

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A

Sunday date: September 20-21, 2008

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

Focusing on the Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16a

(from *Living Liturgy 2008*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN)

To the point: Jesus tells the parable of workers in the vineyard. When hearing this Gospel, we tend to focus on hours and wages: the laborers understand justice as prorated wages. However, this parable is really about God's ways and God's justice: what God offers is not wages, but salvation. This is the same for everyone. The surprise of the parable is that salvation is not earned at all, but it is God's gift to us and God gives it generously.

Connecting the First reading to the Gospel: Through Isaiah's prophecy, the Lord asserts that His thoughts are not ours. God's view of life is not ours. These are powerful words to help prepare us for the message of today's Gospel.

The Second Reading: Today we begin to hear from the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians. Paul writes to them with the firmest conviction that whatever his life holds in the near future – life or death – he knows that he remains in Christ Jesus. Paul is willing to die at this point, because it will unite him with his Savior.

Connecting the Gospel to culture: Most of us have a strong sense of fairness, not only in the Gospel's terms of labor and wages, but also, for example, in terms of the rules of sports or our judicial system. However, if God were to treat us fairly, giving us what we deserve, we would be poor indeed. Mercifully, God does not treat us fairly, but with superabundant generosity.

Questions for Sharing Faith...

1. What is the "labor in the vineyard" that Jesus has invited me to do?
2. How do I view "latecomers to God's vineyard?"
3. How do I extend to others the kind of generosity God demonstrates in today's parable?

Some Other Considerations as you Prepare...

1. Both Opening Prayers point to the Gospel, speaking of the justice of God at work through his mercy and love.
2. Sundays in Ordinary Time II or VII speak of God's great love of for us.
3. Today is Catechetical Sunday. An Order of Blessing for those who serve as catechists may be found in the *Book of Blessings* (no. 1, chapter 4). This could be done after the Post-Communion Prayer.

Sample Prayer of the Faithful for the 25th Ordinal Sunday – Cycle A

Priest: Let us call upon the Lord, who is near to us in every need.

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

1. For the Church, that we may welcome all who come to the Lord's vineyard, whoever they are and whatever the hour, we pray to the Lord.
2. For all ministers of the Church, especially those who serve in catechetical ministry, that they may teach by word and example Christ's message of faith, hope and love, we pray to the Lord.
3. For government leaders and for all those who labor to bring wholeness and comfort to their people in these times of recovery and healing, we pray to the Lord.
4. For those who continue to suffer because of the recent storms, that they may know the presence of God in words and deeds of compassion, we pray to the Lord.
5. For this Eucharistic assembly that we may be the Gospel's model of community, in which there are neither first nor last, only sisters and brothers in Christ, we pray to the Lord.
6. For all who have died in the hope of rising again (especially _____), may they live in the peace of God's kingdom, we pray to the Lord.
7. Please pause to offer more personal petitions in silence.

[the presider alone concludes]

Priest: To the last as to the first, O God,
You are generous and more than just,
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
So high are your ways above our thoughts.
Open our hearts to the wisdom of your Son,
That, without concern for the cost of discipleship
or the reward of our labors,
may we work without ceasing for the coming of the kingdom.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(From *Prayers for Sundays and Seasons, Year A*, by P. Scagnelli, Chicago, LTP, 1997.)