

**RICH IN MERCY, GREAT IN LOVE:**  
**An Advent Reconciliation Liturgy**  
**for the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

**INTRODUCTORY RITES**

**HYMN**

**Suggestions:**

*God of All People* (D. Haas—GIA)

*Comfort, Comfort, O My People* (Public Domain)

*The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns* / *tune: MORNING SONG* (Public Domain)

*(or some another suitable hymn)*

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**GREETING**

**Priest:** Grace, mercy, and peace be with you  
from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

**All:** And with your spirit.

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

**Priest:** Brothers and Sisters,

We gather here this day [night] because we are conscious of our sinfulness.

We also gather here because we are confident that our God is a merciful God,  
who has given us the sacrament of Reconciliation in order that we might experience  
God's mercy through the ministry of the Church.

This year, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee celebrates the 175<sup>th</sup> year since our founding  
in 1843. Over the course of the next year, we are invited to contemplate the fidelity  
of God's abundant love and mercy throughout our history. Through times of war and  
peace, growth and vitality, struggle and home, God has been rich in mercy and great  
in love.

During this Advent season, we prepare to celebrate Christ's coming to earth and we  
anticipate the time when Christ will come again in glory. Therefore, let us reflect  
more deeply on Christ's presence here in our midst so that we may bring God's  
message of mercy and reconciliation to a world in great need.

So let us pray... (*silence*)

## OPENING PRAYER

**Priest:** Loving and Merciful Lord,  
hear the prayers of those who call on you  
and forgive the sins of those who confess to you,  
granting us in your abundant compassion both pardon and peace.  
We ask this 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.

**All: Amen.**

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING

**Ephesians 2:4-10**

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Brothers and Sisters:

God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love which he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast. For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works, that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

*Psalm 33: Let Your Mercy Be on Us / Señor, Que Tu Misericordia* (M. Haugen—GIA)

*Psalm 33: Blessed the People* (R. Debruyne—OCP)

*Psalm 33: The Lord Fills the Earth with His Love* (P. Inwood—OCP)

*Psalm 103: The Lord is Kind and Merciful* (M. Haugen—GIA)

*Psalm 103: The Lord is Kind and Merciful / El Señor Es Compasivo* (T. Alonso—GIA)

*Psalm 103: The Lord is Kind and Merciful* (R. Manalo—OCP)

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## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

### GOSPEL

John 15:9-14

The Lord be with you.

**And with your spirit.**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples:

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you.

Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my life, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

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### HOMILY

## RITE OF RECONCILIATION

### EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

*(based on Misericordiae Vultus, from Pope Francis in the Jubilee Year of Mercy)*

**Priest:** My dear friends,

as we prepare to welcome Christ in our midst,

let us pause to reflect upon how we have shown love and mercy to our brothers and sisters.

*Let us kneel* as we recall St. Paul’s words from his letter to the Ephesians: God is rich in mercy and great in love.

*A Kyrie Eleison refrain is sung.*

Reader 1: God's mercy breaks through the dimension of space and time,  
inserting everything into the eternal mystery of love.  
it is as if to say that not only in history,  
but for all eternity,  
we will always be under the merciful gaze of the Father. (pause)

Reader 2: Have I avoided the love of God, neglecting prayer and worship? (pause)

Have I listened for God's voice, looking for signs of God's mercy and  
action in the persons and circumstances around me? (pause)

Have I trusted in the mercy of God, or have I let my own unworthiness  
stand in the way of hope? (pause)

And so we pray...*Kyrie Eleison...*

Reader 1: With our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze,  
we experience the Love of the Most Holy Trinity.  
The mission Jesus received from the Father  
was that of revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness. (pause)

Reader 2: Is my image of God in harmony with the way Jesus describes God?  
(pause)

Am I open to the mercy of God in my life? (pause)

Am I willing to let go of all my preconceived notions of God and let  
God transform my mind and heart? (pause)

And so we pray...*Kyrie Eleison...*

Reader 1: When faced with sin, God responds with the fullness of mercy. Mercy  
will always be greater than any sin, and no one can place limits on the  
love of God who is ever ready to forgive. (pause)

Reader 2: What stands in the way of my responding fully to the mercy of God in  
my life? (pause)

What circumstances in my life are most difficult for me right now? Can I  
let God's mercy into these difficulties? (pause)

Am I allowing God's merciful love to reach out to others through me?  
(pause)

And so we pray...*Kyrie Eleison...*

**Priest:** Let us reflect on the areas in our own lives in need of forgiveness so that we can bring them to God's sacrament of mercy.  
(longer period of silence)

And so we pray...*Kyrie Eleison...*

## **GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS**

**Priest:** Our God is a God of mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in love.  
Like the Father who welcomes us home,  
or the mother who kisses away our wounds,  
our God is ready to forgive.  
Therefore, with trust in his goodness, let us stand,  
join hands and together confess our sin.

**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.**

**Priest:** Now, in obedience to Christ himself,  
we join in prayer to the Father, asking him to forgive us as we forgive others.

**Our Father...**

**Priest:** Almighty and eternal God  
you sent your only-begotten Son  
to reconcile the world to yourself.

Lift from our hearts the oppressive gloom of sin,  
so that we may celebrate the approaching  
dawn of Christ's birth with fitting joy.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

### **INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION OF SIN & ABSOLUTION**

*The priest or another minister instructs the assembly where the confessors will be located. A brief word regarding the manner of confession may be given. If there is to be a common ending, the assembly should be advised to remain in church for the Proclamation of Praise and Concluding Rite. If there is no common ending, the **Concluding Rite** precedes Individual Confession and Absolution.*

**PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE** *(or a suitable song may be sung)*

STAND

*After individual confession has concluded, the liturgy continues.*

**Priest:** Let us pray...*(silence)*

Lord God,  
Creator and Ruler of your kingdom of light,  
in your great love for this world  
you gave up your only Son for our salvation.  
His cross has redeemed us,  
his death has given us life,  
and his resurrection has raised us to glory.

Through Christ we ask you to be always present among us.  
Teach us to be reverent in the presence of your glory;  
fill our hearts with faith, our days with good works,  
and our lives with love.

May your truth be on our lips and your wisdom in our actions,  
that we may receive the reward of eternal life.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

## **CONCLUDING RITE**

### **Blessing**

**Priest:** May the Father bless us for we are God's children, born to eternal life.

**All: Amen.**

**Priest:** May the Son show us his saving power, for he died and rose for us.

**All: Amen.**

**Priest:** May the Spirit give us his gift of holiness  
and lead us by the right path, for he dwells in our hearts.

**All: Amen.**

**Priest:** The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

***SOME IDEAS FOR PENANCES*** (based on the Corporal Works of Mercy)

Feed the Hungry; Give Drink to the Thirsty

- Donate food to a food pantry
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen
- Prepare a meal for a family during their time of need

Clothe the Naked

- Go through your drawers and closets and find good-condition clothes to donate to St. Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army or Good Will
- Reach out to neighbors that have lost their possessions in fires, floods, or other natural disasters
- Donate clothing and shoes to our twin parish in Haiti

Visit the Sick

- Cook and deliver a meal to a sick, elderly or homebound relative or friend
- Volunteer to drive a sick relative or neighbor to a medical appointment
- Spend quality time with someone who is homebound or in a nursing home

Shelter the Homeless

- Donate blankets to a homeless shelter
- Assist with cooking a meal at a homeless shelter
- Save your coin change into a jar and donate it to a charity that tends to the needs of the poor and homeless

Visit the Imprisoned

- Donate books to a jail library
- Pray for the families of people in jail
- Guard against racism, practice inclusion—not exclusion, and be mindful that all are members of the human race and equal in God's eyes

Bury the Dead

- Visit a cemetery & place flowers on a grave that has none
- Assist with a bereavement luncheon or minister at a funeral
- Spend time with widows and widowers