

Liturgy for Lent

Call to Worship

We gather today to celebrate a special time in the liturgical year: Lent. What comes to mind when we think of this season? Is it the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness? The challenges we encounter “giving up” something? Or perhaps this year the focus is on our relationships with the people around us, striving to mend relationships that are in need of reconciliation or strengthening the bonds that already exist. During this holy time of the year, let us remember that Lent is a time for fasting, abstinence, prayer and penance. It is a time to look at ourselves, to be honest and ask if we are following Jesus’ example to serve one another. It is a time to reflect on the wonderful things that we are doing and the things that we need to work on. Let us take this time we have set aside to pray, reflect and give thanks to God.

Gathering Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

+Amen.

Loving Father,

We are grateful for this prayerful time of year. Help us during these forty days to hold strong to the commitments we have made this year for Lent, whether we have promised to pray more, eat less, deny ourselves of excess, or give to those in need. By these actions, let them lead us primarily to you and your bountiful love for us.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Merciful Redeemer.

+Amen.

Reading (Jeremiah 29.11-13)

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 51.3-4. 12-13, 17, 19)

R. Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me.

R. Create in me a clean heart, O God.

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

R. Create in me a clean heart, O God.

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

R. Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Gospel (Luke 15.11-32)

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayers of the Faithful

The response is: ***Lord hear our prayer.***

For Pope (Francis), the bishops, the clergy and all holy men and women:
That they may continue to serve God humbly, lovingly and with unceasingly.

We pray to the Lord.

R. Lord hear our prayer.

For leaders in government:

That during this holy season of Lent, they actively strive to find peaceful ways of resolving conflicts between nations and communities.

We pray to the Lord.

R. Lord hear our prayer.

For those of us in the __(Insert School name here)__ community:
That through our Lenten promises, we return to God as people of love, faith and hope.

We pray to the Lord.

R. Lord hear our prayer.

For the prayers that lie deep within our hearts...(pause).

We pray to the Lord.

R. Lord hear our prayer.

Let us join our hearts and voices in the prayer that Jesus taught us...

Our Father,
+Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
+Amen.