Suggested Opening Song: We Gather Together, #144

We gather as a faith community each Sunday to worship God by celebrating Mass and receiving the Eucharist. In doing so, we are coming here, as Jesus says in today's Gospel, "to repay to God what belongs to God." Praise and thanks belong to God for creating us, redeeming us, and making us holy. We make this day and this gathering holy with our presence. We then go forth to serve the Lord as his disciples, repaying God with our prayers, words, and actions.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 142
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, (*bow as we say*) ***and by the Holy Spirit he 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.**

Introductory Rite:
Greeting:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 10
Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:
Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 108
A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah *Isaiah 45: 1, 4-6*

Thus says the LORD to his anointed, Cyrus, whose right hand I grasp, subduing nations before him, and making kings run in his service, opening doors before him and leaving the gates unbarred: For the sake of Jacob, my servant, of Israel, my chosen one, I have called you by your name, giving you a title, though you knew me not. I am the LORD and there is no other, there is no God besides me. It is I who arm you, though you know me not, so that toward the rising and the setting of the sun people may know that there is none besides me. I am the LORD, there is no other.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10*
R/. Give the Lord glory and honor.
R/. Give the Lord glory and honor.

Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD all you lands.
Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples, his wondrous deeds. **R/.**

For great is the LORD and highly to be praised; awesome is he, beyond all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are things of nought, but the LORD made the heavens. **R/.**

Give to the LORD, you families of nations, give to the LORD glory and praise;
give to the LORD the glory due his name! Bring gifts, and enter his courts. **R/.**

Worship the LORD, in holy attire; tremble before him, all the earth;
say among the nations: The LORD is king, he governs the peoples with equity. **R/.**

Second Reading
A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians *Thessalonians 1:1-5b*

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: grace to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father, knowing, brothers and sisters loved by God, how you were chosen. For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel *Matthew 22:15-21*
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew **Glory to you, Lord**

The Pharisees went off and plotted how they might entrap Jesus in speech. They sent their disciples to him, with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. And you are not concerned with anyone's opinion, for you do not regard a person's status. Tell us, then, what is your opinion: Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?" Knowing their malice, Jesus said, "Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin that pays the census tax." Then they handed him the Roman coin. He said to them, "Whose image is this and whose inscription?" They replied, "Caesar's." At that he said to them, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection on the Word:

- Cyrus was the pagan king of Persia, but when he conquered Babylon, he permitted the Jewish people to return to their homeland and worship God as they desired. For this reason, Isaiah speaks of Cyrus as having been anointed by God. He insists that God was the power behind the pagan king's success, arming him, making him king, and leading him to victory over Babylon, all without him realizing it. In a similar way, Paul explains to the Thessalonians that the gospel did not come to them only by what he, Silvanus, and Timothy told them, "but also in power and in the Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). What we cannot see or hear can be even more powerful than what we can sense. Let us recognize the effect of the Holy Spirit, whom we received in baptism and confirmation, in our own lives and the lives of others.

- The Roman coin makes the "repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar" half of this lesson easy to remember (Matthew 22:21). But sometimes we overlook the "[repay] to God what belongs to God" half (22:21). We owe our very lives to God. Created in God's image, given breath and life by our creator, we have been baptized in Christ Jesus and confirmed in the Holy Spirit, chosen as disciples to live out the gospel throughout the course of our lives. We bear the image of God. We are called to repay God with our whole selves.

- How often do we get frustrated shopping for a gift, throw up our hands, and say: What do you get someone who has everything? Well, what if that someone is God? What can we give God, who has everything and has already given us everything we have? We give God thanks and praise, of course, through prayer and worship. But because all people are God's children, we can also give to those in need from the gifts we have received. Just as we might give gifts to our close friends' young children, we can also give gifts to God's children.

Question of the Week

This week ahead, how will I repay to God what belongs to God?

Prayer of the Faithful:

As Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy remembered the Thessalonians in their prayers, so do we remember all those in need in our prayers, asking that God's blessings be showered upon us all.

- For the Church, that we may steadily become aware of all that belongs to God and may strive always to repay it, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For our elected leaders, that they may see that the money they receive is used responsibly to improve the welfare of all Americans, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For missionaries around the world, that they may be kept safe as they proclaim the gospel with conviction in word and in deed, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those living in poverty, that Christians may hear Jesus' words in today's Gospel as a call to repay to those in need what belongs to them, for they were made in the image of God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all of us, that our work of faith, our labor of love, and our endurance in hope may grow and flourish in the days and weeks ahead, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Glorious God, you are indeed worthy of praise and thanks. Shower your blessings upon us and upon all those in need. May our lives and works reflect your glory as we grow as disciples of your Son, through whom we make these prayers, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 176
Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:
The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:
Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:
Grant, O Lord, we pray, that, benefiting from participation in heavenly things, we may be helped by what you give in this present age and prepared for the gifts eternal.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Concluding Rite:
Final Blessing:
May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: For the Beauty of the Earth, #158