

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle A

Sunday or Feast Day date: August 23/24, 2008

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

After weeks of teaching us about the kingdom of heaven, discipleship and faith, Matthew now turns his attention to Jesus' mission on earth. In this Sunday's readings, we begin to learn the identity of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus asks His apostles who "people" say He is. They reply using terms from the past, important people in the faith history. But when He addresses the question to those who are closest to Him, it is Peter who answers. Peter has recognized and identified Jesus as the Son of God. In turn Jesus identifies Peter as the "rock" on which He will build His church. This is the same Peter who just a few weeks back was crying out for the Lord to save him when his faith waivered while walking on water to reach Jesus.

Perhaps Jesus has selected Peter because of Peter's total reliance on Jesus, which would allow Jesus to work through Peter to bring His message to the world. Peter has received a special gift of revelation so that He can recognize Jesus. This gift of revelation is followed by a second gift of leadership, and another gift to each of us in the Church itself.

Suggested Reflection Questions...

1. How does your life lead others to know Jesus as the Son of God?
2. How does your belief in Jesus as the Christ affect the way you live?
3. How does your community's profession of faith help you to stand firm in the face of adversity?

Other Considerations as You Prepare...

1. Either Opening Prayer would be a good choice today.
2. Penitential rite Form C-iii is a good choice, or you may want to consider somewhat similar to this:
 - a. Lord Jesus, deep is your wisdom, Lord have mercy
 - b. Christ Jesus, boundless is your love, Christ, have mercy,
 - c. Lord Jesus, eternal is your glory, Lord, have mercy.
3. The Eighth Preface for Sundays in Ordinary Time would be a good choice today, since it refers to our salvation through the obedience of Christ.
4. The Democratic and Republican Party conventions will be held during the next two weeks. It would be appropriate to include in the intercessory prayers an intercession asking that the parties be given wisdom in selecting and promoting a candidate and drawing up a platform that will advance God's will, and work for peace in our world and the good of all people.

Sample Prayer of the Faithful for the 21st Ordinary Sunday

Priest: We pray in the name of Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah, for our world and ourselves:

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

1. For Pope Benedict, the successor of Peter, that he will continue to teach, unite and lead all people to know Christ...we pray to the Lord.
2. For the people of Georgia, Russia, Afghanistan, Iraq, the United States and all nations facing conflict and turmoil...that God will send them leaders who will work for peace...we pray to the Lord.
3. For those who have not yet come to recognize Jesus...May their hearts be open to conversion...we pray to the Lord.
4. For those who will go to bed hungry tonight...that they may be comforted in the riches offered to each of us by Jesus...we pray to the Lord.
5. For political parties meeting to promote candidates for President of the United States, that they may make wise decisions that address the common good...we pray to the Lord.
6. For protection from storms during this hurricane season...we pray to the Lord.
7. For the dying that their fears may be calmed and for our beloved dead [especially (names)]...we pray to the Lord.
8. In silence we pray the prayers that lie deep in our hearts.

Priest: Heavenly Father,
you have given to us the gift of faith in your Son, Jesus,
whom you sent to bring us to everlasting life with you.
Strengthen us so that all that we do
may bring you the glory and praise that belongs to you alone.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.