

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the Second Sunday of Advent – Cycle A

Sunday date: December 8-9, 2007

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview for this Sunday...

The incarnational focus of Advent does not properly begin until the 17th of December; however, some hints can be found within this weekend's liturgy. The Scriptures speak more directly of the coming of the Messiah with the prophecy of Isaiah, and the Gospel deals with the ministry of John the Baptist. While the ministry of John is to prepare for the coming of Christ, it is not the infant Jesus for whom we need preparation. It is for the whole ministry of Christ that we are preparing. Advent is not play-acting on the way to Bethlehem. We are preparing for the adult Christ, the whole Christ, with His demanding example and words.

Questions for Faith Sharing...

1. For what aspect of Jesus Christ do you most need to prepare?
2. The reading from Romans speaks of the *encouragement of the Scriptures that we might have hope*; what does that mean for your life?
3. What attracts you to the figure of St. John the Baptist? What is difficult for you to take?

Some Considerations as You Prepare...

1. Keep Advent liturgies relatively simple. There is supposed to be a contrast between Advent liturgies and Christmas liturgies. Don't celebrate Christmas before Christmas...
2. Use C-ii if you choose form C of the Penitential Rite. Remember, Advent is not strictly penitential in nature.
3. No Gloria is sung or recited on Advent Sundays or weekdays (it is on Solemnities, such as the Immaculate Conception).
4. The first Opening Prayer for the Sunday is recommended. Express with your voice the assembly's receptiveness to God's power and mercy.
5. The Preface is Advent I is still required until December 17. It is especially appropriate, continuing the eschatological orientation of the season. Stress the Advent words: come, fulfilled, watch, hoping, promised, will come...
6. The Solemn Blessing for Advent is recommended; or use Prayers Over the People no. 1.

Looking Ahead...

1. December 17 is when we move liturgically into the second half of Advent. The liturgy now turns from focusing on the return of Christ in His glory at the end of time to the approaching commemoration of Christ's first coming in the flesh in the mystery of the Incarnation. From December 17 on, the readings and the prayers of the Mass calls us to look back to the greatest of all God's actions breaking into human history.
2. The Third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday, with traditional focus on joy at the coming of Christ. The priest and deacon may wear rose-colored vestments. Gaudete comes from the Latin word "Rejoice" and it indicates this turn in emphasis in the second half of Advent.
3. The antiphons sung or recited before the Magnificat at Evening Prayer (Vespers) from December 17 through 24 are known as the "O Antiphons." They are the "original text" of the popular Advent carol, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." You may wish to incorporate the ideas contained in them in other ways in these weeks.
4. Make sure your parish is well aware of the parish's special schedule for the Christmas Vigil, Christmas Midnight, and Christmas Day Masses. It is not too early to start working on the homilies for those celebrations, as each Mass has its own set of readings.
5. Remember, the complete liturgical calendar for 2008 is posted on the Office of Worship site at the diocesan web site www.diobr.org
6. Lent comes fairly quickly after the Christmas season. Have you given any thought to the shape of Lent in your parish this coming year?

Sample General Intercessions for Advent II, December 8-9

Priest: On this Advent day (night) we present to the Father our prayers of need:

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

1. For the mission of Christ expressed through the life of the Church in our parish and in our diocese; for renewal and strength of faith during these Advent days, we pray to the Lord...
2. For the world to know peace and justice; for new efforts at reconciliation, we pray to the Lord...
3. For all who live in the darkness of fear and anxieties; for healing grace upon those who struggle with their physical health, we pray to the Lord...
4. For our families and friends; for those strangers with whom we share the highway and stores, we pray to the Lord...
5. That we come to trust more deeply God's faithful love in all things, we pray to the Lord...
6. For those who have died in peace, and for the dead whose faith is known to God alone, we pray to the Lord...
7. In peace and in silence we offer to God our more individual prayers...

[pause, the presider alone will conclude]

Priest: Loving God,
you listen to the prayers of your people.
Grant these requests which we make with sincere hearts,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.