

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



Office of Worship
P.O. Box 2028
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028
Phone: (225) 387-0561, ext. 128
Fax: (225) 336-8731
E-Mail: tranzino@diobr.org

RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the Feast of the Holy Family – Cycle A

Sunday/Feast date: December 29-30, 2007

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

The post-Vatican II reform of the Liturgical Calendar removed the Sundays after Epiphany, except for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, and moved the Feast of the Holy Family into the Christmas cycle. Placing this latter Feast on the Sunday within the octave of Christmas continues some of the popular piety that was a part of the overall Epiphany celebration.

However, this Feast is not to become a nostalgic reminiscent about the childhood of Jesus. The overall arch of the Feast is the incarnation of the Son of God and how our becoming like him is worked out in the human experience of family life. We live in a fragile culture with many notions about family and marriage being promoted. It would be an equal caution not to use this Feast as a time to harangue about these issues either. Rather, the difficult task of the preacher is to offer a positive statement of mutual respect: God's peace reigning, not the endorsement of one power group over another. It's difficult to preach focused on how the Incarnation changes perceptions about relationships – but that is the task.

Faith Sharing Questions...

1. What is your most challenging relationship and how do you pray about this?
2. How is one liberated in the Gospel of Christ Jesus? How does culture define liberation? Is there a difference?
3. How does the Father's love becoming flesh in Christ Jesus affect your desire to grow in love and patience?

Some Considerations As You Prepare...

1. The alternative Opening Prayer is more recommended, as it speaks more to the nature of this Feast. It has a more universal application rather than a particular one, as reflected in the first choice for the Opening Prayer.
2. For texts of the Penitential Rite, see C-iii and C-iv as given in the *Sacramentary*.
3. Choose from one of the Christmas Prefaces. Eucharistic Prayer I (The Roman Canon) is still the recommended one: remember to use the special insert because we are still within the Octave of Christmas.
4. Continue to use the Solemn Blessing of Christmas.
5. If you choose to do any blessing of families, see the ritual in the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 1, B, no. 662ff. This blessing could be done at the end of the Intercessory Prayers or after the Post-Communion Prayer.

Looking Ahead...

1. The first of January has many observances. The Octave of Christmas comes to an end; New Year's Day is observed; there is the observance of World Day of Peace; and it is the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God.
2. Remember, it is possible on January 1 to use the Mass for Peace from the section of the *Sacramentary* titled "Masses for Various Needs and Occasions" instead of the ritual texts for the Marian Feast.

Sample Intercessories for the Feast of the Holy Family

[Or see the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 1, no. 64, for more samples]

Priest: Within the hope of this Christmas season, we offer our prayers to the Lord with confidence:

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

1. For the work of the Church in the world; for renewed faith and devotion of the Gospel life as given by Christ Jesus, we pray to the Lord...
2. For the families of the world; for actions of reconciliation to replace acts of war and violence; for a world renewed in Christ, we pray to the Lord...
3. For those who heal the sick, feed the hungry, calm the fearful, bury the dead; may God bless them for their kindness, we pray to the Lord....
4. For those in our family with whom we do not speak; for new wisdom from God to break old stalemates; for new life in relationships long since dead, we pray to the Lord...
5. For those of our families and friends who have died; may we be reunited with them in the Kingdom of God's own peace, we pray to the Lord...
6. In peace and silence, we offer our own needs...

[*pause, for the presider alone concludes...*]

Priest: O God of our fathers and mothers,
Grant to your people these prayers
which we make with confidence
through Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior,
forever and ever.
Amen.