

PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

(Any Season)

We are gathered together to celebrate the wonder of our salvation. In the Cross we have a powerful sign that our salvation has already taken place. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation we have the sign that our salvation is yet to be made complete in us. We are sinners, constantly in need of forgiveness.

This is one of the great paradoxes of our faith: we are saved, and yet to be saved. This sacrament is part of the saving power that Christ has given to his Church.

A good model for us to bring with us this evening is that of the Repentant thief, sometimes called St Dismas.

- He was a thief
- He was very close to our Saviour as he died on the Cross
- He made one of the most amazing acts of faith when he said, 'Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom'. Jesus looked anything but the Son of God at that moment
- He teaches us that forgiveness is immediate and complete. 'This day you will be with me in paradise,' Jesus said.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we thank you for showing us how much you love us by dying on the cross that we might live. Hold us in your love. We pray that all of us here may have true repentance for our sins and ask forgiveness and healing in this sacrament which you have given to your Church. We pray that each one of us may know the liberation as those sins which hold us back are put away for ever.

Take away all anxiety and fear from our hearts, and, as our sins are forgiven again this evening, strengthen us in ways that will make it easier for others to know your love and to live your way.

We ask these things in the power of Christ our Saviour and as Son of God, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading:

(St Matthew 18: 1- 4) At that time, the disciple came to Jesus, asking, 'Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?'

So Jesus called a child, made him stand in front of them, and said, 'I assure you that unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven is the one who humbles himself and becomes like this child.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

There are five essentials for living as God's children:

- Trust
- Enthusiasm
- Wonder
- Forgiveness
- Innocence

We now meditate in silence, allowing the gift of the Holy Spirit to work within our conscience so that we see in a new way the sins we carry.

Lord Jesus Christ, you ate and drank with sinners. For those who are well have no need of a doctor, but only those who are sick. You did not call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me a sinner.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to the scribes and Pharisees who brought to you a woman caught in adultery, 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.' And when they had gone away, one by one, you looked at her and said, 'Has no one condemned you: go, and do not sin again.'

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me a sinner.



My son, your sins are forgiven

Lord Jesus Christ, you welcomed the sinful woman when she knelt down before you in the house of Simon. She washed your feet with her tears, wiped them with her head of hair, and anointed you with costly ointment. You forgave her sin and sent her on her way in peace. Her sins, which were many, were forgiven, for she loved much.

Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me a sinner.

Lord Jesus Christ, you were crucified between two thieves, one on your right and the other on your left. One of them hurled insults at you but the other confessed his sin and asked you to remember him when you came into your kingdom. In the hour of your agony, you said to the penitent thief, 'Today you will be with me in paradise.'

Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me a sinner.

Lord Jesus Christ, in the glory of your risen life you restored Simon Peter who had disowned you in the time of trial. You committed to him the care of your flock and once again called him to follow you in the way of the cross.

Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me a sinner.

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.**

**We have wounded your love
and marred your image in us.**

**We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,**

forgive us all that is past;

and lead us out from darkness

to walk as children of light. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins
to all who with heartfelt repentance and true faith
turn to him:
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and bring you to the joy of heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We say the Lord's Prayer: Our Father ... for thine is the kingdom Amen

Almighty God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
you have made us for yourself
and our hearts are restless until they rest in you:
grant us purity of heart and strength of purpose,
that no selfishness may hinder us from knowing your will,
no weakness from doing it;
but that in your light we may see light,
and in your service may find our perfect freedom;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

May God the Father of all mercies, fill your hearts and your homes
with his peace. May he take away from you all anxiety and fear. May he
heal all divisions that exist in your families and in our parish commu-
nity and may he bless all those whom you love. Together with them,
may he bring you to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace,
to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen



*Her many sins are
forgiven because of
her great love*