

LIVING LITURGY™

for Music Ministers

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*in grateful appreciation
for your music ministry*

(date)

USING THIS RESOURCE

*Living Liturgy for Music Ministers*TM is a resource intended to assist music ministers in their preparation for the liturgy on Sundays and selected solemnities, as well as Ash Wednesday. Included here are reflections on the gospel, and some insight into how the word of God informs daily life. It is hoped that the commentaries and reflections in this resource will assist music ministers with their own personal encounter with the sacred text. Music ministers who have a better understanding of the readings may be more apt to sing with a greater sensitivity to the deeper meaning of God's word.

*Living Liturgy for Music Ministers*TM has reflections on the gospel readings, brief commentaries connecting the gospel with the other readings, and reflections to assist psalmists with preparing for proclamation of the psalms. There are prayers provided for musicians to use with their own spiritual preparation for their ministry. Also included are the readings and responsorial psalms for every Sunday of the liturgical year, as well as for certain solemnities and Ash Wednesday. The second readings are found in an appendix.

This book is an essential resource for music ministers whose own spirituality is nourished by the liturgical cycle and the accompanying Scripture readings, especially the gospel and the psalm. The following outline suggests how this resource might be used by music ministers as they prepare for the liturgical assembly. Of course, adaptations are encouraged as there is no one "right" way to use this book.

On Monday, read only the gospel and reflect on it. Then, read "Reflecting on Living the Gospel" before reading the gospel again. What new insights come to mind? How does the reflection inform your understanding of the sacred text?

On Tuesday, read the first reading. What connections, if any, do you find between it and the gospel? This is a good time to read "Making Connections." What new insights come to mind for you? How do these readings inform the situation at your parish, or with your fellow music ministers?

On Wednesday, read the psalm in a prayerful manner. What connections do you draw between the psalm, the gospel, and the first reading? If it is helpful, read the second reading too and let the Scriptures percolate in your spiritual life, with insights bubbling up naturally. When we have been reading God's word, these insights happen not only in prayer but also throughout the week at home, at work, and in daily life.

On Thursday, spend some time with “Psalmist Preparation.” How will you allow some of the spiritual insights you’ve gained through prayer to inform your proclamation of the psalm?

On Friday, if you haven’t already been singing the psalm with your accompanist or fellow ministers, now is a good time to start—at least on your own, or *a cappella*. Use the “Prayer” together as a group or pray it on your own either before or after your practice.

On Saturday and Sunday, spend time in quiet prayer, allowing yourself to be an instrument in God’s hands so that the gathered assembly might find meaning and spiritual insight through your ministry. In your prayer allow words or phrases from the gospel, psalm, and first and second readings to come to mind.

Many music ministers find this to be a rich ministry, filled with spirituality and giving new meaning to their daily lives. The personal encounter with the living and sacred text, being the vehicle through which the assembly hears God’s word, and the fellowship one experiences throughout the week are sources of consolation and joy. When we minister with the gifts given to us by God, we become who we are meant to be. We actualize the charisms God has bestowed on us, not for our sakes alone, but for the building up of the Christian community. In this way, music ministers live their Christian baptism.



Gospel (Matt 24:37-44; LIA)

Jesus said to his disciples: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and

carried them all away. So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

First Reading (Isa 2:1-5)

This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz,
saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come,
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest mountain
and raised above the hills.

All nations shall stream toward it;
many peoples shall come and say:
"Come, let us climb the LORD's mountain,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may instruct us in his ways,
and we may walk in his paths."

For from Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,
and impose terms on many peoples.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;

one nation shall not raise the sword against another,
nor shall they train for war again.
O house of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the LORD!

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9)

R/. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,
“We will go up to the house of the LORD.”
And now we have set foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

R/. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Jerusalem, built as a city
with compact unity.
To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD.

R/. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

According to the decree for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
In it are set up judgment seats,
seats for the house of David.

R/. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
May those who love you prosper!
May peace be within your walls,
prosperity in your buildings.

R/. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Because of my brothers and friends
I will say, “Peace be within you!”
Because of the house of the LORD, our God,
I will pray for your good.

R/. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

See Appendix, p. 210, for Second Reading

Reflecting on Living the Gospel

The gospel today impresses upon us the urgency of preparing for the coming of the Lord. The images of the unprepared ones whose homes are broken into or who are left behind are not meant to frighten us; they remind us that there will be an end-time when all our preparations, all our attempts to be alert, and all our efforts to disarm our hearts and wage peace will, in a critical moment, reach fruition. And we will be ready.

Making Connections

The readings together speak of the impending reality of God's kingdom—a kingdom that arrives on God's terms, not ours. It will be a kingdom of healing and restoration for all humankind, offering joy and peace to people that we might not have chosen. It asks us to live in the light of Christ, rather than in the "night" that we perhaps prefer. And, as Jesus tells us, it will come at a time that we will not expect.

Psalmist Preparation

Psalm 122 is a "song of ascent," sung by pilgrims approaching the city. In a way, we too are pilgrims, on the way to see the Lord at Christmas. Do you feel prepared to see God? Do you feel the same type of joy expressed in this psalm, excited for the new liturgical year, or is there something holding you back from sharing in joy at this time? Each of us approaches Advent from our own experiences, joys and fears alike. In preparing to proclaim this psalm, you can keep the intentions of the congregation in mind, inviting them to approach the Lord with hope, knowing that Jesus awaits us all with infinite love and mercy.

Prayer

God of time and eternity, bless our beginning of this new liturgical year. Make this Advent season for us a time of conversion, joy, and hope. Help us to prepare for your coming by throwing off the works of darkness and putting on Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

DECEMBER 7, 2025

Gospel (Matt 3:1-12; L4A)

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said:

*A voice of one crying out in
the desert,
Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.*



John wore clothing made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

First Reading (Isa 11:1-10)

On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.

The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him:
a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
a spirit of counsel and of strength,
a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord,
and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD.

Not by appearance shall he judge,
nor by hearsay shall he decide,

but he shall judge the poor with justice,
and decide aright for the land's afflicted.
He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.
Justice shall be the band around his waist,
and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.
Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the young lion shall browse together,
with a little child to guide them.
The cow and the bear shall be neighbors,
together their young shall rest;
the lion shall eat hay like the ox.
The baby shall play by the cobra's den,
and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.
There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD,
as water covers the sea.
On that day, the root of Jesse,
set up as a signal for the nations,
the Gentiles shall seek out,
for his dwelling shall be glorious.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17)

R. (cf. 7) Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;
he shall govern your people with justice
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

Justice shall flower in his days,
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.
May he rule from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,
 and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.
 He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;
 the lives of the poor he shall save.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

May his name be blessed forever;
 as long as the sun his name shall remain.
 In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed;
 all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

See Appendix, p. 210, for Second Reading

Reflecting on Living the Gospel

“You can attract more flies with a teaspoon of sugar than with a barrel of vinegar,” says a popular maxim. Yet in today’s gospel, John the Baptist takes a very harsh approach. He is confrontational and uncompromising. There is nothing gentle or alluring about him. He demands repentance! And people flocked to him. Why? John was wholehearted in his commitment to God’s reign and the Coming One who would usher it in. When a person lives so completely and authentically what he or she proclaims, that witness is very compelling.

Making Connections

Both Isaiah and John the Baptist speak directly of God’s kingdom to come, though in very different language. This juxtaposition invites us into the frequent “both/and” nature of Catholic faith. In his letter to the Romans, Saint Paul invites the community to hold on to hope in the fullness of the kingdom, and to live in its “harmony” in the present.

Psalmist Preparation

While the psalm response is rather authoritative—“Justice shall flourish . . .”—the psalm itself is one long prayer of petition, asking God for blessings upon the king. In the first reading from Isaiah, we hear about the kingdom that Jesus will rule, with peace and justice for all. In the season of Advent, we look forward to the coming of Christ at Christmas and at the end of time. We ask Jesus to rule our own lives, knowing that

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Jesus will be the king of love for whom our hearts long. As you prepare to proclaim this psalm, consider where you can more fully acknowledge Jesus as king of your life, trusting in the arrival of his reign of peace and justice.

Prayer

God of endurance and encouragement, as we prepare to celebrate the coming of your Son into the world, draw us to sincere repentance for our sins, especially those that disrupt the harmony we are called to have with you and with one another. **Amen.**