

Suggested Opening Song: Gather Us In, #211

On the night before he died, Jesus assured his disciples that “in my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. . . I am going to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2). Jesus knew that their faith would be severely tested and their hope would be dashed in the coming days. Our faith and hope waver as well. May the words of our Lord in today’s Gospel reassure us through our doubts and despair about our future. God’s house has a place for each of us.

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

Profession of Faith p. 22

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. 8

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, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal.

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

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 204

A reading from the Act of the Apostles

Acts 6:1-7

As the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them. The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19

R/. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

R/. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Exult, you just, in the LORD; praise from the upright is fitting.

Give thanks to the LORD on the harp; with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises. **R/.**

Upright is the word of the LORD, and all his works are trustworthy.

He loves justice and right; of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full. **R/.**

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope for his kindness,

To deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Peter

1 Peter 2:4-9

Beloved: Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it says in Scripture:

Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame.

Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith:

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and A stone that will make people stumble, and a rock that will make them fall.

They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny. You are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises" of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

John 14:1-12

Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way." Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you

are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me?" Jesus asks Philip in today's Gospel (John 14:9). The same could be asked of us today. Jesus has been with us since we were baptized. He had only been with his disciples for three years; he's accompanied us for much longer. Do we still not know him? We have written eyewitness testimony about him. We have two thousand years of writings about him, from Saint Paul's letters to books and essays from contemporary theologians and spiritual writers. We have our own personal experiences through prayer. Jesus assures us that to know the Son is to know the Father. Twenty centuries later, we still have every opportunity to know God.
- As the early church grew and grew, especially when Saint Paul or one of the Twelve came to preach, with hundreds of people being baptized every day, more ministers were needed to serve the church's many members. In the first reading today, it is the needy among the Hellenists—who most likely were Palestinian Jews and other Jews from the diaspora who spoke Greek, the more common language at the time, and not Hebrew or Aramaic—who are being overlooked. Clearly, the Twelve did not want this to continue. But there were only so many of them and they needed to remain dedicated to preaching and teaching the word of God. So they appointed seven disciples (seven symbolizing universality) to take on the task of serving those with material needs. These seven—all with Greek names—are considered the Church's first deacons (from the Greek *diakonos* meaning servant).
- The building we enter to celebrate the Eucharist may be made in part with physical stones, but Peter points out in our second reading today that the Church is made of a different kind of stone: living stones. Along with all other baptized Christians, we make a living spiritual home in which God may dwell. Just as we would prepare our own physical home for guests, we pray that God help us prepare our spiritual home so that we may be "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own" so that our lives may be lived in praise of God (1 Peter 2:9).

Question of the Week

What can I do this week to know Jesus better, to serve those who are overlooked, and to prepare my spiritual home?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Placing our trust in the Lord, as we sang in the responsorial psalm, we ask that God's mercy be on us and all our brothers and sisters.

- For the Church, that we may respond with haste to widows, orphans, and all those in need within and outside our faith communities, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That officeholders at all levels of government may do their best to ensure that no one is neglected when it comes to basic human needs, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all those who minister to the Church, and in particular deacons, who trace their ministry back to the ones chosen by the twelve apostles, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For the newly baptized, who are the newest living stones in this spiritual house, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those whose hearts are troubled, that they may find comfort in Christ's invitation to the Father's house, where there are many dwelling places, 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.**

Welcoming God, your house has many dwelling places providing a home for all your children. Your Son shows us the way. Hear our fervent prayers as we discern our way to you, through your Son, who is our Risen Lord, for ever and ever.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 54

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:

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life.

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: Make Us True Servants, #221