



# Holy Land Commissariat de Terre Sainte

## Grant Us Peace!

### **2011 PENITENTIAL CELEBRATION THE COMMISSARIAT OF THE HOLY LAND IN CANADA**



#### *Suggestions for Hymns*

The presentation of this Penitential Celebration may be enriched with a selection of hymns calling for peace. The hymns listed below are provided by way of example. Each congregation is free to select from its repertoire. The hymns suggested here are from the Catholic Book of Worship (CBW), and Oregon Catholic Press (OCP, *Breaking Bread*). Each hymn is given with the number assigned in the publication.

#### *Beginning of the Celebration*

This is Our Cry (OCP, 490)  
Let There be Peace on Earth (OCP, 494)  
Were you There (CBW II, 493)

#### *After the meditation if needed*

Dona Nobis Pacem (OLP, 495)  
Prayer of St Francis (OCP, 495, Also CBW, 698, 699; CBW III 630)

#### *During the examination of conscience*

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

#### *Following the dismissal*

Peace is flowing like a River (OCP, 494)  
Peace I leave with you (CBW II, 700)

### **Greeting**

May God our Father and Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, grant you grace and peace.  
R. Blessed be God now and forever

## **Opening Invitation**

Benedict XVI stated on October 24, 2010: "*Peace, which is a gift of God, is also the result of the efforts of men of good will, national and international institutions, particularly those countries most committed to resolving conflicts... Peace is possible. Peace is urgently needed. Peace is the indispensable condition for a life worthy of the human person and society.*" (1)

Such calls are not new and they do not originate from afar. They are more urgent than ever. They are rooted in our consciences and our life experiences. Wherever we may live and bear witness we face similar issues and tensions. Given the opportunity to keep a vigil and convert by striving to make the world a better place, we hesitate and often recoil. We sometimes feel left to ourselves with the burden of implementing solutions or coming to terms with problems in the first place. This is to misunderstand the Spirit of God, the communion that brings us together and the common service of reconciliation. It all boils down to a matter of vision and courage.

During our quest to repent we learn to open our hearts to forgiveness embodied by the Christ Jesus. We make ourselves willingly available to the presence and the calling of the one who is the Peace of God. We accept his vision and receive his passion for peace, perhaps all the more diligently since we find reluctance to do so within ourselves.

*Let us pray*

Spirit, Breath of the Father and of the Son, You are present and you bring us together as children of God so that we should seek to become a single soul and a single heart. You are among us when calls to reconciliation invite us to mend our ways, in thought as well as in deed, so that peace will prevail, on earth and in heaven. You inspire us when we turn to the Christ Jesus to receive him and offer to him the obedience of our hearts. Amen.

## **Liturgy of the Word**

**A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians (5.17-21)**

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake God made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

*The word of the Lord.*

## **Psalm 102, 1-5. 8-12**

*Response: The Lord is kind and merciful.*

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul  
and do not forget all his benefits. R.

It is the Lord who forgives all your iniquity,  
who heals all your diseases,  
who redeems your life from the Pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy. R.

The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities. R.

As far as the east is from the west,  
so far he removes our transgressions from us.  
As a father has compassion for his children,  
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. R.

(Or the psalms 116; 121; 129; 50, 3-6.8-11. 12-15, or a  
Canticle from the New Testament Luke 1, 76-79; I Peter 2, 21-24)

**A reading** from the holy gospel according to Matthew 5.17-37

So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then go and offer your gift.

Come to terms quickly with your accuser, while the two of you are on the way to court, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

*Let us praise the Word of God / Praise be to you o Lord Jesus*

## **Proposal for a meditation**

*If you remember!* The first step to peace and reconciliation consists in the act of remembering. There is no denying a stubborn will to erase the memory of our transgressions. Experts speak of denial: denial of actions, denial of intent, and denial of consequences. We struggle obstinately to stay on track in our lives by repressing into our unconscious mind so many signs of awareness and responsibility. Finding oneself then can only mean an increased awareness and a recognition all those actions and intentions that lead us to take stock precisely of all that we are striving to ignore.

*Your brother or sister has something against you!* We rarely forget having been hurt by someone. Any wrong caused by parents, brothers and sisters in the faith is so readily called to mind, ever so vividly and painfully re-enacted, thus making forgiveness all the more difficult. The list of transgressions of our brothers in the extended family of humanity is mulled over repeatedly. Our heart accuses and passes judgment on our neighbour. This is not to say our injury should be glossed over. Luke the evangelist starts from the fact that there are real transgressions that are part of the daily experience of the Christian community and by the same token of humanity. To bring into the full light of day the reality of an offence, a conflict and all events where violence prevailed is always a major step forward.

*Leave your gift there before the altar!* If there is a place that lays bare our consciences, actions and intentions is it not the altar? The disciples are brought together there, before the altar, where the community remembers the death and resurrection of Jesus. In that place where is proclaimed and celebrated the fact that Jesus, out of love, gave his life to atone for the multitude. In that place where sins are forgiven and where an entirely new life is offered, the community affirms that each disciple does not travel by himself and so does not offer alone. All the members unite in their offering to present the gifts received, but to be presented through solidarity and a sharing spirit. Before the altar, before the God of Jesus Christ who is *one* in his love and his forgiveness begins the recognition of one another. This reciprocity leads to acceptance, forgiveness and the transcending of personal limitations.

*First be reconciled to your brother or sister.* Without reconciliation, it is impossible to move closer to the altar without blasphemy and misunderstanding God. If the disciples do not move towards one another to free themselves from any resentment stoked by wrongdoing and the consequences of sin the offering is hypocrisy, falsehood and perjury. It is important to take the time to seek out the truth and to build a community of reconciliation. A headlong rush is particularly unhelpful. What truly marks progress here is the decision to be *one* with the Christ Jesus and between disciples before God. What marks a real advancement here is to be *one* with the Christ Jesus and for all disciples to be as *one* before God. A concrete achievement takes shape also in all those steps walked and all those words spoken to restore an authentic peace and communion.

*While the two of you are on the way!* The road allows going forward. So much is true. But the road is also an opportunity to backtrack, to revisit our actions, our intentions, to learn to see fellow travellers in another light, even those who are more our enemies than our neighbours. Between the aggressor and the victim, before they can square off in court and submit their quarrel before a judge, there is a salutary distance, a road to learn to draw closer, look at oneself and assess the events and the motivations. If we are going to share the same road anyway, why not seek out a way to transform hostile feeling into dialogue and meditation and even into an inventive quest for reparation and agreement?

*Then go and offer your gift.* Everything is possible now since brothers and sisters accept one another and live in the reality of

reciprocity and reconciliation. The one who awaits and receives the offering is also the one from whom all originates: *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.* The disciples, with their gift before the altar, rediscover the memory and the will of God. They also rediscover courage and imagination. They rediscover the inescapable way of the Gospel: justice, forgiveness and peace. The gift created in truth can now be offered without deception.

*In the name of Christ... we are on a mission.* Truth spoken and the gift accepted, the community is reacquainted with its mission. The disciples share between themselves what they receive for the world, in the most concrete and trying conditions of life. In their actions and their words the disciples of Jesus have nothing in support of their mission other than the message: *We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.* Such is the nature of our experience. We work at bringing reconciliation day in and day out. We are the humble but sincere witnesses of the experience of reconciliation. Christ who forgives teaches us to become forgiveness.

The awareness and the certainty of this presence of peace buttress our commitment and our offering. Make peace with one another and be peace in the world. Such is the challenge from which we will not shrink and that gives our lives purpose. “*Give us peace and we will give you wonders*”, could be read on a streamer in a silent street march for peace in Lyon on November 11, 2010. “*Let us give ourselves peace, we will work wonders*”.

## **Examination of conscience**

*At the end of this meditation or of any other reflection, it would be appropriate to listen to a musical piece or to sing together a hymn to allow enough time for each worshipper to examine his conscience and experience contrition.*

*The priest, deacon or other minister may assist the faithful by proposing the following leads to a reflection. The last part of the Lamb of God is repeated and sung by the congregation after each section of hailing.*

Hymn: *Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.* (Repeat)

### **1st Voice: *The peace of God is born in the heart of each person.***

1. How does each one of us work to recognize and weed out the sources of conflict that rise in his heart? (period of silence)
2. In all situations of life, how do we seek to protect the rights of all and remind everyone of their obligations so that justice prevails and peace unfolds? (period of silence)
3. How do we work in view of a more equitable distribution of gifts and goods that are indispensable to the full development of human beings and of the earth? (period of silence)

Hymn: *Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.* (Repeat)

### **2nd Voice: *I leave you my peace, I give you my peace.***

4. Do we know how to receive, within ourselves and between ourselves, the gift of peace such as Christ gives it to us? (period of silence)
5. How do we transform the barriers of race, nationality and of gender to favour with Christ greater justice and peace? (period of silence)
6. Are we more attentive to what draws us nearer to one another than to what divides us? (period of silence)

Hymn: *Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.* (Repeat)

### **3rd Voice: *Insofar as it depends on you, live in peace with all men.***

7. Do we limit ourselves to wishfully hoping for peace or are we true peace makers in the community we live in? (period of silence)
8. Do we strive to have the din of arms quieted by supporting organizations that help nations and peoples to

resolve their differences without resorting to violence? (period of silence)

9. Are we aware of the mission of reconciliation that God, through Christ, entrusts to each of us and to our church communities? (period of silence)

Hymn: *Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.* (Repeat)

## **Period of personal confession and absolution of sins**

### **(Background music)**

*Following the examination of conscience, it is important that each penitent identifies in himself a condition, an attitude, a place where "I have put up a wall of hatred". By coming forward to confess, the penitent is required to express a commitment for reconciliation that will be confirmed by the priest.*

## **Acts of reconciliation**

*The coordinators of the penitential liturgy propose to the faithful and their communities a few actions that could express their will of conversion and their will to become builders of peace. The actions and the steps towards conversion must be simple and implementable. Provide here some time for each person to decide within himself how to rise to such a challenge. The priest then calls for a common prayer.*

Let us collect our thoughts and pray the Lord:

God of peace, we thank you that you sent your Son Jesus, so that we might be reconciled to yourself in Him. Give us the grace to be effective servants of reconciliation within our communities. In this way help us to serve the reconciliation of all peoples. Fill us with love for one another; may our unity serve the reconciliation that you desire for all creation. We pray in the power of the Spirit. Amen.

## **Blessing**

Christ is the builder of our reconciliation: may he establish your lives and your actions in his peace, may he fill your hearts with his joy, and lead you and strengthen you in your commitment.

R. Amen.

And may God almighty bless you, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Ghost.

R. Amen.

## **Sending off**

You are ambassadors of Christ.

God invites you to share the calling and the peace received with courage and discernment where you live and bear witness. Go in the peace of Christ.

Hymn...

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## **NOTES**

1. Homily for the closing of the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops, Sunday, October 24, 2010.
2. Silent march experienced in solidarity with the victims of a massacre of Christians in Bagdad on October 31, 2010.

