

LIVING  LITURGY™

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Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities

Year C • 2022

Stephanie DePrez
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with
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CONTENTS

Contributors	vi
Preface	vii
Acknowledgments for Gospel Reflections	viii
Season of Advent	1
Season of Christmas	23
Ordinary Time I	45
Season of Lent	75
Easter Triduum	107
Season of Easter	117
Ordinary Time II	151
Appendix A: <i>Readings (continued)</i>	261
Appendix B: <i>Lectionary Pronunciation Guide</i>	316



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PREFACE

Introduction

As a premier Catholic publisher, Liturgical Press remains committed to offering liturgical, spiritual, and scriptural resources rooted in the Benedictine tradition. While these resources have changed and developed over the years, the commitment to sound theology and best pastoral practice remain hallmarks of our mission and ministry. *Living Liturgy*TM is one of our most loved and widely used incarnations of this commitment.

*Living Liturgy*TM will always help people prepare for liturgy and live a liturgical spirituality—a way of living that is rooted in liturgy. The paschal mystery is the central focus of liturgy, of the gospels, and of this volume. *Living Liturgy*TM is more than a title. Rather, “living liturgy” is a commitment to a relationship with Jesus Christ, embodied in our everyday actions and interactions.

We hope this edition of *Living Liturgy*TM will continue to facilitate this relationship, making liturgical spirituality a lived reality.

Authors

Sr. Verna Holyhead, SGS, and Orin E. Johnson return as authors for this edition of *Living Liturgy*TM. Their understanding of Scripture and liturgy provide rich and provocative fodder for reflection and catechesis.

We are also thrilled to introduce a number of authors who are new to *Living Liturgy*TM. Stephanie DePrez, M. Roger Holland, II, John T. Kyler, and Fr. Ferdinand Okorie, CMF, write at the intersection of theology and pastoral reality, bringing their own experiences of “living liturgy” to this work.

We know that you will find these contributions to be prayerful, practical, and relevant to our church and world today.

Artwork

This edition features stunning original artwork from Ruberval Monteiro da Silva, OSB. Fr. Ruberval, a native of Brazil, resides in the Benedictine community of Sant’Anselmo in Rome. His colorful mosaics grace the walls of churches around the world, and we are excited to once again include his work in *Living Liturgy*TM.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS for Gospel Reflections

Adapted “Reflecting on the Gospel” sections

Verna Holyhead, *Welcoming the Word in Year C: With Burning Hearts* (2006)

All days except those listed below

Original “Reflecting on the Gospel” sections

M. Roger Holland, II

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas), Vigil Mass

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas), Mass at Dawn

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas), Mass during the Day

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection

Pentecost Sunday

Ferdinand Okorie, CMF

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Annunciation of the Lord

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

All Saints

The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day)



SEASON OF ADVENT



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Ps 85:8

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.
Show us, Lord, your love;
and grant us your salvation.
R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36; L3C

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 com-
ing 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 be-
come 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.”

Reflecting on the Gospel

On this first Sunday of the church year, many of us will gaze on the single flame that is burning on the Advent wreath. It seems so small and insignificant against the background of world events, and even of our own lives. Often, we are so physically and mentally exhausted at the end of the year that we may be

skeptical about this tiny, flickering flame and the illumination it can offer us. But as we enter this season, the church encourages us to have hope in the promises of God that can so easily flicker in and out of our consciousness. At first hearing, Luke’s gospel may seem to be proclaiming a message of fear and doom; its truth, however, is different. Christ, in his second coming as the glorious Son of Man, will liberate the cosmos and all humanity from fear and menace. Luke uses large, symbolic language for large events. It is the only way to speak of events that have not yet been experienced.

Many people in our world commit themselves to what has not yet happened and to long-range hopes. Medical researchers speak about positive outcomes in decades ahead; ecologists are concerned not just for our planet at this moment, but for its future in the centuries to come; astrophysicists conjecture about developments in terms of millennia. We accept these long-range forecasts and hopes, yet we may feel uncomfortable with,

and even dismissive of, the emphasis on the future at the beginning of Advent. We don’t mind thinking, with comfortable nostalgia, about the past coming of “baby Jesus”—but that is not where the church wants us to start Advent.

When we take our first plunge into this season, we seem to be caught in a liturgical riptide that drags us away from the comparatively safe and familiar shore of the present into the uncharted end of human history and reflection on the second, and as yet unrealized, coming of Christ.

Advent challenges us to let our hopes reach beyond cozy domesticity to the huge and human hope of a new creation. Just as a woman watches for signs that the birth of her child is imminent, so Jesus urges his disciples to be alert to the birth pangs of the reign of God in all its fullness. In our present time, in the womb of human and cosmic history, God is nurturing and preparing for the birth of the new heaven and new earth. In the midst of any personal suffering, international tension, opportunist politics, or natural disasters that we might experience during these Advent weeks, the word of God urges us to be people of hope. Nor are Christians to be captives of frantic seasonal consumerism. We are called, rather, to be a people awake and alert to the promises of God already revealed, grateful for what has been liberating for us as Jesus’s disciples in the year just past, and confident in the gifts of God that are yet to come. Jesus proclaims to us in today’s gospel the same good news he spoke to the bent-over woman (cf. Luke 13:10-17). Touched by Jesus, the woman who for eighteen years had only looked at feet and dust was able to “stand up straight” and to see the Sabbath stars shining on his face. Today, we too are urged to lift up our heads and have faith that we will see our redemption drawing near in the Son of Man.



Focusing the Gospel

Key words and phrases: “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.”

To the point: It is interesting that Jesus pairs drunkenness and anxiety in this passage as equal forms of distraction. One uses substance to distance from reality, and the other is a preoccupation with the frustrations of reality. Both are presented as equally harmful, taking our hearts away from focusing on the true reality of the coming of Christ. Drunkenness and anxiety are also both presented as causing us to become “drowsy.” Perhaps the vigilance that Jesus speaks of is not a sharp awareness that borders on anxiety or a complacency that removes us from our situation. Perhaps Christian vigilance is more about seeking a balance between noticing the aspects of our life that are not currently life-giving and holding them in a healthy perspective.

Connecting the Gospel

to the first reading: Jeremiah speaks of a nation of Israel that is safe and secure. This is considered “justice.” The Lord raises up a leader for Judah and Jerusalem who promotes safety and security.

to experience: In the second reading, Paul equates strength to love, offering love as the key to “strengthen your hearts” in order to please God. Do you view love as a source of strength in your own life?

Connecting the Responsorial Psalm

to the readings: This psalm is brimming with hope and delight. The second reading calls us to justice, and in the psalm, we learn who the just are. They are the humble, who encounter the Lord through kindness and constancy.

to psalmist preparation: When proclaiming these words, you are tying together the gospel and the readings by providing a road map to justice. You are a version of John the Baptist, proclaiming the way to the Lord for your community by sharing the concrete instructions: “All the paths of the LORD are kindness and constancy / toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees. / The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him, / and his covenant, for their instruction.”

PROMPTS FOR FAITH-SHARING

What are a few sources of anxiety in your life? Have you experienced anxiety that causes you to become “drowsy” with distraction?

What are ways in which you seek out “drunkenness”? Do you seek a form of escape that goes beyond self-care?

If we view “justice” as safety and security, how is it present in your own family and wider community? Is your parish a “just” place for parishioners?

How does putting a priority on love contribute to a nation of safety and security?



Model Penitential Act

Presider: In today’s gospel Jesus tells us to be mindful about the ways our hearts may grow drowsy. Let us remain awake and aware, asking for God’s mercy and forgiveness

. . . [pause]

Lord Jesus, you are the Son of God and the Son of Man: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you are the Hope for the World: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are our ever-present Redeemer: Lord, have mercy.

Homily Points

• Today we begin a new liturgical year. Marking time through the liturgical year is an important part of our Christian journey, as it allows us to more deeply align our hearts and minds with Christ and enter more fully into the paschal mystery. It is important to remember that the waiting we experience now during this time of preparation for the coming of God is intimately connected to not only Christmas, but also the entirety of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection.

• In the second reading, St. Paul prays that God will make God’s people “increase and abound in love.” While it is easy to speak of this love in a general sense, this is a good time to consider explicit ways in which our community and world need to grow in love for each other and in love for God. This is not a time for shaming or rebuking, but for inviting ways to cultivate the love Paul describes.

• The gospel today reminds us that as Christians, we wait for something more than the celebration of the historical coming of Christ at Christmas. Jesus tells his disciples that a day will come when all must stand before the Son of Man. Like the disciples, we too wait for the coming of Christ at the end of time, a time where sin, fear, and injustice will be no more. This waiting is an important part of the twofold nature of Advent.

Model Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

Presider: Jesus tells his disciples not to become drowsy from the anxieties of daily life. Confident in this, we bring our needs before God.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That the church may always radiate the light and hope of Christ . . .

That all leaders of cities and countries may work together for the common good . . .

That all who feel despair may know God’s abiding comfort and presence . . .

That all gathered here may begin this season of Advent with renewed hope . . .

Presider: Loving God, hear these prayers we bring before you and grant them according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,

the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ

with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Jer 33:14-16

The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and Judah. In those days, in that time, I will raise up for David a just shoot; he shall do what is right and just in the land.

In those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure; this is what they shall call her: “The LORD our justice.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14

R. (1b) To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;
teach me your paths,
guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my savior,
and for you I wait all the day.

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Good and upright is the LORD;
thus he shows sinners the way.
He guides the humble to justice,
and teaches the humble his way.

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

All the paths of the LORD are kindness and
constancy
toward those who keep his covenant
and his decrees.
The friendship of the LORD is with those
who fear him,
and his covenant, for their instruction.

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

SECOND READING

1 Thess 3:12-4:2

Brothers and sisters:
May the Lord make you increase and
abound in love
for one another and for all,
just as we have for you,
so as to strengthen your hearts,
to be blameless in holiness before our
God and Father
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all
his holy ones. Amen.

Finally, brothers and sisters,
we earnestly ask and exhort you in the
Lord Jesus that,
as you received from us
how you should conduct yourselves to
please God
—and as you are conducting
yourselves—
you do so even more.
For you know what instructions we gave
you through the Lord Jesus.

About Liturgy

Many Modes of Waiting: Somewhere, perhaps in a closet or a basement storeroom, perhaps perched high on a shelf or hidden behind assorted tapestries or various nativity figurines, it is there. Be it wooden or metal, large or small, it remains there for eleven months of the year. Waiting. Waiting to be adorned with greenery, violet and rose candles, perhaps decorative ribbons, and then brought once again into our sacred spaces and into our lives.

Even the Advent wreath spends most of its time waiting.

Yet this wreath's waiting continues even into its time of active purpose. Consider that the wreath's candles are lit for perhaps five or six hours each weekend, and perhaps a couple hours of the days in between. Consider particularly the fourth candle, whose main purpose seems to be standing tall and proclaiming a “not yet” counterbalance to the “soon” of its trio of ever-shorter luminary friends.

Yet, when it is time to be what it was made to be, to do what it is asked to do, this candle easily and capably springs into action—to remind us that our whole lives are a combination of rest, readiness, and activity, all in the name of the Lord. Our whole lives are a combination of “soon” and “not yet” while we wait for that same Lord, already risen in glory, to come again as he promised.

About Liturgical Documents

Revisiting, Reimagining: As a new liturgical year begins, much like when a new calendar year begins, it is a good idea to make some resolutions about our spiritual and liturgical lives. Might I suggest revisiting the myriad documents that inform and guide our public prayer? Some, like *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC; the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) and *Sing to the Lord* might initially seem to be known and studied well enough, but revisiting them, especially if it's been some time, might yield some surprising realizations.

Could you say, off the top of your head, what *Sing to the Lord*, fifteen years old now, says about recorded music? I suspect the nuanced information there would surprise you! And there are many other lesser-known documents, like the various “instructions” following *Sacrosanctum Concilium* over many years—*Varietates Legitimae* and *Liturgiam Authenticam* to name two—along with the occasional *motu proprio* and encyclical to attend to. Which have the full weight of universal liturgical law, and which only provide guidance or suggestions? Which are relevant universally, and which apply only in the United States? Did you know there is a Roman Missal for the Dioceses of Zaire that offers significant adjustments from our ordinary form? What insights might we draw from that rite?

This space will, occasionally during the coming year, delve into these documents, at least briefly, offering some history, context, reminders, new insights, and future possibilities.

About Music

Advent Justice: Advent, scripturally, picks up where the previous cycle finished, painting imagery of end times, often in stark and frightening ways. This cycle adds a layer of justice as well, a justice that, as the weeks progress, transforms into hope—hope for a future of peace only possible through tangible acts of justice.

So, especially this First Sunday of Advent, it's important to use music with texts that pick up on that sense of justice. “This Is Your Justice” by Craig Colson (World Library Publications [WLP]/GIA Publications [GIA]) is one such contemporary offering.



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Luke 3:4, 6

R¹. Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

R². Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 3:1-6; L6C

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:

*A voice of one crying out in the desert:
 "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.
 Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low.
 The winding roads shall be made straight,
 and the rough ways made smooth,
 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

Reflecting on the Gospel

Against a backdrop of geography, politics, and history, Luke ushers the adult John the Baptist onto the Jordan stage. Last Sunday's gospel announced the advent or "arrival" of Jesus at the end of human history; today, as watchman

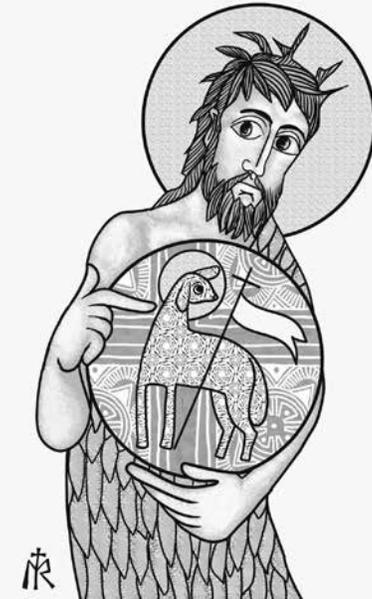
and awakener, John announces the advent of salvation and consolation to the people and proclaims that their hope for the dawn of messianic time is near. In searching for ways to communicate John's significance, Luke and the other gospel writers found it most appropriate to use (with minor alterations) the words of Second Isaiah with which that prophet begins his "Book of the Consolation of Israel" (Isa 40-55). John's is the voice that, after four centuries of prophetic silence, heralds the coming of God's salvation not only to Israel, but to all humankind. In an insignificant and troublesome pocket of the Roman Empire, John starts to shout his message throughout the district around the Jordan River.

Son of the priest Zechariah though he may be, John dissociates himself from Jerusalem and the temple and chooses the place where Israel crossed over from its wilderness wandering into the Promised Land. John will call the people to make another crossing: from the exile of unfaithfulness to God into the forgiveness of their sins. He proclaims a baptism of repentance, a conversion of heart (*metanoia*) that

looks to future commitment and not merely to regret for the past.

We are used to heavy earth-moving equipment and technology that builds roads to speed travelers on their way—cutting out sharp bends, smoothing treacherous bumps, straightening dangerous curves to give us a clearer and safer view of what is ahead or oncoming. Advent is the season of Christian "road work," with John the Baptist as our overseer. With John's voice, the church asks us both personally and communally to level and straighten out whatever is an obstacle or danger on our journey to God. What are the "potholes" in our discipleship, those sins of omission? From what do we need to be converted if we are to make the way smoother for others who find it difficult to travel to God because of our intolerant or erratic behavior? Do we indulge in outbursts of destructive "road rage" toward our sisters and brothers as we all try to follow the way of the gospel? Have we a kingdom vision that can enable us to see around the twists and turns of personal tragedy or ecclesial failure and to recognize there an advent of Christ—his presence with us in the suffering, dying, and rising from these painful realities?

From the desert of his prison, Paul writes in the second reading to the church at Philippi using words that the liturgy now addresses to us. It is a hopeful letter, full of Paul's confidence in the fidelity of this church to continue in the way of the gospel so that Jesus Christ may bring his work in them to completion by the time he comes again. Out of his tender compassion, Paul prays a threefold prayer: that the Philippians may continue to grow in mutual love; that its members may be discerning of the demands of their Christian life; and that they may be vigilant for Christ's second coming, "filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God"



(Phil 1:11). First love, then understanding, then ethics—these are Paul’s priorities, for where would the last be without the other two?

Focusing the Gospel

Key words and phrases: “John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”

To the point: In this gospel, the writer includes a lot of information we might pass over as “fluff” when reading today. The fifteenth year of whom? Tetrarch of what? This setup creates a relevant context for the first few audiences of this gospel. Those in the first century would have known who this Caesar was and where Abeline is. They are road markers, setting the scene for the arrival of Jesus. The writer then immediately references Isaiah, which his first audience would recognize. These pieces of the gospel require us to do more work to encounter the Word as it was intended. How might this be written if it were for today’s audience? What historical context would you use to set up the coming of Christ in your hometown this month? What books or lyrics would you use to paint a picture of the Christ that citizens of your country are longing for?

Connecting the Gospel

to the first reading: The first reading reads like a coach’s speech to a bedraggled team in the fourth quarter of a losing game. Take off that robe of mourning and misery! Up, Jerusalem! God is leading Israel (you!) into joy!

to experience: This reading is an ancient pump-up speech that, like the first part of the gospel, gives us context. We encounter today’s gospel after being reminded here that God is on our side, and we are ultimately going to win. The readings are building the scene for the coming of Christ.

Connecting the Responsorial Psalm

to the readings: This psalm is very blunt. The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Paul uses this certainty in his letter to the Philippians when he tells us, “I am confident of this, / that the one who began a good work in you / will continue to complete it / until the day of Christ Jesus.” Paul is speaking of the Holy Spirit, trusting and celebrating that the good things the Spirit has begun will continue to manifest positively.

to psalmist preparation: If you have ever played or coached a sport, or received or given mentorship, this psalm invites you to channel that experience. You are the leader in this moment, giving encouragement to the congregation, reminding them of past victories. “Although they go forth weeping, / carrying the seed to be sown, / they shall come back rejoicing, / carrying their sheaves.” You have the opportunity to share God’s game plan with your parish, using this beautiful imagery. For you personally, recall a moment when you had to double down on hard work and trust to accomplish a goal. This is the type of moment the psalmist is asking us to remember.

PROMPTS FOR FAITH-SHARING

Have you taken a course or attended a workshop on biblical history? Are there clues in this week’s readings that you are able to pick out because of the time you’ve spent studying the context of the writers? What can you share with your fellow ministers?

Who was a great coach or mentor who helped you develop? What activities or words did this person use to encourage you to grow?

Paul’s prayer for us is, “[T]hat your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.” How does this make you feel? How would you change if you knew this prayer was being said for you constantly?

In light of Paul’s words, what is your prayer for your own community?



Model Penitential Act

Presider: In today's gospel John cries out, "Prepare the way of the Lord." For the times our lives have not heralded God's coming, we ask for forgiveness and peace . . . *[pause]*

Lord Jesus, you are the Way that beckons us to follow: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you speak words of peace when we are afraid: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are light, and in you there is no darkness: Lord, have mercy.

Homily Points

- Both the first reading and the gospel share images of God lowering mountains and exulting valleys. We may have heard these words before without thinking about what they actually mean. Consider putting this into perspective for your community by referencing local natural landmarks that people can visualize and imagine the significance of these works of God.
- The desert imagery in today's gospel may be difficult to imagine during December. Even so, the desert remains an important image in Scripture. Today we hear that John the Baptist leaves his time of prayer and contemplation in the desert to proclaim the words of the prophet Isaiah. Later, Jesus will spend time in the desert praying and preparing for his public ministry. How are we being called to spend time in the desert of prayer and contemplation during this Advent season? How might we carve out some quiet time and stillness in our own lives during these busy weeks leading up toward Christmas? Perhaps part of that time might be spent in contemplating those great works of God that Isaiah and John mention.
- Today's psalm allows for further consideration of the works of God: "The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy." The words of the psalmist speak to our very human emotions: dreaming, laughing, rejoicing, etc. How can we name our response to the works of the Lord in our everyday lives? Meister Eckhart is known for proclaiming, "If the only prayer we ever say is thank you, it would be sufficient." How do today's readings help us cultivate a spirit of gratitude?

Model Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

Presider: We offer our prayers in a spirit of gratitude, knowing that God hears us when we call out. With confidence, we bring our prayers to God.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That all members of the church may grow in appreciation and gratitude for the works of God . . .

That lawmakers and politicians may always advocate for peace and justice, even when it is difficult . . .

That all who feel alone or isolated during these days of Advent may find comfort and consolation in family, friends, caregivers, and strangers . . .

That our church community may, like John the Baptist, have the courage to proclaim the works of God . . .

Presider: Loving God, hear and answer these prayers, according to your will, not ours. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer

Almighty and merciful God,
may no earthly undertaking hinder those
who set out in haste to meet your Son,
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom
gain us admittance to his company.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Bar 5:1-9

Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning
and misery;
put on the splendor of glory from God
forever:
wrapped in the cloak of justice from God,
bear on your head the mitre
that displays the glory of the eternal
name.
For God will show all the earth your
splendor:
you will be named by God forever
the peace of justice, the glory of God's
worship.

Up, Jerusalem! stand upon the heights;
look to the east and see your children
gathered from the east and the west
at the word of the Holy One,
rejoicing that they are remembered by
God.

Led away on foot by their enemies they
left you:
but God will bring them back to you
borne aloft in glory as on royal thrones.
For God has commanded
that every lofty mountain be made low,
and that the age-old depths and gorges
be filled to level ground,
that Israel may advance secure in the
glory of God.
The forests and every fragrant kind of
tree
have overshadowed Israel at God's
command;
for God is leading Israel in joy
by the light of his glory,
with his mercy and justice for company.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

R. (3) The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,
we were like men dreaming.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with rejoicing.

R. The Lord has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy.

Then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”

The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad indeed.

R. The Lord has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the torrents in the southern desert.
Those who sow in tears
shall reap rejoicing.

R. The Lord has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy.

Although they go forth weeping,
carrying the seed to be sown,
they shall come back rejoicing,
carrying their sheaves.

R. The Lord has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy.

SECOND READING

Phil 1:4-6, 8-11

Brothers and sisters:

I pray always with joy in my every prayer
for all of you,
because of your partnership for the
gospel
from the first day until now.

I am confident of this,
that the one who began a good work
in you
will continue to complete it
until the day of Christ Jesus.

God is my witness,
how I long for all of you with the
affection of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer:
that your love may increase ever more
and more
in knowledge and every kind of
perception,
to discern what is of value,
so that you may be pure and blameless
for the day of Christ,
filled with the fruit of righteousness
that comes through Jesus Christ
for the glory and praise of God.

About Liturgy

Liturgical Justice: As our Scriptures this Advent continue to reveal the coming justice and righteousness of God’s son, we are reminded to engage in our ministries, when possible, with the same justice that Jesus lived 2,000 years ago and continues to teach us today.

Justice issues are interwoven into all of these elements. Is a liturgy director using the monetary and human resources of the parish appropriately? Are the materials selected for art and environment environmentally friendly? Are those who are paid for their ministries paid an appropriate amount, and paid promptly upon completing their labors in the vineyard?

Further, directors of music and/or liturgy have responsibilities that demand even more attention to these justice issues. On the personal level, the season can demand so much more time and effort than other times of the year; are you carefully monitoring your workload and your sanity during this time? On the professional and economic level, we should remind ourselves that a parish budget (or a music and liturgy budget within that whole) is a document of priorities more than anything else. Does the music and liturgy budget meet the demands of justice that our faith places upon it? Are you able and willing to be a voice that calls for an appropriate percentage of the parish budget to be put toward creating the fullest and most vibrant celebration of the source and summit of our faith—the liturgy? All the other facets of parish life revolve around this public prayer and within this they find their purpose.

Pursuing justice at our liturgies must go beyond the economic and ecological and into the societal as well. Are all those in your parish community equally represented and heard in the various aspects of the liturgy, as lectors or music ministers? Is the liturgy prepared with inculturation in mind, something much more complicated than ensuring it is multilingual? Are those at the margins more than welcomed—are they seen and heard as an essential part of the Body of Christ?

About Liturgical Documents

Sacrosanctum Concilium’s Greatest Hits: The first document to come out of the Second Vatican Council was the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. That it was the first indicates the importance of the liturgy in our lives and that those at the council recognized that fact.

Many readers have already heard many times the famous phrases “source” and “summit” (or font and apex) and “full, conscious, and active” participation (SC 10, 14). Some may already be well-versed into how these words have been translated, interpreted, argued over, and hopefully enacted over the last sixty years. Off and on over the next few weeks we’ll explore the history of liturgical experimentation preceding the council and some of the other “nooks and crannies” of this foundational document.

About Music

Melodies That Engage: Consider the repetitive *Psallite* refrain “Take Your Place at the Table” (Liturgical Press) or strong and accessible melody of “Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord” by Kenneth Louis (WLP/GIA).