the reasons for this as they enter the building – but that in itself can be a good way to explain the theme of your celebration. You can display these commitments somewhere in the church, or use them later on in the Preparation of the Gifts.

As the Mass begins, some words of introduction and welcome from groups of young people can make a very positive impact, too. Find some brave volunteers!

You may wish to process things which represent the parish, and especially the life, energy and commitment of young people in the parish.

Things that symbolise the **Reclaim the Future!** theme could be presented. For example: a globe, energy saving lightbulbs, recycling containers, fairly traded goods, pictures of people from different parts of the global community, and so on.

If you have invited the congregation to make *livesimply* promises or **Reclaim the Future!** commitment pledges, these could be presented too.

## Penitential Rite

The Penitential Rite helps us to reflect on our need for God's forgiveness and our celebration of his mercy. We offer four suggestions here...

### Idea 1

Lord Jesus, you reveal to us the beauty of all creation,  
Lord, have mercy: Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you teach us to care for this world,  
Christ, have mercy: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you show us how to live for each other,  
Lord, have mercy: Lord, have mercy.

### Idea 2

These words are based on the livesimply key message

Lord Jesus, you call us to live simply, so that others may simply live.  
Lord, have mercy: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you call us to live sustainably, caring for our world's resources.  
Christ, have mercy: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you call us to live in solidarity with the poor, reaching out to our sisters and brothers.  
Lord, have mercy: Lord, have mercy.

### Idea 3

In place of these simple prayers, you could lead the congregation in a more reflective Penitential Rite. For example, highlight the idea that God calls us to wholeness, and to mend a broken world. Use a picture of globe, cut into three pieces, and bring these broken pieces together in a mime, dance or movement as you pray the words, 'Lord, have mercy...' and so on.

### Idea 4

Or ask a group to think beforehand of some of the ways that we fail to live simply, sustainably or in solidarity with the poor, and name these in a litany of penance. For example:

For the times we've wasted energy...  
For throwing away unused food...  
For turning away from someone in need...  
For over filling our kettles...  
For wasting paper...  
For failing to speak up for the refugee or asylum seeker...  
Lord, have mercy.

Note: this would work well musically, too, using a simple refrain.

## Liturgy of the Word

**Some background** The readings given in the Lectionary for this Sunday mix an agricultural theme with information about the Kingdom of God. We start with Ezekiel presenting the Lord as the caring shepherd who takes particular care of the lost sheep and those that are weak and vulnerable. The sheep theme continues in the Gospel with the familiar passage of the Last Judgement, where the King divides people up into sheep or goats, depending on their actions. We're encouraged to reach out to the hungry, the thirsty, the naked and the sick – caring for others as if we are caring for Jesus. In the middle, we hear from Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians – a challenging passage that talks about the eternal life that Jesus offers to everyone: Christ's death and resurrection destroys death and prepares us for a kingdom of peace where God reigns over all creatures.

These readings fit in well with our theme of **Reclaim the Future!** The scriptures prepare us for what is to come – and they present life with God as a life that has respect for our world and for all people.

**First Reading** A reading from the prophet Ezekiel (34:11-12, 15-17)

The Lord says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest – it is the Lord who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.

As for you, my sheep, the Lord says this: I will judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and he-goats.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Idea 1** This passage works well as a simple mimed drama or dance. One person can play the role of the shepherd Lord, who stands amongst his sheep. As the passage is read – slowly and strongly – different lines can be dramatised. For example, in the line, 'I will rescue them from wherever they have been scattered', 'sheep' can wander round in a confused way, using raised hands to symbolise searching in the darkness, with the Lord collecting each one and returning them together.

Movements should be simple but obvious enough to be able to be seen clearly.

You may wish to play some gentle, reflective music in the background.

Idea 2                      Another option for illustrating this reading is to scatter the different 'sheep' across the congregation. This time, nominated people sit throughout the church or worship space and are brought together by the Shepherd who moves amongst the people. The growing flock of sheep can then be brought to the front of the church for the final lines.

**Psalm 23                      R              The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

1              The Lord is my shepherd,  
                 there is nothing I shall want.  
                 Fresh and green are the pastures  
                 where he gives me repose.

2              Near restful waters he leads me,  
                 to revive my drooping spirit.  
                 He guides me along the right path;  
                 he is true to his name.

3              You have prepared a banquet for me  
                 in the sight of my foes.  
                 My head you have anointed with oil;  
                 my cup is overflowing.

4              Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me  
                 all the days of my life.  
                 In the Lord's own house shall I dwell  
                 for ever and ever.

Idea 1 (Music)              Ideally, of course, the psalm should be sung. There are many and varied musical versions based on this well known passage, including:

- Because the Lord is my shepherd (Christopher Walker)
- God alone may lead... (Tom Conry)
- Shepherd me, O God (Marty Haugen)
- I'll sing God's praises (Aniceto Nazareth)
- The King of love my Shepherd is (Henry Williams Baker)

Idea 2                      Another way to bring the words of the Psalm to life is to try a different translation. It can work especially well with a well-known psalm like this one. For example, check out how The Message interprets the words:

God, my shepherd!  
I don't need a thing.  
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,  
you find me quiet pools to drink from.

True to your word,  
you let me catch my breath  
and send me in the right direction.

Even when the way goes through Death Valley  
I'm not afraid  
when you walk at my side.  
Your trusty shepherd's crook  
makes me feel secure.

You serve me a six-course dinner  
right in front of my enemies.  
You revive my drooping head;  
my cup brims with blessing.

Your beauty and love chase after me  
every day of my life.  
I'm back home in the house of God  
for the rest of my life.

Psalm 23 (The Message)

**Second Reading** A reading from the first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians (15:20-26,28)

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power. For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death. And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Gospel Reading** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (25:31-46)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the

world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.”

Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?” And the King will answer, “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.”

Next he will say to those on his left hand, “Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me.” Then it will be their turn to ask, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?” Then he will answer, “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it for me.” And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

- Idea 1      Display the Gospel Slides, based on the illustrations by Ellis Nadler, as the Gospel is proclaimed. (These are available as a PowerPoint file at [reclaimthefuture.org.uk](http://reclaimthefuture.org.uk))

### ***After the Gospel is proclaimed***

- Idea 1      It’s another well- known passage of Scripture! This Gospel again lends itself to dramatic presentation and symbolic interpretation. A drama group could bring the Gospel to life, highlighting the different actions mentioned by Jesus, and perhaps even suggesting examples of how these actions are or can be achieved by the parish community. (For example, by holding a recycling clothes event, or arranging a food collection for a local homeless shelter.)
- Idea 2      If you’re feeling really daring, why not challenge the congregation to judge themselves. Ask those that consider themselves to be the sheep of the Gospel to move to the right of the church, and those that are self-confessed goats to be on the left. Then invite both groups to think about how they can put into action the words of Jesus.

Idea 4 After the proclamation of the Gospel, consider presenting the following sketch, which interprets the Last Judgement from the perspective of a television news broadcast.

## This is the Good News – Sheep and Goats

You will need five people to play the different roles:

Angus McCoatUp (news presenter); Sue Stainable (reporter); Larry Lamb (sheep); Theresa Green (special correspondent); Billy Gruff (goat)

Angus This is the Good News. The headlines at six o'clock.  
Bong! Feeling sheepish? It's eternal life for the nation's favourite animal.  
Bong! Get your goat up! Gruff news for selfish beasts.  
Bong! It's the end of the world as we know it. Which side will you end up on?

Good afternoon, I'm Angus McCoatUp.

There was high drama in Jerusalem today as Jesus presented his vision of how the world was ending up. The good Lord divided people up into sheep and goats and had some startling news for them. For the latest, let's cross to our reporter, Sue Stainable.

Sue Angus, thank you. Well, it's been quite an afternoon here, with renowned messiah Jesus Christ really causing a stir with news of a final judgement. He warned people that they'd be put into groups of sheep or goats depending on how they acted on earth. One of the witnesses to this powerful speech was Larry Lamb. [Turns to Larry] Larry, thanks for joining us.

Larry That's okay.

Sue Larry, tell us, what happened here today?

Larry Well, Sue, Jesus certainly wasn't pulling the *wool* over our eyes. He didn't *mince* his words; he told us quite clearly that we had to do good things for one another.

Sue What sort of things, Larry?

Larry Things like feeding the hungry, giving clothes and shelter to the poor, ewe know the sort of thing – thinking of and caring for those in need. And, crucially, all, he said we had to do all these things to him.

Sue Wow, sounds pretty radical, Larry. How did people react?



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- Larry Well, they'd *flocked* to see him – it was so busy you couldn't see *past your* own little space. The crowd were pretty divided really. I have to say that some of the goats looked a little *sheepish*, funnily enough.
- Sue What were these goats saying?
- Larry Well, they *bleated* on about how they would definitely do all those things for Jesus – but that they'd never seen him in need.
- Sue And how did Jesus react to that?
- Larry Oh, he was *mint*. *Source* of all wisdom, isn't he? He told them quite plainly that what they failed to do for others they failed to do to him.
- Sue I bet the goats didn't like that.
- Larry No, Sue, they were *baaa*-rking mad. Especially when he told them they'd be for the *chop*.
- Sue How do you mean, Larry?
- Larry Well, Sue, it seems that people who are too selfish to do good for others are destined to eternal punishment.
- Sue Sounds pretty grim, Larry. Well, thanks for filling us in on those events. This is Sue Stainable in a field, handing you back to the studio.
- Angus Sue, thank you. We can cross exclusively now to one of the goats at the scene with our special correspondent Theresa Green.
- Theresa Thanks, Angus. Well yes, as you can imagine, there's been a pretty strong reaction to these events. Billy Gruff is one of the goats who joins me now. Billy, how do you feel after Jesus' warning?
- Billy I'm shocked by what I've *herd*, Theresa, I don't mind telling you.
- Theresa But surely you realised that you were being selfish and stubborn?
- Billy I think we've been made to look like scapegoats, to be honest. And anyway, Theresa, I think it's okay to look after number one. All that stuff about looking out for others, feeding the hungry and all that – I mean, you've got to be *kidding*, it's just so pointless!
- Theresa Er, is it? I thought Jesus' words were pretty convincing.
- Billy Well, he's really got my goat. If people are poor, it's their own fault. If people get sick – what's that got to do with me?

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- Theresa                    But surely you'd want people to help *you* out if you got into a difficult position? Don't you think it's important to live in solidarity with others?
- Billy                      I don't know, Theresa, it's just another example of the *nanny* state.
- Theresa                    So you won't be changing your ways, Billy?
- Billy                      I'm not convinced – why should I bother?
- Theresa                    Well, Angus, as you can see there's been a stubborn reaction here. Let's just hope Billy and his friends are happy with their decision come judgement day. Back to you in the studio.
- Angus                     Let's hope he likes the heat, Theresa! Well, you can join in the debate here on the Good News – tell us where you stand by texting in sheep or goat to 80085.
- Just time for a quick look at the weather.  
                                  [Holds up a picture of a cloud, or just looks up to the sky]  
                                  Pretty overcast, but don't worry, the outlook's bright with Jesus!
- I've been Angus McCoatUp and this has been the Good News.

## **Prayer of the Faithful**

The Prayer of the Faithful ('bidding prayers') can be written by and presented by young people. A good way to do this is to give general themes for prayer to individuals or small groups – it means you'll avoid repetition as they write the prayers. You'll need to choose a response that is said by the congregation after each prayer.

Suggested themes for the prayers:

- For young people on this National Youth Sunday
- That the Church will work together as a community of faith
- That we will answer God's call to live sustainably
- For people living in poverty
- That we may have hope as we seek to reclaim the future

Generally speaking, the celebrant will introduce these prayers. After the final intercession, it is customary to invite the congregation to pray silently for their own needs. The celebrant will then conclude with a closing prayer.

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

### Preparation of the Gifts

The gifts of bread and wine are presented at the altar: gifts that are used in the celebration of the Eucharist.

A simple, but highly effective way to present the gifts, is to use dance or movement.

Young people could be invited to 'dress' the altar. You could, for example, ask a group to prepare an altar cloth or frontal, based on the *livesimply* message or the **Reclaim the Future!** poster. People could also present flowers and candles, as well as the other items that are needed for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

### Preface

*Don't forget that there is a special Preface for the feast of Christ the King. These words remind us that Jesus is our universal King and helps to describe God's kingdom as a place of truth, life, holiness, grace, justice, love and peace.*

## Communion Rite

### Post Communion Reflection

This part of Mass can be a suitable time to offer a quieter, more reflective time of prayer, as we thank Jesus for his generous gift of the Eucharist.

### Idea 1

*Try this reflection:*

Okay, so Jesus didn't say, 'I was hungry and you gave me a fairly-traded banana' or 'I was a stranger and you helped me seek asylum' or 'I was naked and your managed to source some organically grown cotton t-shirts that weren't produced in a sweat shop for me'.

But God did say 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be responsible...' (from Gen 1)

As we are fed by Jesus in Holy Communion, we pray for the courage to **Reclaim the Future!** We ask God to bless each of us as we try to live up to the responsibility of living simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor.

And even if our ethical actions seem insignificant or irrelevant, we pray for the grace to know that we can make a difference to the environment and to our neighbour.

We can **Reclaim the Future!** Have faith!

### Idea 2

This idea needs a little more preparation, but it can be an effective way to help reiterate the **Reclaim the Future!** theme. It'd work well as a post-Communion reflection, or as part of the final blessing.

Prepare some FairTrade chocolates or sweets to give out to the congregation – it can be as simple as a little piece from a block of chocolate, don't worry about spending too much! Wrap the individual chocolate or sweet in some tissue or greaseproof paper, adding a little *livesimply* message or action as a tag – things like 'change to energy saving lightbulbs' or 'try to walk somewhere this week instead of using your car' or 'give some change to charity' – and so on. You could ask a group of young people to come up with as many ideas as they can, or even better the young people may have already committed to these ideas (and are doing them) now invite others to join them... Perhaps also provide prayer cards with a Reclaim the Future! prayer (see below). These little gifts to the congregation will, hopefully, send them out with a smile, but also with a little challenge!

## A **Reclaim the Future!** prayer

Brilliant God,  
we celebrate your wonderful world  
and we thank you for the gift of your creation.  
On this National Youth Sunday  
inspire us, we pray,  
to **Reclaim the Future!**  
Help us to see how our actions today  
will make a difference tomorrow.  
And bring us together in faith  
to make that difference a positive thing.  
Amen.

You might like to use these prayers in your celebrations of National Youth Sunday. They are based on the **Reclaim the Future!** message given on this year's NYS poster.

*The following prayers can be led by different readers:*

Creator God, we can choose to live differently!  
Inspire us as we make choices  
so that we will recognise the impact our lives have  
on our environment and our fellow human beings.  
We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

Loving God, we can reclaim the future!  
Encourage us to be people of hope  
as we look forwards in faith,  
knowing that we can build a world of justice and peace.  
We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

Brilliant God, we can choose to live in a way

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that creates a better world for everyone.  
Help us to know that our individual actions  
are made in solidarity with our sisters and brothers.  
We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

Wonderful God, you invite us to live simply,  
to live sustainably,  
and to live in solidarity with the poor.  
So help us to respond to that invitation  
with conviction and generosity.  
We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

God of justice,  
listen to us as we pray this day.  
In the silence of our hearts,  
we place all our needs before you.  
(Allow some time for silent prayer.)  
We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

*Led by the celebrant:*

God of grace and love,  
we bring you our prayers,  
our needs and our hopes.  
Pour out your blessing upon us today.  
And help us to reclaim the future:  
your future.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.