

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the Easter Sunday

Sunday date: March 22-23, 2008

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview for this Sunday...

The Masses of Easter Sunday are the culmination of the Paschal Triduum. Father Kevin Irwin points out the significance of Easter Sunday Masses for the Christian community (*Sunday Worship: A Planning Guide to Celebration*. NY: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1983):

“Like the celebration of the Easter Vigil, the celebration of the Eucharist on Easter Sunday is a celebration of light and rebirth by water and the Holy Spirit. Easter is indeed *the* celebration of the entire Church year; it is the fulfillment of the Lenten preparation of the community, and is the central mystery of our faith. While strictly speaking the most important celebration of the liturgy is the Easter Vigil, there is an unavoidable problem inherent here – for most of the community the Vigil is, in fact, not their celebration of Easter. Rather Easter Sunday itself is the most popular day of the Church year, and the Eucharists celebrated on Easter Day need, therefore, as much care, attention and planning as that of the Vigil itself.”

Some Considerations as you Prepare...

1. **Hospitality:** This is particularly important today because of the many visitors who flock to church. For whatever reason, some of these people do not practice their faith. However, they are here today and extra care is needed to make them feel welcome. Today's liturgy is a unique opportunity for evangelization. Make sure that ushers are on hand to greet people and to pass out hymnals or programs. If possible provide additional seating for the large numbers who will attend the Masses.
2. **The Paschal Candle:** It stands beside the Ambo now throughout the 50 days of Easter. It should appear as though it has remained lighted since being carried into the church at the beginning of the Vigil. This means lighting it well before people arrive for the first Mass of the day.
3. **Introductory Rites:**
 - Entrance Procession: raise the solemnity for today's Mass with the use of incense, processional banners, and celebratory music that may be sung by everyone.
 - Penitential Rite C: use option C-vi or C-vii, which seem the most appropriate because they acclaim Christ who raises us to new life.
 - Gloria: The Glory to God is sung today after being put aside for Lent.
 - Collect: The alternative Opening Prayer includes scriptural references, and images of joy, hope and light (morning, the opening of eyes.) The first Opening Prayer more succinctly asks that God raise us up with the Risen Christ. Either is appropriate.
4. **The Liturgy of the Word:**
 - The First Reading today and throughout the Easter season is from the Acts of the Apostles. It presents a summary or profession to the central element of our Christian faith: "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again."
 - The Responsorial Psalm is Psalm 118, with the classic antiphon, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad." This is one of the Common Psalms for the Easter Season and may be sung in place of the proper psalm on any Sunday of the Easter Season.
 - There is a choice in the Second Reading: either Colossians 3 ("seek what is above, where Christ is"), or 1 Corinthians 5 ("Clear out the old yeast so that you may become a fresh batch of dough")
 - The Sequence "Victimae Paschali Laudes" is sung today. The Easter Sequence one of four sequences that remain in the liturgy. This poetic text should be sung. It serves to prepare the assembly to hear the proclamation of the resurrection. It leads directly into the singing of the Alleluia and the gospel procession.
 - The Third Reading also involves some choice in selection. As a Gospel today you may proclaim John 20:1-9, or you may proclaim the gospel used at the Easter Vigil, Matthew 28:1-10. You may also use Luke 24: 13-35 at an afternoon or an evening Mass.
 - In place of the recitation of the Nicene Creed, the Renewal of Baptismal Promises takes place at all Easter Sunday Masses. This renewal of our baptism takes place

after the homily. The text for this rite may be found in the *Missal*. After renewing baptismal promises, the priest sprinkles the entire assembly with water from the font. A festive Easter or Baptismal Hymn sung by all should accompany this rite.

5. Liturgy of the Eucharist: look at the fine print in the Eucharistic Prayer. Using the Easter I preface, P21, note that one includes the line “on this Easter day” not only on Easter Sunday but throughout its octave. Eucharistic Prayer I (The Roman Canon) has special text inserts for the Octave of Easter and for the Easter season (“ . . . accept this offering from those born into the new life of water and the Holy Spirit.”)

6. Solemn Blessing and Dismissal: Especially at Easter time we are called to go forth as witnesses to the resurrection. The *Missal* provides a proper Solemn Blessing for this day. The Easter dismissal with its special “double Alleluia” is used today and throughout the octave of Easter. The singing of this dismissal by the deacon or priest will add great solemnity to our being missioned as witnesses of the Resurrection.

Questions for Faith Sharing...

1. How has my Lenten Prayer and service led to Easter Glory?
2. How am I like the disciples in today’s Gospel? Do I identify with Mary Magdala? With the Beloved Disciple? With Peter?
3. How can I testify that Jesus is risen from the dead? How can I be a witness to Christ’s Resurrection?

Sample Intercessions for Easter Sunday

(adapted from *Prayers for Feasts and Seasons, Year C*. P. Scagnelli, Chicago, LTP, 1997)

Priest: On this, the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad as we pray to the God who raised Jesus from the dead.

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

1. For the people of God, brought through saving waters to a land of promise: May we joyfully proclaim, with our lips and our lives, the good news of Christ's victory over sin and death, we pray to the Lord.
2. For all the peoples of the earth during this festival of Christ's resurrection: May the gloom of evil yield to a springtime of sincerity and truth, we pray to the Lord.
3. For those bound by sin or oppressed by evil: May forgiveness of sins and spiritual freedom be theirs with Easter joy, we pray to the Lord.
4. For those newly baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, and for those newly received into the Church: May they walk always with Christ in newness of life, we pray to the Lord.
5. For those who are sick and homebound: May the risen Christ visit them with healing power and new hope, we pray to the Lord.
6. For this assembly, gathered to eat and drink with the risen Lord: May we set our hearts on things that are above as we bear witness here to the risen Christ, we pray to the Lord.
7. For those who have died (especially _____): may they forever with Christ in the glory of His resurrection, we pray to the Lord .

[silent prayer can be added, so that all may add to the general intercessions.]

Priest: This is the day, Lord God, that you have made!
In raising Christ from the dead, and raising us with Christ,
you have fashioned for yourself a new people,
washed in the flood of baptism.
Amidst the beauty of Easter,
set our minds on the new life to which you have called us;
place on our lips the words of witness for which you have anointed us;
and fill our hearts with love for you.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord.
Amen.