

LIVING  LITURGY™

for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Year C • 2019

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Presented to

*in grateful appreciation
for ministering as an
Extraordinary Minister
of
Holy Communion*

(date)

USING THIS RESOURCE

Extraordinary typically refers to outstanding or exceptional. But extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are “extra”-ordinary in the sense of “in addition to” the ordinary (as well as being outstanding and exceptional!). Ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the ordained and those properly installed as acolytes, usually seminarians. In parishes today there are simply not enough “ordinary” ministers of Holy Communion, so we call forth additional ministers, referred to as “extraordinary.” Imagine how long the distribution of Communion would take if the ordained or seminarians were the only ones who distributed! It is not only because of need, however, that we have extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. It is also by virtue of one’s baptism. We parishioners are grateful that so many baptized Christians respond to the call to serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. In so doing we are reminded that we are all holy, and we are all called to ministry by virtue of our Christian baptism.

Preparing for This Ministry

Though different dioceses and parishes have slightly different preparation requirements for those who would be extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, there is preparation nonetheless. We hope that this book will be a source of reflection for such preparation, and also for ongoing reflection throughout one’s ministry. We know that it is not enough to simply attend a training event and never look back. Each ministry of the church requires regular prayer, reflection, reading, and thoughtfulness. This book is intended to assist with that process by providing prayers and reflection for each Sunday and for certain solemnities. This resource can also be used by groups who would like to share their faith with questions that prompt discussion.

Holy Communion for the Homebound and Sick

In the New Testament Letter of James we learn about the concern and care that the early Christians had for those members of their community who were sick. Such care and concern was a hallmark of Jesus’ own ministry, and it has been a Christian charism ever since. Each week there are parishioners who are not able to join us

for the liturgy, and so the Eucharist is brought to them as a sign of our unity. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are often those who perform this ministry, and, in so doing, they extend the parish's reach to so many more fellow parishioners. This book is intended to be a resource for them as well.

***Adapting This Resource for
Holy Communion for the Homebound and Sick***

The Communion rite (Ordinary Rite of Communion of the Sick) is provided as a separate publication to this book and enclosed within. Those who are extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion have undoubtedly been made familiar with this rite as part of their preparation. This book may be adapted for use with the rite, by sharing the gospel reflection, the prayers, or even the reflection question, so that the visit becomes a true ministry. It is to be remembered that ministers are not mere functionaries. As such, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion bring not only the presence of Christ in the eucharistic species, but the presence of Christ in their very person by virtue of their baptism. So this book has been designed with that in mind, and it can be used to assist with making this a meaningful encounter and ministry.



In today's gospel Jesus speaks of the coming of the Son of Man. As we begin a new church year, let us ask for God's mercy and forgiveness, so as to be ready to greet Jesus when he comes again . . .

Prayer

To you, O Lord, we lift up our voices. Our souls proclaim your praise, for you guide us in your truth and teach us your paths. We lift up our voices in praise.

Show us, Lord, your love, *and grant us your salvation. Amen.*

Gospel

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Jesus said to his disciples: "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.

"Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man."

Brief Silence

For Reflection

The gospel reading for today gives the reader signs that will accompany the end times, the coming of the Son of Man. But we would be mistaken if we took these passages literally. And it's certainly true that hundreds if not thousands of people have done just that—looked for these signs to be fulfilled literally.

The message of this passage sought to give hope to a beleaguered people, the Christians, who anticipated their redemption. Many of them desperately wanted to see the coming of the Son of Man who would establish justice and peace. Many of the early Christians were on the bottom of the social ladder, experiencing tribulations and trials. Jesus himself had faced a violent end at the hands of the state. The Christians needed to be reminded that their salvation would come, and that they also needed to be vigilant, watching for that same salvation. And at the time this gospel was written there were many other Christians who may have lost hope or grown weary of waiting. This message was for them; and the message is also for us.

◆ As Christians living in the year 2018 we realize that our own personal end will likely come before the second coming of Jesus. Thinking about your own mortality, how would you live this coming year if you knew it was your last on earth?

Brief Silence**Prayer**

Good and gracious God, we come before you mindful of our limited time on this earth. Give us the sense to live each day with meaning and purpose, striving to do your will. May we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and give drink to the thirsty, knowing we are serving you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY



In today's second reading we hear that we have been chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before God. Let us pause to ask for God's mercy and pardon for the times we have not lived up to this call . . .

Prayer

You have blessed all creation, Lord, with the gift of Mary, prepared from birth to trust in you and proclaim your Word. May her song of justice be ever on our lips.

Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands; *break into song; sing praise. Amen.*

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be

impossible for God.” Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Brief Silence

For Reflection

The immaculate conception is a difficult concept for adults to grasp, much less children. Though it is a basic element of faith, it is the source of never-ending confusion and much explanatory catechesis. Frankly, the issue is not made easier when the reading for this solemnity narrates the conception of Jesus (also known as the annunciation) and not the immaculate conception (the conception of Mary). But as we know, there is no scriptural passage that narrates the conception of Mary, so the church gives us the story about the conception of Jesus! No wonder confusion abounds.

We recall that every Marian title ultimately says more about Jesus than it does about Mary. And that is certainly true with the immaculate conception, which claims that the salvific effects of what God has done in Christ preserved Mary from sin from the moment of her conception. We can understand and appreciate some confusion regarding the meaning of this feast, which celebrates Mary’s immaculate character from the moment of conception, by reading from the gospel about the conception of Jesus by Mary’s own word of *fiat*.

◆ As God protected Mary from sin from the moment of her conception, he also desires to wash all sin from us. What spiritual and sacramental practices reveal God’s forgiveness to you?

Brief Silence

Prayer

Lord, Jesus Christ, your mother was immaculate from the moment of her conception. Her freedom to do the will of God was expressed in her *fiat*, and lived throughout her life. Give us the same freedom to respond generously to the call of God in our own lives, so that we may do your will. We ask this in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit. **Amen.**