

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the Fourth Sunday of Lent – Cycle A

Sunday date: March 1-2, 2008

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

The Christian tradition has always held tight to the image of light as a symbol of enlightenment and knowledge, and the image of seeing as symbol of realization and acceptance. In today's gospel these themes are dominant. We hear the well-known, ironic story of the man born blind. The Gospel invites us to consider for ourselves how well we know and believe in this prophet from Nazareth who claims to be the Messiah, this prophet whom we know to be the Son of God.

The man born blind is healed by Jesus. Some of the religious authorities use it as an occasion to challenge Jesus and His actions. Through a series of questions the man born blind come to a deeper understanding of who Jesus is.

The man born blind is a model for the Elect. The Elect are growing in understanding, knowledge and appreciation of the messianic identity of Jesus Christ. Their eyes are being opened to the salvation Christ offers.

Some Considerations as you Prepare...

1. Once again the Cycle A readings are an integral element in the celebration of the Second Scrutiny for the Elect. The prayers and exorcisms of the Second Scrutiny, as well as the special Preface for the Fourth Sunday of Lent in Cycle A (P 15) reflect the images of light and darkness, and the healing of blindness and sin. At a Mass at which the Scrutiny is celebrated, there are proper Prayers which should be used with the Second Scrutiny (these may be found in the Catholic Book edition of the *Sacramentary* on p. 826-829).
2. The ritual for the Second Scrutiny itself is found in the RCIA at nos. 164-170. Attention to the non-verbal elements of the scrutiny – the silent prayer, the kneeling and the silent laying on of hands – speak as loudly as the prayer texts themselves.
3. At the other Masses, the Prayers reflect the theme of reconciling Word of God, and propel us forward, anticipating the joy of the resurrection. These prayers reflect an older designation for this Sunday – Laetare Sunday. This name comes from the Latin text of today’s Entrance Antiphon: “*Laetare, Ierusalem, et conventum facite, omnes qui diligitis eam. . .*” (Rejoice, Jerusalem! Be glad for her, you who love her. . .). Rose vestments may be worn indicating this more joyful attitude.
4. Be sure to use the proper preface (P15) even for the non-Scrutiny Masses.
5. A Prayer Over the People concludes today’s liturgy.

Reflection questions for the Fourth Sunday of Lent

1. What is blindness the world and local community in which requires Jesus’ healing?
2. What is the darkness within me that needs to be healed, so that I may proclaim and witness more faithfully as a “child of light?”?
3. How is my daily living different when I see life through the “eyes of faith?”

Sample Intercessions for the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Cycle A)

(adapted from Prayers for Sundays and Seasons, P. Scagnelli (Chicago: LTP)

Priest: In the presence of God, whose light shines on us in Christ, let us pray now for the needs of all.

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

1. That the Church may scatter earth's darkness with the light of Christ, by preaching the just word and practicing what we preach, we pray to the Lord.
2. That God may banish deeds of darkness from our society by the light of truth, we pray to the Lord.
3. That lands made desolate by terrorism, violence or war, and refugees driven from their homes by conflict, may come to a Sabbath of healing and a season of peace, we pray to the Lord.
4. That the Elect may be enlightened and reveal God's mighty deeds through their witness, we pray to the lord.
5. That our Lenten observances may wake us from sleep and fill us with light to bring forth all that is good and right and true, we pray to the Lord.
6. That the dead (especially _____) may be raised up with Christ and seated in the glory of heaven, we pray to the Lord.

(pause; the presider alone concludes)

Priest: O God, the author and source of all light,
You gaze into the depths of our inmost hearts.
Never permit the powers of darkness to hold your people captive,
Open our eyes by the grace of your Spirit,
that we may be able to look on your Son
and see the One whom you sent to illumine the world,
so that, seeing,
we may believe and worship Jesus as the Lord
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.
Amen.