

PENANCE SERVICE

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**Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with
Individual Confession and Absolution**

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**A seasonal resource courtesy of the
Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC)
(November 2013, and the Office of Worship, Diocese of Dallas)**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The English translation of Psalm Responses from *Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL); excerpts from the English translation of the *Rite of Penance* © 1974, ICEL; excerpts from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, ICEL. All rights reserved.

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OUR GOD IS RICH IN MERCY



A PENANCE SERVICE

Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution

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PREPARATION

- Hospitality Ministers should be recruited to welcome the assembly as they arrive and to distribute worship aids.
- At least two readers should be appointed to proclaim the reading(s), to read the Examination of Conscience, and to lead the Litany of Repentance. They are to be seated in the assembly.
- A musician and cantor(s) should lead the assembly in song. Instrumental music may be played during individual confession. (A list of music suggestions is included herein.)

- A Lectionary should be readied with the appropriate readings.
- Lighting may be subdued, but sufficient for reading hymnal and worship aid. Candle(s) should be lit at the ambo. No altar candles are lighted. The appropriate number of candles should be lit on the Advent Wreath, if during that season.
- Stations for confessors should be prepared. Priests might stand or sit in isolated areas around the main body of the church to receive penitents. In this way, the communal nature of the rite is maintained. Candles may light these stations. A tall plant, a table with a candle on it, and possibly a guide for the Act of Contrition should be at each station.
- For the sake of simplicity, the presider alone or the presider and preacher could participate in the procession. Other priests could be seated in the sanctuary or in a reserved area before the liturgy begins.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

OPENING HYMN

GREETING

Presider: **Grace, mercy, and peace be with you
from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.**

All: **And with your spirit.**

INTRODUCTION

Presider: *In these or similar words...*

We gather here today [tonight] because we are confident that God is merciful. We have this confidence because, in every age, God has shown his justice and his mercy.

When his chosen people erred, he sent prophets to call them back. He sent John the Baptist to call sinners to repentance and to announce the coming of the Savior.

And in his greatest act of merciful love, God sent his only Son to live among us, to preach of the Father's love, and to set us free from sin and death.

God continues to save his people and Christ continues to be present to us, especially in the Church's sacraments.

And in this sacrament of reconciliation, though we cannot grasp the richness of his grace nor depth of his compassion, God continues to offer us his mercy.

OPENING PRAYER

**Presider:
My brothers and sisters,
God calls us to conversion;
let us therefore ask him
for the grace of sincere repentance.**

Silent prayer

**Father of mercies and God of all consolation,
you do not wish the sinner to die
but to be converted and live.
Come to the aid of your people,
that they may turn from their sins and live for you alone.
May we be attentive to your word,
confess our sins,
receive your forgiveness,
and always be grateful for your loving kindness.
Help us to live the truth in love
and grow into the fullness of Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.**

All: Amen.

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

The following are suggested readings. Alternative readings may be selected. The preacher may wish to use one, two, or three readings. If only one is chosen, it is preferable that it be the gospel.

The readings are printed elsewhere in this booklet, for ease of rehearsal. A Lectionary should be used during the liturgy.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:1-11

...turn to the LORD for mercy;
to our God who is generous and forgiving.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(preferably sung)

Psalm 145: 1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13

The Lord is gracious and merciful;
slow to anger and of great kindness.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 2:1-10
But God who is rich in mercy...
brought us to life with Christ

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Psalm 85:8
Show us, LORD, your love;
and grant us your salvation.

GOSPEL

John 1:29-34
Behold the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.

HOMILY

RECONCILIATION SERVICE: ALTERNATIVE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 25:6-10a	The Lord will save us.
Isaiah 35: 1-6a, 10	God himself will come to save us.
Isaiah 40:1-11	God consoles his people
Isaiah 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25	There is no just and saving God but me.
Isaiah 54: 1-10	The Lord calls you back.
Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7	O, that you would rend the heavens and come down
Jeremiah 7:21-26	Listen to my voice...I will be your God and you will be my people
Jeremiah 23:5-8	I will raise up a righteous shoot to David...
Joel 2: 12-18	For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness
Zephaniah 3:14-18a	The Lord has removed judgment against you...the Lord is in your midst

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 25	Teach me your ways, O Lord
Psalm 36:2-13	How precious is your unfailing love, O Lord.
Psalm 51: 3-21	Give back to me the joy of your salvation.
Psalm 72: 1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17	Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19	Lord, make us turn to you and we will be saved.
Psalm 85: 9ab,10, 11-12, 13-14	Our God will come and save us.
Psalm 103: 1-2, 3-4, 8, 10	The Lord is kind and merciful
Psalm 130: 1-8	With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption
Psalm 145: 8-14	The Lord is just in all his ways.
Psalm 147:1-6	Blessed are all who wait for the Lord.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 3: 22-26	Justified by the gift of God, Christ Jesus
Romans 4:13-17, 20-25	Inheritance through faith
Romans 6:2-14	You must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God
Romans 12:1-2, 9-19	Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction...
2 Corinthians 5:17-21	God reconciled the world to himself through Christ
Ephesians 1: 3-14	The Father's plan of salvation
Ephesians 4: 22-32	Forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ
Philippians 1:4-11	Show yourself pure and blameless for the day of Christ
Philippians 4: 6-9	Have no anxiety at all
James 5:7-10	Make your hearts firm, the coming of the Lord is at hand
1 Peter 1: 13-23	You have been redeemed...by the precious blood of Christ

1 Peter 1: 14-21
1 John 1:5 –2:2

You were ransomed from your futile conduct
If we acknowledge our sins he is faithful and just

GOSPEL

Matthew 3:1-12
Matthew 9:1-8
Matthew 13:24-30
Matthew 18:12-14
Matthew 21:28-32
Luke 7: 18b-23
Luke 19: 1-10
John 1:29-34
John 5:33-36
John 15: 9-14

Reform your lives, the reign of God is at hand
Have confidence, my son, your sins are forgiven.
Weeds and wheat growing together
The shepherd seeks one lost sheep
Man had two sons... John came and sinners believed in him
Go tell John what you have seen and heard
The Son of Man has come to search out and save what was lost
Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
I have testimony greater than John's
You will live in my love, if you keep my commandments

PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE

Psalms 32: 1-7, 10-11
Psalm 98:1-9

Rejoice in the Lord and sing for joy, friends of God
The Lord remembered his mercy

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

The assembly is now invited to make an examination of conscience. This can be done in silence or by using the examination below. One reader alone may read the questions or two readers might alternate. Allow a brief period of silence between each one. This form, or another form (many worthy examples can be found through the internet) may be printed in the worship aid, or on separate sheets (placed in the pews).

Reader #1: How have I failed to worship God in private and communal prayer?

- **Do I pray daily?**
- **Do I receive the sacraments regularly?**
- **Do I keep Sundays and holy days sacred?**
- **Do I fulfill my commitments as a member of my faith community?**
- **What is my attitude toward the sacrament of reconciliation?**
- **Have I tried to grow in the life of the Spirit through prayer and the reading of the word of God?**
- **Do I trust God's goodness and providence, even in times of crisis and doubt?**

Reader #2: How have I failed to use the gifts of God in daily living?

- **Do I respect my own body as a gift from God?**

- Do I control my vices, including abuses of food and drink?
- Have I made good use of the gifts God has given me?
- Do I work too hard and too long? Do I neglect my family and health?
- Have I been lazy and given too much time to leisure or entertainment?

Reader #1: How have I failed in my relationships with others?

- In my household, have I contributed to the well-being and happiness of the rest of my family? Am I patient? Am I loving?
- Do I treat my parents with respect?
- Am I ever angry with those I love?
- Have I been faithful in my relationships?
- Have I imposed my will on others without respecting their freedom and rights?
- Am I intolerant of other's ideas or needs?
- Have I perpetuated racism, prejudices and stereotypes?
- Do I treat people with disabilities with respect?

Reader #2: Have I failed to share God's love with the world?

- Do I share my time and my treasure with others in need?
- Do I fail to speak out on behalf of the poor or the oppressed?
- Have I accepted suffering as a share in the suffering of Christ?
 - Have I indulged in reading, conversation, or entertainments that are contrary to Christian decency and respect for human life?
- Do I use the earth's resources wisely?
- Do I purchase a lot of material goods that I don't really need?

RITE OF RECONCILIATION

GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS

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

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

All: Lord, have mercy.

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

All: Lord, have mercy.

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

All: Lord, have mercy.

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

All: Lord, have mercy.

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

All: Lord, have mercy.

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

All: Lord, have mercy.

LORD'S PRAYER

**Presider: Now, in obedience to
Christ himself, let us join in prayer
to the Father,
asking him to forgive us as we forgive others.
Our Father,...**

CONCLUDING PRAYER

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.

INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

The presider or other minister might tell the assembly where the confessors will be located. Some brief words regarding the manner of confession should be given. The people may be encouraged to accept one of the penances which are found in the worship aid or the confessors may give a penance suited to the individual. The assembly may be advised to remain in church if there is to be a common ending. Quiet instrumental music might be played during this time. A selection of bibles, breviaries, or other suitable reading should be made available for quiet prayer during this time.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

Confessor: God, the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection of His Son
has reconciled the world to himself
and sent the Holy Spirit among us
for the forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the Church
may God give you pardon and peace,
and I absolve you from your sins
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠
and of the Holy Spirit.

Penitent: Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE FOR GOD'S MERCY

Luke 1:46-55

*You may provide the following text for the assembly or use any musical setting of the Magnificat.
This part of the service should not be omitted.*

Refrain: The Lord has remembered his mercy.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. (Refrain)

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his Name. (Refrain)

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. (Refrain)

He has shone the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones
and has lifted up the lowly. (Refrain)

He has filled the hungry with good things
and the rich he has sent away empty. (Refrain)

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever. (Refrain)

*Another psalm, hymn, or litany may be prayed in acknowledgment of God's power and compassion.
See the enclosed music suggestions or use one of the scripture citations below.*

Psalm 28: 6-7

Psalm 136: 1-9, 13-14, 16, 25-29

Psalm 32: 1-7, 10-11

Psalm 145: 1-21

Psalm 54

Psalm 146: 2-10

Psalm 66

Isaiah 12: 1b-6

Psalm 95

Isaiah 61: 10-11

Psalm 98: 1-9

Jeremiah 31: 10-14

Psalm 100: 1-5

Daniel 3:52-57

Psalm 103: 1-4, 8-18

Ephesians 1:3-10

Psalm 119: 1, 10-16, 18, 33, 105, 169-170, 174-175 **Revelation 15: 3-4**

CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**Presider: Almighty and merciful God,
how wonderfully you created man
and still more wonderfully remade him.
You do not abandon the sinner,
but seek him out with a father's love.**

**You sent your Son into the world
to destroy sin and death
by his passion
and to restore life and joy
by his resurrection.
You sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts
to make us your children
and heirs of your kingdom.
You constantly renew our spirit
in the sacrament of your redeeming love,
freeing us from the slavery of sin
and transforming us ever more closely
into the likeness of your beloved Son.
We thank you for the wonders of your mercy,
and with heart and hand and voice
we join with the whole Church
in a new hymn of praise:
Glory to you through Christ
in the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.**

All: Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

BLESSING

**Presider: May the Father bless us
for we are his children, born to eternal life.**

All: Amen.

**Presider: May the Son show us his saving power,
for he died and rose for us.**

All: Amen.

**Presider: May the Spirit give us his gift of holiness
and lead us by the right path, for he dwells in our hearts.**

All: Amen.

DISMISSAL

Presider: The LORD has freed you from your sins. Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.



READINGS

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 55:1-11

**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 might 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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13

**R: The Lord is gracious and merciful;
slow to anger, and of great kindness.**

I will extol you, O my God and King,
and I will bless your name forever and ever.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

**R: The Lord is gracious and merciful;
slow to anger, and of great kindness.**

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.

Let them discourse of the glory of your Kingdom
and speak of your might.

**R: The Lord is gracious and merciful;
slow to anger, and of great kindness.**

Let them make known to men your might
and the glorious splendor of your Kingdom.
Your Kingdom is a Kingdom for all ages,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

**R: The Lord is gracious and merciful;
slow to anger, and of great kindness.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

Ephesians 2:1-10

Brothers and sisters:

**You were dead in your transgressions and sins
in which you once lived following the age of this world,
following the ruler of the power of the air,
the spirit that is now at work in the disobedient.
All of us once lived among them in the desires of our flesh,
following the wishes of the flesh and the impulses,
and we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest.
But God, who is rich in mercy,
because of the great love he had for us,
even when we were dead in our transgressions,
brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
raised us up with him,
and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus,
that in the ages to come
he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace
in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.
For by grace you have been saved through faith,
and this is not from you; it is the gift of God;
it is not from works, so no one may boast.
For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works
that God has prepared in advance,
that we should live in them.**

The Word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Psalm 85:8

**Show us, LORD, your love;
and grant us your salvation.**

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

John 1:29-34

**John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said,
“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.
He is the one of whom I said,
‘A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me
because he existed before me.’
I did not know him,
but the reason why I came baptizing with water
was that he might be made known to Israel.”
John testified further, saying,
“I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven
and remain upon him.
I did not know him,
but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me,
‘On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain,
he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’
Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God.”**

The Gospel of the Lord.

SAMPLE PENANCES

Choose one of the following penances as a way of accepting God's mercy.

+ SUGGESTED PENANCES FOR ADULTS +

- **Pray Psalm 51, 63, 72, 80, 122, 145, or 146 and reflect on its meaning in your life.**
- **Plan a visit or make a call to someone who is ill or alone.**
- **During the next week, spend an hour in prayer for those who are the victims of abuse or neglect. Read Matthew 25: 31-46.**
- **Make a commitment to bring food to the parish food bank.**

- **As a family, prepare a basket of food or toiletries and give it to a family in need.**
- **Skip a meal at your favorite restaurant. Use the money to purchase a gift for a person served by a parish organization or local charity.**
- **Identify a person whom you have offended since your last confession and pray for them each day for a week.**
- **Pray the Our Father once a day for a month in thanksgiving for the joy of reconciliation.**
- **Take a "prayer time" of ten minutes or so... and ask God if there is something**
 - **God would like to say to you... and LISTEN.**

+ SUGGESTED PENANCES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS +

- **Every morning until _____ (Christmas, Easter), say a Hail Mary for peace.**
- **Reach out to a lonely person at school. Invite him or her to sit with you and your friends.**
- **Donate your next babysitting wages to the poor.**
- **For one whole week, do the dishes or set the table without being asked.**
- **Donate the money you would have spent on a CD to a local shelter. Send it anonymously.**
- **Share some of your Christmas treats with a schoolmate you find difficult to like.**
- **Give up some leisure time to shovel an elderly neighbor's driveway (sweep a porch, bring in mail, etc.)**

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PENANCE SERVICE

A Voice Cries Out	Michael Joncas	GIA
All You Who Are Thirsty	Michael Connelly	RS 644
Amazing Grace	Newton	various
Christians, Let Us Love One Another	Foltz/Nigro	OCP
Clear the Voice	Hagan	OCP
Come to the Water	Grayson Brown	OCP
Come, Emmanuel	Light/Tate	WLP
Come, O Long Expected Jesus	Haggai 2:7/Wesley	various

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come	Alford	various
Comfort, Comfort, O My People	Winkworth	OCP
Cry out with Joy and Gladness	Paul Tate	WLP, 007381
Cry out with Joy and Gladness	Rudy Borkowski	WLP, 006272
Deep Within	David Haas	GIA
Ephesians 1:3-10	Eugene Englert	GIA
Find Us Ready	Tom Booth	GIA
Gift of God	Marty Haugen	GIA
God is Love	David Haas	GIA
God's Holy Mountain We Ascend	Westendorf	WLP
I Will Be Your God	Gerard Chiusano	OCP
Lead us to Your Light	Carol Browning	GIA
Let Desert Wasteland Now Rejoice	Delores Dufner	GIA
Let Justice Roll Like a River	Marty Haugen	GIA
Let Us Sing to the Lord/ <i>Cantemos al Señor</i>	Alonso/Mahler	GIA, G-6129
My Soul in Stillness Waits	Marty Haugen	GIA
No Greater Love	Michael Joncas	GIA
Our Darkness	Taize	GIA
Patience, People	John Foley	OCP
Praise the Lord, My Soul	Tom Parker	GIA
Ready the Way	Bob Hurd	OCP
Seek the Lord	Roc O'Connor	various
Sion, Sing	Lucien Deiss	WLP
The Advent of Our God	Coffin/Chandler (tr.)	WLP
The King of Love My Shepherd Is	Ps 23/Baker	various
The Master Came to Bring Good News	Finn	GIA
The Reign of God	Delores Dufner	GIA
The Trumpet in the Morning	Rory Cooney	GIA
There's a Wideness in God's Mercy	Faber	various
Though the Mountains May Fall	Dan Schutte	OCP
Treasures Out of Darkness/ <i>Tesoros Ocultos</i>	Alan Revering	WLP
Turn to Me	John Foley	OCP
Wait While the Seed is Planted	Delores Dufner	GIA
We Are God's Work of Art	Marty Haugen	GIA
When John Baptized by Jordan's River	Dudley-Smith	Hope
When the King Shall Come Again	Is 35/Idle	Jubilate Group/Hope
Where Charity and Love Prevail	Benoit	various

This list is not exhaustive, and primarily in English. Musicians please note that the music text should focus on God's mercy, God's forgiveness, and God's infinite love. Psalmody is most appropriate during a Penance Service, reflective of the liturgical season (Advent, Lent, etc.) The most familiar language to the people of the parish, or a combination of languages, is certainly recommended.