

Sunday and Feast Day Liturgical Notes for Priests and Deacons

Suggestions for Leading Worship



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RE: Liturgical Suggestions for the Fourth Sunday of Easter – Cycle B

Sunday date: May 2-3, 2009

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

An Overview for this Sunday...

All three cycles of the *Lectionary* offer Gospel texts from the tenth chapter of John about Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Originally, these texts were proclaimed on the Second Sunday of Easter. This text speaks of Jesus who “knows” His sheep, who gives them “life” and who calls Himself “good” – in that He is the true and perfect shepherd. The depth of His love is shown in His willingness to lay down His life for His flock. He offers His flock a share in the relationship He has with His Father. He is the pathway to the Father. The image of the Shepherd as good is given in the reading from Acts, which refers to the healing power of the name of Jesus. The sacramental life of the Church reflects this healing power, particularly in the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and the Anointing of the Sick.

Faith Sharing Questions...

1. How have you experienced the Lord Jesus as a “good” shepherd?
2. What are the implications within the life of the Christians in the world to model the pattern of Jesus as Good Shepherd?
3. Which sacrament of healing has been most powerful in your life?

Some Other Considerations as you Prepare...

1. The *Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling* with holy water is still most appropriate of the introductory rites in the Easter season. Speak in the introduction of our worship in the name of the Lord, which coincides with the readings for today. Remember, if you do the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling, you do *not* also do a Penitential Rite.
2. If you choose to use a Penitential Rite, consider no. 7 in the *Missal*, which speaks about Christ as our way to the Father; Christ as giving us the consolation of the Truth; and Christ as the Good Shepherd who leads us to everlasting life.
3. Use the first option of the Opening Prayer. The second option includes imagery from the 23rd Psalm, which curiously is not included in the Scriptures for this Cycle.
4. The Fifth Easter Preface is recommended with its reference to the Advocate who is always pleading our cause.
5. The Solemn Blessing of Easter continues to be recommended.

Looking Ahead...

1. Next Sunday is also Mother's Day. Many parish assemblies have grown accustomed to this Sunday's liturgy incorporating or adapting the "Blessing of Mothers" in the *Book of Blessings*, chapter 55, after communion.
2. On Thursday, June 18, Dr. Judy Bullock from the Office of Worship in Louisville, Kentucky, will offer an afternoon for priests and deacons on the new US bishops' document on liturgical music called *Sing To The Lord*. This new document includes information about the revised and soon-to-be-retranslated *Roman Missal* and its implications for priests and deacons. More information about this workshop will be sent to priests and deacons in the diocese. On the evening of June 18, Dr. Bullock will offer a workshop for musicians and singers on *Sing To The Lord*. These workshops are being co-sponsored by the *Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions* and our diocesan Office of Worship and Priests' Continuing Formation Committee.
3. The *North American Forum on the Catechumenate* and the Diocese of Baton Rouge are cosponsoring a Forum Institute entitled *Furthering the Initiation Experience* on June 26-28 at the Catholic Life Center. Information about this local Institute can be found at www.naforum.org and at www.diobr.org/news/0906rcia_form.pdf on the diocesan website.
4. Don't forget that the complete liturgical year, including the local liturgical calendar for the Diocese of Baton Rouge is to be found at the Office of Worship section at the diocesan website, www.diobr.org/worship

Sample Intercessions for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

Priest: God is gracious in care for us all. We entrust our needs into God's own providence.

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

1. For the Church on mission for Christ; may the Church be a “good shepherd” to those made children of God through the waters of baptism, we pray to the Lord...
2. For the salvation of the world and for all who lead nations; may the inspiration of the Holy Spirit guide those who influence the daily lives of people of every land, we pray to the Lord...
3. For our parish during this Easter season; may fresh hope and enlivened faith encourage us to be more faithful disciples, we pray to the Lord...
4. For those who suffer on the bed of pain; may they be comforted and healed, we pray to the Lord...
5. For those who have died, particularly those who have died recently and those who were known to us; may they be at peace, we pray to the Lord...
6. In peace and in silence we offer to the Lord our other prayers of special or personal need...

(pause; the presider alone concludes)

Priest: Loving God, we offer you this prayer,
which expresses our deepest longings.
Grant what is good for us.
We pray through Christ, our Risen Lord.
Amen.