

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 of Lent – Cycle A

Sunday or Feast Day date: February 23-24, 2008

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

This Sunday's readings begin with the Exodus account of the thirsty Israelites crying in the desert, "Is the Lord in our midst or not?" They were led to the promised land by the Lord, but still they did not recognize Him. Yet, in the Gospel reading, the woman of Samaria finds Jesus waiting for her at the well. And she does eventually come to recognize Him as the one who fills her thirst for water and eventually her thirst to be saved. The Gospel reading is appropriately long, as it demonstrates how she came to know the Lord in stages, as one who first gave her water, then was revealed as a prophet, and finally was recognized as the Messiah.

The readings for Year A on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent are chosen especially because of their baptismal nature. The source of our living water is in the baptismal font. This is especially important because today the First Scrutiny for those who will receive the sacraments of Initiation at Easter is celebrated. Lent is both a season for the preparation of those who are to be baptized and a season when the already-baptized are renewed in their commitment to be sons and daughter of God.

The Cycle A readings are in integral element in the celebration of the First Scrutiny. The prayers and exorcism of the First Scrutiny as well as the Preface for the Third Sunday of Lent (P14) all reflect the images and themes of the Gospel of the Samaritan woman.

Some Considerations as You Prepare...

1. Either Opening Prayer works today. Note that if you are celebrating a Scrutiny at Mass, the scrutiny has its own Opening Prayer, Prayer over the Gifts and Post-Communion Prayer (Catholic Book edition of the *Sacramentary*, p. 826).
2. This Sunday's propers also include its own Preface P 14, for the Third Sunday of Lent Cycle A, and a Solemn Blessing.
3. The Rite of the First Scrutiny is found in RCIA nos. 141-156. The scrutiny takes place after the homily and includes silent prayer, intercessions for the elect, an exorcism and the "laying on" of hands upon them, and then their dismissal.

Reflection Questions...

1. The Samaritan woman figured out who Jesus was in stages. How has your understanding of Jesus grown over time?
2. What has your thirst taught you about being human? About Jesus as the one who satisfies?
3. The Samaritan woman became a witness of Jesus to the townspeople? How many people would believe in Jesus because of the word you proclaim and live?

Suggested Intercessory Prayers for the Third Sunday in Lent

Priest: Let us pray to God who offers us life giving water..

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

1. For our Church...may we be full of energy and wisdom so that we can share the water of life with all who thirst, we pray to the Lord.
2. For families and communities torn apart by war, for those we have treated as enemies, for an end to terrorism and fear of each other...may they find peace and salvation, we pray to the Lord.
3. For government leaders, especially those who seek the office of president...may they seek the Lord's wisdom and resolve to care for those in need, we pray to the Lord.
4. For those who are preparing for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist...may they realize that they will be drinking from the never-ending fount of love that is Jesus, we pray to the Lord.
5. For the Samaritans of our own day and age, who encounter unfounded bitterness and rejection...may the love of God be poured into their hearts, we pray to the Lord.
6. For the dying and the dead...may they find peace with God in heaven, we pray to the Lord
7. In silence we lift up the prayer of our hearts.

Priest: Because of your great love, O God,
you have saved us from death,
and washed us in the waters of life.
Hear these prayers we lift up to you in a spirit of hope.
We pray them in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior.
Amen.