

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION AT THE END OF LENT

PRAYER

As the Season of Lent draws again to a close,
we thank you, Great God,
for drawing us together and for opening our hearts.

We gather in humility, in reverence,
and in hope of your healing love.

You help us discover anew truths that can shape our lives:
that You have always loved us, and always will,
and that we can be renewed in Your life again and again.

Inspire us tonight with your closeness and presence among us.
Encourage us to try to grow in the ways of your Kingdom.
Help us to rejoice in your life constant amongst us. AMEN

LITURGY OF THE WORD

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (7:14-24)

I cannot understand my own behaviour. For, again and again, I fail to carry out the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate.

Though the will to do what is good is in me, the performance very often is not, with the result that, instead of doing the good things I want to do, I carry out the sinful things I do not want. When I act against my will in this way, it is not my true self doing it, but sin which lives in me.

In fact this seems to be the rule, that every single time I want to do good, it is something evil that comes to hand. In my inmost self I dearly love God's law, but I can see that my body follows a different law. What a wretched person I am!

Who will rescue me from this body doomed in this way?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God!

Reflection

There's a chance that the call to repentance during Lent doesn't move us – we might argue that it doesn't really apply to us.

For we are not bad people really. We try to live decent lives, do our jobs, solve our problems, make ends meet, and deal with people fairly. Oh, we have our faults and are in no way perfect, but we are basically good people trying to make the best of it – our paths are pretty straight.

Have another look. Most of us usually consider ourselves 'decent' because we basically have no major moral failings. But like a house that is neat but left untouched for a little while, we may not notice that a fine layer of dust has settled in every nook and cranny of our lives. The sins of 'good people' are 'dusty' kinds of sins, not noticed without a closer look: things like complacency, smugness, gossiping, procrastination, taking people for granted, self-preoccupation, chronic complaining, envy, pettiness, rudeness ingratitude, laziness, not putting out a hand to help someone when the need and the chance were there.

Dust! Soft, fine dust – settled into the corners and cracks in our lives: not making them bad lives, not listed in the Ten commandments perhaps - but not really 'loving one another as Christ loves': and a sinful condition that is in need of repentance.

Examination of conscience

What have I 'given up' this Lent? / what have I 'tidied up' in my life this Lent? / what aspect of my life have I 'put aside' this Lent? / what attitude, behaviour have I 'let die' this Lent: so that I can – with God's forgiveness and grace - live renewed in the life of Christ?

What sin do I want God's forgiveness for: for what I have done, and for what I have not done?

Act of Contrition

Turn to me, Lord, and have mercy.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.

In your compassion blot out my offence.

O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

Turn to me, Lord, and have mercy.

Lord Jesus,

You chose to be called the friend of sinners.

By Your saving death and resurrection

Free me from my sins.

May Your peace take root in my heart

and bring forth a harvest

of love, holiness and truth.

LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER OF THANKS AND PRAISE:

Holy Creator God,

in this sacred time of Lent

when we have been searching for Your new life in our own lives,

You have opened us to a greater awareness of Your love for us

who are made in your own image and likeness.

You show this in Your forgiveness of our sins

and Your calling us to new life.

We thank You!

Through the journey of Lenten,

You have led us away from our insecurities, hurts, and sins.

You have reconciled us again by your forgiving love.

We thank You!

We pray that, through Your life-giving presence,

we are healed in the depths of our spirit,

always ready to allow Your wisdom to spring forth,

keeping us in the way of Christ, our Way, our Truth, our Life.

Keep us new in bearing the life of Christ in our world.

May God bless us always, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit