

PENITENTIAL SERVICE AND CEREMONY OF LIGHT IN PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

RATIONALE:

In combining the Penitential Service and the Ceremony of Light we believe that we are deepening the understanding traditionally linked to the Ceremony of Light. The sacrament of Baptism provides us with the context for this celebration.

At baptism we become part of the Christian family. The symbol of the candle, lit from the Paschal Candle is a powerful acknowledgement that we have invited the Light of Christ into our lives. At baptism parents, sponsors and the wider faith community are charged with the responsibility of keeping that light of faith enkindled in the life of the child. The sacrament of Confirmation acknowledges that the child must now begin to accept this responsibility for themselves. However, they will still need the support of the faith community that surrounds them, parents, family members and the wider faith community.

In our tradition, light and darkness are often used to help us understand sin and reconciliation. The light entrusted to us at Baptism does not always burn as brightly as it might. The sacrament of reconciliation allows us time to reflect on those parts of our lives where we need to invite in the light of Christ again.

The sacraments of initiation are not just to be experienced by the candidate, but are opportunities for families and the wider community to grow in faith. Therefore, in offering this combined celebration, we are recommending that the invitation to participate is extended not just to the candidates, but, to their families and the wider community.

We offer the following text as a guideline for your celebrations.

BEFORE THE CELEBRATION:

To Do LIST:

- **Talk about the significance of this event as a community celebration at Sunday Masses the week before.**
- **Visit Confirmation Classes and be sure that the candidates are familiar with the format of the celebration**
- **Remind candidates to bring their Baptismal Candles**
- **Invite teacher/parent/Minister/s to help with readings and reflections, carrying and placing of Paschal Candle**
- **Invite two members of the community to help light the Baptismal candles from the Paschal Candle.**

GOSPEL:

Mt 5: 13-16

REFLECTION:

We offer a choice of reflections which may take the place of a homily or may be read after the homily. It is hoped that the reflection will act as an Examination of Conscience. The rationale at the beginning may offer a context for the homily.

INVITATION TO RECONCILIATION

This invitation should be to all, but perhaps the candidates might come forward first. It may also be necessary to give some instructions as to what might be said when the people come forward for reconciliation. The following wording is offered as an option:



Forgive me for all my sins, especially.....

You may also like to suggest that when absolution has been offered, the candidates should bring their Baptismal Candles with them. Once absolution has been given they go to the Paschal Candle where their candles are lit by a member of the community. They can then return to their seat or if they wish to a different space in the church.



Suitable Music might be played during this time

CELEBRANT:

Invite all to stand

We have chosen to walk in the light of your forgiveness and healing. As children of the light we pray together in the words that Jesus gave us:

Our Father.....

Invite the candidates to raise their candles

CELEBRANT:

These candles are symbols of the light of faith gifted to us at Baptism and now rekindled from the Paschal Candle. That light is once again entrusted to you and to all of us here to be kept burning brightly. We have

been enlightened by Christ. We are always to walk as a child of that light. May we always keep the light of faith alive in our hearts and in our lives. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

ALL: **Amen**

Extinguish Candles

CELEBRANT: Let us now offer one another the sign of peace as a sign of our commitment to work together to keep the light of Christ shining in our world.



Peace be with you

ALL: **And also with you**

FINAL BLESSING:

Loving God,
We thank you
for calling us
to be members
of your holy people.
May we always walk
in your ways
and be faithful to your word.

Amen

May we carry the
light of Christ in our hearts,
in our minds
and in our deeds
as we go from this place
to continue our walk
with God and with each other.

Amen

Go now from this holy place,
treasure in your hearts
the wonder of who you are
and may the words you have heard here
ever echo in your hearts.

Amen

And may the peace of God,
Creator of us all,

Jesus Christ, the living God among us
And the Spirit who dwells and works in each and
every one of us,
Be with us now and always.

Amen

FINAL SONG:

Christ is my Light

Alive-O₃ p52

REFLECTION 1

Our deepest fear is not that we are, inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful
beyond measure.

It is our light not our darkness, that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves: "who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and
fabulous?"

Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.

Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people around
you won't feel insecure.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.
We are born to manifest the glory of God
that is within us.

It's not just in some of us: it's in everyone.
And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically
liberates others.

(Marianne Williamson)

REFLECTION 2

"You are the light for the world...your light must shine in people's sight.....Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus tells us: "You are the light for the world." It sounds pretentious when we say it of ourselves. According to many contemporaries, it even sounds pretentious when it comes from Jesus' lips, calling himself the light of the world. They forget that he called them the light of the world, too.

That does not seem to be the only misunderstanding when using that analogy of light to describe his and our role. Light is enormous, light is a great help. Without light we would be in the dark. Yet we should not exaggerate. Light does much, but it does not bring any-thing. When I switch on the light in a dark room full of people and furniture, that light does not cause or create those people and those tables and chairs. Light shows what is there already.

In a similar way, Jesus is a light in our world. It is in the light of his life that we see who we are and what we are capable of being. This is a role others play, too. It is what a lover, a friend, or an artist do. They reveal in us physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions we would never have known if they had not helped to light them up in our person.

None of them, however, does it the way Jesus did. Nobody showed better what human love is capable of. Nobody showed better how to relate to the source of our being, or to each other. It is in his light that we discover our own depth, width, length, and worth. Who would we be without him?

(Joseph G. Donders; Scripture Reflections Day by Day)

