

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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

Sunday date: January 26-27, 2008

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

As we return to the Gospel of Matthew, we begin to hear more of Jesus' mission. The longer version of today's Gospel is rich in its two-fold message: "repent" and "come after me" – two essential aspects of discipleship. John has been arrested, the land is in darkness – "overshadowed by death" – when Jesus announces the "kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repentance is the way out of darkness.

Matthew's follows this with the call of the first apostles: "Come after me." The disciples we read about responded immediately to Jesus' call and left behind their nets, boats and even their father. Discipleship involves both repenting from sins and then following Jesus, leaving behind distracting material baggage. Jesus will bring His followers out of the darkness into light.

In the First Reading Isaiah also refers to the light, symbolizing Israel's deliverance and freedom. The Second Reading from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians focuses on Christian unity, which we as the Church prayed for during this past Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Some Considerations as You Prepare...

1. The Opening Prayer echoes the theme of unity and would be an appropriate choice.
2. Penitential rite C-ii (“you came to gather the nations”) or C-v (“you bring light to those in darkness”) would be good choices today.
3. Any of the Prefaces for Ordinary Time could be used. Preface 36 echoes the theme of Christian Unity addressed by St. Paul in the Second Reading.
4. Today begins the annual observance of Catholic Schools Week, and it would be appropriate to pray for Catholic education in an intercessory prayer.
5. Today we also take up the annual second collection for the Church in Latin America.

Reflection questions...

1. Where is the darkness in your life? What do you need to do to find light?
2. How do you experience Christ calling you to the light?
3. Do you live your life as if the kingdom of heaven is at hand?

Upcoming...

1. February 2 is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the traditional day for blessing candles.
2. February 3 is Scout Sunday in the USA.
3. Ash Wednesday is February 6.
4. The Rite of Election will be held at the Cathedral on the First Sunday of Lent.
5. February 11 is World Day of the Sick. You may want to consider offering the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in conjunction with it.

Suggested Intercessory Prayers for January 26-27, 2008

Priest: As members of the body of Christ, we have the courage to place before the Lord the needs of our world

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

1. For our Church...may we intensify our efforts toward a new evangelization, especially among those estranged from the Catholic Church, we pray to the Lord.
2. For those whom God calls to be “fishers of men”...may they respond generously and be supported by the love of this community and all of the Church, we pray to the Lord.
3. For those who live in the darkness of sin and despair...may the light of God’s healing dawn upon them, we pray to the Lord.
4. For those in need of forgiveness and for those who need to forgive, we pray to the Lord.
5. For (our own School of *name* and) all Catholic schools...may they be blessed with the joy of teaching our young people about God and the world He created for us, we pray to the Lord
6. For those who followed Christ in life and now seek eternal life with Him [especially (names of deceased)], we pray to the Lord.
7. In silence we lift up our own needs to the Lord.

[pause; the presider alone concludes]

Priest: Father, you call us to follow you.
Lead us where you want us to go, and
help us along with the way
with the light of your wisdom and strength.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Lord.
Amen.