

# CELEBRATING ABILITY

Fr Anthony Kain

Late last year our Roman Catholic Archbishop in Adelaide, Philip Wilson, thought it would be a good idea to have a liturgy to mark the "International Day for the Disabled" that was being held on December 3.

This International day was being celebrated with a huge event at Victoria Square in the heart of the city and we planned to have the liturgy on the Sunday afternoon.

A planning group was set up with the Church Office and the Office for Worship. It comprised of people from these Offices and also chaplains and people from the Special Schools and parents of people living with disability. The dynamic of the group was excellent as parents were able to talk with us about their experience. In fact it was very moving as we went through ideas and drafts towards the ceremony. The title says it all – "Celebrating Ability". This was to be a ceremony not only for those living with disability but also for their carers.

I asked people to send me their ideas and 'language' about disability and ability and from this 'mine' we composed the commentary, the prayers and intentions of the day. We put this in the ancient 'shape' of the liturgy – Gathering Rite, Word, Symbol and Sending Forth. I thought flowers would be a good symbol for those living with disability – they bloomed amongst us!

Because of need we had to choose a one level area for the event. All the processions and movement were to have people in wheelchairs, on frames and walking sticks. We went to the gymnasium of Christian Brothers College which is right in the city centre and we formed the area in a diamond of seats with the altar in the middle that was dressed in colours, with lectern and flag pole (there was a special flag for the day) at one apex, presidential chair at the opposite apex, musicians at another apex and a procession aisle opposite them.

The Gathering rite began with a Solo by one of the students of Cabra College Special Unit, a welcome by the commentator, a welcome to the Aboriginal land, a gathering song (We come to share our story), the procession of the celebrant. After the liturgical greeting the "Gloria" was sung as a symbol of the glory of God being the human person fully alive as the flag was brought in a raised.



The Word was Isaiah 61:1-3 followed by 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 during which people were invited to come forward and 'link' with one another as part of the one body. This was particularly moving as pretty well everyone came forward to be part of this movement. We had a wonderfully coloured canopy, (borrowed from one of the Colleges that had been used for a Catholic Education Mass) to accompany the Gospel procession. The Gospel was John 15:9-12. The homily was followed by the Prayers of Intercession.

The Symbol was a huge basket of flowers of many colours. This was processed to the altar and the Prayer of Thanksgiving prayed over it with sung acclamation and the Lord's Prayer. There was a 'communion' in flowers as they were distributed amongst all to song.



The Concluding Rite was a blessing a sending forth and the Sign of Peace as we all moved to the courtyard for mingling and refreshments.

Attached below is the running sheet of the celebration that might be of interest. Whilst this was organized by the Catholic Church there was an attempt to make it ecumenical by invitation. We are doing it again this year and have ecumenical membership of our planning group. This year we are seeking a lot more participation at the planning level from people living with disabilities and their carers.

I think that one of the great things that we have to offer our societies is the understanding churches have of the 'shape' of ritualizing events. The fact that we do not have to re-invent the wheel' when we prepare such a liturgy is very helpful. By using the 'shape' of the usual liturgy we can help people be at home with the liturgy – at least those who go to main line church worship. This 'shape' does work well as we consider how we might 'gather', what we might say in 'word and song', what 'symbolises' the event and what we want to 'send forth' people to do by way of faith action.



THE ORDER OF THE CEREMONY

*Celebration of Ability*

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1.30pm	<i>Opening of venue to be in collaboration with CBC</i>	
	<p><i>The space is prepared. The seats are put in a diagonal form</i></p> <p><i>Microphone is at the Lectern</i></p> <p><i>Another microphone is a lapel one for the Archbishop for his leadership at the chair and at the "altar" for the flowers.</i></p> <p><i>Reserved seating for those in processions is designated</i></p>	Dean and Michael
	<i>The flag pole is in position – the flag is prepared and is on the possession of .....who will practice the entrance by the raising of the flag with participants.</i>	Helen
	<p><i>The basket of flowers is prepared</i></p> <p><i>The procession for this will be coordinated and practiced by .....</i></p>	Anthony and Michael
	<i>The celebrants, main participants and commentator meet in a room to vest and prepare.</i>	Dean
	<i>The musicians and choir arrive and prepare and practice in a venue provided. Music as the people gather</i>	Stephanie

	<b>INTRODUCTORY RITES</b>	
3pm	<p>Solo: "Prayer"</p> <p>The commentator welcomes everyone (taken from website)</p> <p>Good afternoon all.</p> <p>My name is .....and together with .....we are to be your commentators today.</p> <p>Please remain seated throughout the ceremony.</p> <p>The International Day of People with a DisAbility is part of a worldwide celebration that occurs on 3 December each year.</p> <p>Originally declared by the United Nations General Assembly in October 1992 as the International Day of Disabled Persons, the Australian event was renamed the International Day of People with a DisAbility by community representatives in 1997. It was felt that this new title placed a greater emphasis on the abilities and achievements of people living with disabilities.</p> <p>This theme is reflected in the phrase Celebration of Ability, which has been adopted as the catch phrase of the Australian campaign. Thousands of individuals and organisations throughout the country are being encouraged to celebrate the day in any way they can.</p> <p>International Day of People with a DisAbility is unique among community awareness days, as it unites disability organisations, individuals with a disability, businesses, federal, state and local governments and the community. The day is a collaborative effort to celebrate and acknowledge the experience and expertise of people with a disability.</p> <p>And so this event is joined to all those others, especially the fun many of us had yesterday. We pray to our God who gives us our abilities.</p>	Carmelita Michael
3.03pm	<p><b>Kurna Welcome</b></p> <p>Commentator: As we gather I introduce .....of the Kurna people to welcome us.</p> <p><i>Acknowledgement of Kurna country</i></p>	Michael

<p>3.05pm</p>	<p><b>Commentators:</b> Thank you.....</p> <p>We gather to celebrate ability knowing that our God is creative in each of us. As we clothe our altar and gather let us sing our gathering song</p> <p><b>Entrance Song (to be chosen) (Musicians repertoire!)</b></p> <p><i>During this Song the Archbishop preceded by the readers and cloth bearers enters. The cloth is put in the table – Maureen</i></p> <p><i>The musicians lead the song</i></p> <p>SONG OF THE BODY OF CHRIST</p> <p><i>We come to share our story, we come to break the bread</i></p> <p><i>We come to know our rising from the dead.</i></p> <p>1. We come as your people; we come as your own united with the Spirit, love finds a home</p> <p>2. We are called to heal the broken, to be hope for the poor. We are called to feed the hungry at our door.</p> <p>3. You will lead and we will follow, you will be the breath of life; living water we are thirsting for your light.</p> <p><small>Tune and Text: David Haas. 1988. GIA Publications. All right reserved. Used with permission</small></p>	<p>Musicians</p> <p>Maureen</p> <p>Carmelita</p>
<p>3.08pm</p>	<p><b>Liturgical Greeting , welcome and Introduction</b></p> <p><b>Archbishop:</b> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.</p> <p>ALL AND ALSO WITH YOU</p> <p><i>(The celebrant adds a few words of greeting)</i></p>	<p>Dean – Book to Archbishop</p>

3.09pm	<p><b>Archbishop:</b> The Glory of God is the human person fully alive. We sing of God's glory in each of us and all of us:</p> <p><b>Gloria.</b> <i>"Shalom" setting by Colin Smith.</i></p> <p><i>Everyone sings the Refrain; the choir sings the verses.</i></p> <p>Refrain: Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth.</p> <p>After final verse: Amen</p> <p><i>© Colin Smith CFC. Published J. Albert &amp; Son. Used with permission.</i></p> <p><b>FLAG ENTRANCE</b></p> <p><i>During the singing of the Gloria the Flag is processed in by people and raised – persons in wheelchairs to lead</i></p>	<p>Dean</p> <p>Musicians</p> <p>Helen</p>
3.13pm	<p><b>OPENING PRAYER</b></p> <p><b>Archbishop:</b></p> <p>Loving God, author of all gifts:</p> <p>We praise and thank you for all the gifts you have entrusted to us.</p> <p>Give us the courage to be</p> <p>the light of welcome in the darkness of exclusion</p> <p>a voice of gentleness in the wilderness of the unheard</p> <p>and an outstretched hand of love to those longing for community.</p> <p>We ask this through Christ our Lord.</p> <p>ALL: Amen</p> <p><small>Adapted from the Australian Catholic Bishops Committee for the Family and for Life. ©Australian Bishops Conference 2004</small></p>	<p>Dean</p>



	<b>LITURGY OF THE WORD</b>	
3.14pm	<p><i>The two Readers move to the lectern</i></p> <p><b>First Reading:</b> From the Prophet Isaiah 61: 1-3            (Read by Parent from St. Patrick's)</p> <p>The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,            because the LORD has anointed me            to bring good tidings to the afflicted;            he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,            to proclaim liberty to the captives,            and the opening of the prison to those who are            bound;            to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,            and the day of vengeance of our God;            to comfort all who mourn;            to grant to those who mourn in Zion --            to give them a garland instead of ashes,            the oil of gladness instead of mourning,            the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.</p> <p>The Word of the Lord</p> <p>ALL THANKS BE TO GOD</p>	Parent from St. Patrick's

<p>3.15pm</p>	<p><i>During the second reading people are invited to come from the assembly and form a tableau of all being one body. They might 'connect' to one another by streamers or holding hands, or hands one each others' shoulders.</i></p> <p><i>Music is played quietly.</i></p> <p><i>After the commentary the music begins and the reader proclaims strongly and loudly and the movement commences led by people we have asked to start this off.</i></p> <p><b>Commentators:</b></p> <p>1. During this reading any who feel so moved are invited to come and form a circle around the altar and to link by linking arms, holding hands or other creative ways of connecting and linking.</p> <p>2. Please don't be shy to do this and use your imagination on ways of linking!</p> <p><b>Second Reading:</b> 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (Read by Deborah Dowd)</p> <p>For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.</p> <p>For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit.</p> <p>For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.</p> <p>And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.</p> <p>If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?</p> <p>As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.</p> <p>The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."</p> <p>If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.</p> <p>Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it</p> <p>The Word of the Lord</p> <p>ALL: THANKS BE TO GOD</p> <p>People in the 'linking' movement return to their places</p>	<p>Musicians play <u>quietly</u></p> <p>as a backdrop – continue playing at the end as people return to their places</p> <p>Deborah</p> <p>Michael to arrange for some people to start the linking</p>
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3.18pm	<p><i>The Gospel procession forms as follows during the singing of the Alleluia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The deacon of the Word first asks the Archbishop for a Blessing and moves to the lectern</i></li> <li><i>Stephanie arranges for the canopy and a person holds the Gospel book aloft and is accompanied by the bearers of the canopy and proceeds down the western aisle, around the altar and to the lectern. The book is handed to the deacon and the canopy bearers stand to the rear of the lectern still holding the canopy.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Gospel:</b> John 15: 9-12 (read by.....)</p> <p>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.</p> <p>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.</p> <p>These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.</p> <p>"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.</p> <p>The Gospel of the Lord</p> <p>ALL; PRAISE TO YOU, LORD JESUS CHRIST</p>	<p>Forming the Gospel Procession"</p> <p>Stephanie</p> <p>Musicians play and lead in the singing of the "Alleluia"</p> <p>Gospel reader</p> <p>David Cappo</p>
3.21pm	Homily/Address	Archbishop

3.25pm	<p><b>The Prayers</b></p> <p><i>Composed by Paul Garton</i></p> <p><i>The readers move to the lectern for the Prayers</i></p> <p>Archbishop: God, you give us all abilities to be a community of your life. Listen to our prayers as we celebrate these abilities.</p> <p><b>Reader 1:</b> Lord God of our people, help us to always be people of wisdom, who see the wonderful abilities you give to each person <i>first</i>, and any disabilities <i>second</i>.</p> <p>Lord hear us...</p> <p>Lord hear our prayer.</p> <p><b>Reader 2:</b> Lord we lift up to you and pray for all of the carers in our community. May they never forget that they have been called to 'care' by you, and that the people they care for are your gift to them.</p> <p>Lord hear us...</p> <p>Lord hear our prayer.</p> <p><b>Reader 3:</b> Lord, we pray that our society will always acknowledge the wonderful selfless work that our carers do in caring for our disabled people.</p> <p>Lord hear us...</p> <p>Lord hear our prayer.</p> <p><b>Reader 4:</b> Lord, inspire us to be a people that are always welcoming and accepting of all people, and which sees Jesus in everyone.</p> <p>Lord hear us...</p> <p>Lord hear our prayer.</p> <p><b>Reader 5:</b> Lord, give us the courage to be the light of welcome to those of us who feel excluded, and an outstretched hand of love to those who long to be part of our community.</p> <p>Lord hear us...</p> <p>Lord hear our prayer</p> <p>Archbishop</p> <p>Loving God, listen to these our prayers this day as we celebrate International Day of people with a DisAbility. Grant them through Christ our Lord.</p> <p>ALL AMEN</p>	Paul Garton
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<p>3.28pm</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LITURGY OF FLOWERS</b></p> <p><i>The people who are to be in the Procession are directed by Maureen to the area where the Basket of flowers with streamers is ready.</i></p> <p><i>Four smaller baskets for the distribution are positioned in readiness.</i></p> <p>At the same time, the musicians begin the music and the Cantor moves to the microphone from which he/she will lead the singing of the antiphon (same as the Gloria) during the Prayer of Thanks and Blessing over the Flowers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>People hold a huge basket of flowers and the streamer people lead and follow it.</i></li> <li>• <i>The procession proceeds – the procession odes a circuit of the Altar and the basket is placed on it with the four streamers flowing down off the altar on the floor</i></li> </ul>	<p>Music is played as this is prepared and proceeds</p> <p>Carmelita - music</p> <p>Maureen to arrange baskets and procession</p>
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<p>3.29pm</p>	<p><b>PRAYER OVER THE FLOWERS</b></p> <p><b>The Archbishop moves to the altar to lead the prayer over the flowers.</b></p> <p>There will be sung acclamations throughout</p> <p>Creator God, Loving God of all of us.</p> <p>Your creativity blooms in our world through the gifts of each one here and so we sing...</p> <p>ALL; Glory to God in the Highest and peace to God's people on earth (to 'Mass Shalom' tune)</p> <p>Your son Jesus Christ, taught us to be united with the abilities we have and thus to build up your reign on earth and so we sing again....</p> <p>ALL; Glory to God in the Highest and peace to God's people on earth</p> <p>Your Holy Spirit inspires us to wisdom to see in each person your glory, that spark of divine life that is in each of us and so we sing....</p> <p>ALL; Glory to God in the Highest and peace to God's people on earth</p> <p>God of our diverse gifts, Bless these flowers that are a symbol for us of our wonderful diversity of abilities and gifts. As we share them may they become for us a sign of being part of one another in your loving plan of salvation that can transfigure our limitation and suffering. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. ALL SING: Amen, Amen, Amen</p>	<p>Dean</p> <p>Carmelita</p>
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3.32pm	<p><b>The Lord's Prayer</b></p> <p>Archbishop: Celebrating the Father's gifts in each of us as people of the kingdom we pray together:</p> <p>Our Father who art in Heaven;  Hallowed be thy name.  Thy kingdom come  Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.  Give us this day our daily bread  And forgive us our trespasses,  As we forgive those who trespass against us  And lead us not into temptation,  But deliver us from evil.  For the kingdom, the power and the glory are your  now and forever. Amen</p>	Dean
3.33pm	<p><b>Distribution of Flowers</b></p> <p><i>Four participants move forward and collect a basket of flowers to distribute</i></p> <p><i>The breaking up of the flowers is done by the Archbishop assisted by the MC – Dean – they have been arranged in four bunches for easy transfer to the smaller baskets.</i></p> <p><i>The basket bearers throughout the congregation and the baskets are passed along the rows and shared.</i></p> <p><i>The musicians play music as this action takes place.</i></p> <p><i>There is a solo sung during this distribution – it starts as soon as the blessing prayer concludes</i></p>	<p>Dean</p> <p>Carmelita</p>

3.36pm	<p>Song after Distribution</p> <p>Companions on the journey</p> <p>We are companions on the journey</p> <p>Breaking bread and sharing life</p> <p>and in the love we bear is the hope we share</p> <p>for we believe in the love of our God,</p> <p>we believe in the love of our God.</p> <p>1. No longer strangers to each other</p> <p>no longer strangers in God's house</p> <p>we are fed and we are nourished</p> <p>by the strength of those who care</p> <p>by the strength of those who care.</p> <p>2. We have been gifted with each other</p> <p>and we are called by the word of the Lord</p> <p>to act with justice, to love tenderly</p> <p>and to walk humbly with our God</p> <p>to walk humbly with our God.</p>	Carmelita
3.39pm	<p><b>PRAYER AFTER DISTRIBUTION – Main Celebrant</b></p> <p>Let us pray in a moment of silence as we reflect on the wonderful gift of being part of one another in the Body of Christ.</p> <p>(Silent Prayer)</p> <p>God of this day and time that we have spent together, be with us as we live our lives together knowing the hope that we have celebrated here and the wonderful abilities you give to each of us.</p> <p>We pray through Christ our Lord</p> <p>ALL; AMEN</p>	Dean
3.40pm	<p><i>The Commentators come forward to lead some thanks to various people</i></p> <p>CBC</p> <p>GUESTS</p> <p>PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>OTHER.....</p> <p>The commentators invite people at the end of the ceremony to get refreshments from the kitchenette and move to the courtyard for mingling and sharing.</p>	Michael



	<b>CONCLUDING RITE</b>	
3.42pm	<p><b>FINAL BLESSING – Main Celebrant</b></p> <p>God of our lives  may all people know and cherish  the heavenly gifts they have received  in the name of Jesus  ALL: AMEN  And may almighty God bless us  the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit  ALL: AMEN</p>	Dean
3.43pm	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DISMISSAL</b></p> <p>Celebrant: Celebrating our diverse gifts and taking them into our world let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  ALL Thanks be to God  Celebrant: As we go forth celebrating our abilities let us offer each other signs of Christ's peace.....</p>	Dean
3.44pm	<p><b>RECESSIONAL MUSIC</b></p> <p><i>Music as Sign of Peace and Mingling takes place.</i></p>	Dean  Carmelita
3.47pm	<b>REFRESHMENTS in the courtyard</b>	