

LENT

PREPARING FOR RECONCILIATION

The Church encourages us to listen to the word of God as part of our preparation to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation.

The scriptures proclaim God's mercy and also call us to conversion. A time of quiet reading, reflecting, and praying with the scriptures helps us to more deeply understand the love of God and to respond to it from our hearts.

N ow, now –
it is the Lord who speaks –
come back to me
with all your heart,
fasting, weeping, mourning',
Let your hearts be broken,
not your garments torn,
turn to the Lord your God again,
for he is all tenderness and compassion,
slow to anger, rich in graciousness,
and ready to relent.

Joel 2.12-13

Your Father, who sees all that is done in secret, will reward you.

Jesus said: 'Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all your reward from your father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done will reward you in secret.'

'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'

'When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your hair and wash your face, so that no one will know that you are fasting except your Father in heaven who sees all that is done in secret.; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'

Matthew 6:1-6.16-18

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See, I set before you today a blessing and a curse.

Moses said to the people:

'See, today I set before you life and prosperity,
death and disaster.'

If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I enjoin on you today, if you love the Lord your God and follow his ways, if you keep his commandments, his laws, his customs, you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to make your own. But if your heart strays, if you refuse to listen, if you let yourself be drawn into worshipping other gods and serving them, I tell you today, you will most certainly perish; you will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: so that you and your descendants may live in the love of the Lord your God, obeying his voice, clinging to him; for in this your life consists, and on this depends your long stay in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob he would give them.'

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

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God did not spare his own Son.

With God on our side who can be against us?
Since God did not spare his own Son,
but gave him up to benefit us all,
we may be certain, after such a gift,
that he will not refuse anything he can give.

Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen?
When God acquits, could anyone condemn?
Could Christ Jesus? No!
He not only died for us - he rose from the dead,
and there at God's right hand
he stands and pleads for us.

Romans 8:31-34

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Joel 2:12-13

He humbled himself, but God raised him high.

His state was divine,
yet he did not cling
to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave,
and became as men are;
and being as all men are,
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.

But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on the earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of the Father.

Philippians 2:6-11

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Joel 2:12-13

Jesus learnt to obey through suffering and became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme High Priest who has gone through to the highest heaven, we must never let go of the faith that we have professed. For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.

During his life on earth, he offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey the source of eternal salvation and was acclaimed by God with the title of high priest of the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

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Joel 2:12-13

The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory. This hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man - though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die – but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:1-2.5-8

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Joel 2:12-13

Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said:

Wake up from your sleep,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.

Ephesians 5:8-14

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The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you.

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

Romans 8:8-11

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