

A COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE

Opening prayer:

Presider:

Lord Jesus, you turned and looked on Peter when he denied you for the third time. He wept for his sin and turned again to you in sincere repentance. Look now on us and touch our hearts, so that we also may turn back to you and always be faithful in serving you.

All:

Amen.

First reading:

The story of Peter's denial of Jesus (Luke 22:54-62).

Meditation:

Listen to "Hosea" (Weston Priory) or another suitable song.

Response:

Presider:

Since we have all known Jesus' love before, let us pray this psalm together that each of us here can experience it again.

All:

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.

Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me.

For I acknowledge my offense,
and my sin is before me always:

"Against you only have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight"—

That you may be justified in your sentence,
vindicated when you condemn.

Indeed, in guilt was I born,
and in sin my mother conceived me;

Behold, you are pleased with sincerity of heart,
and in my inmost being you teach me wisdom.

Cleanse me of sin with hyssop, that I may
be purified;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness;
the bones you have crushed shall rejoice.

Turn away your face from my sins,
and blot out all my guilt.

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.

Cast me not out from your presence,
and your holy spirit take not from me.

Give me back the joy of your salvation,
and a willing spirit sustain in me.

I will teach transgressors your ways,

and sinners shall return to you.

Free me from blood guilt, O God, my saving God;
then my tongue shall revel in your justice.

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

For you are not pleased with sacrifices;
should I offer a holocaust, you would not accept it.

My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn. (Psalm 51, NAB)

Gospel:

The story of Peter's reconciliation with Jesus (John 21:1-19).

Homily

Prayer:

Leader:

O God, we come to you as members of this community. We want to admit our own weakness and sins and ask for forgiveness. We are sorry for the many times that we have turned away from you to our shallow, untrue selves. We regret that we have diminished the full strength and stature the Body of Christ could have in our community. Each of our sins and faults has done harm to others, not showing the real depth of what the Gospel should mean.

Examination of conscience:

Reader:

What is my attitude toward the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Do I sincerely want to be set free from sin, to turn to Jesus? To begin a new life and to enter into a deeper friendship with Jesus? Or do I look on the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a burden to be undertaken as seldom as possible?

Have I tried to practice my promise to Jesus to lead a better life in keeping with his question to me, "Do you love me?"

Have I been careful to grow in my understanding of my religion?

Are there any false gods that I worship by giving them greater attention and deeper trust than I give to God: money, drugs, sports, sex, clothes...? Have my false gods closed my heart to the poor and suffering of the world or to the needs of others at school, in my family?

Do I spend my life caring only for myself?

Have I been so conceited that I tried to make myself popular and to build up my own image while hurting others?

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All:

Lord, help us to see thee more clearly.

Reader:

Do I have love and reverence for God's name?

Have I injured another person by damaging a reputation, by harming someone's physical or spiritual life?

Have I kept up hatred for others? Do I hold grudges?

What use have I made of time, of health and strength, of the gifts God has given me?

Have I kept my senses and my whole body pure and chaste as a temple of the Holy Spirit?

All:

Lord, help us to love thee more dearly.

Reader:

Have I been willing to be known as a Christian at school, at home, when I'm with my friends? Since a true friend should draw us closer to God, what kind of a friend am I to others in this regard? Am I two-faced?

Do I attend Mass as often as I should? When I am there, how do I participate?

Have I been a good family member?

Have I lied? Have I been afraid to speak out when I should have? Have I hurt another by my thoughtless words?

Have I stolen or purposely damaged anything? Have I made restitution?

Have I been too lazy to get up? Too slow to help? Too blind to see the sorrow of others? Too afraid to offer the Jesus I know and love to others? Even to my friends? Too deaf to hear your call so that day by day I may see you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly?

All:

Lord, help us to follow thee more nearly, day by day.

Act of repentance:

Presider:

God gives us an example of love: When we were sinners he first loved us and took pity on us. Let us turn to him with a sincere heart, and in the words of Peter say to him:

Response:

All:

Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.

Reader:

Lord, like Peter we have relied on your own strength rather than on grace. Look on us, Lord, and have mercy. (*Response.*)

We have at times laughed at rather than been saddened by the misfortunes of others. Look on us, Lord, and have mercy. (*Response.*)

Our pride and foolishness have led us into temptation. Look on us, Lord, and have mercy. (*Response.*)

We have not cared about those in need. Look on us, Lord, and have mercy. (*Response.*)

We have been afraid to tell the truth. Look on us, Lord, and have mercy. (*Response.*)

We have repeatedly broken the promises of our baptism and failed to be your disciples. Look on us, Lord, and have mercy. (*Response.*)

Presider:

Let us now pray to the Father in the words Christ gave us and ask forgiveness for our sins:

Our Father...

Song:

"Day by Day"

Individual confessions. *Participants with vigil lights move first to each of the Reconciliation stations.*

Others who wish to strengthen their love for Jesus through this special sacrament may also move to a particular station at this time. While some are receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation others may move to any designated place for prayer, reflection, reading, preparation or journal-writing. When all who so desire have confessed, the group reassembles for a final blessing.

Closing prayer:

Presider:

Lord Jesus, our Savior, you called Peter to be an apostle; when he repented of his sin you restored him to your friendship and confirmed him as first of the apostles. Turn to us with love and help us imitate Peter's example. Give us strength to turn from our sins and to serve you in the future with greater love and devotion, for you live and reign forever and ever.

All:

Amen.