

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the Fifth Sunday of Easter – Cycle A

Sunday date: April 19-20, 2008

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview for this Sunday...

Today we begin the second half of the Easter Season, where the Gospel of John presents Jesus' farewell discourse. In today's Gospel Jesus speaks of His "Father's house," "dwelling places," and "preparing a place." At first we, like the disciples, might think of this as a physical location, a destination we could find if we knew the way. Jesus however, leads us to a deeper understanding when He reveals where He and the Father dwell: within each other. The way to this dwelling place is Jesus, who leads us into the heart of God.

In the second reading, St. Peter speaks of our intimate relationship with God in Christ using different images. God dwells – not in a house of stone – but in a spiritual house made of living stones. We are that spiritual house because we are "chosen and precious in the sight of God." The root of all religious desire is union with God. The bold claim of Christianity is that God meets this desire by coming to us in Christ and we come to God in Christ: "No one comes to the Father except through me" (*adapted from Living Liturgy 2008 by J. A. Zimmerman, et al., Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007*).

Questions for Sharing Faith...

1. How do I live my life if I believe that Jesus is the way into the heart of God?
2. How is my service of others different when I see it as an exercise of my “holy priesthood” and as a “spiritual sacrifice?”
3. Is it possible for me to share Jesus’ work of preparing a place for others in the Father’s house? How?

Some Considerations as you Prepare...

1. The Entrance Antiphon for this Sunday’s liturgy is from Psalm 97 and proclaims a new song offered to God. There are many hymns and songs based on Psalm 97 which could be used to begin today’s Mass. Consider using the antiphons from the *Sacramentary* as a source of inspiration for the music used during the liturgy.
2. If it has been your parish practice, continue the Rite of Sprinkling during this Eastertide Sunday. After the Rite of Sprinkling a familiar setting of the Gloria should be sung.
3. One of the Easter Prefaces may be used today (P22-P25); however, the first Preface for Ordinary Time (P29) has direct references to today’s Second Reading, so perhaps it could be used, inserting into its text the standard phrasing, “We praise you with greater joy than ever in this Easter season, when Christ became our paschal sacrifice.”
4. A “Prayer Over the People” is offered today for Final Blessing (Catholic book edition of the *Sacramentary*, p. 243).

Sample Intercessions for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

Priest: As a chosen race, a holy nation and God's own people, let us offer intercessions in Jesus' name.

Deacon (or other reader if there is no deacon):

1. For the Church, the temple built of living stones: may her life always be marked by prayer and loving service to all those in need, we pray to the Lord.
2. For our Holy Father, Pope Benedict, all bishops, priests and deacons, and the religious and laity called to serve in the Church: may they – like Stephen and the first deacons – be filled with faith and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord.
3. For people all over the world who long to see the face of God: may they see now God's loving care for them, we pray to the Lord.
4. For our newly initiated brothers and sisters in the Church: may the word of God continue to spread and the number of new disciples increase greatly, we pray to the Lord.
5. For the widowed members of our community, for the hungry and for all who are in need: may our devotion manifest itself in generous deeds of practical charity, we pray to the Lord.
6. For this assembly of God's holy people: may our life together bear witness that Jesus is indeed for us the Way, the Truth and the Life, we pray to the Lord.
7. For those who have died, may they be happy forever in the Father's house, the place Jesus has prepared for them, we pray to the Lord.
8. Let us pause for a moment of silent prayer, during which we hold more personal intentions before the Lord.

Priest: In your house, O God, there are many dwelling places.
There your Son has gone to prepare a place for us.
Do not let our hearts be troubled, but fill our lives in deeds of service.
Help us to follow Jesus with joy, for He is the way, the truth and the life.
Then shall we come to you through the One who is our Passover and our
Peace,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.