

A Reconciling Community Prays

A Service for parish use in the Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

“We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love; and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.”

1 John 4:16

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen

Leader: The Grace and Peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is with us.

ALL: Blessed be God forever.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Lord God, Source of Love and Mercy,

In the plan of your providence you have revealed the boundlessness of your love in every generation. Remember your compassion and guide our hearts with your Spirit so that we may grow in faithfulness and seek you in all that we say and do. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen

The Word of God

Isaiah 55:6-12

Brothers and Sisters let us listen to the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near. Let the scoundrel forsake his way, and the wicked man his thoughts; Let him turn to the LORD for mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts. For just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to him who sows and bread to him who eats, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; It shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it. Yes, in joy you shall depart, in peace you shall be brought back.

(A moment of silence follows the scripture.)

Response

Psalm 25

ALL: I lift up my soul to my God.

Reader: In you I trust; do not let me be disgraced; do not let my enemies gloat over me.



No one is disgraced who waits for you, but only those who lightly break faith.

ALL: I lift up my soul to my God.

Reader: Make known to me your ways, LORD; teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.
For you I wait all the long day, because of your goodness, LORD.

ALL: I lift up my soul to my God.

Reader: Remember your compassion and love, O LORD; for they are ages old.
Remember no more the sins of my youth; remember me only in light of your love.

ALL: I lift up my soul to my God.

Reader: Look upon me, have pity on me, for I am alone and afflicted.
Relieve the troubles of my heart; bring me out of my distress.
Put an end to my affliction and suffering; take away all my sins.

ALL: I lift up my soul to my God.

Gospel

Luke 19:1-10

He came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."



Reflection

Reader: In every generation the Lord inspires the hearts of men and women to seek and call upon his name. In doing so God's providential mercy and love is generous beyond any human measure. For God's ways are not human ways. We see the human way in the zeal for the Lord in the story of Zacchaeus, a wealthy and influential tax collector, who abandons all propriety and climbs a tree in order to get a glimpse of the Lord for whom his heart longed. Jesus finds Zacchaeus in the tree and rewards his zeal by saying, "Come down, for today I must stay at your house."

Christ's way is to enter the hearts and home of all who welcome him. This reminds us that sometimes our first steps toward the Lord in repentance may seem "out on the limb" by human standards. By God's standards

stepping “out on the limb” is the first step in a long succession of steps in the eternal relationship to which God calls all of us.

Examination of Conscience

For use when the sacrament of reconciliation is offered.

Recall the period of time since your last celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation:

- When do you feel that Christ invites you “to come down” and “receive him with joy?”
- How do you receive Christ into your life by welcoming the stranger? Caring for people in need? Putting your wants aside for the needs of other people?
- How do you proclaim Christ by your words and actions? Is it obvious by what you say and do that you are a disciple of Christ?
- How do you live the truth of the Gospel when it is unpopular to do so at work? In your family? With your friends?
- When have your anxieties and fears stopped you from making choices according to the Gospel?
- How have you asked the Holy Spirit to strengthen you in those moments?
- What are the areas of Christian life that you find most challenging? How have you sought help from the Christian community in these moments? How have you separated yourself from the community of faith in these moments?
- How is prayer a part of your life? What are ways that it might improve?
- What are ways that you include the Bible in your life? How do you draw strength and insight from God’s word?
- Do you regularly participate in the Mass each Sunday? What are the obstacles that get in the way of full participation? How can the Christian community help you overcome those obstacles?
- Are there ways in which your actions hurt others? What steps can you take to bring about healing with people you have hurt? How can the Christian community help you reconcile with other you have hurt?

Intercessions for God’s Mercy and Peace

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came into the world to seek and save what was lost, hear the prayer that we offer to you this day.

Reader: **Response: LORD HAVE MERCY**

Reader: For the Church, that like Zacchaeus, we may go out on the limb to be a reconciling presence of the Christ in our parish, families, neighborhoods and world, let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

Reader: For our Church, that like Zacchaeus we invite Christ into our hearts and homes, let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

Reader: For our world, that the divisions that separate us from the “ways of God” may be set aside so that the true peace and unity of Christ may prevail, let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

Reader: For all who seek to know and live the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

Reader: For the courage to seek the Holy Spirit’s help in times of anxiety and fear, let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

Reader: For all who find it hard to pray, read the Bible and attend the Sunday Eucharist, let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

Reader: For what else shall we pray?

The Lord's Prayer

Leader: Gathering these and all of the prayers in our hearts, let us pray for God's peace and mercy in the words that Jesus taught us... Our Father...

The individual confession of sins to a priest may follow. Afterward, either communally or individually the newly reconciled pray these words in thanksgiving for God's mercy, love and peace.

Prayer of Thanksgiving for God's Mercy

ALL: God of mercy and love,

We praise and thank you for the gift of Christ's peace. Send your Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us as we seek to live according to your Word. Bind us more closely to your community of your Church, that we may always rejoice in your love and go forth to be signs of your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ our reconciling Lord . Amen

Leader: Please share a sign of Christian peace.