

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 in Ordinary Time – Cycle A

Sunday or Feast Day date: February 2-3, 2008

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

This Sunday we hear Matthew's familiar account of the Sermon on the Mount. In the Gospel, the context for understanding the Beatitudes is the kingdom of heaven. The fullness of the kingdom has made its first appearance in Jesus, who both proclaims and inaugurates the kingdom. The good news is that in God's kingdom all needs are freely and graciously met – the sick are healed, the hungry are fed, the dead are raised. On the other hand the Beatitudes offer this kind of graciousness: those who are now poor in spirit, who hunger and thirst for holiness now, who are lowly now, are in fact blessed. Jesus is offering a radically alternative view of society. The kingdom of God begins now. We are in ourselves blessed because we are in Christ.

The Gospel begins with Jesus going to the mountain top and sitting down with His disciples. We must first put ourselves in the presence of Christ, so that we can be open to His word. Once Jesus has our attention He begins to show us how to live, giving the Beatitudes as a blueprint of discipleship.

In a similar vein, in the first reading Zephaniah tells us how the humble should live, seeking justice and taking refuge in the Lord. The Second Reading from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians tells us that God chooses the weak and lowly, according to His own design.

Some Considerations as you Prepare...

1. Either of the opening prayers for today would be appropriate.
2. Preface 33 speaks of how God establishes us to be stewards, which would follow the theme of discipleship.
3. It is also the feast of St. Blase, which is of course superseded by the Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time. However, a blessing of throats could be incorporated into – or better, after – the Mass.
4. Some parishes will be observing “Scout Sunday” today. It would be appropriate to recognize the good work of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts by praying for them and their ministries in the General Intercessions.

Looking Ahead...

1. Wednesday, February 6, is Ash Wednesday this year. Make sure you publicize times for Masses and the distribution of ashes.
2. The Diocese of Shreveport invites you to attend 2008 Liturgical Conference on Saturday, February 23, from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm at its Catholic Center in Shreveport. Dr. Nathan Mitchell from the University of Notre Dame will be the keynote speaker. He will speak on *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*. There will be breakout sessions in the afternoon. Registration is \$20 which includes lunch.

Reflection questions...

1. When have you been aware of being blessed in Christ?
2. How would your life be different if you lived out the Beatitudes?
3. The Communion process incorporates the lowly of God: the poor in spirit, the mourning, the meek, etc. How do you see the Body of Christ at Sunday Mass?

Suggested Intercessory Prayers for the Fourth Ordinal Sunday, Feb. 2-3, 2008

Priest: We meet God on the Mountaintop where he teaches us to be humble of heart. Let us ask our God for his grace over our world.

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

1. For our Church . . . may we always be a source of blessing for all those in need . . . we pray to the Lord.
2. For people of every race, creed and culture . . . may they cast aside feelings of anger and resentment and become peacemakers in our broken world . . . we pray to the Lord.
3. For our young people . . . may they dare to hunger and thirst for what is right . . . we pray to the Lord.
4. For Scouts and their leaders . . . may they be filled with grace as they continue to praise God and build His kingdom through service, learning and fun . . . we pray to the Lord.
5. For each of us here . . . may we be counted among the humble, the lowly and the weak whom God calls to be His people . . . we pray to the Lord.
6. For all our beloved dead . . . May they inherit the kingdom promised to them, we pray to the Lord.

[*pause*]

Priest: God of blessings and mercy,
you shower us with every good thing.
Hear these our prayers
that one day we might enjoy everlasting life with you.
We ask this and all things in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior.
Amen.