

Lenten Communal Penance Service

When a number of penitents assemble at the same time to receive sacramental absolution, it is fitting that they be prepared for the sacrament by a celebration of the word of God. Those who will receive the sacrament at another time may also take part in the service.

Communal celebration shows more clearly the ecclesial nature of penance. The faithful listen together to the word of God, which proclaims his mercy and invites them to conversion; at the same time they examine the conformity of their lives with that word of God and help each other through common prayer.

If necessary, several priests should be available in suitable places to hear individual confessions and to reconcile the penitents. (*Rite of Penance*, #22)

Pastoral Suggestion #1: The church may be divided into two sections. The people may assemble in the front pews of the church leaving the back pews available for confessors to position themselves in various places of the area to maintain privacy. At the time when individual confessions are to be heard, the assembly is seated. Ushers may direct the people to the confessors, one pew at a time, so as to avoid congestion in the aisles. The people may be advised beforehand to: 1) go to next open confessor so as to avoid undue delay; 2) remain for the conclusion of the service. The above directions may be included in a printed program.

Introductory Rites

Gathering Hymn

Suggestions

Tune

	<i>Source/Composer</i>	<i>Publisher</i>
Amazing Grace	<i>New Britain</i>	OCP
Be Not Afraid	Bob Dufford	GIA
Come You Sinners, Poor and Needy	RS 954 <i>Beach Spring</i>	
Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive	RS 952 <i>St. Anne</i>	
Glory and Praise to Our God	Dan Schutte	OCP
He Healed the Darkness of My Mind	RS 951 <i>Old 100th</i>	
Jesus Remember Me	Jacques Berthier	GIA – Taizé
Our Father We Have Wandered	RS 955 <i>Passion Chorale</i>	
The Master Came to Bring Good News	RS 956 <i>Ich Glaub' an Gott</i>	
There's a Wideness in God's Mercy	<i>In Babilone</i>	GIA/OCP

Greeting

After the opening song the presider greets the people. The meaning of the celebration is explained in these or similar words:

Presider:

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ who laid down his life for our sins.

All: Glory to him forever. Amen

Opening Prayer

Presider:

Brothers and sisters, God calls us to conversion; let us therefore ask him for the grace of sincere repentance.

(All pray in silence for a brief period.)

Lord our God, you are patient with sinners and accept our desire to make amends. We acknowledge our sins and are resolved to change our lives. Help us to celebrate this sacrament of your mercy so that we may reform our lives and receive from you the gift of everlasting joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The readings should be seasonal as well as reflective of the sacrament being celebrated. For example, the readings for the Mass of the day may be appropriate.

First Reading:

Lev 19, 1-2, 11-18

Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy.

Responsorial Psalm (sung)

Ps 51

Suggestions

Tune

Be Merciful O Lord (Psalm 51)

Be With Me Lord (Psalm 91)

Be With Me Lord (Psalm 91)

The Lord is King/Merciful (Psalm 103)

With the Lord there is Mercy (Psalm 130)

Source/Composer

Patricia Craig

Marty Haugen

Michael Joncas

Marty Haugen

Marty Haugen

Publisher

GIA

GIA

OCP

GIA

GIA

Gospel Acclamation (If the acclamation is not sung, it is not used.)

Gospel:

Mt 25, 31-46

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.

Homily

Examination of Conscience

(The Examination of Conscience is adapted from Appendix III of the Rite of Penance.)

A. The Lord says, "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart."

1. Is my heart set on God, so that I really love him above all things and am faithful to his commandments? Or am I more concerned about the things of this world?
2. God spoke to us in his Son. Is my faith in God firm and secure? Have I been careful to grow in my understanding of the faith, to hear God's word?
3. Do I pray regularly? Do I offer God my difficulties, my joys and my sorrows?
4. Have I love and reverence for God's name? Have I shown disrespect for the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints?
5. Do I keep Sundays and feast days holy by taking a full part, with attention and devotion, in the liturgy, and especially in the Mass?
6. Are there false gods that I worship by giving them greater attention and deeper trust than I give to God: money, superstition, astrology?

B. The Lord says, "Love one another as I have loved you."

1. Have I a genuine love for my neighbors? Or do I use them for my own ends, or do to them what I would not want done to myself?
2. In my family life, have I shown proper respect toward my parents? Have I been careful to give a Christian upbringing to my children? Have I been faithful to my spouse?
3. Do I share my possessions with the less fortunate? Do I do my best to help the victims of oppression, misfortune and poverty?
4. Does my life reflect the mission I received at confirmation? Do I share in the apostolic and charitable works of the church and in the life of my parish?
5. Am I concerned for the good and prosperity of the human community in which I live, or do I spend my life caring only for myself? Do I share to the best of my ability in the work of promoting justice, morality, harmony and love in human relations?

C. Christ our Lord says, "Be perfect as your Father is perfect."

1. Where is my life really leading me? Is the hope of eternal life my inspiration? Have I tried to grow in the life of the Spirit through prayer, reading the word of God, receiving the sacraments? Have I imposed my own will on others, without respecting their freedom and rights?

2. What use have I made of time, of health and strength, of the gifts God has given me? Do I use them to become more perfect each day?

3. Have I been patient in accepting the sorrows and disappointments of life?

4. Have I kept my whole body pure as a temple of the Holy Spirit? Have I dishonored my body physically or through unworthy conversation or thoughts? Have I indulged in activities which offend Christian or human decency?

5. Have I gone against my conscience out of fear or hypocrisy?

A period of silence should always be included so that each person may personally examine his or her conscience. (*Rite of Penance*, Appendix II, #59)

RITE OF RECONCILIATION

General Confession of Sins

Deacon: (Please kneel.)

Presider: My brothers and sisters, confess your sins and pray for each other, that you may be healed.

(After a brief period of silence, all say together:)

I confess to almighty God...

Deacon: (Please stand.)

Presider:

The Lord is merciful. He makes us clean of heart and leads us out into his freedom when we acknowledge our guilt. Let us ask him to forgive us and bind up the wounds inflicted by our sins.

Give us the grace of true repentance. We pray: *Lord, have mercy.*

Pardon your servants and release them from the debt of sin. We pray:

Forgive your people who confess their sins, and restore them to full communion with your Church. We pray:

Renew the glory of baptism in those who have lost it by sin. We pray:

Welcome them to your altar, and renew their spirit with the hope of eternal glory. We pray:

Keep them faithful to your sacraments and loyal in your service. We pray:

Renew your love in their hearts, and make them bear witness to it in their daily lives. We pray:

Keep them always obedient to your commandments and protect within them your gift of eternal life. We pray:

Presider:

Let us now pray to God our Father in the words Christ gave us, and ask him for his forgiveness and protection from all evil.

Our Father...

Presider:

Lord, draw near to your servants who in the presence of your Church confess they are sinners. Through the ministry of the Church free them from all sin so that renewed in spirit they may give you thankful praise.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Individual Confession and Absolution

Then the penitents go to the priests designated for individual confession and confess their sins. Each one receives and accepts a fitting act of satisfaction and is absolved. After hearing the confession and offering suitable counsel, the priest extends his hands over the penitent's head and gives absolution. Everything else which is customary in individual confession is omitted. (*Rite of Penance*, #55).

Pastoral suggestion #2: The presider may remain at the presidential chair during individual confession and absolution. As a sign of reconciliation with the community the penitents, after receiving absolution, may exchange a sign of peace with the presider at the presidential chair. (cf. Pastoral Suggestion #1)

<i>Suggestion Tune</i>	<i>Source/Composer</i>	<i>Publisher</i>
Healer of Our Every Ill	Marty Haugen	GATHER
Shelter Me O God	Bob Hurd	OCP

Proclamation of Praise for God's Mercy

When the individual confessions have been completed... the presider invites all present to offer thanks and encourages them to do good works which will proclaim the grace of repentance in the life of the entire community. It is fitting for all to sing a psalm or hymn or to say a litany in acknowledgment of God's power and mercy, for example, the Cantic of Mary. (*Rite of Penance*, 56)

Pastoral suggestion #3: The presider may introduce the proclamation of praise for God's mercy with these or similar words: *We have experienced the love and mercy of our God. Now we must dedicate ourselves to living lives worthy of the grace we have received. Let us praise the Lord in song.*

Song:

<i>Suggestion Tune</i>	<i>Source/Composer</i>	<i>Publisher</i>
Who Calls You By Name	David Haas	GIA-WCYBN/1
Glory and Praise to Our God	Daniel Schutte	OCP
Magnificat	James Chepponis	GIA
Praise the Lord (Isaiah 12)	Robert Batastini	GIA WORSHIP

Sing of the Lord's Goodness	Ernest Sands	OCP
Though the Mountains May Fall	Dan Schutte	OCP
You Are the Voice	David Haas	GIA-GATHE

Concluding Prayer of Thanksgiving

Presider:

Almighty and merciful God,
 how wonderfully you created us
 and still more wonderfully remade us.
You do not abandon the sinner
 but seek him out with a father's love.
You sent your Son into the world
 to destroy sin and death by his passion, and to restore life and joy
 by his resurrection.
You sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts
 to make us your children
 and heirs of your kingdom.
You constantly renew our spirit
 in the sacrament of your redeeming love, freeing us from slavery to sin
 and transforming us ever more closely
 into the likeness of your beloved Son.
We thank you
 for the wonders of your mercy,
 and with heart and hand and voice
 we join with the whole Church
 in a new song of praise:
Glory to you through Christ
 in the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.
Amen.

Concluding Rite

Presider:

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Deacon:

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

Presider:

May the Lord guide your hearts in the way of his love
and fill you with Christ-like patience. Amen.
May God give you strength to walk in newness of life
and to please him in all things. Amen.
May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son + and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Deacon:

The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace.
Thanks be to God.

SOURCES

Ritual Song, Worship Third Edition, and Gather Comprehensive all published by GIA Publications. OCP – Music can be found in single octavos as well as in *Journey Songs*, and *Breaking Bread*. PFCY – *Psalms for the Church Year*, published by GIA publications, several volumes are available. WCYBN – *Who Calls You By Name: Music for Christian Initiation*, by David Haas, published by GIA publications, 2 vol.