

Empty Spaces Using the DVD as a Liturgical Resource

Introduction

- The DVD comes in two sections: *Empty Spaces - Passion*; and *Empty Spaces - Resurrection*.
- Two scripts accompany the sections of the DVD, one for Passion and one for Resurrection, are akin to the more traditional *Stations of the Cross* and *Stations of the Resurrection*. These may be downloaded from the LCI website - under the Learning and E-Learning areas of the website.
- Each script is a composite reading of Bible narratives drawn from various versions of the gospel.
- The Reader is invited to read slowly and meditatively as the images are shown. It is important for the purposes of timing to make sure that the reader begins to read as soon as they see a new image emerging.
- Alongside the images and the reading, ambient music sets a mood for an emerging drama built around the communion table that is set before the people.

Empty Spaces - Passion

- The communion table should be laid out as below. Please note:
 - The jug at the head of the table is raised up above the level of the other wine goblets
 - The wine goblets and plates are laid out in a narrowing pattern towards the foot of the table



- This is important as the service proceeds dramatically in the following way:
 - The service begins with the congregation sharing communion (Mass / Eucharist) together in the manner associated with the Christian tradition to which they belong.
 - Once this is completed, the table should remain set out as above.
 - The DVD is set going, beginning with darkness and moving into the first image of a courtyard with an upper room.
 - At particular moments in the script, each of the six place settings is covered with a small white cloth, followed finally by the jug at the head of the table.
 - After the images have finished, the whole table is covered with a clean white shroud (bedsheet?) to create the image of Christ's body lying in the tomb.
- The music continues for a further five minutes and people leave the service with no blessing as and when they feel moved.

Empty Spaces - Resurrection

- The service begins with a table as above, but with no wine goblets or bread plates or jug. It simply has two shrouds, one folded at the head of the table, one at the foot. There is empty space between.
- The service proceeds dramatically in the following way:
 - The DVD is set going, beginning with darkness and moving to a candle with light dawning around it.
 - The reader begins once the first image of a building with a dark boarded window.
 - At particular moments in the script, the table is laid into the empty space with a jug of wine, a plate with bread, a wine goblet until the bread is broken (at the point when the Risen Christ breaks bread with disciples at Emmaus)
 - The final two text slides give people space to reflect on their own faith in believing.
 - Communion (Mass / Eucharist) is then shared according to local custom.

Theology and Interpretation

We hope that people will put their own interpretation on their experience of Empty Spaces: Echoes of Redemption in an Urban Landscape. We hope people might discover that they are reflecting on the following:

- Presence in absence
 - The Tomb, though empty, is a symbol of presence - a symbol of resurrection, a symbol of life beyond death.
 - There are parts of our urban landscape which, though empty, imply presence - of people, of God, of hope and expectation.
- Hope in despair
 - There are no parts of our world, our urban landscape, that are beyond redemption.
- That our city (Leeds in this case) reverberates with the story of Christ's passion and resurrection, even though it is far from those events in space and time. Jerusalem is every city in every place. Christ might have walked to the cross past that scaffolding and through those streets that are our own. Christ might have appeared to people on our streets and in our urban landscape. Perhaps he still does!

Empty Spaces Using the DVD as a Bible Study

- Outside of Easter, the DVD may usefully be used as an aid to understanding and interpreting our urban landscape theologically. There is a PDF Bible study based on Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones which may be downloaded from the LCI website as above.
 - Choose either one or other or both of the DVD sections and encourage people to reflect meditatively on the images they see in the context of the death and resurrection of Christ.
 - The Bible study draws a contrast between two cities - Jerusalem and Babylon.
 - To the Israelite Exiles that Ezekiel is addressing, Babylon feels to be an alien place, where they are displaced, marginalised and maltreated by the indigenous population.
 - Jerusalem, on the other hand, is home - a place of comfort which they can only dream of for the time being.
 - The study leads us to reflect on Babylon and Jerusalem in our own City - where are we at home and where are we displaced?
 - And what is our theological vision for the city in which we are inhabitants for God?