

LIVING LITURGY™

for Music Ministers

Year A • 2020

Brian Schmisek
Katy Beedle Rice
Diana Macalintal



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Presented to

*in grateful appreciation
for your music ministry*

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USING THIS RESOURCE

*Living Liturgy for Music Ministers*TM is a resource intended to assist music ministers in their preparation for the liturgy on Sundays and selected solemnities, as well as Ash Wednesday. Included here are reflections on the gospel, and some insight into how the word of God informs daily life. It is hoped that the commentaries and reflections in this resource will assist music ministers with their own personal encounter with the sacred text. Music ministers who have a better understanding of the readings may be more apt to sing with a greater sensitivity to the deeper meaning of God's word.

*Living Liturgy for Music Ministers*TM has reflections on the gospel readings, brief commentaries connecting the responsorial psalm to the readings, followed by reflections to assist psalmists with preparing for proclamation of the psalms. There are prayers provided for musicians to use with their own spiritual preparation for their ministry. Also included are the readings and responsorial psalms for every Sunday of the liturgical year, as well as for certain solemnities and Ash Wednesday. The second readings are found in an appendix.

This book is an essential resource for music ministers whose own spirituality is nourished by the liturgical cycle and the accompanying Scripture readings, especially the gospel and the psalm. The following outline suggests how this resource might be used by music ministers as they prepare for the liturgical assembly. Of course, adaptations are encouraged as there is no one "right" way to use this book.

On Monday, read only the gospel and reflect on it. Then, read "Reflecting on Living the Gospel" before reading the gospel again. What new insights come to mind? How does the reflection inform your understanding of the sacred text?

On Tuesday, read the first reading. What connections, if any, do you find between it and the gospel? This is a good time to read "Connecting the Responsorial Psalm to the Readings." What new insights come to mind for you? How do these readings inform the situation at your parish, or with your fellow music ministers?

On Wednesday, read the psalm in a prayerful manner. What connections do you draw between the psalm, the gospel, and the first reading? If it is helpful, read the second reading too and let the Scriptures percolate in your spiritual life, with insights bubbling up naturally. When we have been reading God's word, these insights happen not only in prayer but also throughout the week at home, at work, and in daily life.

On Thursday, spend some time with “Psalmist Preparation.” How will you allow some of the spiritual insights you’ve gained through prayer to inform your proclamation of the psalm?

On Friday, if you haven’t already been singing the psalm with your accompanist or fellow ministers, now is a good time to start, at least on your own, or *a cappella*. Use the “Prayer” together as a group or pray it on your own either before or after your practice.

On Saturday and Sunday, spend time in quiet prayer, allowing yourself to be an instrument in God’s hands so that the gathered assembly might find meaning and spiritual insight through your ministry. In your prayer allow words or phrases from the gospel, psalm, and first and second readings to come to mind.

Many music ministers find this to be a rich ministry, filled with spirituality and giving new meaning to their daily lives. The personal encounter with the living and sacred text, being the vehicle through which the assembly hears God’s word, and the fellowship one experiences throughout the week are sources of consolation and joy. When we minister with the gifts given to us by God, we become who we are meant to be. We actualize the charisms God has bestowed on us, not for our sakes alone, but for the building up of the Christian community. In this way, music ministers live their Christian baptism.

Gospel (Matt 24:37-44; LIA)

Jesus said to his disciples: “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”



First Reading (Isa 2:1-5)

This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz,
saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come,
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest mountain
and raised above the hills.

All nations shall stream toward it;
many peoples shall come and say:
“Come, let us climb the LORD's mountain,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may instruct us in his ways,
and we may walk in his paths.”

For from Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,
and impose terms on many peoples.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;

one nation shall not raise the sword against another,
 nor shall they train for war again.
 O house of Jacob, come,
 let us walk in the light of the LORD!

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9)

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,
 “We will go up to the house of the LORD.”
 And now we have set foot
 within your gates, O Jerusalem.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Jerusalem, built as a city
 with compact unity.
 To it the tribes go up,
 the tribes of the LORD.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

According to the decree for Israel,
 to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
 In it are set up judgment seats,
 seats for the house of David.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
 May those who love you prosper!
 May peace be within your walls,
 prosperity in your buildings.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Because of my brothers and friends
 I will say, “Peace be within you!”
 Because of the house of the LORD, our God,
 I will pray for your good.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

See Appendix, p. 200, for Second Reading

Reflecting on Living the Gospel

We are not complacent. The mystery of Christianity, the life, death, resurrection, and ongoing life of Jesus animates us. Any tendency to become lethargic is thwarted by a resounding call to “stay awake!” We are not carried away by a glittering spectacle. Our life in Christ makes us rooted in God’s vision of the world. We see the world through new lenses. We are prepared for anything that might come. In a state of preparation, then, we are alert, aware, and awake. The metamorphosis on the horizon approaches. It is coming, though we know not when.

Connecting the Responsorial Psalm to the Readings

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah foresees a time when the temple in Jerusalem (“the mountain of the Lord’s house”) shall not only belong to God’s chosen people, but to all the peoples of the world. For “[a]ll nations shall stream toward it” in search of divine wisdom and guidance. Our psalm tells us why the temple, “the house of the Lord,” has the ability to attract all the peoples of the world—this is a house of joy, one that promises unity, a place of peace and justice, and what nation doesn’t long for these things?

Psalmist Preparation

We have entered into the time of Advent, and although we might associate the color purple with a time of penance, fasting, and preparation, we are called to joyfully journey toward the feast of Christmas and the fullness of the kingdom of God. The responsorial psalm calls us to “go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.” Is your parish a place that elicits joy?

Prayer

God of new beginnings,
we give thanks that we may stand within your gates
and rejoice in your holy temple.
May your peace dwell with us always.
Show us, Lord, your love,
and grant us your salvation. Amen.

DECEMBER 8, 2019

Gospel (Matt 3:1-12; L4A)

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said:

*A voice of one crying out in
the desert,
Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.*



John wore clothing made of camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

First Reading (Isa 11:1-10)

On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.

The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him:

a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,

a spirit of counsel and of strength,

a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord,

and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD.

Not by appearance shall he judge,

nor by hearsay shall he decide,

but he shall judge the poor with justice,
and decide aright for the land's afflicted.
He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.
Justice shall be the band around his waist,
and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.
Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the young lion shall browse together,
with a little child to guide them.
The cow and the bear shall be neighbors,
together their young shall rest;
the lion shall eat hay like the ox.
The baby shall play by the cobra's den,
and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.
There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord,
as water covers the sea.
On that day, the root of Jesse,
set up as a signal for the nations,
the Gentiles shall seek out,
for his dwelling shall be glorious.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17)

R. (cf. 7) Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;
he shall govern your people with justice
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

Justice shall flower in his days,
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.
May he rule from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,
 and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.
 He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;
 the lives of the poor he shall save.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

May his name be blessed forever;
 as long as the sun his name shall remain.
 In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed;
 all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

See Appendix, p. 200, for Second Reading

Reflecting on Living the Gospel

As human beings we desire consistency, predictability, and stability. Though it's good to experience new things, not many of us thrive on doing new things all the time. Our lives may be punctuated by difference, but regularity reigns. Even so, it's good for us to be shaken up a bit and jostled from our regular routine, as John the Baptist is doing today. We are reminded that we need to repent, turn away from selfish interests and turn toward God. What regular routines do we need to abandon? From what in our lives do we need to turn away? An interior reorientation toward God and the values of his kingdom is demanded.

Connecting the Responsorial Psalm to the Readings

Our responsorial psalm paints us a picture of the kingdom of God: "Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace forever." In the first reading Isaiah prophesies that the one to come shall have justice as "the band around his waist." This justice is the force that hears the cries of the poor and bears good fruit in the lives of those who live by its dictates. The harsh words John the Baptist has for the Pharisees and the Sadducees is a warning for anyone in a position of religious leadership. Later in Matthew's gospel, Jesus will describe the principal fault of these religious leaders by stating, "They tie up heavy burdens [hard to carry] and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them" (23:4; NABRE).

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Psalmist Preparation

What enables you, as ministers who lead the people of God in worship and song, to minister from a place of humility, formed by justice and peace?

Prayer

God of all nations, you chose John the Baptist
to be your voice in the desert.

May our voices join with his to announce that your salvation is near.
Justice shall flourish in his time,
and fullness of peace forever. Amen.