



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
Office of Sacred Worship

LITURGY NOTES

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE MASS

By: Laura Jablonski

Young people are seeking a place to feel seen, known, and loved. They are drawn to truth, beauty, and goodness. They seek answers to life's big questions and desire authenticity in their relationships. In a culture of noise and chaos, we can guide young people to the Prince of Peace. What the young heart seeks is found in the Mass. Through journeying in relationship with a young person, we can help spark the flame of love for Jesus Christ and His Church. St. Francis of Assisi said, "Man should tremble, the world should quake, all Heaven should be deeply moved when the Son of God appears on the altar in the hands of the priest." Share the astounding realities that take place in the Mass with a young person. While the Mass is an inexhaustible mystery, we can still grow in appreciation and awe at the Sacrifice of God for mankind that takes place in the Mass. What impact do these realities have on your life? Encourage young people to contemplate these eternal realities for themselves. A seeking heart that asks questions and investigates answers can bring about a new engagement in and devotion to the Mass.

Next, invite a young person to join you at Mass. In His ministry, Jesus got to know people personally through relationships of trust, and called them by name to follow Him and share Him with others. We, too, are called to invite young people by name to engage more fully in the life of the Church. Once we have reflected upon the joy, purpose, and fulfillment Mass and our faith bring to us, it is natural that we should want to share such a precious gift with others. Through a relationship of care and trust, this gift can be received by the open-hearted young person.

To more deeply invest in Mass and their parish community, encourage young people to give themselves as a gift to God, and then to others. Scheduled daily prayer time, regular Mass attendance and Reconciliation, dying to self through fasting and penance, all create a disposition of the heart to be transformed by God. They will come to know their gifts, talents, and purpose, which are all to be entrusted to a trustworthy, loving God. Once a soul is possessed by God alone, a young person can serve others with a pure and humble heart. Volunteering for a parish event, starting an ongoing formation group, and enacting the corporal and spiritual works of mercy give a young person a greater sense of purpose and helps them grow in confidence in God's plan for his or her life.

St. Bernard said, "One merits more by devoutly assisting at a Holy Mass than by distributing all of his goods to the poor and traveling all over the world on pilgrimage." Mass is the path to life. In a secular culture falsely promising happiness and fulfillment, a young person seeking the source of all truth and purpose will find Him in the Mass. To share this with young people and invite them to engage more deeply in the Mass, it begins with examining what God is doing in our hearts and souls in the Mass, and then sharing our joy with others through personal invitation and encouragement. When young people can accept His invitation to a real life in Him, they can be transformed into who He wants them to be, into a life of joy and purpose. Our Lord

Jesus Christ wants to use those who are willing to accept the call to invite young people to follow Him and encounter Him in the Mass.

About the Author: Laura Jablonski is the Parish Outreach Coordinator for the Office of Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Laura also serves as the Youth Ministry Liaison to the Northern Vicariate. Pastor and parish support, core team training, youth program start-ups and professional development are just a few of the ways Laura serves the Archdiocese of St. Louis.



ALL ABOUT THE ANNUAL FOCUS CONFERENCE, SEEK24

SEEK is a collaboration led by FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students), a Catholic outreach organization that shares the hope and joy of the Gospel with the world. FOCUS missionaries encounter people in friendship, invite them into a personal relationship with Christ and accompany them as they pursue lives of virtue and excellence. The SEEK conference is traditionally held in a different location each year, though it has been in the Archdiocese of St. Louis for the past two years. Attendees are invited into a time of prayer, fellowship, inspiration, and entertainment. A typical day for a SEEK attendee would include daily Mass, morning breakout sessions, afternoon breakout sessions, opportunities for Confession and Adoration, time to interact with vendors, schools, apostolates, religious orders, and more, and then evening keynotes followed by evening entertainment. A key part of this conference is the opportunity for Catholics to connect with one another from different walks of life. This is a great reminder of the Communion of Saints which are all called into by our Baptism.

A few quick facts from SEEK24

- 19,000 conference attendees

- 5,000 people from the Archdiocese of St. Louis attended keynote talks and Adoration on January 3rd
- 700 priests in attendance
- Daily Mass with all conference attendees celebrated by Bishops and Cardinals from throughout the country

Quotes from young adults who attended the SEEK24 conference:

- “I am not alone. There are other people. I think there is a great deal of hope.”
- “The path forward for evangelizing young people is Authenticity.”
- “There is a great response of young adults in the Church, trying to find the way forward and take ownership of Faith.”
- “I am hopeful, I am optimistic... people see how the world is changing and they are worried. But, I think with the amount of young Catholics here, there are so many of us who wanted to grow and deepen our love for Christ, that’s what makes me optimistic.”
- “Do not be afraid to stand out... Don’t be afraid to be a Saint.”
- “There are more young adults here than my entire hometown, and they are all on fire for the Lord!”

The following link will allow you to have access to the keynotes, breakout sessions, and homilies from SEEK24 for **free**! Just create an account using the link below: https://seekreplay.com/?utm_medium=website&utm_source=focus&utm_campaign=top_banner

LENTEN AND EASTER RESOURCES

The season of Lent is quickly approaching as Ash Wednesday will be on February 14th this year. This will begin our 40 day journey to Easter Sunday and the celebration of our risen Lord. The thought of Lent quickly approaching may be overwhelming to you. Maybe every year you feel like you haven’t entered into the season as you wished you had. Maybe you didn’t give much thought to what you should fast from. Maybe you jam packed your schedule and didn’t have time to make a Holy Hour or give your time helping out at your parish or local soup kitchen. The 3 pillars of this penitential season that Holy Mother Church provides us with are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. This is not meant to be a binding, legalistic approach to Lent but rather a lovingly-crafted formula to journey through the desert with our Lord. As Catholics we do not do penance for the sake of penance but rather penance for the sake of Love. Remind yourself of the love our Lord has poured out and is continuously pouring out upon you. Take some time these next few weeks to enter into prayer and examine what our Lord is calling you into this Lenten season. It can be as simple as a short prayer, “Gracious Father, the love you have bestowed upon me is constantly abounding

To jumpstart this process, Here are some ideas for each one of the 3 pillars below:

Prayer:

- Each morning, scroll through the contacts on your phone. Randomly stop and say a prayer for whichever person you land on
- Spend a few minutes with Scripture each day
- Start the Bible in A Year podcast with Fr. Mike Schmitz
- Attend daily Mass once a week
- Attend or pray the Stations of the Cross every Friday
- Invite a friend to attend Mass with you
- Attend Adoration of the Eucharist
- Go to confession
- Pray the Rosary

Fasting:

- Give up coffee (or only brew it at home)
- Give up alcohol

- Give up certain social media sites, or limited them to certain days/time of day
- Give up electronics after a certain time in the day (i.e., no screens after 8 p.m.)
- Sleep without a pillow
- Wake up without hitting the snooze button
- Shower with cold water
- Park in the back of the parking lot and say a prayer as you walk to the grocery store

Almsgiving:

- Spend time volunteering as a family
- Donate to the Annual Catholic Appeal: <https://www.archstl.org/aca>
- Create a jar to collect change to donate
- Donate food to a food bank
- Donate a service such as free homework tutoring
- Give a smile to someone you pass who may be living on the street rather than ignoring them
- Follow new charities on social media and engage with their posts
- Support a business that advertises in your parish bulletin

Important Dates:

Ash Wednesday: February 14, 2024

Holy Thursday: March 28, 2024

Good Friday: March 29, 2024

Holy Saturday: March 30, 2024

Easter Sunday: March 31, 2024

Important Reminders:

Ash Wednesday February 14, 2024), all Fridays of Lent and Good Friday (March 29, 2024) are days of ***abstinence*** (refraining from meat) for ***all Catholics from age 14 onwards***. On these two days, fast, as well as ***abstinence***, is also obligatory for those from the ***ages of 18-59***. Abstinence means refraining from meat. Fast means one full meal a day, with two smaller meals and nothing between meals (liquids are permitted). No Catholic will lightly excuse himself or herself from this obligation.

Additional Resources:

- Office of Sacred Worship Prayer Resources: [PRAYER RESOURCES | Sacred Worship | Archdiocese of St Louis \(archstl.org\)](#)
- Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) Lenten Liturgical Guide: <https://fdlc.org/2024/01/liturgicalpreparation-aid-for-lent-the-sacred-paschal-triduum-and-the-easter-season-2024-year-b/>
- <https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/lent.html>
- [Get FREE Lenten Gospel Reflections from Bishop Robert Barron \(dailycatholicgospel.com\)](#)

Sources: Information compiled from the following website, <https://hallow.com/blog/what-to-give-up-for-lent/#prayer-fasting-almsgiving>

ADORATION



The Office of Worship encourages you to take advantage of Eucharistic Adoration most especially in the season of Lent. One of the pillars of Lent is prayer. While there are many ways to enter into prayer, Eucharistic Adoration is an excellent way to do so. Please visit our website for more information and to view a list of parish adoration times: <https://www.archstl.org/sacred-worship/liturgy-and-sacraments/eucharistic-adoration>

"Gaze upon Him, consider Him, contemplate Him, as you desire to imitate Him."

- St. Clare of Assisi

"Heaven for me is hidden in a little Host where Jesus, my Spouse, is veiled for love. I go to that Divine Furnace to draw out life, and there my sweet Saviour listens to me night and day."

- St. Therese of Lisieux

"Good friends find pleasure in one another's company. Let us know pleasure in the company of our best Friend, a Friend who can do everything for us, a friend who loves us beyond measure. Here in the Blessed Sacrament we can talk to him straight from the heart."

- St. Alphonsus de Liguori

RECLAMATION



The anticipated re-opening of the Reclamation Center has happened! As we come back up to speed, the center will be opened only on Wednesdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. For further information, please visit the Reclamation Center catalog at <https://www.archstl.org/sacred-worship/reclamation-center/reclamation-center-online-catalog>

MUSIC



The following Lenten Music Tool Kit has been crafted by the Director of Sacred Music for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, Andrew Kreigh. You are welcome to use this resource for the planning of Lenten liturgies.

https://email.archstl.org/files/amf_archdiocese/project_50/Music_Tool_Kit_Lent_2024_Final.pdf

As always, please reach out to our Office with any liturgical questions, comments, or concerns. May our Lord bless you and keep you as you prepare for this Lenten season. We will keep you all in our prayers throughout this time.

In Christ,
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