

**OPENING HYMN :**

**GREETING**

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**Presider: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**All: And with your spirit.**

**INTRODUCTION Presider:**

*In these or similar words...*

**We all love heroes. We rejoice when a fireman rescues someone from a burning building. We cry when we see people lift a child from a house leveled by an earthquake. We marvel when someone bravely runs in to pull someone from a car accident.**

**How often do we truly reflect on the fact that God has saved us? Throughout salvation history, God has sent prophets to teach us and saints to lead us. He gives us his revealed truth in the Scriptures. He gives us grace in each sacramental encounter. He sent his only begotten Son to save us from our sins and to free us from death. He offers his ever-present Spirit to guide us still. We have been saved!**

**Tonight [today], let us trust in God's mercy, remember his kindness, and be grateful for his faithfulness to his covenant.**

**In this sacrament of reconciliation, let us be mindful of those times when we have failed to follow God's commandments and resolve, once again, to cooperate in his plan for our salvation.**

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**OPENING PRAYER**

**Presider: My brothers and sisters, God calls us to conversion; let us therefore ask him for the grace of sincere repentance.**

*Silent prayer*

**Father of mercies and God of all consolation, you do not wish the sinner to die but to be converted and live. Come to the aid of your people, that they may turn from their sins and live for you alone. May we be attentive to your word, confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and always be grateful for your loving kindness. Help us to live the truth in love and grow into the fullness of Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you for ever and**

ever.

All: Amen.

## **PLEASE BE SEATED FOR THE SCRIPTURES**

*CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD*

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### **FIRST READING**

**Isaiah 35:1-6 a, 10**

God himself will come to save us.

### **RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

**Psalm 85: 9ab, 10, 11-12, 13-14**

“LORD, let us see your kindness.” OR

“Come, O LORD, and set us free.”

### **GOSPEL**

**Mark 1:1-8, 14-15**

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee preaching the Gospel of God” “This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel.”

### **HOMILY**

In 1940 as events in Europe and the Pacific began to worsen, General George C Marshall saw that the United States was ill prepared to defend our country. Undermanned, under equipped and under trained, by 1941, Marshall had turned a peace-time army into a modern fighting force of over 1 million personnel and made them one of the best trained and equipped armies in the world. The United States was, in no small part because of this build up, a world leader

in food production and manufacturing.

After Pearl Harbor, Marshall's insight and preparedness led the Allied Forces to victory over the Axis powers. Marshall is an American hero, who never sought to be recognized or honored in any way for his contributions. It is rare to find any mention of him at all in the history books in our American public schools.

BUT True heroes are never unaware of the cost of their actions. Nor are they unaware of the, often greater costs, of doing nothing.

And the cost of the war was high. Millions of lives were lost and much of Europe was plunged into deep poverty, their cities left in rubbles.

Again, Marshall stepped up. He developed a plan of action and Europe was fed, clothed and rebuilt in short order.

Today, the European nations aided by the Marshall Plan are vibrant and America remains free and it can be confidently said that whether it be in peace or in conflict, she is prepared.

Can the same be said of our selves? Advent is a time of preparing for the coming of Christ. However, the celebration of the Birth of Jesus is only a part of this waiting. We also look forward to the second coming of Our Lord and the current coming of His grace and presence in our lives today.

We often think of the martyr as the heroic Christian – and those who willingly died for the faith are indeed heroes of the faith. But that choice, that decision in the moment however is rarely one of sudden conviction. The martyr was ready and willing when called to sacrifice. They were prepared, strengthened by the Sacraments, fortified and forged in God's word and armed with a deep faith.

The heroic Christian prepares and is ready! Ready to spread the Gospel message knowing full well that there are costs as well as benefits. And the heroic Christian is willing, and able, to live the Gospel message regardless of cost, even the loss of earthly life.

Throughout the Old Testament, God performs great signs and sends his prophets to His people for one central reason, to prepare them for the coming of, Jesus the Christ. Jesus, in turn prepares all the world,

even to this day, for the coming of His Kingdom.

Jesus calls us to repentance of our sins, to believe the Gospel and to live it. He has increased our numbers through Baptism and the gift of faith. He has fed us with His own body and blood and most importantly, has already paid the immeasurable cost of our redemption.

Tonight we have the opportunity to become better prepared for His return, to...

as Isaiah says tonight, "Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knee" and to "fear not", as each of us makes a clear way for the Lord so that we might be renewed.

We are asked to recognize this evening that the cost of our sins, either in what we have done, or in what we have failed to do, is high, and we are reminded that it is God who reaches out to save us, who loves us and who will forgive us.

Return to seat

**Please Stand**

### **EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE**

*The assembly is now invited to make an examination of conscience. This can be done in silence or by using the examination below. One reader alone may read the questions or two readers might alternate. Allow a brief period of silence between each one.*

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**How have I failed to worship God in private and communal prayer?**

- Do I receive the sacraments regularly?**
  
- Do I keep Sundays and holy days sacred?**

**Do I value the sacrament of reconciliation?**

**Have I tried to grow in my faith through prayer and the reading of the word of God?**

**Do I pray daily?**

**Do I trust God's goodness and providence, even in times of crisis and doubt?**

**How have I failed to use the gifts of God in daily living?**

**Do I respect my own body as a gift from God?**

**Do I control my vices, including abuses of food and drink?**

**Have I made good use of the gifts God has given me?**

**Do I work too hard and too long? Do I neglect my family and health?**

**Have I been lazy and given too much time to leisure or entertainment?**

**How have I failed in my relationships with others?**

**In my household, have I contributed to the well-being and happiness of the rest of my family? Am I patient? Am I loving?**

**Do I treat my parents with respect?**

**Am I ever angry with those I love?**

**Have I been faithful in my relationships?**

**Have I imposed my will on others without respecting their freedom and rights? Am I intolerant of other's ideas or needs?**

**Have I perpetuated racism, prejudices and stereotypes?**

**Do I treat people with disabilities with respect?**

**Have I indulged in reading, conversation, or entertainments that are contrary to Christian decency and respect for human life?**

**Have I failed to share God's love with the world?**

**Do I share my time and my treasure with others in need?**

**When I saw someone hungry, did I give them food?**

**When I saw someone thirsty, did I give them drink?**

**When I saw someone needing clothing, did I clothe them?**

**When I saw a stranger, did I welcome them?**

**When someone was homebound or imprisoned, did I visit them?**

**When someone was ill, did I care for them?**

**Do I fail to speak out on behalf of the poor or the oppressed?**

**Do I use the earth's resources wisely?**

Return to seat

**Please Stand**

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## **RITE OF RECONCILIATION**

### **GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS**

**Presider: God who is infinitely merciful pardons all who are repentant and takes away their guilt. Confident in his goodness, let us ask him to forgive all our sins as we confess them with sincerity of heart.**

**The Confiteor can be found on page \_\_\_\_\_ of the misselettes or on the front of the Mass card**

**All: 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; and 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.**

### **LITANY OF REPENTANCE**

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**Minister: Let us turn to Christ with confidence and ask his mercy.**

**Response will be: Lord, have mercy.**

**You came into the world to seek and save what was lost.**

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

**Minister: You came to give us life, life in its fullness.**

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

**Minister: You became the source of salvation for all who obey you.**

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

**Minister: Once and for all you died for our sins, the innocent one for the guilty.**

All: Lord, have mercy.

**Minister: In your mercy free us from the past and enable us to begin a new life of holiness.**

All: Lord, have mercy.

**Minister: Make us a living sign of love for all to see: people reconciled with you and with each other.**

All: Lord, have mercy.

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

**Our Father, ...**

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

**Presider: 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. Through Christ our Lord.**

**All: Amen.**

### **INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

*The presider or other minister might tell the assembly where the confessors will be located. Some brief words regarding the manner of confession should be given. The people may be encouraged to accept one of the penances which are found in the worship aid or the confessors may give a penance suited to the individual. The assembly may be advised to remain in church if there is to be a common ending. Quiet instrumental music might be played during this time.*

## **PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE FOR GOD'S MERCY**

**R: The LORD is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.**

I will extol you, O my God and King, and I will bless your name forever and ever. The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works.

**R: The LORD is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.**

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD, and let your faithful ones bless you. Let them discourse of the glory of your Kingdom and speak of your might.

**R: The LORD is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.**

Let them make known to men your might and the glorious splendor of your Kingdom. Your Kingdom is a Kingdom for all ages, and your dominion endures through all generations.

**R: The LORD is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**Presider: Almighty and merciful God, how wonderfully you created man and still more wonderfully remade him. 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 the slavery of 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.**

**All: Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

## **CONCLUDING RITE**

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### **SIMPLE FORM BLESSING AND DISMISSAL**

**Presider: May the Father bless us for we are his children, born to eternal life.**

**All: Amen.**

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

**All: Amen.**

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

**All: Amen. DISMISSAL**

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

### **CLOSING HYMN**

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**READINGS****Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10****FIRST READING** A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to them, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; They will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak. Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication, with divine recompense he comes to save you.

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing.

Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return and enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy; they will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.

The word of the LORD .

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Psalm 85: 9-10, 11-12, 13-14

**LORD, let us see your kindness.**

**R: LORD, let us see your kindness.**

I will hear what God proclaims; The LORD – for he proclaims peace. Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him, glory dwelling in our land.

**R: LORD, let us see your kindness.**

Kindness and truth shall meet; Justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall yield its increase.

**R: LORD, let us see your kindness.**

**The LORD himself will give his benefits; Our land shall yield its increase, justice shall walk before him, and prepare the way of his steps.**

**GOSPEL** □ **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark**

**The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.**

**As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:**

***Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."***

**John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.**

**John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me.**

**I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.**

**After John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel."**

**The Gospel of the LORD.**