

# 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.

The celebration begins without a procession.

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

Parish music directors should be able to provide additional appropriate song choices.

A musician can lead one of the following songs or all can sing along to recording (youtube, etc)

Possibilities: Open the Eyes of My Heart – Paul Baloche

Amazing Grace

Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone) – Chris Tomlin

Open My Eyes – Jesse Manibusan

Christ, Be Our Light – Bernadette Farrell

You Are Mine – David Haas

Lead Me, Guide Me – Doris Akers

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light – Kathleen Thomerson

Those Who See Light – Nancy Elze

You are the Light – Sarah Hart

What Wondrous Love is This

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 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.

Acknowledging our sins, we pray, O God, for the gift of true repentance and genuine conversion. Renew the grace of our baptism within us and inspire us to express our love for you in our service of others.

We raise our voices in praise and thanksgiving to you, O God. 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*

**The readings and psalm are those assigned for the day in the *Lectionary for Mass*.**

**Visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) for the readings of the day, March 22, the Fourth Sunday of Lent**

FIRST READING: The First Reading is proclaimed by someone other than the leader. Begin with "A reading from the First Book of Samuel"..." and close with "The Word of the Lord."

THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM: The Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 23) is sung or read.

If necessary, one of the common Lenten psalms (51, 91, or 130) may be sung or read.

SECOND READING: The second reading is proclaimed by someone other than the leader. Begin with "A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians" ..." and close with "The Word of the Lord.:"

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The Gospel Acclamation given in the Lectionary is sung.

If is not 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 light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life. (ALL: Praise to you...)

GOSPEL: The Gospel is proclaimed by the leader. Begin with "A reading from the holy Gospel according to John" and conclude with "The Gospel of the Lord."

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS: Parish Catechetical Leaders can be consulted for appropriate materials and sources for reflection and sharing on the readings. The following options for reflection are provided but can be adapted as necessary by parishes. In addition, the pastor may wish to provide a homily which can be played or read by the leader at this time.

1. LECTIO DIVINA (for more background and information on this type of prayer visit [www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions](http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions))

Take the passage "I was blind and now I see" or another short phrase that stood out to you and repeat it several times. Place yourself in the story of the man born blind. 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.

## 2. QUESTION(S) OF THE WEEK

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

1 SAMUEL: When was a time that a first impression about someone (no names!) or something was proven to be far from the reality? Was there ever a time in your life when something seemingly insignificant made a significant impact? How do you wish to be judged by others? How can we better “look into the hearts” of others?

PSALM 23: What are the “dark valleys” that we face in our lives right now? What are the “green pastures” and “safe waters” that God has provided? In what other ways have you experienced the abundance of God in your life?

EPHESIANS: What does it mean to be called “a child of light?” Are there any “fruitless works of darkness” in your life that need to be exposed? How can you continue to grow in your spiritual journey, moving from “darkness” to “light”?

JOHN: Who is someone you admire because they are overcoming a disability? Has there ever been a physical or emotional misfortune in your life that has turned into an opportunity for the demonstration of God’s power? Has your faith ever made you feel outcast? How do you answer the question “Why?” concerning pain or suffering in your life? When did you first see Jesus as the light of *your* world? How do you measure your spiritual vision?

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

If there are catechumens or elect present, after the silence, continue breaking open the Word of God if necessary to conclude the celebration (Parish RCIA Coordinators will be helpful with providing additional materials to facilitate this) and then close with the Concluding Rite

PROFESSION OF FAITH: Recite either the Nicene Creed or the Apostles’ Creed

[www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/basic-prayers](http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/basic-prayers)

## PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

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

READER: For the holy Church, for all of us, may we serve as beacons of light in this world during difficult times, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For civic leaders, and for those who work to ensure the well-being of all, especially the most vulnerable, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For people living with disabilities, and for those who work to meet their needs, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For all health care workers, counselors, and care-givers, for all who work to heal those suffering from coronavirus in every way, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For victims of human rights violations and their families and loved ones, and for those who work to bring to them the healing touch of Christ, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For those preparing for the Easter Sacraments, may they walk in the light of Christ and reflect that light to others, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For all of us, may we look beyond appearances and attempt to see the face of Christ in all people, celebrating diversity and promoting the gifts each person brings, we pray to the Lord...

READER: For all who have died, especially victims of the coronavirus pandemic, and for their loved ones, and for all who have died to rise in glory on the last day, 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: 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 music choices above. Parish music directors may advise their communities on additional appropriate choices within parish repertoire for the season.

#### *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

Another song or instrumental music may conclude the celebration.