

Prison Ministry Liturgy Resource

The Lord is Inside

This resource could be used as a standalone liturgy for the weekend of the 7th of November (Prison Sunday), in a prison or with a group involved with prison chaplaincy. Alternatively, parts of it could be used for other gatherings, at other times, or incorporated into a parish Mass.

Preparation:

A prayer focus has been set up, including, if possible: a cloth, a candle, some small sticks, a jar of oil, a bread roll, two small coins, a cross and an icon of Christ. If any of these items are not allowed (for example, in a prison environment), you can substitute pictures of them.

GATHERING

Introduction:

In 2016, the Jubilee Year for People in Prison, Pope Francis told a gathering of prison chaplains: “The task of a chaplain is to let the prisoners know that the Lord is inside them. No cell is so isolated that it can keep the Lord out. He is there. He cries with them, works with them, hopes with them. His paternal and maternal love arrives everywhere.” Today we celebrate prison ministry in Australia. At times we look for God outside: outside our walls, outside our circumstances, outside ourselves. But today we remember that there is nowhere we can be beyond the reach of God’s love.

Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge, with respect, the Traditional Custodians of God’s creation in these lands now called Australia.

We acknowledge Christ’s presence inside ancient communities and spiritualities.

We affirm the Elders of this place and commit to the journey of justice and reconciliation for all.

Call to Prayer:

[Light the candle.]

Leader: Let us light the candle, recalling that Christ is present as light to the world.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Penitential Act:

Leader: Lord Jesus, you have been with us in the ups and downs of our lives. Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Christ Jesus, you are ever-present in the smallest of living creatures. Christ, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you promise to reconcile all things to yourself and to one another.
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Collect of the Day:

Collect of the 32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B.

LISTENING

First Reading:

[Ask three people to face the group, holding before them the sticks, the jar of oil and the bread roll.]

A reading from the first book of the Kings. [1 Kings 17:10-16]

Responsorial Psalm:

[Psalm 145:7-10]

Response: Praise the Lord, my soul!

Gospel:

[Ask one person to face the group, holding out the two small coins.]

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. [Mark 12:41-44]

RESPONDING

Reflection:

Leader: Let us consider the small resources that the people in these readings thought they had. Only some sticks, only a little oil in a jug, only two small coins. But in each case, God was working through them and they became an example to the rest of us. What resources do we have today? And how can God, who is already inside us, use us to help others?

Universal Prayer:

Leader: Even when we have little to give, we always have prayer.
Let us offer our prayers, in faith, to our merciful God.

Reader: For Pope Francis and our Church.
May they always share God's paternal and maternal love. We pray:

All: God of mercy, hear us.

Reader: For our world leaders and our prison systems.
May they be models of justice and compassion. We pray:

All: God of mercy, hear us.

Reader: For those who are in prison, especially the most vulnerable.
May they discover Christ inside and share their resources. We pray:

All: God of mercy, hear us.

Reader: For the family and friends of those who are in prison.
May they maintain strong connections and receive the support they need.
We pray:

All: God of mercy, hear us.

Reader: For the peoples of our First Nations.
May they inspire a culture of respect for each other and our land. We pray:

All: God of mercy, hear us.

Reader: For those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit.
May they know the presence of God and of those who care. We pray:

All: God of mercy, hear us.

Reader: For those who have died, especially while in prison.
May they experience the freedom of God's reign, for ever and ever.

All: God of mercy, hear us.

Leader: Liberating God,
You hear us in our need.
Work through us to shine your light in the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord,

All: Amen.

Poem:

We awaken in Christ's body,
As Christ awakens our bodies.
There I look down and my poor hand is Christ,
He enters my foot and is infinitely me.
I move my hand and wonderfully
My hand becomes Christ,
Becomes all of Him.
I move my foot and at once
He appears in a flash of lightning...
Let yourself receive the one
Who is opening to you so deeply...
And everything that is hurt, everything
That seemed to us dark, harsh, shameful,
Maimed, ugly, irreparably damaged
Is in Him transformed.
And in Him, recognized as whole, as lovely,
And radiant in His light,
We awaken as the beloved
In every last part of our body.

Saint Symeon the New Theologian, Hymn 15

GOING FORTH

Blessing:

Leader: May the Lord bless our hands, as they do His work.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless our feet, as they take His footsteps.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless our hearts, as they grow in His love.

All: Amen.

Sending Forth:

Leader: And may we go in peace, making a gift of our lives.

All: Thanks be to God!

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Suggested Hymns:

Mercy is One of God's Names by Peter Kearney

<https://peterkearney.bandcamp.com/track/30-mercy-is-one-of-gods-names>

St Theresa's Prayer by John Michael Talbot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SQtXzjC2pg>



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