

Living Liturgies[™]

for
Cantors

Year A • 2011

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Presented to

*in grateful appreciation
for ministering as a Cantor*

(date)

USING THIS RESOURCE

Living Liturgy™ for Cantors is intended to help psalmists prepare themselves to sing the responsorial psalm by reflecting on the text of the psalm in the context of the readings of the day and applying this reflection to a spirituality for daily living. A cantor who has a sense of how the psalm is connected to the readings and to his or her daily living will sing the psalm with greater sensitivity. The cantor's singing will flow out of personal encounter with God who works through the Liturgy of the Word to draw the cantor and the assembly more fully into being who they are: the Body of Christ.

Living Liturgy™ for Cantors contains the gospel readings, first readings, and responsorial psalms for every Sunday of the liturgical year, for those solemnities that are holy days of obligation, and for Ash Wednesday. An appendix contains the second readings for those days (namely, the Sundays of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter; the solemnities; and Ash Wednesday) when that reading has an intended connection to the other readings. For each Sunday or solemnity the book provides a brief reflection on the gospel, a section connecting the psalm to the readings, a suggestion to help the psalmist prepare spiritually to sing the psalm, and a prayer drawn from the readings and the psalm.

While this book is a small one, it offers a wealth of preparatory material for the cantor of the psalm. Cantors might find the following method helpful in using this book, and should feel free to adapt the method or to create another one to suit their needs and situation.

On Monday, read the gospel and spend some time reflecting on its meaning. Ask yourself who Jesus is in this gospel and what he is saying or doing. Who are we, and what are we saying or doing?

On Tuesday, read the first reading. Ask yourself who God is in this reading and what God is saying or doing. Who are we, and what are we saying or doing? Read "Reflecting on Living the Gospel" and see what further insights open up for you.

On Wednesday, look at the text of the psalm and see how it is connected to the readings. During the festal seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, and for those days that are solemnities, read the second reading.

On Thursday, read “Connecting the Responsorial Psalm to the Readings” and “Psalmist Preparation” and decide how you might implement the suggested spirituality.

On Friday, sing through the psalm, letting your reflection and your daily living add a new dimension to your understanding of the text. Pray the suggested prayer and ask for the grace to do your ministry well.

On Saturday and Sunday, give yourself over to Christ that he may be the voice the assembly hears.

Even more important than musical preparation of the psalm setting is the cantor’s prayerful reflection on the meaning of the text and its role in his or her daily living. The cantor who does this kind of preparation discovers that his or her singing is a dialogue with God that mirrors the dialogue going on between God and the assembly in the Liturgy of the Word. A dimension opens up in the cantor’s singing that is far deeper than the beauty of his or her voice. What the assembly hears is the cantor’s surrender of self to the paschal mystery of Christ, and it is this surrender to which they respond.

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. 203, for Second Reading

Reflecting on Living the Gospel

Jesus' warning, "stay awake!" has to do with having clear vision. We are to see how our good living now is already preparation for the "coming of the Son of Man" who will arrive "at an hour [we] do not expect." Thus the day will come when all people will have a new vision of what it means to walk in the ways of God. Jesus is challenging us to enter this vision even now while we are still climbing toward it.

Connecting the Responsorial Psalm to the Readings

Isaiah offers the vision of a future when all nations stream to the dwelling place of God, listen to God's instruction, and choose to live God's ways of peace and justice (first reading). Jesus warns that we must keep ourselves ready at all times for the coming of the Son of Man when this vision will be fulfilled (gospel). Paul declares the hour of fulfillment is now, and we must act accordingly (second reading). Being ready for the final coming of God's kingdom, then, is not a passive state but an active one. Part of this activity is consciously choosing to journey toward the God who is coming: "Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord" (psalm). This journey will require twists and turns in our manner of living. It will be no small undertaking. But its rewards will be great and the journey itself will bring joy.

Psalmist Preparation

In singing this psalm you express the joy one feels in journeying toward God. This joy has a price, however, for to travel toward God means to leave behind one's present dwelling place. In your own life right now where is God calling you to "make a move"? How will making this move prepare you for the final coming of Christ? How in singing this psalm can you encourage the assembly to make this journey with you?

Prayer

God of salvation, you draw us to a future of justice and peace. Help us to be ready for the coming of your kingdom and to run toward you with joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.