

SUNDAY CELEBRATION OF THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

For use in the home or in a small community

Adapted from *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Gather in a place where an environment appropriate for prayer can be created. Put a green branch on the front door or on a window of the home. It doesn't need to be a palm branch, any branch will do. Through this green branch on our door we can remember each other and Jesus' sacrifice for us as we enter into the holiest week of the Christian calendar.

Instrumental music may be played or an appropriate song may played or sung.

Possibilities:

- Hosanna to the Son of David (Schutte or Booth)
- Hosanna (Hillsong: Ligertwood or Haas or Avolicino or Soper or O'Brien)
- All, Glory, Laud and Honor
- Crown Him with Many Crowns
- Take up Your Cross (ERHALT UNS, HERR or Cortez or Haas)
- Take up Our Cross (Stephan/Hart)

LEADER: We gather here to celebrate the Lord's Day. Sunday has been called the Lord's Day because it was on this day that Jesus conquered sin and death and rose to new life. While we are not able to celebrate Mass today and receive Holy Communion, let us be united in spirit the of Christ with the Church around the world and celebrate our redemption in Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection.

All stand and make the sign of the cross as leader continues:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen

LEADER: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God forever.

ALL: Blessed be God forever.

LEADER: God of all creation, we gather on this first day of the week made holy by the resurrection of Christ. In the waters of baptism we were buried with him so that we might also rise with him and so share his victory over sin and death.

You have transformed our lives into the living stones that form your Church with Christ as the foundation stone. Strengthen our community's

bond of communion and peace during this uncertain time, and deepen our solidarity with your Church throughout the whole world.

Rekindle in us today the vision of your kingdom so that our daily concerns and labor may find their proper perspective.

Fill our homes with the spirit of the Gospel and give us the grace to see the true face of the people with whom we live. In a world torn by fear, sin and division make us instruments of reconciliation and mercy.

Since the beginning of Lent we have been preparing our hearts through penance and charitable works. With faith and devotion, we now commemorate the Lord's entry into Jerusalem for our salvation. Following in Jesus' footsteps and partaking of the Cross, we raise our voices in praise and thanksgiving to you, O God.

May we who celebrate Christ's passion, death, and resurrection this day share in his eternal glory where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

LEADER: *A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.* When Jesus and the disciples drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them here to me. And if anyone should say anything to you, reply, 'The master has need of them.' Then he will send them at once." This happened so that what had been spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled: Say to daughter Zion, "Behold, your king comes to you, meek and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the ass and the colt and laid their cloaks over them, and he sat upon them. The very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and strewed them on the road. The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest."

And when he entered Jerusalem the whole city was shaken and asked, "Who is this?" And the crowds replied, "This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee."

The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord, Jesus, Christ.

LEADER: Let us pray.

All pray in silence for a short time

LEADER: Almighty and ever-loving God, we sing your praises, shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” In your great mercy you sent your Son to become like us, taking on human form and living among us, submitting to the Cross. Increase the faith of all who place their hope in you, and help us love you to the best of our ability. Keep us faithful in word and deed, and may we bear fruit for you by good works accomplished in Christ, our Lord.

ALL: Amen

LEADER: Jesus enters Jerusalem to cries of “Hosanna,” but in just a few days the shouts he hears from the crowd are “Let him be crucified!” As we now listen to Isaiah’s prophecy, Paul’s testimony, and Matthew’s account of the Passion, let our exclamations echo those who came to believe almost two thousand years ago: “Truly, this was the Son of God.”

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Isaiah 50:4-7

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The Lord GOD has given me
a well-trained tongue,
that I might know how to speak to the weary
a word that will rouse them.

Morning after morning
he opens my ear that I may hear;
and I have not rebelled,
have not turned back.

I gave my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;
my face I did not shield
from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help,
therefore I am not disgraced;
I have set my face like flint,
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

The Word of the Lord

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

R. (2a) My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All who see me scoff at me;
they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:
"He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, if he loves him."

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Indeed, many dogs surround me,
a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;
They have pierced my hands and my feet;
I can count all my bones.

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

They divide my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.
But you, O LORD, be not far from me;
O my help, hasten to aid me.

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:
"You who fear the LORD, praise him;
all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel!"

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

SECOND READING

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
something to be grasped.
Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,
he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
which is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The Word of the Lord

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

If the Gospel Acclamation cannot be sung, it should be omitted and leader
continues with Gospel.

CANTOR: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of Endless Glory. (ALL repeat)

CANTOR: I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever believes in me,
even if he dies, will never die.

GOSPEL
Matthew 27:11-54
(Proclaimed by Leader)

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Jesus stood before the governor, Pontius Pilate, who questioned him,
 "Are you the king of the Jews?"
 Jesus said, "You say so."
And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders,
 he made no answer.
 Then Pilate said to him,
"Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?"
 But he did not answer him one word,
 so that the governor was greatly amazed.

 Now on the occasion of the feast
the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd
 one prisoner whom they wished.
And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.
 So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them,
 "Which one do you want me to release to you,
 Barabbas, or Jesus called Christ?"
 For he knew that it was out of envy
 that they had handed him over.
 While he was still seated on the bench,
 his wife sent him a message,
 "Have nothing to do with that righteous man.
 I suffered much in a dream today because of him."
The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds
 to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus.
 The governor said to them in reply,
"Which of the two do you want me to release to you?"
 They answered, Barabbas!"
 Pilate said to them,
"Then what shall I do with Jesus called Christ?"
 They all said,
 "Let him be crucified!"
 But he said,
 "Why? What evil has he done?"
 They only shouted the louder,
 "Let him be crucified!"
When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all,
 but that a riot was breaking out instead,
he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd,
 saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood.
 Look to it yourselves."
 And the whole people said in reply,
"His blood be upon us and upon our children."
 Then he released Barabbas to them,
 but after he had Jesus scourged,
 he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium
 and gathered the whole cohort around him.
 They stripped off his clothes
 and threw a scarlet military cloak about him.

Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head,
and a reed in his right hand.
And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying,
“Hail, King of the Jews!”
They spat upon him and took the reed
and kept striking him on the head.
And when they had mocked him,
they stripped him of the cloak,
dressed him in his own clothes,
and led him off to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon;
this man they pressed into service
to carry his cross.

And when they came to a place called Golgotha
— which means Place of the Skull —,
they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall.
But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink.

After they had crucified him,
they divided his garments by casting lots;
then they sat down and kept watch over him there.
And they placed over his head the written charge against him:

This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.
Two revolutionaries were crucified with him,
one on his right and the other on his left.
Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying,
“You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,
save yourself, if you are the Son of God,
and come down from the cross!”

Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him and said,

“He saved others; he cannot save himself.
So he is the king of Israel!
Let him come down from the cross now,
and we will believe in him.
He trusted in God;
let him deliver him now if he wants him.
For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”
The revolutionaries who were crucified with him
also kept abusing him in the same way.

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land
until three in the afternoon.

And about three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,
“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”
which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Some of the bystanders who heard it said,
“This one is calling for Elijah.”
Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge;
he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed,
gave it to him to drink.

But the rest said,
“Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him.”
But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice,
and gave up his spirit.

And behold, the veil of the sanctuary
was torn in two from top to bottom.

The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened,
and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised.
And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection,
they entered the holy city and appeared to many.
The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus
feared greatly when they saw the earthquake
and all that was happening, and they said,
“Truly, this was the Son of God!”

The Gospel of the Lord.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

Take the passage “Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit” or another short phrase that stood out to you and repeat it several times. Place yourself in the story. As you repeat the phrase, meditate on the people and the actions of the story.

Meditate on what this phrase means to you at this point in your life.

Share your personal response to the text: Allow everyone to simply share their thoughts and feelings about what the text means to them. Dialogue and converse about each other’s responses after the prayer service over a meal.

Take time in silence to personally encounter how Christ has touched you and those you are with through your meditation on this story.

Share together some or all of the following questions based on the scriptures:

ISAIAH: What words of hope, promise, or challenge has God given you to speak to others?

PSALM 22: How have you relied on God through trials or hardships?

PHILIPPIANS: Where have you encountered leadership through humility?

What words or phrases from either Gospel reading stand out to you the most?

After the reflections or sharing, a period of silence for further meditation on the readings should be observed.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

At the words that follow, all bow.

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man. **(end bow)**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father
and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

LEADER: With faith in God's promises, let us now present our needs and petitions.

READER: For the Church, that we may always sing Hosanna to the Lord, giving
witness to our joy in Christ's saving act, while continually aligning
ourselves with the poor, marginalized, oppressed, and vulnerable, we pray
to the Lord...

READER: For an end to religious persecution of all kinds worldwide; for all people to
have the freedom to worship without fear, let us pray to the Lord...

READER: For those who are imprisoned and condemned to death to know the
infinite saving mercy of God, and for all who are near death to feel the
peace of Christ through the care of others, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For all care-givers, health-care workers, first responders, and for all those who are working to heal the suffering from this pandemic in every way, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For those in our families, neighborhoods, or workplaces who feel alone, abandoned, or forsaken in the midst of quarantine; for all who are looking for the Lord's tender presence through the compassionate outreach of others, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For the Elect who are preparing for their Christian Initiation, that their celebration of Holy Week and Easter may bring them closer to the Lord and continue to prepare them for baptism, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For all of us to celebrate Holy Week to the best of our ability, emulating the humility of Christ and proclaiming God's love in word and deed, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For all who have died, (mention any names...) especially victims of COVID-19, to attain the fullness of life in the eternal kingdom, we pray to the Lord...

LEADER: God of love, our refuge and our strength, hear the prayers of your Church, and grant us what we ask of you in faith. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer may be prayed at this time

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

All Recite

Jesus, I know and believe in your real presence in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. It is you I desire to love and receive above all things. As I am unable to receive your sacramental presence now, come and be with me in heart and soul. Let my entire self be united with you as I welcome you again and know your loving embrace. Amen.

ACT OF THANKSGIVING

The act of thanksgiving may be a song, hymn, psalm, canticle, or litany.
(See options on page 1).

CONCLUDING RITE

LEADER: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

ALL: Amen

SIGN OF PEACE

If appropriate, all may exchange a sign of peace