

Evening Prayer

1st Sunday of Advent

1 December 2019

Introduction

Following the national launch of the 2020 *God Who Speaks* project with Cardinal Vincent Nichols on the feast of S. Jerome at the end of September there is the potential for a formal near simultaneous inauguration in each diocese at the beginning of the liturgical year. The planning team put to you the proposal that in every Cathedral on the afternoon/evening of the 1st December there be the celebration of Evening Prayer 2 on this Advent Sunday. Additionally it may be celebrated in other important churches, religious houses or shrines within the diocese as well as in those places where it is the norm in order that the greatest number of people is able to come together, experience and participate in the Evening Office of the Prayer of the Church at the beginning of this year.

For those already planning music for Advent the existing texts remain unchanged but some additional texts and liturgical action are being prepared for inclusion in the Sunday's liturgy.

Outline

Introduction

- Introduction
- Blessing of the Light
- Hymn

Psalmody

- Psalms
- New Testament Canticle

Word

- Scripture Reading
- Homily
- Procession, Placing and Incensation of the Gospel Book)
- Gospel Canticle – Magnificat

Prayer

- Intercessions
- Lord's Prayer
- Concluding Prayer and Blessing

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Notes

Blessing of Light

The inclusion of the Blessing of the Light is particularly significant due to Advent being that time when 'the Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Saviour who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin.'(Book of Blessings N.1519) The Saviour is the Word, the light that is the lantern to our lives.

- There should be a single large candle which is a focus for the Blessing of Light.
- In some places it may be appropriate to use an Advent Wreath, though this is primarily a domestic devotional item.
- It may be desirable for the congregation to have lighted candles.

Psalmody

Is taken from Sunday Evening Prayer II.

Scripture Reading

The reading is taken from the beginning of the first letter of St John.

Homily

The Homily provides the opportunity for the central themes of Celebrating, Living and Sharing God's Word to be enunciated, as well as to promote the distribution for reading of St Matthew's Gospel which is the Lectionary gospel for Year A.

The Book of the Gospels

The principle symbolic action is the Procession of the Book of the Gospels through the church, the Proclamation and Placing of the Book of the Gospels and the Incensation.

- The Procession should be with Acolytes and Incense.
- The Procession should be accompanied by music, such as the *Litany of the Word* by Bernadette Farrell. Other possibilities might include a Gospel Acclamation which can be extended with a number of verses.
- The place of enthronement of the Book of the Gospels at the Ambo should be prepared in such a way that the book may be open and facing the assembled congregation.
- Circumstances permitting the Book of the Gospels should remain in that place throughout 2020 in a similar way to Pope John Paul's encouragement to display a Book of the Gospels in the parishes of Rome at the Millennium.

Hymns

It is appropriate to have hymns which speak of Advent and of the Word of God. The following are some suggestions which can be found in most hymnbooks.

- Creator of the stars of night
- God has spoken by his prophets — G. W. Briggs
- Hills of the north rejoice — C.E.Oakley
- O word of God incarnate — William W. How
- Praise to you eternal Word — Alex Heath (see www.godwhospeaks.uk)
- The saving Word proclaimed for all
- The voice of God — Luke Connaughton
- Word of God, come down to earth — James Quinn, sj

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