



Suggested Service of Reconciliation

Advent - Year of Mercy

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as we begin our Year of Mercy, we gather in this time of Advent, we prepare to welcome your Son Jesus Christ into the world. We pray that we might hear your voice and respond to your call to forgive and be forgiven. We come together as people who have sinned. May our time together bring us your forgiveness and help us to see you at work in our lives each day.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Reading

Colossians 3:12-15

Forgive anyone who does you wrong as Christ has forgiven you.

You are God's chosen race, his saints;

He loves you and you should be clothed in sincere compassion,
in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience.

Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins.

The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same.

Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love.

And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts,

because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body.

Always be thankful.

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you.
Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom.
With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God;
and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm: R /The Lord is kind and merciful.

Merciful and gracious is the Lord,
slow to anger and abounding in kindness.
Not according to our sins does he deal with us,
nor does he requite us according to our crimes. R/

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him,
For he knows how we are formed;
he remembers that we are dust. R/

But the kindness of the Lord is from eternity
to eternity toward those who fear him,
And his justice toward children's children
among those who keep his covenant
and remember to fulfill his precepts. R/

Gospel Matthew 3:1-6

Make straight his ways

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said;

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,

make his paths straight.

This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Homily

Examination of conscience

Our conscience challenges us all the time to be the best people we can be. Sometimes we respond to those challenges and surprise even ourselves. From time to time, however, we do not hear the challenge or we ignore it and fail to respond out of fear or selfishness. As we begin this special Year of Mercy, we listen in quiet time now to the challenges our conscience has made and we ask God's forgiveness as we begin this special Year of Mercy for the times we have failed to respond in a generous Spirit.

1. I am challenged to know God. I seek forgiveness for the times I have been indifferent or wrapped up in myself, and for the way I have limited my time with God.
2. I am challenged to be just and fair in today's world and all its challenges. I seek forgiveness for the times I have not shared what I have to give. I am sorry if my weakness has led me to wrong attitudes to others, based on their colour, creed or race.

3. I am challenged to be a true follower of Jesus. I seek forgiveness for the times that I pretended the gospel message was too difficult to follow and made excuses for not acting in a Christian way. May this Year of Mercy help me seek to become a better Christian.
4. I am challenged to Love. I seek forgiveness for any abuse that I may have allowed or inflicted on family members or others in my life, whether it be verbal, emotional or physical. Help me to heal those whose lives have been broken.
5. I am challenged to believe in myself. I seek forgiveness for the times I may have devalued myself before others by the way I have misused my body with food, alcohol or drugs.
6. Mindful of our need for God's sustaining goodness we now approach the priest for your forgiveness and reconciliation. May we approach you Lord in this Year of Mercy, with a willingness to change and become better Christians.

Individual confession and absolution.

Perhaps use a symbol here for the people after their sins have been left behind e.g. a stone in a basket

Our Father

Sign of peace

Concluding Prayer

God of Mercy, you show us the power of your great love. In forgiving us you give us freedom to forgive others. As we journey together towards Bethlehem in this Year of Mercy, may we draw closer to you and to one another.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.