Suggested Opening Song: We are Many Parts, #165

Out of love, God created us and the entire world we live in. Out of love, God sent the Son who died for us to save us from our sins. Out of love, God sent the Holy Spirit to remain with us always. No wonder John wrote quite simply that God is love. Because we were created, redeemed, and made holy as acts of love, we are called to love in return. Specifically, Jesus teaches us today that the greatest commandment is to love God and love our neighbor. May our hearts expand with love as we join with our neighbor to worship God.

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, increase our faith, hope and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may merit what you promise.

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. 112
A reading from the Book of Exodus *Exodus 22:20-26*

Thus says the LORD: "You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry. My wrath will flare up, and I will kill you with the sword; then your own wives will be widows, and your children orphans.

"If you lend money to one of your poor neighbors among my people, you shall not act like an extortioner toward him by demanding interest from him. If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you shall return it to him before sunset; for this cloak of his is the only covering he has for his body. What else has he to sleep in? If he cries out to me, I will hear him; for I am compassionate."

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

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 18: 2-3, 3-4, 47, 51*
R/. I love you, Lord, my strength.
R/. I love you, Lord, my strength.

I love you, O LORD, my strength,
O LORD, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. **R/.**

My God, my rock of refuge, my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!
Praised be the LORD, I exclaim, and I am safe from my enemies. **R/.**

The LORD lives and blessed be my rock! Extolled be God my savior.
You who gave great victories to your king and showed kindness to your anointed. **R/.**

Second Reading
A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians *Thessalonians 1:5c-10*

Brothers and sisters: You know what sort of people we were among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in great affliction, with joy from the Holy Spirit, so that you became a model for all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. For they themselves openly declare about us what sort of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to await his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath.

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

Gospel *Matthew 22:34-40*
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew **Glory to you, Lord**

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a scholar of the law tested him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

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

Reflection on the Word:

- In the first reading, God had to remind the Chosen People of their obligation to love God with all their being and to love their neighbor as themselves. If they always did, there would have been no reason for an outcry from the widow and the orphan—from people who may not have loved ones of their own. The LORD mentions the people to whom they specifically need to show love: aliens, widows, orphans, and the poor. In each case, God points out that the person we think of "other" could well be ourselves. The Israelites were aliens themselves when in Egypt. A father's death would make his spouse a widow and, in that era, their children orphans. By nightfall, the creditor can become the debtor.

- We are called to love God because God loves us. God loves us unconditionally and has given us all the truly important things that we possess: life, forgiveness, redemption, and the promise of eternal life. We are called to love others because we are all God's children. So loving others is simply loving God's children. As we would expect people who love us to treat our children with love, so too would God expect us to treat God's other children with love. Moreover, as God has shown us that to love others is to give of oneself to others, God calls us to give of ourselves to our neighbor. To give of ourselves to others is to imitate God, which is a tangible way to love God in return.

- Saint Paul tells the early Christian community in Thessalonica how proud he is of them because they "became imitators of us and of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 1:6). In so doing they "became a model for all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia," that is, the surrounding provinces (1:7). This is what we are called to do now. As a parish, we can imitate the love of Jesus Christ. In so doing, we can be a model for other parishes and the rest of the diocese for the ways in which we put that love into action.

Question of the Week
How can I give of myself this week and to whom?

Prayer of the Faithful:
God promises to hear those who cry out in need and respond with compassion, and so we have the confidence to give voice to our needs and the needs of our neighbor.

- For the Church, as we manifest God's love in the world by the way we care for all our neighbors, especially those most in need, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For legislators at every level of government, that they may carefully consider the effects of their work on all of their constituents, especially those on the margins, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those who are orphaned or widowed, for those bereft of the love and support of a parent or spouse, that they may be held warmly in the compassionate embrace of God and of loved ones, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all those who serve those in need—caregivers, hospice workers, social workers, shelter hosts, and others—that they may find continual blessings in their work, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- That our faith community may be a model for all believers in the way we see and serve Christ in all who are in need, 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.**

O God, our strength, strengthen our resolve to love you and to love our neighbor with all our heart, soul, and mind. Hear the prayers we make to you today and grant them according to our need, through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

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:
May your Sacraments, O Lord, we pray, perfect in us what lies within them, that what we now celebrate in signs we may one day possess in truth.

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: God of Day and God of Darkness, #214 Vs. 1, 3