

Liturgy at Home: Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday)

Introduction

Alongside the Mass Christians throughout time have gathered together to pray by singing hymns, psalms and canticles, listening to passages of Scripture, and offering prayers of intercession – we call this kind of prayer the 'Liturgy of the Hours,' or the 'Divine Office.' As we cannot gather for the Eucharist this Sunday lets embrace this ancient tradition and pray in our homes either as a family or by ourselves. If you are praying as a family one person leads, the others say the words in bold.

In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Hymn

Either this one, another of your choosing, or a moment of silence if not feeling particularly musical!



1. God of mer-cy and com - pas - sion, Look with
2. By my sins I have de - ser - ved Death and
3. By my sins I have a - ban - don'd Right and
4. See our Sav - ior, bleed - ing, dy - ing, On the



1. pi - ty_ up - on me, Fa - ther, let me call Thee
2. end - less_ mi - se - ry, Hell with all its pains and
3. claim to_ heav'n a - bove. Where the saints re - jice for -
4. cross of_ Cal - va - ry; To that cross my sins have



1. Fa - ther, 'Tis Thy child re - turns to Thee.
2. tor - ments, And for all e - ter - ni - ty.
3. ev - er In a bound - less_ sea of love.
4. nail'd_ Him, Yet He bleeds and_ dies for me.



Je - sus, Lord, I ask for mer - cy; Let me



not im - plore in vain;_ All my sins, I now de -



test_ them, Ne - ver will I_ sin a - gain.

Psalmody

Psalm 117

Antiphon 1. You are my God: I thank you. * **My God, I praise you.**

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love endures for ever.

**Let the sons of Israel say:
'His love endures for ever.'**

**Let the sons of Aaron say:
'His love endures for ever.'**

**Let those who fear the Lord say:
'His love endures for ever.'**

I called to the Lord in my distress;
he answered and freed me.
The Lord is at my side; I do not fear.
What can man do against me?
The Lord is at my side as my helper;
I shall look down on my foes.

**It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in men;
it is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.**

The nations all encompassed me;
in the Lord's name I crushed them.
They compassed me, compassed me about;
in the Lord's name I crushed them.
They compassed me about like bees;

they blazed like a fire among thorns.
In the Lord's name I crushed them.

**I was hard-pressed and was falling,
but the Lord came to help me.
The Lord is my strength and my song;
he is my saviour.
There are shouts of joy and victory
in the tents of the just.**

The Lord's right hand has triumphed;
his right hand raised me.
The Lord's right hand has triumphed;
I shall not die, I shall live
and recount his deeds.

You are my God, I thank you.

My God, I praise you.

**Give thanks to the Lord for he is good;
for his love endures for ever.**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
**as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Antiphon 1. You are my God: I thank you. **My God, I praise you.**

Canticle: Daniel 3:52-57

Antiphon 2. Lord, you can deliver us from the hand of the one who is stronger than we are: *
save us, Lord, our God.

You are blest, Lord God of our fathers.
To you glory and praise for evermore.

**Blest your glorious holy name.
To you glory and praise for evermore.**

You are blest in the temple of your glory.
To you glory and praise for evermore.

**You are blest who gaze into the depths.
To you glory and praise for evermore.**

You are blest in the firmament of heaven.
To you glory and praise for evermore.

**You who walk on the wings of the wind.
To you glory and praise for evermore.**

May they bless you, the saints and the angels.
To you glory and praise for evermore.

**From the heavens, the earth and the sea.
To you glory and praise for evermore.**

You are blest, Lord God of our fathers.
To you glory and praise for evermore.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Antiphon 2. Lord, you can deliver us from the hand of the one who is stronger than we are:
save us, Lord, our God.

Psalm 150

Antiphon 3. Praise God * in his wonderful works.

Praise God in his holy place,
praise him in his mighty heavens.
Praise him for his powerful deeds,
praise his surpassing greatness.

**O praise him with sound of trumpet,
praise him with lute and harp.
Praise him with timbral and dance,
praise him with strings and pipes.**

O praise him with resounding cymbals,
praise him with clashing of cymbals.
Let everything that lives and that breathes
give praise to the Lord.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Antiphon 3. Praise God in his wonderful works.

Collect of the Day

Let us pray.

O God, who through your Word
reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way,
grant, we pray,
that with prompt devotion and eager faith
the Christian people may hasten
toward the solemn celebrations to come.
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: 1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13

A reading from the first book of Samuel:

The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among his sons.' When Samuel arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed stands there before him,' but the Lord said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him: God does not see as man sees: man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.' Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen

these.' He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes.' Jesse had him sent for, a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one.' At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 22

℟ The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. ℟

He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.

You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort. ℟

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. ℟

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. ℟

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

A reading from St Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory!

I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory!

Gospel Reading: John 9:1-41

A reading from the holy Gospel ✠ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?' 'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered 'he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.'

'As long as the day lasts I must carry out the work of the one who sent me; the night will soon be here when no one can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.'

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man, and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how do your eyes come to be open?' 'The man called Jesus' he answered 'made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I could see.' They asked, 'Where is he?' 'I don't know' he answered.

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?'

'He is a prophet' replied the man. However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind and had gained his sight, without first sending for his parents and asking them, 'Is this man really your son who you say was born blind? If so, how is it that he is now able to see?' His parents answered, 'We

know he is our son and we know he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that he can see now, or who opened his eyes. He is old enough: let him speak for himself.' His parents spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This was why his parents said, 'He is old enough; ask him.'

So the Jews again sent for the man and said to him, 'Give glory to God! For our part, we know that this man is a sinner.' The man answered, 'I don't know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He replied, 'I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' At this they hurled abuse at him: 'You can be his disciple,' they said 'we are disciples of Moses: we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man replied, 'Now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind; if this man were not from God, he couldn't do a thing.' 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.

Jesus said: 'It is for judgement that I have come into this world, so that those without sight may see and those with sight turn blind.' Hearing this, some Pharisees who were present said to him, 'We are not blind, surely?' Jesus replied:

'Blind? If you were, you would not be guilty, but since you say, "We see," your guilt remains.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection

If you are praying as a family this would be a fitting place to have a moment of sharing on how the Scriptures have spoken to you today.

Intercessions

In real humility of heart let us pray to God who cares for everyone, saying:

℟ Lord, have mercy on your people.

Defend the church against all danger. **℟**

Protect Francis our Pope. **℟**

Be the strength of **N.** our Bishop. **℟**

Keep our parish united in prayer. **℟**

Save you people. **℟**

Preserve the world in peace. **℟**

Bring light to those who do not believe. **℟**

Guide the rulers of all nations. **℟**

Come to the aid of the poor. **℟**

Comfort the afflicted. **℟**

Bring an end to the coronavirus. **℟**

Have mercy on the dead. **℟**

We make our own prayers.

We ask Mary to place the whole world under her maternal protection, saying:

Hail Mary...

Let us pray together in the words Jesus taught us, saying:

Our Father...

Spiritual Communion

All sit in silence for a few moments, then we pray together asking Jesus to make his home in our heart:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Thanksgiving and conclusion

Gospel Cantic: Luke 1:68-79 (Benedictus)

Benedictus Antiphon. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind. * **Only Christ, the son of God, has done this.**

Blessed be the Lord, ✠ the God of Israel!
He has visited his people and redeemed them.

**He has raised up for us a mighty saviour
in the house of David his servant,
as he promised by the lips of holy men,
those who were his prophets from of old.**

A saviour who would free us from our foes,
from the hands of all who hate us.
So his love for our fathers is fulfilled
and his holy covenant remembered.

**He swore to Abraham our father to grant us,
that free from fear,
and saved from the hands of our foes,
we might serve him in holiness and justice
all the days of our life in his presence.**

As for you, little child,
you shall be called a prophet of God,
the Most High.

You shall go ahead of the Lord
to prepare his ways before him,

**To make known to his people their salvation
through forgiveness of all their sins,
the loving-kindness of the heart of our God
who visits us like the dawn from on high.**

He will give light to those in darkness,
those who dwell in the shadow of death,
and guide us into the way of peace.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Benedictus Antiphon. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind. **Only Christ, the son of God, has done this.**

The Lord bless us, ✠ and keep us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**