

Prayer Marking the 2nd Anniversary of the Declaration of the Covid-19 Pandemic by the World Health Organization

The following rite may be used as a discrete service on Friday, March 11, or at a time other than the main Liturgy on the 2nd Sunday in Lent, March 13, 2022. Another option is for the Litany and its concluding prayer to be used as the Prayers of the People during the primary Liturgy on Lent 2.

Entrance Rite

A sounding bowl/chime/bell is sounded. After a moment of silence, the chime is sounded again.

Lighting of Candles

Candles may be lit as the following is said,

Presider Come, O Spirit, agent of disruption and grace.
Free us from the shackles of despair and grief.
People **Come, Holy Spirit, come!**

Presider O GOD, our Rock, we are calling to you;
do not be deaf to our cry.
People **For if you answer us with silence,
we will be like those who fall into a pit.**

If the worship takes place online or in an area where the pandemic protocols allow for singing, a suitable hymn, canticle, song, or chant may be sung.

Litany of Lamentation and Promise

If the worship takes place online or in an area where the pandemic protocols allow for singing, the Cantor introduces the response. All repeat the response. All sing the response after each set of petitions as indicated by the /R/. Otherwise, a cantor or small ensemble can sing the response, as permitted in the protocols; or the response may be said by all. It is recommended that a setting of the Kyrie Eleison or Trisagion be used as the response.

Voice 1:

The waves of COVID still crash upon the shores of our world,
millions of lives washed away in the tides of sickness and death.
Many more navigate the currents of economic and social loss,
or the invisible, unspoken pain of grief, loneliness, mental distress.
Disoriented, as the difference between one day and another has blurred,
we are worn down, O God.

Voice 2:

“I have heard your prayers and seen your tears.
I will heal you.
Come to me, all who are weary and burdened,
and find your Sabbath in me.”

Voice 1:

Even in days of distress,
you, O God, are the one we praise.
Cry us into love again.
Break open our hearts to all who are vulnerable and alone,
to ourselves in our glorious finitude,
and to you, the source of all being,
so we may face sickness and fear, despair and death
with resurrection hope.
Hear the prayer of our yearning hearts: /R/

Voice 1:

The dead are not meant to be anonymous or forgotten, O God.
Yet as the disregarded bones
of victims buried by genocide and abuse
continue to be discovered,
many still remain in unmarked graves,
precious lives carelessly discarded,
members of families, children of God,
people who had names.
How long before there is reckoning and restoration?

Voice 2:

“There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed,
or hidden that will not be made known.

I will never forget you.

I have carved you in the palm of my hands.”

Voice 1:

O God of tears,

your anointed One wept at the grave of his beloved friend Lazarus.

Rise up in your tender and fierce consolation.

Bring to our memory those whom you remember.

Speak to us their names.

Let the spirits of the dead who call out for your justice find satisfaction,
and all wounded by their loss know healing.

Hear the prayer of our yearning hearts: /R/

Voice 1:

How long, O God, will nations be shot and shelled

by those who set upon them with the soldier’s trampling boot?

How long will the empire of rampant greed, waste, and corruption
exploit the vulnerable,

displace indigenous peoples,

reward those who hoard wealth,

and commodify consumer and worker alike?

Those burdened by poverty are trapped.

The life of this planet, our fragile island home, is threatened.

Voice 2:

“I have indeed seen the affliction of my people.

I have heard their groaning and have come to deliver them.

Now I send you.”

Voice 1:

Shape imagination and heart, O God, to desire what you desire.

Quench the coveting that separates us from you and neighbour.

Fill our cup and basket with abundance,

not so we can overindulge,

but rather share your goodness in communion with those in need.

Hear the prayer of our yearning hearts: /R/

Voice 1:

O God, streaming tears have dried our skin.
We raise our voices in anguished prayer
for modern day slaves,
the victims of human trafficking.
We raise our voices for innocent children
impacted by the shooter's choice for violence,
and the complicity of those
allowing violent hands easy access to weapons of slaughter.
We raise our voices for displaced peoples
who wash up on beaches or sleep in cages.
Will you relieve the burden of those who suffer,
even as a result of our own neglect?

Voice 2:

"I hear the desire of the humble;
I will strengthen their heart, my ears shall hear;
to give justice to the orphan and oppressed,
so that mere mortals may strike terror no more."

Voice 1:

O God, you will relieve the dryness of salty tears
with oil that restores softness to face and heart.
You will grace the peoples with a garland instead of ashes
that they may dwell in joy and beauty.
In our praise, so clothe us that we may live
as a sign, foretaste and instrument of that promised day.
Hear the prayer of our yearning hearts: /R/

Concluding Prayer

The Presider prays,

Holy God,
who created us for and from love,
hold us close in your arms.
Comfort those who are afraid,
give courage to those who are distressed,
and warm those who feel the cold touch of loneliness.
Breathe in, with, and through us
as we walk through uncertainty into a new future
knowing that you are with us now and await us there.
In the name of Christ the Beloved we pray.

People **Amen.**

Scripture Proclamation

Matthew 5.3-12

It is recommended that the passage be chanted by Cantor and small ensemble using the setting of Common Praise #755, the people joining in the refrain where permitted by the pandemic protocols.

Lord's Prayer and Dismissal

Presider As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,
All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Or

Presider As our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,
All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Presider Let all who take refuge in the Lord rejoice;
People **Let them ever sing for joy.**

Presider God's protection is over them.
People **Let those who love God's name exalt in the Lord.**

Presider Let us bless the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Portions of this rite are revised from material written by Ellen Clark-King, Stephen Andrews, and Jay Koyle for services of the 2021 National Worship Conference. Used with permission.