



Diocese of
OWENSBORO

LITURGY OF THE WORD- 4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

HYMN

Sung to the tune of "Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days"

**From ashes to the living font
Your Church must journey, Lord,
Baptized in grace, in grace renewed
By your most holy word.**

**We sit beside the road and plead,
"Come, save us, David's son!"
Now with your vision heal our eyes,
The world's true Light alone.**

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INTRODUCTION

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.
Unfortunately, we are not able to celebrate Mass today,
but let us be united in the spirit of Christ with the Church around the world
and celebrate our redemption in Christ's suffering, Death and Resurrection.

All sign themselves with the sign of the cross saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Leader: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God for ever.

All respond: Blessed be God for ever.

Leader: Let us pray.

Collect (prayer): O God, who through your Word
reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way,
grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith
the Christian people may hasten
toward the solemn celebrations to come.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

READINGS

It is encouraged that someone other than the leader should proclaim the readings of the day from a Bible. Otherwise, daily readings may be found at usccb.org/bible/readings, and audio recordings of the daily readings may be found at usccb.org/bible/readings-audio.cfm.

First reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Responsorial Psalm:

Refrain (all together): **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**
The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

Refrain (all together): **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**
He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff
that give me courage.

Refrain (all together): **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**
You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Refrain (all together): **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**
Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

Refrain (all together): **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

Gospel (All stand for the reading of the Gospel. A layperson omits the greeting, "The Lord be with you" and proceeds to "A reading from the holy Gospel According to"): John 9:1-41

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

This week we have a reflection from Fr. Pat Reynolds, Pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church and Vicar General for the Diocese:

A little elderly nun approached the ambo and began proclaiming the first Scripture reading at the ordination of Bishop McRaith on December 15, 1982. The site was the Owensboro Sports Center—which was packed with Catholics from all over western Kentucky. As Sister Marie Madeline began to read God’s Word, the arena was hushed and calmed by her rich and soothing voice. Someone who had seen the nun escorted to the ambo had also noticed her hands brushing over the text. She whispered to a neighbor, “Is she blind?” And the answer was yes. Sister could not see anything around her. But it was obvious there was a glow about her and that she had a relationship with Jesus, the Light of the World, as she proclaimed God’s word.

Today’s Gospel is about a blind man who encounters Jesus. He is told to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He does and his sight is restored. The religious authorities become involved with the man. Instead of rejoicing over his cure, they begin to disparage Jesus because the healing occurred on a Sabbath. Then they question the man’s parents, and again interrogate the man and the account of his healing. The man speaks ‘truth to power’ – and he is thrown out of the synagogue.

Jesus has often been a source of division among families and communities (c.f. Luke 12:51). Christian conversions and one’s development of a close relationship with Jesus often alienates family members or ‘former’ friends. While we rejoice over our future Catholics in RCIA, a number of the Elect and Candidates have relatives or friends who do not understand and are perhaps even bitter about the individual’s Journey toward Christ and His Church. That is why these candidates need our ongoing affirmation, prayers and continued welcoming into the Catholic community.

I wonder if this time of ‘Corona isolation’ is an opportunity for many in our families? The blind man receives a powerful miracle of healing which restored his sight. As we read the Gospel passage and notice his references to Jesus, he first refers to Him as ‘the man called Jesus’. Later upon reflection, he declares, ‘He is a prophet’. At the end of this story (and after experiencing rejection and suffering) the man once again encounters Jesus, Who asks the man if he believes in Him. The response is “‘I do believe Lord’, and he bowed down to worship him.”

The conversion was not instantaneous. Nor is ours. The miracle of our baptism occurred during infancy for many of us. Someone once told me that every day of our life is an opportunity to reflect more deeply on the realization that I am God’s daughter/son. This Lenten Season is a wonderful time to reflect on that mystery. We are children of Light. Like the blind man, we can grow in our understanding of Jesus. Many believe Jesus was a great man. Others see God’s power working in Jesus as a great prophet. But each of us is called to know Him as the Lord of our lives, as our truest heart-friend, as the One who died for ME, the One who is before, behind, above, below and within me every moment of my life. That is what this time of ‘isolation’ affords us – to become a close friend with Jesus our Lord Who loves us more than we can fathom. And like the blind Sister Marie Madeline, may Christ’s light, warmth, and soothing kindness be part and parcel of who we are. May we live out that passage which she read at + Bishop John McRaith’s ordination—Jeremiah 1: 4 - 9. Let us reflect on that passage sometime this day and realize how much God desires to dwell with us and use us as a force for good in this world.

Additionally, you can also find video reflections from the USCCB on the readings here:
<http://www.usccb.org/bible/reflections/>.

Observe a period of silence for reflection on the Word of God. You may want to ask the following questions:

What word or phrase is stirring in your heart?
How can you apply this message to your daily life?

PROFESSION OF FAITH (Nicene Creed)

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation,
he came down from heaven,
(At the words that follow, up to and including “and became man,” all bow.)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into Heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

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

You or members of your family can be invited to speak out their intercessions, to which all reply, "Lord, hear our prayer." It would be good to include a prayer for the end of the coronavirus pandemic and a return to public Sunday Eucharist.

Leader: Incline your merciful ear to our prayers, we ask, O Lord, and listen in kindness to the supplications of those who call on you. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

ACT OF THANKSGIVING

Make a prayer of thanksgiving. This can be your own personal prayer of thanksgiving, a canticle of praise from scripture, or you may choose one of the following Psalms: Psalm 100; Psalm 113; Psalm 118:1-4, 19-29; Psalm 136; Psalm 150

CONCLUDING RITE

In solidarity with our diocese, here you could include Pope Francis' prayer to Mary for protection against the coronavirus found at the beginning of the *Diocese of Owensboro Prayer Companion*.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All sign themselves with the cross.

Response: Amen

As an option here, you could add “Let us offer each other the sign of peace,” extending a sign of Christ’s peace to your loved ones by way of a hug, kiss, or whatever would be most appropriate for your situation.

HYMN

Be Not Afraid

**Be not afraid. I go before you always.
Come, follow me, and I will give you rest.**

Bob Dufford, SJ. © 1975, OCP. Used with permission.