

As we approach the penitential season of Lent, we hear a warning from Jesus about sin. Don't focus on the sins of your brother, your sister, or your neighbor; look at your own sins. Every year, Lent affords us the opportunity to recognize our sinfulness and our need for God's forgiveness, which Jesus offers us most dramatically on the cross. Gathered today on the eve of Lent, let us commit ourselves to recognizing our own faults and failures, repenting of our sins, and resolving to follow the Lord more faithfully.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 172

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow as we say) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

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

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 12

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

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.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:

Grant us, O Lord, we pray, that the course of our world may be directed by your peaceful rule and that your Church may rejoice, untroubled in her devotion.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 122

A reading from the Book of Sirach

Sirach 27:4-7

When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear; so do one's faults when one speaks. As the test of what the potter molds is in the furnace, so in tribulation is the test of the just. The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; so too does one's speech disclose the bent of one's mind. Praise no one before he speaks, for it is then that people are tested.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

R/. Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

R/. Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praise to your name, Most High,
To proclaim your kindness at dawn and your faithfulness throughout the night. **R/.**

The just one shall flourish like the palm tree, like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow.
They that are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. **R/.**

They shall bear fruit even in old age; vigorous and sturdy shall they be,
Declaring how just is the LORD, my rock, in whom there is no wrong. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Brothers and sisters: When this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Luke 6:39-45

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Glory to you, Lord

Jesus told his disciples a parable, "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye.

"A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

• It's very easy to be judgmental, especially these days. Before we know it, we've disparaged someone for what they said or did. Let today's Gospel be a warning to us. Notice that it offers an alternative. Refocus. When it comes to failings, look in the mirror, not out to the world. Especially as we enter Lent, we should practice examining our consciences. If we do so honestly, we can identify how to improve ourselves...and the way we see others. Note also the way Jesus counsels us to handle the faults in others. We're not told to condemn our brother or accuse our sister. No, we're called to kindly help them. Then both you and them will be better.

- Today's Gospel has a lot to say about our eyes and our brother's (or sister's). But there is another pair of eyes to think about today: God's eyes. Over the last few weeks, we have heard Jesus teaching his disciples how to see the world through God's eyes. He told his disciples that God does not see poor people as unfortunate, but as the inheritors of the kingdom. Those who are hungry, grieving, or maligned will end up joyful. God foresees what we cannot. God calls us to love our enemies because God does not see enemies but fellow children of God. God sees us stumbling from the wooden beam in our eye and wants us to be healthy and whole. Let us pray for the grace to see our lives from God's eyes. How much differently will we see?
- Saint Paul leaves the Corinthians a farewell message: "Be . . . fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58). This ties in so well with Jesus' call to his disciples, here and elsewhere, to bear good fruit. We are called to put our faith into action, to make the world better, to give a glimpse of the kingdom through our actions. We are known by the fruit we produce. What fruit have we produced or are we producing?

Question of the Week

What beam in my eye will I remove this Lent? What fruit will I produce during Lent? In other words, what two concrete things will I do to see more clearly and to contribute to Jesus' mission?

Prayer of the Faithful:

We proclaim God's generosity from dawn to darkest night, and so we have the confidence to bring our needs before God in heaven.

- For God's holy Church, that we may remove the wooden beams that obstruct our ability to clearly see the needs of others while obstructing the world from recognizing our Christian mission, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For government leaders, that they may work to remove the splinters that afflict the people they serve, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all living things that are dormant during the winter, that they may reemerge and blossom this spring and bear fruit in due season, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That this coming season of Lent may be a time of repentance and renewal for Christians everywhere, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all of us, that through the next forty days we not lose sight of the joy that awaits us at the end of Lent, especially during this Jubilee Year of Hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

God of all goodness, we call on you to fulfill our most precious needs as we thank you for all you have done for us. Hear the prayers we make today and grant us the wisdom to see our own failings and the grace to overcome them, through your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 208

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

Nourished by your saving gifts, we beseech your mercy, Lord, that by this same Sacrament with which you feed us in the present age, you may make us partakers of life eternal.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us,  protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**