



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
Office of Sacred Worship

LITURGY NOTES

AS EASTER DRAWS NEAR

By: Father Nicholas Smith, Director of the Office of Sacred Worship.

One of the courses that I teach in the college program at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary is a literature course which surveys various Catholic themes found in great pieces of British and American Literature. For example, the college seminarians have explored the themes of evil in literature and the priest in literature, among others. Works such as *Frankenstein*, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*, *Macbeth*, and *Screwtape Letter*, among others, have been read and discussed in the evil in literature course. Novels such as *The Diary of a Country Priest*, *The Power and the Glory*, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, among others, have been studied in the Priest in Literature course. The focus of this year's course is conversion in literature. Here, the students have read, thus far, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Man Called Ove*, *A Severe Mercy*, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, with other works to come.

The first book we read this semester was *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. We are all familiar with the story of Ebenezer Scrooge and his conversion from an elderly, bitter miser who is visited by the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future and how, in the process, he is transformed into a kinder, gentler man. At the end of his encounter with the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, Scrooge proclaims, "I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach." At the end of the book, Dickens notes that after Scrooge's conversion, "...it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well."

One might be wondering why I am talking about Scrooge and *A Christmas Carol* as we conclude the Season of Lent and move into the Sacred Paschal Triduum. Well, just as Scrooge vowed to live Christmas and its lessons each day of the year, so must we do the same with Lent and what we have learned about ourselves and God. Preface II of Lent in the *Roman Missal* in addressing God notes: "For you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purifying of their hearts, that freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure."

Lent, hopefully, has been a time for us to actively engage in the three Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving with the focus of helping us to "Repent, and believe in the Gospel." These words were spoken to us as ashes were imposed on our heads on Ash Wednesday.

Oftentimes, we tend to compartmentalize things. In other words, when something is completed, we pack things away and move on to the next thing. Using the Christmas example, when the season is finished, we pack up the decorations, lights, and other Christmas items, and store them away until next Christmas.

We cannot do that with our lives of faith. Hopefully, we have engaged in some special

practices this Lent. For example, going to Mass during the week, praying more often, doing some spiritual reading, abstaining from certain practices that are just a waste of time. On Holy Thursday, we should not “pack up” these things and put them in the closet until next Lent. Instead, we should try to practice them all year long. Did we attend weekday Mass two- or three-days during Lent? Well, maybe we can attend Mass every Wednesday, for example, in rest of the year. Did we make the promise to not use social media during the Season of Lent? Maybe we can refrain from using it one day a week or for only 20-30 minutes a day moving forward.

The Season of Lent is a sacred time when we journey out into the desert to be along with Jesus and examine our lives of faith. Where we reflect Gospel values in our lives, we ask the Lord to sustain us. In those areas where we “miss the mark,” we ask the Lord to help us to “turn it around.” This is something we should be doing everyday of our lives. And those special Lenten practices should not be packed away and left unused. Instead, they should be kept in the open so that it can be said about us that we keep the practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving and the lessons that they teach at the forefront of our lives.

I had a friend who gave up brownies and Diet Coke every Lent. It was more of a penance for me because I had to listen to him “moan and groan” for the entire Lenten season. What did he do on Holy Saturday evening after attending the Easter Vigil Mass at my parish? Yep. There was a box of brownies and a liter of Diet Coke in his car, and he tore into them right after Mass. Extreme, maybe, but this is not how our practices should be used as we journey to holiness.

Best wishes and prayers for a blessed Paschal Triduum and may your Lenten practices sustain your life of faith for many years to come.

About the Author: Father Nicholas Smith is the Director of the Office of Sacred Worship in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Father Smith also serves as the Rector of the Basilica of Saint Louis, King of France, also known as The Old Cathedral, and as an instructor at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary.

LENTEN AND EASTER RESOURCES

Holy Week is upon us. The most sacred week of the year! The beginning of this week is the perfect time to take a step back and do a Lenten Examen. Here are a few practical suggestions for this:

1. **Take time to remind yourself that you are in the presence of God. Give thanks for God for His closeness to you, even when you did not take the time to acknowledge Him.**
2. **Ask our Lord to show you how He is working in your life currently.**
3. **Reflect on the 3 pillars of Lent: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. Call to mind times that you neglected to stay true to your Lenten practices. Think about the times that you grew closer to our Lord by staying true to your Lenten practices.**
4. **Ponder the upcoming Sacred Triduum. What are ways you can prepare yourself to enter into the liturgies Holy Mother Church gives us during these days?**
5. **Remind yourself of the upcoming Easter celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord. Prepare your heart for the transition from the great fast to the great feast. Call to mind the Lord's companionship with you in this time.**

Important Dates:

Holy Thursday: March 28, 2024

Good Friday: March 29, 2024
Holy Saturday: March 30, 2024
Easter Sunday: March 31, 2024
Pentecost: May 19th, 2024

Important Reminders:

Good Friday (March 29, 2024) is a day of **abstinence** (refraining from meat) for **all Catholics from age 14 onwards**. On this day, fasting, 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.

Memo for priests, deacons, and liturgical coordinators: [Reminders for the Sacred Triduum](#)

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/>

A NOTE FROM THE HOLY FATHER, ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II, ON THE SACRED TRIDUUM:

Click [HERE](#) to view this reflection.

MUSIC



SACRED MUSIC

Please contact Andrew Kreigh with any questions regarding Sacred Music:
akreigh@cathedralstl.org

RECLAMATION



MYSTAGOGY

By: Deacon John Stoverink, Director of the Office of Sacred Worship.

Mystagogy or post-baptismal catechesis is the final period of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults extends through the entire Easter season ending with Pentecost. It is a time for deepening of Easter faith, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the Christian community.

Mystagogy is the time for the newly baptized, or neophytes, as they are called, to reflect on the Easter Vigil experience of sacramental initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Looking back the neophytes deepen their understanding of being made a “new creation in Christ” through sacramental initiation. And looking forward they reflect on how they will live out their new life of faith in Jesus Christ through their participation in the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and through daily and ongoing conversion.

At the Sunday Masses of the Easter season the entire Christian community should be

encouraged to welcome the neophytes into the community, helping them to feel more at home in the community of the baptized. The neophytes should also be encouraged to discern the ways in which God is calling them to witness to their Easter faith and serve in various ministries of the Church. The Emmaus account (Luke 24: 13 – 35) reflects the abiding presence of the risen Lord with the disciples and with every community of believers.

The Reclamation Center has many spiritual and devotional books that could be helpful to the neophytes and the community as they move forward through the Easter season and into the future.

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>

The Office of Sacred Worship wishes you an early blessed Easter Season. May the next 50 days be filled with a joyful celebration of the Lord's resurrection. Please know of our prayers for you and reach out to us at worship@archstl.org if we can be of assistance.

May the Peace of Christ Reign in your Hearts,

The Office of Sacred Worship



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