

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the Fifth Sunday of Lent – Cycle B

Sunday date: March 28-29, 2009

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

“Quartadecima die ad vesperum Pascha Domini est: et in quintadecima solemnitatem celebrabitis altissimo Domino”

(Fourteen days from now the Pasch of the Lord will begin, and on the fifteenth you will celebrate the great solemnity in honor of God Most High – from an ancient monastic liturgy)

On the Fifth Sunday of Lent (before Vatican II, this Sunday marked the start of Passiontide) the Church begins to point us more directly to the coming celebration of the Paschal Triduum. Both Scripture cycles (A and B) clearly highlight the central theme of all liturgy – the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.

Cycle A Readings (for use with the celebration of the Third Scrutiny) focus on resurrection and the power of Christ over death. The Gospel story of the raising of Lazarus (John 11: 3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45) proclaims that Jesus is indeed the Messiah who has power over anything that might separate us from God – even death. The first reading from the prophet Ezekiel also promises: “I will open your graves and have your rise from them.” In Psalm 130 we sing from the tomb with Lazarus and Jesus: *“De profundis clamavi ad te...”* (“Out of the depths I cry out to you”). Finally the second reading from Paul’s Letter to the Romans reminds us that every baptized person shares in Jesus’ life, death and ultimately His resurrection.

In Cycle B, the Gospel sets forth apparent opposites: grain dies – produces fruit, lose life – preserve life. These, however, are not opposites. For Jesus and those who follow Him dying *is* rising, losing life *is* preserving it. Thus, in fact, the cross (“lifted up”) *is* glorification. In the first reading the new covenant of which Jeremiah speaks is established by Jesus through His death and resurrection. In our culture, glory comes through great deeds; for Jesus, however, glory comes through service and self-giving.

(from *Living Liturgy*. J. A. Zimmerman, *et al.* Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006)

Questions for Faith Sharing...

- 1) As the grain of wheat in today’s Gospel, what are the dying and rising experiences in my everyday life?
- 2) What does it mean to follow Jesus by being a servant?
- 3) How have I glimpsed the glory of the cross in my own life?

Some Other Considerations as You Prepare...

- 1) This is the last Sunday for the Lenten pattern in the Introductory Rite. (Next week, Palm Sunday, commemorates Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Look ahead and carefully prepare the Introductory Rites for Palm Sunday Masses. See the Catholic Book edition of the *Sacramentary*, pp. 122-125 for options.
- 2) The Alternative Opening Prayer for the Fifth Sunday of Lent more clearly highlights the idea of death to self so that we may share fully in the joy of Easter.
- 3) At the Scrutiny mass you may use prayers from the Ritual Mass for the Scrutinies (in the Catholic Book edition of the *Sacramentary*, p. 826)
- 4) The texts of the Third Scrutiny may be found in RCIA nos. 171-177. In addition to the Exorcism, the RCIA provides two models of Intercessions for the Elect.
- 5) Prefaces: P16 for the Fifth Sunday of Lent is for use only when Cycle A readings are proclaimed. It speaks of Jesus’ love for Lazarus and for all of us who are his followers. When Cycle B readings are proclaimed, Prefaces 8 or 9, Lent I or II, should be used.
- 6) Consider praying Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation I with its proper preface, especially when Cycle B readings are used.
- 7) Look ahead, alert your readers to prepare now for next Sunday’s Proclamation of the Passion according to Mark. Decide how the passion will be chanted or proclaimed. An excellent resource for the proclamation of the Passion comes from Liturgy Training Publications of the Archdiocese of Chicago: *The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* prepared with notes by George Szews. This booklet provides a brief background and the text of each passion, as well as, some practical suggestions for proclamation.

Sample Intercessory Prayers for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

Reflecting Cycle B Readings (adapted from *Prayers for Sundays and Season, Year B*. P. Scagnelli, Chicago: LTP, 1997):

Priest: Let us offer up prayers and supplications to God through Jesus, who has become the source of our eternal salvation. . .

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

1. That all the people of God, from the least to the greatest, may know the Lord through the law of love written in their hearts, we pray to the Lord.
2. That the judgment of this world may herald justice for the oppressed, we pray to the Lord.
3. That the sick, who offer their prayers with loud cries and tears, may find strength in their union with Jesus, who was made perfect through suffering, we pray to the Lord.
4. That those hoping to see Jesus may find the Son of Man glorified among us in our celebration and service, we pray to the Lord.
5. That those who have been sown with Christ in death (especially _____) may bear an abundant harvest with Christ in eternal life, we pray to the Lord.

[*pause; the presider alone concludes*]

Priest: Deep within our hearts, O God,
You have written your law,
and high upon the cross
You have lifted up our salvation,
the Savior made perfect in suffering.
From the death of that single grain
sown in the weary earth,
bring forth in this Lenten springtime
a rich harvest of life.
As the hour of his passion draws near,
glorify your name,
and in our baptismal renewal,
let it be glorified again.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sample Intercessory Prayers for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

Reflecting Cycle A Readings (adapted from *Prayers for Sundays and Season, Year B*. P. Scagnelli, Chicago: LTP, 1997):

Priest: Let us pray to God, who raised Jesus from the dead as the resurrection and life of all who believe.

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

1. That wherever the power of death holds people bound, the church may summon forth life in the name of Christ, we pray to the Lord.
2. That the judgment of this world may herald justice for the oppressed, we pray to the Lord.
3. That those who mourn the loss of loved ones may experience the comfort of Christ in the presence of the community, we pray to the Lord.
4. That in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the eucharist our Elect will experience Christ who calls them to life, unbinds them and lets them go free, we pray to the Lord.
5. That through penance and reconciliation this assembly may be raised from the grave and filled with God's spirit, we pray to the Lord.
6. That the faithful who have gone to their rest (especially _____) may hear the voice of Jesus calling them forth to life and resurrection, we pray to the Lord.

[*pause; the presider alone concludes*]

Priest: As once in the vision, O God,
Your prophet summoned the Spirit
so that dry bones stood up alive,
and as once your Son stood fearless at death's door
calling Lazarus to come forth alive,
raise us up with Christ from the death of sin,
That all of us, the elect and the baptized
may be unbound and set free.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.