

<p style="text-align: center;">YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN A PENITENTIAL SERVICE FOR LENT 2020</p>

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ who laid down His life for our sins. **Glory to Him forever. Amen.**

INTRODUCTION

Often in the gospel accounts, we hear Jesus say “your sins are forgiven.” Inevitably, some bystanders would take exception to that, questioning whether He had the “authority” to do so. They did not recognize God in their midst. Perhaps there are times when we are equally incredulous. Could Jesus forgive me, a sinner? Could Jesus understand all that I have been going through? Could Jesus help me to be a better person, to change my life and try again? In this Lenten penitential service, He has called each of us to repent our sins. He reminds us that he died to save us all, to redeem us from our sins. Once again, and still, He offers us His saving mercy. Let us then appreciate the great compassion and everlasting mercy that only God can give. In this time and in this place, and through His Church, let us listen to Christ’s words of forgiveness.

OPENING PRAYER

Brothers and sisters, God calls us to Himself. Let us therefore ask Him for the grace of sincere repentance.

SILENT PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, deeply regretting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; Help us to grow into the fullness of Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen**

THE WORD OF GOD

FIRST READING Joel 2:12-13

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel.

“But even now,” says the Lord, “repent sincerely and return to me with fasting and weeping and mourning. Let your broken heart show your sorrow; tearing your clothes is not enough.” Come back to the Lord your God. He is kind and full of mercy; He is patient and keeps His promise; He is always ready to forgive and not to punish.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 130

*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive to my voice in supplication.
With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.*

*If you, O Lord, mark our iniquities, Lord, who can stand?
But with you is forgiveness that you may be revered.
With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.*

*I trust in the Lord; my soul trusts in His word.
My soul waits for the Lord more than sentinels wait for the dawn.
Let Israel wait for the Lord.
With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.*

*For with the Lord is kindness and with him is plenteous redemption;
And he will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.
With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.*

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL 2 Corinthians 5:19

Praise to You O Christ, King of Eternal Glory
*God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*
Praise to You O Christ, King of Eternal Glory

GOSPEL Matthew 9:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

After entering a boat, Jesus made the crossing, and came into His own town. And there people brought to Him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Courage, child, your sins are forgiven." At that some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." Jesus knew what they were thinking, and said, "Why do you harbour evil thoughts? Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" – He then said to the paralytic, "Rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home." He rose and went home. When the crowds saw this they were struck with awe and glorified God who had given such authority to mankind.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Sisters and brothers, our Father knows all our failings, but asks us to call them to mind so that we may seek out His forgiveness

Have I tried to grow in the life of the Spirit through prayer and the reading of the word of God?

Do I trust God's goodness and providence, even in times of crisis and doubt?

Have I made good use of the gifts that God has given me?

Do I work too hard and too long? Do I neglect my family and health?

Have I been lazy and given too much time to leisure or entertainment?

In my household, do I contribute to the well-being and happiness of my family?

Am I patient? Am I loving?

Am I ever angry with those I love?

Do I pass judgement on others?

Do I truly forgive others when they cause hurt?

Do I seek God's mercy and compassion for someone I dislike?

How often do I pray for someone who I think dislikes me?

Do I share my time and my gifts with others in need?

Do I fail to speak out on behalf of the poor or the oppressed?

Am I ever afraid to act in a Christian manner, afraid of what others might think?

Do I sincerely want to be set free from sin, turn again to God, and resolve to begin again?

RITE OF RECONCILIATION

Brothers and sisters, Let us call to mind the goodness of God our Father, and acknowledge our sins, so that we may receive His merciful forgiveness.

Most merciful God, Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbour as ourselves. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be; that we may do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you, Our God. Amen

LITANY OF REPENTANCE

The Lord is merciful. He makes us clean of heart and leads us into His freedom when we acknowledge our guilt. Let us ask Him to forgive us and bind up the wounds inflicted by our sins.

You were sent with good news for the poor and healing for the contrite. **Lord Have Mercy**

You came to call sinners, not the just. **Lord Have Mercy**

You did not shun the company of outcasts and sinners. **Lord Have Mercy**

You promised Paradise to the repentant thief. **Lord Have Mercy**

You always intercede for us at the right hand of the Father. **Lord Have Mercy**

LORD'S PRAYER

Now, in obedience to Christ Himself, let us join in prayer to the Father, asking Him to forgive us as we forgive others.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Lord God, in your great love for this world, you gave your only Son for our salvation. His cross has redeemed us, His death has given us life, His resurrection has raised us to glory. Through Him we ask you to be always present among your family. Fill our hearts with faith, our days with good works, our lives with your love; that we may receive the reward of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

CONCLUDING RITE

BLESSING

May the Father bless us for we are His children, born to eternal life. **Amen.**

May the Son show us His saving power, for He died and rose for us. **Amen**

May the Spirit give us His gift of holiness and lead us by the right path, for He dwells in our hearts. **Amen.**

