

PART 3

LITURGY SUGGESTIONS

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Practical directions

Directory of popular piety and liturgy

In order to venerate Don Bosco's Casket best within the context of liturgy it would help first of all to take a look at the directions given by the CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS offered in the *Directory for popular piety and liturgy* published in 2002.

In no. **229** we are reminded:

"It is necessary to instruct the faithful on the link between Feasts of the Saints and the celebrations of the mysteries of Christ. In fact the feasts of the Saints, brought back to their original reason for being, through light on the concrete realisation of God's salvific plan and "proclaim the wonders of Christ in his servants"; **the feasts of his members, the Saints, are the feasts of the Head who is Christ**".

An earlier document in this preparatory set of three aims to offer a Christological orientation for venerating St John Bosco's Casket so that the faithful are already prepared to receive it.

During **THE CASKET'S JOURNEY** the involvement of the faithful is foreseen especially in the final stretch when it arrives at the welcoming community. Regarding this the *Directory* reminds us in number **247**:

"So that the procession always keeps its character as a manifestation of faith the faithful need to be instructed about its nature in its *theological, liturgical and anthropological* aspects.

From a **theological** point of view the procession should be presented as a sign of the situation the Church finds itself in, as the People of God on a journey, with Christ and following Christ, aware that they do not have a stable abode in this world (cf. Heb 13:14), and moving along earthly paths towards the heavenly Jerusalem; it is also a sign of the witness of faith which the Christian community gives to its Lord in the context of civil society; finally it is a sign of the Church's missionary role which from the beginning, following the Lord's mandate (cf. Mt 28:19-20), sets out to proclaim the Gospel of salvation throughout the world.

From a **liturgical** point of view the processions also need to be directed, including from a popular perspective, towards a celebration of Liturgy: presenting the movement from church to church as one of the living Church in the world as it moves towards the community which abides in heaven; this means seeing that it takes place *under ecclesiastical leadership*, to avoid disrespectful or degrading manifestations; providing *occasion for an opening prayer*, which does not leave out a proclamation of the Word of God; *taking opportunity for hymns*, preferably drawing on the Psalms, with instrumental support; suggesting they carry, during the procession, *candles or lamps*; seeing to moments of *pause* which alternate with walking, as an image of life's journey; concluding the procession with *a doxology* to God, source of all holiness, and a blessing given by the Bishop, priest or deacon.

Finally, from an **anthropological** point of view the procession should highlight its significance as a "journey together": in the same atmosphere of prayer, joined in song, aiming at the same goal, the faithful feel united with each other, determined to make the journey of life concrete through Christian tasks which take place during the procession".

Each local community should see to preparing this occasion by taking into account distance, involvement of the people, and the opportunities offered. Next we offer some opening and closing celebrations which include a procession.

Locating, decorating and venerating the Casket

The Casket can be placed in an **area off to the side**, sideways to the altar or less preferably **in front of the altar**, but in this case it should be sufficiently far from it to avoid blocking the centre of the altar, which stands for Christ. When it is first brought in it may be placed near the altar for the celebration of Eucharist, then removed to its right place.

Regarding **decoration**, a certain *simplicity is called for in placing flowers* so it doesn't give the idea of a tomb, or look too exaggerated. The casket might have **two texts** placed either side, one from the Gospel, another from Don Bosco, in order to *lead to the idea of the gift of life*. Below, the reliquary reminds us of the grain of wheat which falls to the ground and dies, giving rise to new life.

Regarding **veneration** the *Directory* at the end of no. **237** reminds us:

"There are different kinds of popular devotion to Saints relics such as **kissing the relics**, decorating them with lamps/candles and flowers, imparting a blessing with them, carrying them in procession, and not to be excluded is bringing them to the sick to comfort them and give them a chance to pray for recovery: these are all to be carried out *with great dignity* and for genuine reasons of faith. To **be avoided** in every case is the *exposition of the Saints relics on the altar itself*: this is reserved for the Body and Blood of the King of martyrs".

It seems to us to be correct **to kiss** the relics (if this fits in with the way the Casket is set up) and **incense them**, also provided for in the *Book of Blessings* for blessing images of the Saints.

Celebrations

Welcoming ceremony

In welcoming the Casket it is possible to accept the Rite of Blessing for the image of a Saint taken from the *Book of Blessings*, using the same scheme. We suggest two approaches.

1. Welcome outside the church entering in procession.
2. Welcome inside the church.

Concerning the **FORMER** we suggest the following:

- Greeting outside the church
- Introduction
- **Entering in procession**
- Placement
- Incensation
- Veneration

Here is a scheme for the **SECOND CELEBRATION**.

BEGINNING

When the Casket enters in procession, there is an appropriate hymn or people pause in recollection.

HYMN

CP 669 Praise God; **CP 617** Light of the world.

The words should highlight the wonders of God wrought in his servant Don Bosco. Perhaps it is better to leave hymns like “Padre Maestro e amico” or similar to other moments, according to circumstances and opportunity.

PLACEMENT OF THE CASKET

Side location or angled sideways in respect to the altar.

Everyone makes the sign of the Cross, while the priest says

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

GREETING

The priest greets those present with the following words or other similar words, preferably drawn from the Scriptures:

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
crown of all the Saints,
the love of God our Father
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
be with you.**

R. And also with you,

or some other appropriate greeting.

INTRODUCTORY WORD

The priest or other suitable minister introduces the welcoming rite in these or similar words:

Dearly beloved, the welcome rite we are about to celebrate by exposing the Casket containing the relics of St John Bosco for public veneration, gives glory to God in the first place, the source of all holiness. Let us prepare our hearts to understand the true meaning of this celebration.

By offering the relics of St John Bosco to the devout attention of the faithful, holy Mother Church wishes to place before us the image of those who, led by the Holy Spirit, followed Jesus in life and in death, so that by lifting our gaze to the future city

we may see the way that the Saints achieved perfect union with Christ. They are friends and heirs of the Lord Jesus, our models and patrons. They love us, come to our aid, intercede for us, because of the mysterious bond of communion between the pilgrim members of the Church on earth and those who have already entered the heavenly Jerusalem.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord God,
in your providence you gave us Saint John Bosco,
father and teacher of the young,
who worked with tireless zeal,
under the guidance of the Virgin Mary,
for the good of the Church;
arouse in us the same apostolic charity,
which urges us to seek the salvation of our brothers to serve you,
our one and only good.
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son who is God,
and who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

A reader or one of those present reads one or more texts from the Sacred Scriptures, choosing by preference from those offered in the Roman Missal or Liturgy of the Hours, either from the Common or Proper of Saints, inserting an appropriate response or moment of silence between the readings. The reading of the Gospel is always given place of honour. Also the following texts could be read.

1 Reading: Ez 34:11-12.15-16.23-24.30-31 2 (1 Reading from the Proper of St John Bosco)

Psalm 33:2-3 4-5 6-7 8-9 10-11

R. Blessed be the Lord, the glory of his Saints.

Gospel: Mt 18:1-6.10 (Gospel from the Proper of St John Bosco)

HOMILY

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

These or similar prayers may be read, alternating children, youth, teachers and families according to circumstances. Prayer in form of a litany may also be used like those in the Liturgy of the Hours, since they are better followed by the people.

In this celebration in honour of the Father and Teacher of the young, we address our prayer to God the Father, who is always ready to accept the prayers of his children

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For the Pope, bishops, priests and deacons: that they may proclaim the Gospel of truth and joy through generous witness to their calling, **we pray to the Lord.**
2. For all people of good will: that their commitment to a better world may be based on a generous and disinterested love, **we pray to the Lord.**
3. For the Salesians and the Salesian Sisters that by imitating St John Bosco in his total gift of his life and service of the young, they may learn how to form in them the true image of Christ, **we pray to the Lord.**
4. For neglected, marginalised young people without ideals: that they may find in every son and daughter of St John Bosco a friend to help them to construct their life according to the Gospel, **we pray to the Lord.**
5. for all those involved in the Christian education of the young: that they may find in their holy Patron a teacher and guide to inspire them in their mission, **we pray to the Lord.**
6. For those of us gathered here at the Casket of St John Bosco: that with him as a model for holiness we may be committed each day to carrying out the Gospel teaching of love and mutual acceptance to one day be welcomed into the Lord's presence, **we pray to the Lord.**
7. Other intentions

The Lord's Prayer follows

Our Father.

FINAL PRAYER

The priest, arms extended, proclaims this prayer:

Let us pray.

**O God source of all grace and holiness,
look with love on your faithful
who have welcomed this reliquary of St John Bosco,
friend and heir of Christ
faithful witness to the Gospel:
may we experience the effectiveness of his intercession
at the throne of your glory.
through Christ our Lord.**

R. Amen.

INCENSATION

the celebrant venerates the Casket with incense.

Following this some young people may decorate *the Casket symbolically with* flowers and lamps, or with *two appropriate sentences* chosen from the Gospel and from writings of the Saint.

CONCLUSION

the priest extends his hands over those present saying:

**O God, glory and joy of your faithful servants
and who gave us in St John Bosco
a sign of your protection,
let your face shine on us.**

R. Amen.

**May the intercession of St John Bosco free us from present evils,
and may his example urge us to live according to the Gospel,
in the service of God and our brothers and sisters.**

R. Amen.

**May you enjoy with Mary, Queen of Saints
the joy and peace of the homeland,
where the Church rejoices in eternity
in the glorious communion of all its children.**

R. Amen.

**And may the blessing of Almighty God,
Father, Son and ✠ Holy Spirit,
descend on you, and with you remain forever.**

R. Amen.

HYMN: Hymn in honour of St John Bosco.

Celebration of handing over

This celebration may take place at the conclusion of the Thanksgiving Mass taken from the Proper of St John Bosco. After the *postcommunion* prayer the following schema is possible.

- Introduction
- Prayer of thanks
- Handing over the Casket to those taking it on from here or those receiving it from another community.
- Final blessing

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O Father, you have nurtured us
with this sacrament of salvation,
may we imitate the tireless efforts
of St John Bosco
to bring the young to the love of Christ your Son,
inexhaustible source of new life.
He who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

INTRODUCTORY WORD

the priest or other suitable minister introduces the rite of handing over.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Almighty and eternal God,
we thank you for the gift of St John Bosco,
father and teacher of the young.
Bless these your faithful
who have come with such devotion to see his relics
and to ask him to intercede with You.
Free them from every affliction of body and mind,
look after them in your mercy here and everywhere
and keep them in your grace,
so that they may deserve to come to the joy of Paradise.
Bless and guard these relics
and all the faithful who receive a visit from this Casket
so that by praying to St John Bosco
they may come to You, O Father, who visits his people
and proclaims through the life of your Saints the wonders of our Lord Jesus Christ.
He who is God and lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

INCENSATION

the celebrant venerates the Casket with incense.

HANDING OVER

The celebrant greets representatives of the community who will next receive the Casket of the Saint and invites them to receive the solemn blessing which will accompany them on the journey.

SOLEMN BLESSING

May the Lord, who inspires every good proposal,
protect you always with his grace
and make you faithful to the promises of your baptism.

R. Amen.

May Christ the Good Shepherd,
grant that you may serve your brothers and sisters in joy
following the example of our Holy Founder.

R. Amen.

To you, who are about to receive the relics of St John Bosco,
may the Lord grant that you may always walk in faith,
hope and love,
may he look after you and protect you
as you walk to your community.

R. Amen.

And may the blessing of Almighty God,
Father, Son ✠ and Holy Spirit,
descend on you, and with you remain forever.

R. Amen.

Prayers

Don Bosco meets the children

BEGINNING

HYMN

To Don Bosco, for example: "Verdi le tue valli", or similar.

All make the Sign of the Cross, while the priest says:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

GREETING

After the following or similar words, the priest greets the children with appropriate words for the circumstances, explaining the meaning of the gestures and prayers that are about to be carried out.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
crown of all the Saints,
the love of God our Father
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
be with you.**

R. And also with you.

[Here, if appropriate, one could insert a simple reading from the OT, on the Prophet Samuel as a young man, who accepted *the call of God* and the need to *listen* and for *help* to understand the call. There could also be a simple psalm of repetition. The story could also be the basis for the homily and comment].

A READING FROM THE LIFE OF THE SAINT

A short excerpt could be drawn from the first part of this aid dedicated to **children**. Our advice is the paragraph: "A dream which changed his life", or: "God's little juggler". If the prayer event is for **pre adolescents** then the paragraph of choice could be "A providential inconvenience", or: "The Happy Club", drawn from the second part of the same document.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The Gospel is announced with the singing of the alleluia.

Gospel: Mt 18:1-6.10 (Gospel from the Proper of St John Bosco or other according to choice)

HOMILY

SIGN

Some youngsters bring a vase containing earth and a container with wheat seeds in front of the Casket. The priest then says these or similar words. The sign could be altered according to the circumstances.

**Dear young friends,
you have heard how St John Bosco, from his childhood, put his life at the disposition of others for love of the Lord. To do everything that Jesus asked of him, he made many sacrifices and his efforts brought many good results. We could say that Don Bosco was consumed with love for others.**

These grains of wheat too, in order to grow and bear fruit have to be sacrificed: in fact they have to die in the ground in order to become a plant.

We also wish to live for others like young John Bosco, and to help us to keep our commitment we become grains of wheat.

One at a time we will plant our grain of wheat in the ground to remind us that to grow and bear fruits of love we need to act courageously and be ready to make sacrifices. May St John Bosco help us to love the Lord.

While the youngsters line up to plant their grain of wheat, there can be a suitable hymn.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

This is a good chance for the children to prepare simple prayers for the occasion and read them out, without reference to other formulas for adults.

The Lord's Prayer follows

Our Father

PRAYER OF BLESSING

The priest, arms extended, says this prayer of blessing:

O God source of all grace and holiness,
look with love on these children
who have prayed at the relics of St John Bosco,
friend and heir of Christ,
faithful witness to the Gospel:
may we experience the effectiveness of his intercession
at the throne of your glory,
so that we too may become
friends of the Lord and bear fruits of love.
through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

INCENSATION

the celebrant venerates the Casket with incense.

After this prayer some children may *symbolically decorate* the Casket with flowers and lamps, or with *two sentences* chosen appropriately from the Gospel and from the writings of the Saint.

CONCLUSION

the priest extends his hands over those present saying:

O God, glory and joy of your faithful servants,
who in St John Bosco
gave us a sign of your love,
let your face shine on us

R. Amen.

May the intercession of St John Bosco help you to be good,
and may his example urge you to live according to the Gospel,
and cultivate friendship with Jesus and Mary,
to serve God and your brothers and sisters in love.

R. Amen.

May you enjoy the joy and peace of Paradise with Mary, Queen of Saints.

R. Amen.

And may the blessing of Almighty God,
Father, Son and ✠ Holy Spirit,
descend on you, and with you remain forever.

R. Amen.

HYMN Hymn in honour of St John Bosco

Don Bosco meets the Salesian community

BEGINNING

HYMN

To Don Bosco, for example: “Salve don Bosco Santo”, or similar.

All make the Sign of the Cross, while the priest says:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

GREETING

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
crown of all the Saints,
the love of God our Father
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
be with you.**

R. And also with you.

A READING FROM THE LIFE OF THE SAINT

Something taken from the first part for **adults**. Our advice is the paragraph on “Contemplation in action”, or: “Mama Margaret and the new family”. According to circumstances you could choose sections from the Biographical Memoirs, especially those regarding the extraordinary graces granted to the Saint.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The Gospel is announced by singing the alleluia.

Gospel: Mt 18:1-6.10 (Gospel from the Proper of St John Bosco or other according to choice)

HOMILY

SIGN

If it is opportune, you could think up a sign to help people understand better the Casket's presence. You could give them a sheet of paper containing the basic elements of the Casket's pilgrimage and its significance, explained at length in the second part of this aid, or with a prayer to Don Bosco which recalls the prayer of thanksgiving for the handing over. This sign could also be left out.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Drawn from the adult set of prayers or made up for the occasion.

The Lord's Prayer follows

Our Father.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

The priest, arms extended, says this prayer of blessing:

**O God, source of all grace and holiness,
look with love on this community
which has prayed at the relics of St John Bosco,
friend and heir of Christ,
faithful witness to the Gospel:
may we experience the effectiveness of his intercession
at the throne of your glory,
so that we too may become
heirs of the Lord and bearers of the fruits of love.
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.**

R. Amen.

INCENSATION

the celebrant venerates the Casket with incense.

After this prayer some youngsters may *symbolically decorate* the Casket with flowers and lamps.

CONCLUSION

the priest extends his hands over those present saying:

**O God, glory and joy of your faithful servants
you gave us a sign of your protection
in St John Bosco.
Let your face shine on us.**

R. Amen.

**May the intercession of St John Bosco free us from present evils,
and may his example urge us to live according to the Gospel,
in the service of God and our brothers and sisters.**

R. Amen.

**May you enjoy the joy and peace of our heavenly home
with Mary, Queen of Saints,
where the Church rejoices in eternity
in the glorious communion of all its children.**

R. Amen.

And may the blessing of Almighty God,
Father, Son and ✠ Holy Spirit,
descend on you, and with you remain forever.

R. Amen.

HYMN Hymn in honour of St John Bosco

Don Bosco meets the young: prayer vigil

Organising this situation depends a lot on the local situation at the time. Cultural context is important as well as the nature of the group of young people taking part in the Vigil. In this case we are not offering a detailed rite but general criteria and possible themes.

The following could alternate

- A hymn
- Reading of psalms (reminding us of Don Bosco's life)
- Reading of episodes from the Saint's life
- Reading of the Word of God (giving prime place to the Gospel)
- Readings from the Saint's writings
- Signs
- Audiovisual: projection, video (being careful not to end up going beyond the immediate topic).

We suggest the possibility of building the Vigil around a theme. Here are some possibilities.

- **Don Bosco as a spiritual guide**
You could use the outline *of reflection for youth-adults*. You could insert excerpts where Don Bosco speaks of the importance of his guidance, from either this set of materials or from the *Memoirs of the Oratory*. Alternate *moments of listening* with *moments for reflection* where the young people are invited to question themselves on the basis of questions given them.
- **Don Bosco life as mission**
You could also keep using the *outline of reflections for youth-adults*. You could put in excerpts where Don Bosco speaks of the importance of choices made for the future, or about work and study today which prepares us for daily apostolate and for mission on the morrow.
- **Don Bosco and the project of life**
You could use the outline of the *reflections for adolescents and young people*. Dealing with the idea of sacrifice, maybe with some readings, keeping in mind sections like: “*A providential inconvenience*” and “*His years at the Seminary*”.

If conditions are right, and according to opportunity, you could thinking of including an occasion for **Eucharistic Adoration** as the highpoint of prayer, where we thank God for the gift of St John Bosco asking bring our prayers to him through the intercession of the Saint