

We Pray for God's Mercy

This prayer service is best used at the conclusion of Chapters 5 and 6 of *Jesus Christ: Source of Our Salvation*.

Gathering

Leader: In the name of the Lord who calls us to renewal and reconciliation, in the name of the God we seek, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the life that flows from the cross of Christ fill our hearts.

All: May it be so for us and for all God's people.

Leader: Let us pray.

All: Lord, you shower us with justice. You rescue us from death. You are our refuge, our touchstone in a tumultuous world. May we cleave to you with all our hearts so that your promise of resurrection might be ours now and forever. Amen.

Leader: We turn our attention to the reconciling Word of the Lord.

First Reading

Reader 1: A reading from the Book of Ezekiel (18:21-23).

But if the wicked man turns away from all the sins he committed, if he keeps all my statutes and does what is right and just, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of the crimes he committed shall be remembered against him; he shall live because of the virtue he has practiced. Do I indeed derive any pleasure from the death of the wicked? says the LORD God. Do I not rather rejoice when he turns from his evil way that he may live?

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Response (based on Psalm 51:3-4, 12-14, 17-19)

Reader 2: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

All: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Reader 2: Have mercy on me, God, in accord with your merciful love;
in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions.
Thoroughly wash away my guilt; and from my sin cleanse me.
Turn away your face from my sins; blot out all my iniquities.

All: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Reader 2: A clean heart create for me, God;
renew within me a steadfast spirit.
Do not drive me from before your face,
nor take from me your holy spirit.
Restore to me the gladness of your salvation;
uphold me with a willing spirit.

All: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Reader 2: Lord, you will open my lips;
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
For you do not desire sacrifice or I would give it;
a burnt offering you would not accept.
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a contrite, humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn.

All: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Second Reading

Reader 3: A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (5:17-21)
So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold,
new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself
through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was
reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for
Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be
reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that
we might become the righteousness of God in him.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

Reader 4: A reading from the Gospel according to St. Luke (5:27-32)

After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him. Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were at table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes complained to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: God invites us to a change of heart, to conversion and reconciliation. Let us thank the Lord for the people in our lives who extend that divine invitation to us.

Group 1: We thank you, O God, for the people who encourage us, for they draw us closer to you.

Group 2: We thank you, O God, for the people who help us discover new talents and abilities, for they prompt us to grow.

Group 1: We thank you, O God, for the people who accept us even with our faults. They assure us we are loved, and they help us love others.

Group 2: We thank you, O God, for the people who challenge us and call us to responsibility, for they point the way to true conversion of heart.

Leader: Indeed we give you thanks, O God, for all those who call us to new life in you.

All: Amen.

Ritual of Reconciliation

Leader: As a sign of our need and desire for reconciliation, let us bow our heads in silent prayer.

All pray in silence for a few moments.

Now, let us give voice to the prayers of our hearts and ask God for forgiveness and reconciliation.

All: Draw us close, O God. Forgive all our faults. Continue to show us your mercy, so that we may not fear to lay aside our sinfulness and inhumanity, to shoulder our own cross, and to follow you now and forever. Amen.

Leader: O God, keep us on the path of conversion, and hear us as we offer the prayer of your reconciling people, the prayer Jesus gave us.

All link arms as a sign of solidarity and pray the Lord's Prayer.

Leader: The Lord our God rescues us and restores us not by some sleight of hand or conjurer's trick, but by blood, nails, and wood. May God bless us in the sign of the life-giving cross, + the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Concluding Hymn

All join in singing an appropriate hymn of thanks.