

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:

- Now We Remain (Haas) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWcqU3PvBas>
- The Way (Barrett) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAwjuFPoYBE>
- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (Wesley / Prichard) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQrNMJrgbyM>
- As A Mother Cares (Bridge) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b6PW-V_dZM
- Where My Father Lives <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G05S8vikPes>
- Vine and Branches (Thompson) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_4pzgxNWaM
- Eye Has Not Seen (Haugen) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jYgOQC82aU>

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: Let us Pray.

All pray in silence for a short time, then leader continues:

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.

The good news of Easter fills our hearts with joy as we remember Christ's victory over death. In him, who offered his life on the cross, a broken world has been renewed and the promise of eternal life made sure.

May we who celebrate Christ's 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.**

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

As the number of disciples continued to grow,
the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows
were being neglected in the daily distribution.
So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said,
"It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table.

Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men,
filled with the Spirit and wisdom,
whom we shall appoint to this task,
whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer
and to the ministry of the word."

The proposal was acceptable to the whole community,
so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit,
also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas,
and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

They presented these men to the apostles
who prayed and laid hands on them.

The word of God continued to spread,
and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly;
even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

The Word of the Lord

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19

R. (22) Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Exult, you just, in the LORD;
praise from the upright is fitting.
Give thanks to the LORD on the harp;
with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Upright is the word of the LORD,
and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right;
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you. Only

SECOND READING

1 Peter 2:4-9

A reading from the first letter of Peter

Beloved:

Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings
but chosen and precious in the sight of God,
and, like living stones,
let yourselves be built into a spiritual house
to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For it says in Scripture:

Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion,
a cornerstone, chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame.

Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith:

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,
and

A stone that will make people stumble,
and a rock that will make them fall.

They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny.

You are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, a people of his own,
so that you may announce the praises" of him
who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

The Word of the Lord

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

CANTOR: Alleluia, Alleluia. (ALL repeat)

CANTOR: I am the way, the truth and the life, says the Lord;
no one comes to the Father, except through me.

All: Alleluia, Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 14:1-12

(Proclaimed by Leader)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:
“Do not let your hearts be troubled.
You have faith in God; have faith also in me.
In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.
If there were not,
would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?
And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come back again and take you to myself,
so that where I am you also may be.
Where I am going you know the way.”
Thomas said to him,
“Master, we do not know where you are going;
how can we know the way?”
Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.
If you know me, then you will also know my Father.
From now on you do know him and have seen him.”
Philip said to him,
“Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.”
Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time
and you still do not know me, Philip?
Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.
How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?
Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?
The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own.
The Father who dwells in me is doing his works.
Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me,
or else, believe because of the works themselves.
Amen, amen, I say to you,
whoever believes in me will do the works that I do,
and will do greater ones than these,
because I am going to the Father.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

Take the passage “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” 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. Have the leader read the Gospel again if necessary.

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.

QUESTION(S) OF THE WEEK

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

1. ACTS: How is your parish helping those in need? How are you involved?
2. PSALM: Where do you see the kindness of the Lord at work in the world?
3. PETER: How do you respond to Peter’s descriptions of you as “living stones ... a chosen race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own”?
4. JOHN: Into what areas of your life have troubles entered? How might you seek to turn them over to the Lord?

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; for all who find ways to both preach the word and serve their neighbor, let us pray to the Lord...

READER: For elected leaders; for all who must make difficult decisions for the good of others, and for all who humbly serve the people in their care, let us pray to the Lord...

READER: For those who are ill, especially those who are suffering alone; for the unemployed or underemployed, and for anyone whose heart is troubled through grief, despair, depression, or addiction, let us pray to the Lord ...

READER: For all care-givers, health-care workers, first responders, and essential personnel; and for all who work to bring comfort and peace to others, let us pray to the Lord...

READER: For mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, expectant mothers, and all who have acted as a mother to us; for all women to know the value of their nurturing presence in the love of their family, let us pray to the Lord...

READER: For all who are gathered today through this live-stream, and for all whose words and actions testify to Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, let us pray to the Lord...

READER: For all who have died, (mention any names...), and also 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 today what we ask of you, in faith, 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