

Dear servants of the liturgy,

What an incredible celebration! Beautiful music, profound preaching, the "full, conscious, and active participation" of the assembly....passionate, well-prepared readers and attentive, reverent servers... it was truly a great Chrism Mass! Thanks to all who could be with us, who helped prepare for the liturgy, and who cleaned up afterwards!

It is indeed splendid what can happen if we celebrate the rites given to us with love and intention, if the *ars celebrandi* - the art of celebrating the liturgy - is taken to heart. To do so, we—as assembly, as ministers, and as presiders—are called to a deep love...

(1) ...of God: we ought to be people of prayer, otherwise we minister solely out of ourselves (a fairly shallow well) rather than from the infinite wellsprings of the divine;

(2) ...of the liturgy: a gift given us by Christ through the Church; not the "private property" of any individual or community, but a treasure of inestimable worth given to all;

(3) ...of the people: for in ministry (whether a formal liturgical ministry, or the ministry of praying the liturgy as a member of the assembly--a ministry given to us in baptism) our task is to help create a "space" and "time"—a context—where we can more readily encounter Christ. As ministers, we can facilitate that encounter or hinder it; we cannot prevent it or make it happen: for all is grace. However, if we love one another, we will do all we can to "get out of the way" so Christ can be met through us and with us.

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

THE U.S. BISHOPS' COMMITTEE ON PASTORAL PRACTICES

This USCCB committee has been studying the question of fostering greater attendance at Sunday Mass. After wide consultation, they have published a series of nine suggestions that parishes can implement, including this final offering:

#9 Attend to the needs of young adults. Schedule a Sunday evening liturgy. Provide child care during Mass. Schedule faith formation around the Mass schedule. Encourage an active family life ministry to young families and divorced Catholics. Provide opportunities for discussion and dialogue (*Why Catholic? Theology on Tap*). Offer formation for parents of children preparing to receive First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CONTINUING FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

Diocese of Des Moines: May 18-19, 2007

Friday, May 18 (7:00-9:00 pm): “Music for the Liturgy: a Music Reading Session”

Saturday, May 19 (9:00-2:30 pm): “The Ministry of Music and Musicians, ‘Full, conscious and active participation by all’”

For more information... call or e-mail the Des Moines Department of Faith Formation • 515/237-5058 • formation@dmdiocese.org • www.dmdiocese.org (“Faith Formation”)

Liturgical Music Conference: St. John’s University

“Liturgical Music Ministry: The Duality of Rich Spiritual Formation and Practical Pastoral Approaches” is the theme of the annual liturgical music conference to be held at St. John’s on June 25-28. For further information, please contact Deb Guertin at 320-363-3371 or dguertin@csb-sju.edu.

IN OUR DIOCESE – RCIA: Beginnings and Beyond – July 19-22

A Beginnings and Beyond conference will be held in the diocese July 19-22, 2007 at St. John Vianney Parish in Bettendorf. The registration flyer was included with the December newsletter and is on the diocesan website. Please be aware that scholarships to the conference are available.

The National Catholic Youth Choir: St. John’s Abbey, Collegeville, MN

Applications and audition materials for the eight season of the National Catholic Youth Choir are available at www.CatholicYouthChoir.org. The choir is for Catholics entering grades 10, 11, or 12 – and will meet June 27-July 13. For more details, see the website or contact Fr. Anthony Ruff, OSB at awruff@csbsju.edu.

National Association of Pastoral Musicians

NPM will be offering a number of institutes (topics: cantors, choir directors, music with children, guitar and ensemble, pastoral liturgy) in addition to their national convention (Indianapolis, July 9-13). See www.npm.org. Of special note, one of the Cantor Express Institutes will be held at Mundelein Seminary in Chicago on June 29-July 1.

LITURGY PREPARATION

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

2008 CHANGES

Next year, the solemnity of St. Joseph (March 19) falls on the Wednesday of Holy Week and the solemnity of the Annunciation (March 25) falls on the Tuesday in the Octave of Easter.

Normally, they would be moved forward to the next open days on the calendar—March 31 and April 1. However, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has decreed that in 2008: The Solemnity of St. Joseph will be observed on March 15 and the Solemnity of the Annunciation will be celebrated on March 31.

SPECIAL ALERT: Diocese of Antsiranana, Madagascar

We have received news that our partner-diocese of Antsiranana has been hit by two cyclones within the last couple of weeks, the fifth and sixth severe storm to do so this year, causing widespread devastation. Tens of thousands are homeless and entire villages have been wiped out by floods and mudslides. Livestock and crops have been decimated, including over 20,000 acres of rice paddies, raising the specter of starvation. Eighty percent of the country's vanilla crop—its major export—has been lost.

The Social Action Department and Madagascar Committee are working on a formal diocesan plan to address these humanitarian needs as we also keep our sisters and brothers in prayer. Perhaps one of the following intercessions might be used at Sunday Masses this month:

For the people of Madagascar, and for all who are suffering in the aftermath of natural disasters, that they would be comforted in their suffering and know God's compassion through the ministry of the Church, we pray to the Lord:

For our sisters and brothers in Antsiranana, that they would know our love for them by our prayers and our outreach...

For our sisters and brothers in Antsiranana, that they would know Easter hope in the midst of their suffering...

That our solidarity with the people of Antsiranana would be strengthened as we strive to serve them in their time of need...

For the hungry and homeless, the frightened and the bereaved in Madagascar; that they would be comforted—and that we would be generous with our assistance...

INTERCESSIONS

Below please find three intercessions for each Sunday of the month. The first is an “intercession for life” provided by the USCCB. The second is an intercession for vocations, courtesy of the vocations office. Finally, there is an intercession written by a member of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission and inspired by the readings of the day. Please use and/or adapt them as you see fit.

May 6

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

That this season of risen life might deepen within all men and women a spirit of gratitude, obedience, and worship of Christ Jesus, through whom all were made; we pray to the Lord:

That Christian laity who witness to the Good News of Jesus in secular society and those who live their vocation in religious community would be a support and encouragement to one another...

For those who have not yet come to believe in the risen Lord, that the door of faith may be opened to them so that they may come to embrace the Lord's commandment of love.

May 13

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

For those who will die this week, and especially for those in pain, that our prayers may guide them home and fill their hearts with peace; we pray to the Lord:

That the faithful witness of religious community life will draw others to follow God with greater intention...

For those who face anxiety of any kind in their lives, that their hearts may not be troubled or afraid, but that they would place their trust in the Holy Spirit, our “Advocate.”

May 20

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

For those who live on death row, that God might give them the gift of repentance, and their lives might be spared; we pray to the Lord:

That sisters, brothers, and religious-order priests may find joy in their service to the Church and in their lives of community...

For Christians sent to the nations who face persecution for their testimony to Christ, that they might be faithful witnesses to the One who sits at God's right hand...

May 27

PENTECOST

That the Spirit of the living God might implant in the hearts of all peoples a love for the Gospel; of life and a respect for God's law; we pray to the Lord:

That deacons, through their ministries of word, sacrament, and charity, would bear faithful witness to Christ the Servant of all...

For the Body of Christ, that on this Pentecost Sunday, we may be renewed in the gift of the Holy Spirit and emboldened to speak in a variety of tongues the Word that can be understood by all.