



The First Sunday in Lent

Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil.

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth his praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us keep silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

May Almighty God have mercy on us forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.



Lord, open our lips. And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: Come let us adore him.

A Song of Penitence *Kyrie Pantokrator*

Prayer of Manasseh, 1-2, 4, 6-7, 11-15

O Lord and Ruler of the hosts of heaven, *
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
and of all their righteous offspring:
You made the heavens and the earth, *
with all their vast array.
All things quake with fear at your presence; *
they tremble because of your power.
But your merciful promise is beyond all measure; *
it surpasses all that our minds can fathom.

O Lord, you are full of compassion, *
long-suffering, and abounding in mercy.
You hold back your hand; *
you do not punish as we deserve.
In your great goodness, Lord,
you have promised forgiveness to sinners, *
that they may repent of their sin and be saved.
And now, O Lord, I bend the knee of my heart, *
and make my appeal, sure of your gracious goodness.
I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, *
and I know my wickedness only too well.
Therefore I make this prayer to you: *
Forgive me, Lord, forgive me.
Do not let me perish in my sin, *
nor condemn me to the depths of the earth.
For you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent, *
and in me you will show forth your goodness.
Unworthy as I am, you will save me,
in accordance with your great mercy, *
and I will praise you without ceasing all the days of my life.
For all the powers of heaven sing your praises, *
and yours is the glory to ages of ages. Amen.

Psalm 25:1-9

Ad te, Domine, levavi

1 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;
my God, I put my trust in you; *
let me not be humiliated,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
2 Let none who look to you be put to shame; *
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.
3 Show me your ways, O Lord, *
and teach me your paths.
4 Lead me in your truth and teach me, *
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.
5 Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, *
for they are from everlasting.
6 Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; *
remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.
7 Gracious and upright is the Lord; *
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.
8 He guides the humble in doing right *

and teaches his way to the lowly.

9 All the paths of the Lord are love and faithfulness *
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen

THE FIRST LESSON

1 Peter 3:18-22

Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you-- not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

THE CANTICLE

*Creator of the earth and skies, to whom the words of life belong,
grant us your truth to make us wise; grant us your power to make us strong.*

*We have not known you: to the skies our monuments of folly soar,
and all our self-wrought miseries have made us trust ourselves the more.*

*We have not loved you: far and wide the wreckage of our hatred spreads,
and evils wrought by human pride recoil on unrepentant heads.*

*For this, our foolish confidence, our pride of knowledge and our sin,
we come to you in penitence; in us the work of grace begin.*

*Teach us to know and love you, Lord, and humbly follow in your way.
Speak to our souls the quickening word, and turn our darkness into day.*

*(David. W. Hughes 1911-1967)
(TH 1982 # 148)*

THE SECOND LESSON

Mark 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe (*have faith*) in the good news."

REFLECTION

by
Norm Wright

May Christ who suffered for sins once for all bring all to God. Amen



In Ash Wednesday's exhortation to observe a Holy Lent, we heard how Lent was used in the early church as a period of instruction for the newly converted as they prepared for baptism. As such, Lent continues to serve as an invitation to explore the Mystery of Faith that was signified in our baptisms. This Sunday and next Sunday our Gospel lessons will be taken from the Gospel of Mark which will help set the stage for a brief excursion into what can be consider the great initiation manual of Christianity, the Gospel of John in which Jesus, the Word made flesh, guides us into a deeper understanding of our relationship with God.

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On this first Sunday in Lent, I cannot think of a better quote from scripture to start this seasonal excursion into the Mystery of Faith than the opening line in today's reading from First Peter, "Christ suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you (*to bring all*) to God."

CHRIST SUFFERED ONCE FOR ALL.

This is a scandalous notion that doesn't fit well with the world's long-standing practice of retributive justice being meted out on all wrong-doers of this world and the blatant sinners in this life. There is a sense that if we don't punish the wrong-doers, "God will get them in the end." It is true that God gets *everyone* in the end, but that is not what most people are thinking when saying it. Common understanding is that the good deserve to be rewarded and the bad to get their just

rewards; that in order for there to be a heaven, there has to be a hell. Our life experiences largely validate this dualistic good guy/bad guy, heaven and hell, yin and yang perspective.

For most of human history this perspective held true until Jesus was “put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”

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Ash Wednesday reminded us that the human soul is a composite of the cosmic dust and ash we are physically made of and the life-giving energy of God, the spirit that was breathed into the primal sludge that eventually became us. The physical is what garners most of our attention in this life because it passes away, but the risen Christ focuses our attention on what gives us life in the first place, the very essence of God, which does not pass away.

Paul explains it this way, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **the new creation has come**: the old has gone, the new **is** here.” [2 Corinthians 5:17] In today’s second lesson Jesus put it this way, “The time **is** fulfilled, and the kingdom of God **has come near**; repent, and *have faith* in the good news.”

There is an undeniable sense of paradox running throughout the New Testament; informing us followers of Jesus that we exist in two realms of reality simultaneously; that of the temporal world in which everything becomes a work in progress and that of a greater reality, the Kingdom of God, in which everything is fulfilled, everything accomplished, everything completed, everything saved, and where all is One.

The Gospel of John explores this mysterious paradox and is dedicated to helping us embrace it in the here and now. It is most notably expressed in Jesus’ high priestly prayer where he describes his followers as being in the world but not of the world. [John17]

We are limited in what we know and limited in our ability to what we can know on this side of life. Our guide to this mysterious, paradoxical existence is Jesus in whom, as the incarnation of God the Son, we see the fullness of the whole God-imagined living souls we are.

Now if all of this seems a bit deep and incomprehensible, **IT IS**. That is the nature of a mystery and why we talk about the Mystery of Faith. There is an incomprehensibility to this mystery that the world we live in does not fully grasp, and our only grasp on this mystery is given to us by the God-given grace of faith.

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We followers of Jesus are in possession of a scandal in which nothing is lost because Christ unconditionally died for all, the good and the bad, the sinner and the saint. With God nothing is wasted, and that is indeed good news worth knowing and worth telling others about.

If everybody in this world could embrace the truth that in God's eyes all are saved, this world would be a much different world, but unfortunately the way of this world continues to maintain the illusion of heaven and hell by making this life a heaven for a select few and a living hell for a vast majority.

We followers of Jesus are in possession of a great mystery that consists of a much different narrative, a greater reality where all are saved:

Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come again:

With Christ we die, With Christ we are risen, With Christ we will come again.

During this season of Lent, we will briefly explore what it means to be in the world but not of the world, and that the call to repentance is a call to turn our attention to the Good News that in Christ all are brought to God.

Amen.

Hymn

*Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown,
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.*

*Come, almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be alway blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.*

*Finish then thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.*

(Charles Wesley 1797-1788)

(TH 1982 # 657)



THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan:
Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know
the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus
Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of Love, we pray for the whole Church and our parish family. Guide your
Church and this parish in the way of truth and love.

God of Healing, we pray for Bernard, Sue, Bev Ann, Pat Michels, Jolene, and Darold Adamson. Jim Black and for those we hold in our hearts. Grant unto all in need of comfort your healing presence.

God of Joy, we pray for those celebrating birthdays this past week: Beth Kathy, Jim Means, and Mariah La Croix (Feb. 15) May they find joy, happiness, and fulfillment in the coming year.

God our Protector, we pray for those affected by Covid-19; for healthcare workers around the world; for those who provide essential services, first responders, fire fighters, police. We pray for the leaders of all nations, for all government officials every where, and for all those making decisions in times of crisis. Grant them protection and guide those in authority to make wise decisions.

God our Defender, we pray for the homeless and the jobless in our nation, and for those who have lost their homeland, their sense of security, and who find themselves dependent on the good will of others in strange lands; that their needs are met and grant them the comfort of your Holy Spirit.

God of Life, we pray for those who have died. May all the departed find life in you.

God of Mission, we pray for all bishops, priests, deacons, and all who serve your Church. Grant them guidance in their various ministries and guide us in our mission to enlarge the Family of Faith in our midst.

THE PRAYER FOR MISSION

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent you blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near; Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into you fold; pour out you Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of you kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

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