



Social Justice Sunday Liturgy Notes

26th September 2004

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

2004 Social Justice Sunday Statement

Peace Be With You
Cultivating a Culture of Peace

Overview

The 2004 Social Justice Sunday Statement encourages us to cultivate a culture of peace within our own hearts, so that peace will be generated within our families and our local, national and international communities. As signs of peace, we can enable and encourage others to participate in bringing peace to our world.

Liturgy Notes

On this Sunday, the Church in Australia asks us to focus particularly on our mission to act with justice and so bring about the reign of God in our world. Pope John Paul II said to our bishops at their meeting this year in Rome:

Your leadership in the defence of the fundamental rights of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, and the developmental support offered to indigenous Australians, are shining examples of the 'commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being'. (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 49) Address to Australian bishops: 26.3.04, 8

It has always been our tradition to link justice and Eucharist. Indeed the earliest surviving account of Eucharist attributed to Justin Martyr (c. 150 CE) begins, "The wealthy come to the aid of the poor and we are always together."

The following are notes to assist those who prepare and lead us in the weekly celebration of the Eucharist on the Lord's Day. It is important that we keep in mind those many Catholics in our nation who are deprived of regular Sunday Eucharist because of physical distance or a scarcity of ordained leaders. In our celebrations let us bring their needs and concerns, along with ours, to the holy sacrifice.

Opening Prayer

The alternative Opening Prayer, *For the peace of the kingdom which we have been promised*, expresses the theme of the SJSS 2004.

Readings

Amos 6:1, 4-7

Amos speaks out against those who live in luxury and ignore the plight of the poor, warning them that those who selfishly enjoy material riches incur God's wrath.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 145: 6-10

The Psalm details what it means to act justly: give bread to the hungry, set prisoners free, give sight to the blind, raise up those who are bowed down, protect the stranger, uphold the widow and the orphan.

1 Timothy 6:11-16

The person who is the antithesis of the rich man of Luke's gospel is described.

Luke 16:19-31

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is unique to Luke. It does not condemn a person because of evil doing, but because of not noticing a fellow human being who is in need.

Homily Notes

Faith and good works are essential elements of our Catholicity and its expression. The rich man created a gulf between himself and Lazarus when he just did not notice the plight of the destitute man at his gate. Such a gulf is easily bridged in this life but becomes impossible to cross after death.

John Chrysostom instructs us, “Do you wish to honour the body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked. Do not pay him homage in the temple clad in silk only then to neglect him outside when he suffers cold and nakedness. He who said: ‘this is my body’, is the same one who said: ‘You saw me hungry and you gave me no food,’ and ‘whatever you did to the least of my brothers you did also to me’.” Commentary on Matthew 50,4.

Truthful Eucharistic remembering challenges us to realise our baptismal duty of recognising Christ both in the shared communion of the consecrated bread and wine and in those who suffer in our world: the poor, the sick, the refugee in detention. This is the challenge of those who gather to remember the Christ, who suffered and died for the liberation of all creation. We will fulfil our prophetic calling if our remembrance challenges us to go from our Eucharist to liberate others.

Prayer of the Faithful

One or more of the following could be added.

- We pray for the people of Australia. Cultivate peace within our hearts, so that peace may be generated within our families and our local, national and international communities.
- Teach us to acknowledge and respect the rights of others and to fulfil our duties towards others.
- May we recognise Christ both in the shared communion of the consecrated bread and wine and in the suffering of our world, so that justice may prevail and peace may be cultivated.

The Eucharistic Prayer

D. Jesus the Compassion of God or On the Way to Salvation

The Sign of Peace

The Sign of Peace could be highlighted, emphasising it as an expression of the peace of Christ.

For the Parish Bulletin: This is Social Justice Sunday

To mark this occasion, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference has produced the Social Justice Sunday Statement, *Peace Be With You: Cultivating a Culture of Peace*. The horrors that accompany war and terrorism have urgently posed the questions: What can we Australians do to cultivate a culture of peace in which such crimes never occur again? What can I do as an individual to work towards a peaceful world? Peace is possible – peace is our duty.

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Sunday Statement can be downloaded from the websites of:

- Australian Catholic Bishops Conference www.acbc.catholic.org.au
- Australian Catholic Social Justice Council www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au