

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the Baptism of the Lord – Cycle B

Sunday or Feast Day date: January 10-11, 2009

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview...

The Celebration of the Baptism of the Lord ends the Christmas-Epiphany season, with the time of the year, called “Ordinary Time” [which refers not to nothing extraordinary happens, but rather the “ordinal” (numbering) of the following Sundays] beginning. As the focus of the Christmas-Epiphany season celebrations has been on the meaning of the event of God’s revelation in the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is a proper closing – casting implications as to what is to come. Considering what the past weeks of Advent-Christmas-Epiphany have revealed: expectation, manifestation, inauguration of ministry at the baptism of Jesus- the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is a fitting climax. In preparing for the Feast, note that there are a set of *Lectionary* texts for Cycle B with the Gospel from Mark. Here are apocalyptic images of the heavens being torn open and the revelation of God’s Son being shown. Here is a prefigurement of the Transfiguration.

Cycle B opens for us the Gospel of Mark – and here is the open door through which for the remainder of the liturgical year Mark leads us to reflect on the implication of baptismal ministry.

Faith Sharing Questions...

1. When did you first realize *any* implications of being baptized into Christ?
2. What has it cost you personally to live as a Christian Catholic?
3. What, if any, do you feel impelled to “do” because of your baptism?

Some Other Considerations as You Prepare...

1. You are encouraged to do the *Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling* to begin Mass this weekend. This is found in the *Missal* as part of the Opening Rites. If you do this *Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling*, you *do not* also do a *Penitential Rite*: the *Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling* replaces the use of a *Penitential Rite*.
2. This weekend would be a very appropriate time to baptize within the context of Mass, or even outside of Mass.
3. Unlike most Sundays, you are offered three choices for the Opening Prayer. The first and third options are the more recommended.
4. The Preface for the Baptism of the Lord is prescribed as mandatory.
5. The Solemn Blessing for Christmas or the Epiphany may be used.

Looking Ahead...

1. Christmas décor needs to come down following the final Mass of Sunday. The Season of Ordinary time begins the day after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, with the next Sunday being the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time.
2. Ash Wednesday will be February 25.
3. The Rite of Election will be held on the First Sunday of Lent, March 1, at 2:30 and 5:30 pm at St. Joseph Cathedral. The Office of Worship is in process of notifying parishes of the process for registration.
4. The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [www.fdlc.org] offers series of four parish *Bulletin* inserts to help parishioners understand and appreciate infant baptism. It is available as a .PDF file as an email attachment, or on disk, or in hard copy by mail.
5. The complete liturgical year for cycle B is available at the Office of Worship site on the diocesan website, under local diocesan liturgical year calendar.

SAMPLE INTERCESSORY PRAYERS FOR THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Priest: We offer our prayers to the Father, who reveals His Son in the waters of the Jordan:

1. For the ministry of the Church, born in baptism; may we the baptized be strengthened for service in the manner and memory of Christ Jesus, we pray to the Lord...
2. For our unbaptized catechumens and baptized candidates; may God enlighten them on the journey of faith to grow to full stature in Christ, we pray to the Lord...
3. For those who serve our parish in ministry; for a fruitfulness of God's grace on good work done in the name of Christ, we pray to the Lord...
4. For those who linger in pain and who suffer; for their help and healing, we pray to the Lord...
5. For all who have died faithful to Christ; for the dead whose faith is known to God alone, we pray to the Lord...
6. In peace and in silence, we pray to the Lord for our own needs.

[pause; the presider alone concludes...]

Priest: God of faithfulness,
hear our prayers and grant them,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.