

PRAYING THE *ANGELUS*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. When will Sydney Catholic Schools begin praying the *Angelus* as a system of schools?

On the Feast of the Annunciation (Wednesday 25 March, 2015).

2. Will the *Angelus* be prayed each day?

Yes. There may be the odd occasion, however, when this does not occur. Ordinarily this would be a major event involving the whole school being off-site e.g. swimming or athletics carnivals.

3. At what time should the *Angelus* be prayed?

Customarily the *Angelus* should be prayed at midday. This is the tradition of the Church and it should be observed. Local circumstances may occasionally necessitate the prayer being prayed at a different time. This should not be the norm, however.

4. Can schools use the alternate wording of the Hail Mary, found in the 'Our Prayers' Section of the "To Know, Worship and Love" texts?

Yes, students can pray the version of the Hail Mary found in "To Know, Worship and Love".

5. Is there a particular approach that schools should adopt in praying the *Angelus* as a community?

Schools may wish to adopt different approaches in the praying of the *Angelus*. Some may pray the prayer over the PA system, while others may wish to pray it in individual classes. The prayer may be led by teachers or students, or schools may wish to use the CD which has been provided.

6. Should people stand while they are praying?

Yes. The significance of standing while praying is modelled for us in our participation in the Mass. Furthermore, within the *Angelus* people customarily genuflect at the words, "and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us".

7. Should schools ring bells as is the custom when praying the *Angelus*?

Where practicable, yes. Many schools already have appropriate bell systems in place, or suitable alternatives. A CD has also been provided to each school with a recording of *Angelus* bells. This can be played through the school's PA system. The recording of *Angelus* bells is available as an MP3 file from RE Online.

It is suggested that schools use 'bells' as a signal to stop work and to prepare for prayer. The bells deliberately break our routine so that our attention and focus turns to God. The bells should be rung a few minutes before the start of the prayer so as to enable a proper and prayerful atmosphere in each room.

8. Which parts of the *Angelus* do people pray?

The *Angelus* is a prayer of 'call' and 'response'.

The person leading the *Angelus* will pray particular verses e.g. 'The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary', to which all respond 'And she conceived of the Holy Spirit'.

This pattern occurs throughout the prayer. Generally, these 'call and response' sentences are very short, with the exception of the final section of the prayer which begins 'Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord'.

The prayer card itself identifies which sections of the *Angelus* are prayed by the leader (white text) and which are the words of response (blue text). While the Hail Mary may be said in full it can also be broken into two parts of call and response. When this occurs the leader would typically pray the first stanza of the prayer, 'Hail Mary, full of grace ... thy womb, Jesus', to which the people respond 'Holy Mary, Mother of God ... hour of our death' (second stanza).

9. Will the *Angelus* be prayed throughout the year and then into the future?

Yes. It is expected that the *Angelus* will be embedded within the daily life of all Sydney Catholic school communities.

10. Will schools receive support resources?

Schools will receive a range of support materials including:

- prayer cards,
- prayer posters for all classrooms,
- a CD of prayers and Marian hymns,
- suggested teaching & learning strategies,
- reflections on the *Angelus*.

11. How should parents be advised of this Archdiocesan prayer strategy?

Schools should advise parents via their normal modes of communication. It is suggested that schools may wish to contextualise the use of the prayer by quoting the words of Archbishop Anthony Fisher on the prayer card:

Prayer is at the heart of the Christian life. It opens us to the presence and activity of God in our lives and helps us to discern and follow the will of God.

A prayer of particular significance within the Christian Tradition is the Angelus. The Angelus is an ancient prayer recalling the events of the Annunciation, when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would conceive by the Holy Spirit and become the mother of God. The prayer honours Mary's great 'yes' to God; offered humbly, faithfully and obediently. Through this prayer we reflect upon and celebrate the great mystery of God sharing in our humanity, becoming one of us in the person of Jesus.

The Angelus is usually said at noon each day. Bells are customarily rung to encourage people to stop work, if only for a few moments, and reflect upon God's gifts to us and our own 'yes' to God.

I wish to invite all those in our Sydney Catholic school and office communities to join with me in pausing each day to pray the Angelus. With 100,000 of us praying together each day it will be a wonderful act of solidarity and communion.

Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP

12. Who should schools contact if they have further questions?

Rebecca Ters from the Religious Education and Evangelisation team (02 9568 8419).