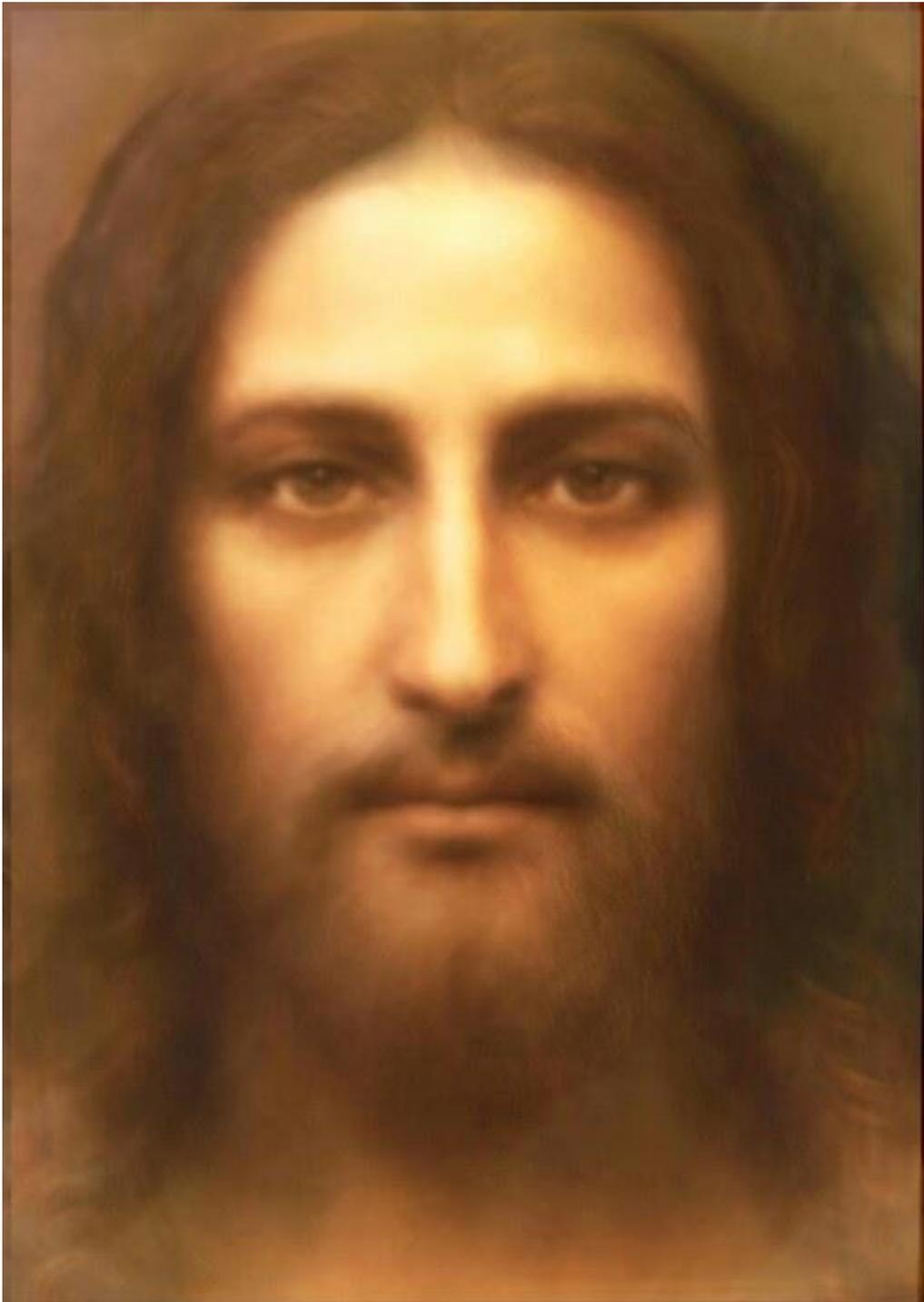


ADVENT COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE



JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

INTRODUCTORY RITES

HYMN

Comfort, comfort O my people,
Speak of peace, now says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness,
Mourning under sorrows' load.
Speak unto Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them.
Tell of all the sins I cover,
And that warfare now is over.

Hark, the voice of one who's crying
In the desert far and near,
Bidding all to full repentance,
Since the kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise to meet him
And the hills bow down to greet him.

O make straight what long was crooked,
Make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
As befits his holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
Now o'er earth is shed abroad;
And all flesh shall see the token
That his word is never broken.

Text: Isaiah 40:1-8; Tröstet, tröstet, meine Lieben; Johann Olearius, 1611-1684; tr. by Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.
Tune: GENEVA 42, 8 7 8 7 77 88; Genevan Psalter, 1551; harm. adapt. from Claude Goudimel, 1505-1572. In the public domain.

GREETING

After the song the presider greets the people:

Presider:

Grace, mercy and peace
from God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son
be with you in truth and love.

All: And with your spirit.

Then the presider or another minister speaks briefly about the importance and purpose of the celebration in these or similar words.

Brothers and sisters, we gather here because we are conscious of our sinfulness, but we also gather here confident of God's infinite mercy. He has given us this sacrament that we might experience this mercy through the ministry of the Church.

Pope Francis has declared this a special Jubilee "Year of Mercy." In the next twelve months, the Holy Father has asked us to contemplate more deeply upon the mystery of God's abundant mercy— "the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness." (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 2)

Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy.

In this Advent season—when we both prepare to celebrate Christ's coming to earth and also look forward to the time when he will come again—let thank him all the more for the merciful gift of salvation which his Death and Resurrection has won for us. Let us reflect more deeply on his Gospel of compassion and mercy. May we, as his disciples, joyfully bring Christ's message of mercy and reconciliation to birth in the world.

OPENING PRAYER

Presider:

Let us pray.

All pray in silence for a brief period.

Lord,
hear the prayers of those who call on you,
forgive the sins of those who confess to you,
and in your merciful love
give us your pardon and peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55: 9-11

Reader: A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

Thus says the LORD:

All you who are thirsty, come to the water!

You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat;

come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk!

Why spend your money for what is not bread,

your wages for what fails to satisfy?

Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare.

Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life.

I will renew with you the everlasting covenant,

the benefits assured to David.

As I made him a witness to the peoples,

a leader and commander of nations,

so shall you summon a nation you knew not,

and nations that knew you not shall run to you,

because of the LORD, your God,

the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while he may be found,

call him while he is near.

Let the scoundrel forsake his way,

and the wicked man his thoughts;

let him turn to the LORD for mercy;

to our God, who is generous in forgiving.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

As high as the heavens are above the earth

so high are my ways above your ways

and my thoughts above your thoughts.

For just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down

and do not return there till they have watered the earth,

making it fertile and fruitful,

giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats,

so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth;

my word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will,

achieving the end for which I sent it.

The word of the Lord.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 100, 1b-2, 3, 4, 5

R. The Lord is loving and kind: his mercy is for ever.

Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;
serve the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful song.

R: The Lord is loving and kind: his mercy is for ever.

Know that the LORD is God;
he made us, his we are;
his people, the flock he tends.

R: The Lord is loving and kind: his mercy is for ever.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
his courts with praise;
give thanks to him, bless his name.

R: The Lord is loving and kind: his mercy is for ever.
The LORD is good:
his kindness endures forever,
and his faithfulness, to all generations.

R: The Lord is loving and kind: his mercy is for ever. 21

SECOND READING

Romans 8: 31b-39

Reader: A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

If God is for us, who can be against us?

He did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all,

how will he not also give us everything else along with him?

Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones?

It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn?

It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised,

who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

What will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will anguish, or distress, or persecution,

or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?

As it is written:

For your sake we are being slain all the day;

we are looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered.

No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly
through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor principalities,
nor present things, nor future things,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor any other creature
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Come, O Lord, do not delay;
forgive the sins of your people.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Luke 7: 36-50

Deacon: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Deacon: + A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

A certain Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him,
and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table.
Now there was a sinful woman in the city
who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee.
Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment,
she stood behind him at his feet weeping
and began to bathe his feet with her tears.
Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them,
and anointed them with the ointment.
When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself,
"If this man were a prophet,
he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him,
that she is a sinner."
Jesus said to him in reply, "Simon, I have something to say to you."
"Tell me, teacher," he said.
"Two people were in debt to a certain creditor;
one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty.
Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both.
Which of them will love him more?"
Simon said in reply,

“The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven.”
He said to him, “You have judged rightly.”
Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon,
“Do you see this woman? When I entered your house,
you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears
and wiped them with her hair.
You did not give me a kiss,
but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered.
You did not anoint my head with oil,
but she anointed my feet with ointment.
So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven;
hence, she has shown great love.
But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.”
He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”
The others at table said to themselves,
“Who is this who even forgives sins?”
But he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Deacon: The gospel of the Lord.
All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

HOMILY

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

The assembly is now invited to make an examination of conscience.

This may be done in silence or by using the examination of conscience below.

Pauses and periods of silence are indicated in the text.

Presider: Let us listen on the words of Pope Francis as he calls us to reflect on God’s mercy in our lives and see how we have failed to allow that mercy to permeate our being.

Reader 1: God’s mercy breaks through the dimension of space and time, inserting everything into the eternal mystery of love. It is as if to say that not only in history, but for all eternity, we will always be under the merciful gaze of the Father. (*Misericordiae Vultus* 7)

Reader 2: Have I avoided the mercy of God, neglecting prayer and worship?
(pause)

Have I listened for God's voice, looking for signs of God's merciful love and action in the persons and circumstances around me?

(pause)

Have I trusted in the mercy of God, or have I left my own unworthiness stand in the way of hope?

(short period of silence)

Reader 1: With our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze, we experience the love of the Most Holy Trinity. The mission Jesus received from the Father was that of revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness. "God is love." (*Misericordiae Vultus* 8)

Reader 2: Is my image of God in harmony with the way Jesus describes God?

(pause)

Am I open to the mercy of God in my life?

(pause)

Am I willing to let go of all my preconceived notions of God and let God transform my mind and heart?

(short period of silence)

Reader 1: When faced with sin, God responds with the fullness of mercy. Mercy will always be greater than any sin, and now one can place limits on the love of God who is ever ready to forgive. (*Misericordiae Vultus* 3)

Reader 2: What stands in the way of my responding fully to the mercy of God in my life?

(pause)

What circumstances in my life are most difficult for me now? Can I let God's mercy into these places?

(pause)

Am I allowing God's merciful love to reach out to others through me?

(short period of silence)

Presider: Let us reflect on the areas in our own lives in need of forgiveness so that we can bring them to God's sacrament of mercy.

(longer period of silence)

Provided by the Diocese of Camden, NJ

RITE OF RECONCILIATION

GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS

Presider:

Directing the assembly.

Please kneel.

God who is infinitely merciful
pardons all who are repentant
and takes away their guilt.
Confident in his goodness,
let us ask him to forgive all our sins
as we confess them with sincerity of heart.

All say together:

**I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done
and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault:
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

LITANY OF REPENTANCE

Presider:

Directing the assembly.

Please stand.

Presider: Let us turn to Christ with confidence and ask his mercy.

Deacon: You came into the world to seek and save what was lost.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: You came to give us life, life in its fullness.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: You became the source of salvation for all who obey you.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Once and for all you died for our sins,
the innocent one for the guilty.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: In your mercy free us from the past
and enable us to begin a new life of holiness.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Make us a living sign of love for all to see:
people reconciled with you and with each other.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Presider:

Let us now pray to God our Father
in the words Christ gave us.

All say or sing together:

Our Father...

The presider concludes:

Presider:

Almighty and eternal God
you sent your only-begotten Son
to reconcile the world to yourself.
Lift from our hearts the oppressive gloom of sin,
so that we may celebrate the approaching
dawn of Christ's birth with fitting joy.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

INVITATION TO INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION

Presider:

Directing the assembly.

Please be seated.

Before we begin the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our priests who have joined us this afternoon.

Frs. _____,
_____,
_____,
_____,
_____,
_____.

I would also like to thank all of you who have come together to pray, seeking Christ's mercy.

While we sing the next song, our confessors will process to their confessional stations. They are located in these places in the church:

Fr. _____ will be _____.

I will be _____.

At the end of the song I invite you to stay and to line-up at one of the confessional stations.

After your confession is heard you may remain here to pray for a time if you wish, but are otherwise dismissed.

For those of you who decide not to partake of the sacrament at this time, I invite you to go to individual confession at your earliest convenience.

Confessions are regularly heard at _____ parish:

on _____(day) from _____ to _____ (time)

PRAYER

Presider:

Gesturing for the assembly to stand.

Let us pray.

All pray in silence for a brief period.

Lord God,

Creator and ruler of your kingdom of light,
in your great love for this world
you gave up your only Son for our salvation.

His cross has redeemed us,
his death has given us life,
his resurrection has raised us to glory.

Through him we ask you
to be always present among your family.
Teach us to be reverent in the presence of your glory;
fill our hearts with faith,
our days with good works,
our lives with your love.

May your truth be on our lips
and your wisdom in all our actions,
that we may receive the reward of everlasting life.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Confessors process to their stations during the song.

HYMN

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down!
Fix in us your humble dwelling;
All your faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, source of all compassion,
Love unbounded, love all pure;
Visit us with your salvation,
Let your love in us endure.

Come, Almighty, to deliver,
Let us all your life receive;
Suddenly return and never,
Nevermore your temples leave.
You we would be always blessing,
Serve you as your hosts above,
Pray, and praise you without ceasing,
Glory in your precious love.

Finish then your new creation;
Pure and spotless, gracious Lord.
Let us see your great salvation
Perfectly in you restored.
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heav'n we take our place,
Till we sing before the Almighty,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

Tune: HYFRYDOL, 8 7 8 7 D; Rowland H. Pritchard 1811-1887

INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Then the penitents go to the priests designated for individual confession, and confess their sins. Each one receives and accepts a fitting act of satisfaction and is absolved. After hearing the confession and offering suitable counsel, the priest extends his hands over the penitent's head (or at least extends his right hand) and gives him or her absolution. Everything else which is customary in individual confession is omitted.

After receiving absolution the penitents may return to the main body of the church and spend some time in private prayer.

Soft, unobtrusive instrumental music may be played for a time during the transition to individual confession.