

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A

Sunday date: August 16-17, 2008

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

In the last few weeks, we have met the compassionate Jesus, who wept at the death of John the Baptist, who fed the hungry crowds, and who reached out His hand to save a doubting Peter. This Sunday, however, we encounter a different Jesus when He meets the Canaanite woman, who seeks a cure for her possessed daughter. Jesus at first ignores her pleas for help and then apparently says He only came to the Jews. He even makes reference to “dogs” when speaking to her. But the woman is persistent and finally Jesus rewards her great faith and persistence by healing her daughter. The message of the Gospel is Jesus has come to save us all, and anyone, even those considered outsiders by the world’s standards, will be welcomed by Jesus if they have faith. Indeed, as we often see in the Gospels, it is frequently those who are poor, marginalized or outcasts who can recognize and accept Jesus more readily. The first reading from Isaiah echoes the message that salvation is for all people.

It is important to note that the woman in the Gospel passage does not ask Jesus to take pity on her daughter, but to take pity on her, a sign that in her great love she has taken on the pain of her daughter. Jesus rewards both her love and her faith.

Reflection Questions...

1. Have you ever felt rebuffed when you asked Jesus for help?
2. When have you been tempted to ignore another's plea for help?
3. What helps you to be persistent in faith?

Other Considerations as You Prepare...

1. Consider using the text of Penitential Rite C-vii
2. The alternate Opening Prayer continues the message that God's salvation is open to all.
3. Any of the prefaces for Sundays in Ordinary Time would be appropriate this Sunday.

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful for the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest: The Canaanite woman in today's Gospel pressed upon Jesus her needs and was heard. With confident faith, let us place our needs before this generous God.

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

1. For our Church and all of the ecclesial communities of the world wherein faith in God is professed in various ways...we pray to the Lord.
2. For our broken world, so in need of healing and in search of a savior, yet often so far from Jesus...we pray to the Lord.
3. For healing of those who are sick in mind, body or spirit... for those who feel excluded as outsiders or foreigners...we pray to the Lord.
4. For protection from storms during this hurricane season, especially by the intercession of Our Lady of Prompt Succor...we pray to the Lord.
5. For [(names) and] all of our beloved dead, who died convinced of Jesus' saving power...we pray to the Lord.
6. In silence, we lift up the prayers that lie unspoken in our hearts.

[pause; the presider alone concludes]

Priest: Loving Father, you call each of us to you despite our race, culture or position in this life. Open our hearts to a deeper faith and help us to grow in love so that all of our actions may bring you praise and glory. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen.