



## LENTEN PARISH CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

### *MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER*

#### Gathering

*As people come into the church they are invited to take a stone and keep it with them throughout the service.*

#### Opening Hymn

#### Sign of the Cross & Greeting

The mercy of the Father, the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And with your spirit.**

#### Words of Welcome

Welcome on this Lenten evening to our celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation.

The love of God has gathered us together and so we can rejoice and be glad.

A rite of reconciliation is a great moment in the life of a parish community. When we come seeking forgiveness, we are welcoming the mercy of God into our lives; this is a true encounter with God's love, an encounter that we in turn can carry with us into our lives where we are called to be merciful like our Father.

Let us prepare ourselves to meet the merciful embrace of God who is waiting for us, who is our source of hope and peace...

#### Opening Prayer

Gracious God,

You are a God of compassion and love

we turn to you hoping in your great mercy,

that you would grant us your forgiveness and so lift the burden of sin from our lives.

We are sorry for all our sins and now lay them down before your mercy.

Heal us that we may receive your grace and so go and bring your love to our homes and world, as servants of your mercy.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Isaiah 1:16-18

*Learn to do good, search for justice  
Lectionary I page 232*

Beginning: 'Wash, make yourselves clean...'. Ending: 'they shall be like wool.'

### Pause

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 50

*Have mercy on me, God, in your  
kindness...*

Lectionary I page 192

*(Preferably sung – settings found in Gather hymnal)*

Or Psalm 103

*The Lord is kind and merciful*

Lectionary I page 242

*(Sung settings found in gather and In Caelo)*

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Luke 6:36-38

*Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate*

Lectionary I page 232

## Homily

### Rite of Reconciliation

#### Reflection/Examination of Conscience

*(The following examination draws on an examen offered by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)*

Priest Celebrant: My brothers and sisters, before we approach to receive God's mercy and forgiveness let us reflect on our lives and acknowledge those areas of our lives that are burdened and weighed down by sin... as we do so, I invite you take up your stone and hold it in the palm of your hand.

Reader 1: As you hold your stone and look upon it, notice how it feels in your palm... it may be smooth, it may feel rough in parts... notice its colours and textures. This stone is a lifeless mass – at its heart is hardness; right now it offers us nothing but its weight. Sin is like that. It turns our heart into stone, offering us nothing but the burden of its consequences.

But God does not abandon us to the consequences of our sins. God is a God of mercy and compassion who turns and says to each one of us 'let us talk this over', who says to us 'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow'.

And so we examine our lives in the light of the ten commandments, our guide for Christian living...

Reader 2:

**I am the Lord your God: You shall not have strange God's before me.** (Pause)

Have I treated people, events or things as more important than God? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Reader 1:

**You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.** (Pause)

Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the Church or people? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Reader 2:

**Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.** (Pause)

Do I go to Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation? Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper relaxation of mind and body? Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service of others on Sunday? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Reader 1:

**Honour your father and mother.** (Pause)

Do I show my parents due respect? DO I try to maintain good communication with my parents where possible? Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Reader 2:

**You shall not kill.** (Pause)

Have I harmed another through physical, verbal or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind? Have I used social media to harm any other person regardless of whether I know them or not? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Reader 1:

**You shall not commit adultery.** (Pause)

Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Reader 2:

**You shall not steal.** (Pause)

Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another? Have I added to the environmental damage of the earth at the cost to future generations? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Reader 1:

**You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.** (Pause)

Have I gossiped, told lies or embellished stories at the expense of another? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Reader 2:

**You shall not covet your neighbour's spouse.** (Pause)

Have I honoured my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Reader 1:

**You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.** (Pause)

Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily? (Pause)

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world. **All: Grant us peace.**

General confession of sins

*The Priest Celebrant invites the assembly to kneel (if not already doing so) and to pray together, I confess to Almighty God...*

The Lord's Prayer

Priest Celebrant: Assured of God's mercy and love, we stand and join in prayer to God the Father... Our Father...

Individual Confession and Absolution (with instruction regarding stone)

Priest Celebrant: I invite my brother priests to take their places.

As you come forward to receive the grace of this sacrament you are invited to bring your stone with you and place it in the basket before returning to your place.

*(During this time music ministers can lead the assembly in reflective music – both instrumental and sung, for example. Taize Music – “Bless the Lord My Soul”... as well as the official Jubilee Hymn – the refrain of the Jubilee Hymn has worked very well used in a Taize style at the beginning and end of this element of the celebration of reconciliation...)*

*Before the ordained ministers of the sacrament return to their place they bring their baskets to the Lenten space and pour their stones onto the growing mountain of God's mercy....*

Communal Penance – Jubilee Prayer

*This prayer might be included in the participation sheet for the congregation or, where relevant, on a projector screen. (shorter alternative in bold)*

### **Lord Jesus Christ,**

you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,  
and have told us that who  
ever sees you sees Him.

Show us your face and we will be saved.

Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;  
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;  
made Peter weep after his betrayal,  
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.

Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:

“If you knew the gift of God!”

You are the visible face of the invisible Father,  
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:  
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.  
You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness  
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:  
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by  
God.

**Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,  
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,  
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,  
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,  
and restore sight to the blind.**

**We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy,  
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

### Closing Prayer

Priest Celebrant: Gracious God,  
your mercy is boundless  
and we cannot thank you enough for this great gift you shower on us.  
Give us grace to truly appreciate your merciful deeds in our lives  
and through the Holy Spirit transform our hearts  
into wells of mercy and forgiveness, making us merciful like the Father.  
Teach us to work together for peace and reconciliation in our lives  
that we may come to know the blessings of the merciful.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **AMEN.**

### Final Blessing and Dismissal

Priest Celebrant: The Lord be with you. **And also with your spirit.**  
May almighty God bless you...  
Brothers and sisters, be merciful, just as your heavenly Father is merciful. Go in peace.

Closing Hymn (if desired)