



Morning Prayer
First Sunday of Lent
21st February 2021

An Order for Morning Prayer on Sunday

21 February 2021

First Sunday of Lent

† Preparation

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Prayers of Penitence

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

**Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us**

**and restore to us the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessed is the Lord,
for he has heard the voice of our prayer;

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy
and in our song will we praise our God.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
creator and redeemer of all;
to you be glory and praise for ever.
From the waters of chaos you drew forth the world.
and in your great love fashioned us in your image.
Now, through the deep waters of death,
you have brought your people to new birth
by raising your Son to life in triumph.
May Christ your light ever dawn in our hearts
as we offer you our sacrifice of thanks and praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
Blessed be God for ever.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

Amen.

† The Word of God

Psalmody

Psalm 25.1-9

- 1 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;
 O my God, in you I trust;
let me not be put to shame;
 let not my enemies triumph over me.
- 2 Let none who look to you be put to shame,
but let the treacherous be shamed and frustrated.
- 3 Make me to know your ways, O Lord,
and teach me your paths.
- 4 Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
 for you have I hoped all the day long.
- 5 Remember, Lord, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.
- 6 Remember not the sins of my youth
 or my transgressions,
but think on me in your goodness, O Lord,
 according to your steadfast love.
- 7 Gracious and upright is the Lord;
therefore shall he teach sinners in the way.
- 8 He will guide the humble in doing right
and teach his way to the lowly.
- 9 All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and shall be for ever. Amen.

First Reading

Genesis 9.8-17

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' ¹²God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' ¹⁷God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Old Testament Canticle

A Song of Humility

- 1 Come, let us return to the Lord
who has torn us and will heal us.
- 2 God has stricken us
and will bind up our wounds.
- 3 After two days, he will revive us,
and on the third day will raise us up,
that we may live in his presence.

- 4 Let us strive to know the Lord;
his appearing is as sure as the sunrise.
- 5 He will come to us like the showers,
like the spring rains that water the earth.
- 6 ‘O Ephraim, how shall I deal with you?
How shall I deal with you, O Judah?
- 7 ‘Your love for me is like the morning mist,
like the dew that goes early away.
- 8 ‘Therefore, I have hewn them by the prophets,
and my judgement goes forth as the light.
- 9 ‘For loyalty is my desire and not sacrifice,
and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.’ *Hosea 6.1-6*

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Second Reading

Mark 1.9-15

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’

¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. ¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead
And Christ shall give you light.

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.
Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

Set your minds on things that are above,
not on things that are on the earth.
And Christ shall give you light.

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.
**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give you light.**

Gospel Canticle

Benedictus

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *Luke 1.68-79*

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Sermon (There is a reflection at the end of this booklet)

The Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.



Prayers

For resistance to temptation and obedience of life, let us pray to the Lord.

May God's people, baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, hold fast to the faith they have professed ... Keep the Church safe in purity of doctrine and holiness of life ... May the Holy Spirit come down in power to be her guide and lead her away from temptation.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We ask that the divine love may be victorious over all evil in the world ... Where human authority leads people astray and power is wrongly used, may the power of Christ drive away temptation and cleanse the nations with the sacred water of his baptism.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

As the Father rejoiced in the work of the Incarnate Son, may we receive grace to live as those who are pleasing to him in our own time ... Bless this community, its homes and its places of work with the protection of the divine love.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Have mercy on those who are in the wilderness places of this world, assailed by the wild beasts of doubt and temptation ... Bring them safely through their trouble, feed those who are hungry in their bodies or in their minds and lead them into the way where they may know and embrace your love.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Give rest to all who have passed through the temptations of this life and now are free from all its dangers ... Let their praise be joined with the song of the angels who ministered to the Incarnate Lord and now adore him in his glory.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

May these our prayers be acceptable in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son, the Beloved.

**Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

The Collect is said.

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**



The Conclusion

The Blessing

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

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First Sunday of Lent

By Angus Ritchie

MARK often raises readers' expectations, only to postpone their fulfilment. As Ched Myers observes, this is one of the ways in which he holds together the glory and the humility of Christ (Binding the Strong Man: A political reading of Mark's story of Jesus).

Mark builds up an atmosphere of expectation at the start of his Gospel. Yet he introduces Jesus to us in a way that emphasises Jesus's humility. In place of a genealogy, we are reminded of his obscure home town. We then encounter Jesus submitting to his baptism by John, along with the rest of the crowd.

Suddenly, however, the mood is transformed. The heavens are "torn apart", the Spirit descends "like a dove", and a voice declares Jesus to be God's Son. The lectionary pairs this passage with the story of the Flood. According to St Gregory Thaumaturgus, by sending the Spirit upon Jesus in the form of a dove, the Father is "pointing him out right there as the new Noah, even the maker of Noah, and the good pilot of the nature which is in shipwreck" (Fourth Homily, On the Holy Theophany).

The glory of the new Noah is greater than the old. The first Noah's righteousness preserved his own life. By contrast, the righteousness of this new Noah leads to his death, that a "shipwrecked" world might be "piloted" to resurrection life. In the words of our epistle, the ark that saved a few prefigures the baptism now offered to all (1 Peter 3.21).

Once again, Mark postpones the fulfilment of our expectations. After descending upon Jesus in the form of a dove, the Spirit "immediately" drives him into the wilderness. Jesus's time of trial echoes that of all humanity. It is after God has worked through us most powerfully that we tend to be most vulnerable to pride. That will be the case at the very centre of this Gospel, when Peter confesses Jesus as Messiah and is almost immediately rebuked for resisting his teaching about the Cross (Mark 8.27f).

Times of retreat and renunciation are essential if we are to respond to the call of God's grace, and not be ruled by our ego and pride. The

Australian pastor Sarah Bachelard warns that much of our Christian action is in fact “functionally atheist”. While we may take actions in pursuit of laudable goals, these are often motivated by a proud desire for self-justification rather than expressing our obedience to the God who has already justified us in Christ. It is the uncomfortable silence of the desert which opens up a space for God to confront the divided state of our hearts.

The Lenten fast can itself become an exercise in self-justification. This is why the Orthodox begin their preparations for Lent with a Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, to recall worshippers to the purpose of their self-denial. Our aim in Lent should not be to justify ourselves before God by our acts of penance, but, rather, through those acts to develop a genuinely penitential heart. Such a heart knows itself to depend entirely on the mercy of the Lord. It can, therefore, respond to his will with joyful obedience.

For Jesus, as for us, retreating to the wilderness is not a pious evasion of the challenges of daily life, but an essential preparation for those struggles. As Myers notes, the “wild beasts” of verse 13 refer back to the Prophets, who used this image to refer to the oppressive leaders of their time (cf. Daniel 7).

With the arrest of John, Mark’s narrative turns to the unjust rulers of Jesus’s day. There is an echo here of our Ash Wednesday readings: as they remind us, the fast that God chooses has a political dimension — not only feeding the hungry and housing the homeless, but breaking the yoke that oppresses them (Isaiah 58.6,7).

The interior ascesis of Lent is essential to this work. The inner and the outer struggles are deeply intertwined. If our action is motivated by self-justification and pride, it will not lead to any genuine transformation; instead, it will reproduce the very faults that it seeks to challenge. We can become faithful heralds of God’s Kingdom only if we first allow him into our hearts, to confront our vanities and heal us of our sin.