

Lent 3 Year B

Notes for Use

This service is designed for you to use in your home. If you used our Advent materials, you will notice a familiar structure and rhythm to these Lent resources. Feel free to use them in any way that suits you best. For example, you can move confession and the kyrie to between the intercessions and the concluding prayers, if you are used to confession just before the Eucharist. You can also cut the number of readings if you prefer, but we would advise if doing this that you retain the Psalm and the Gospel.

The intercessions are offered as a guide only. You are, of course, completely free to use this prayer space as you need or wish to.

The questions at the end of the reflection are optional but offer time for reflection either during the service or afterwards. If you are using this resource to worship either as a family or at an online gathering, you can use them for group discussion. In a group setting you can change the singular “I/my” for “We/our” as needed. Words in **bold** should be said together. Instructions and guidance are written in *italics*.

Lent, a season of penitence and reflection, can sometimes be a challenging season as we focus so much on personal relationship with God. Do remember that you can reach out to your priest, or fellow members of the congregation, or any other trusted person, if you want to discuss how you are feeling as you progress through Lent.

Introduction

You may wish to light a candle or have a moment of silence before you say:

Lord God, I open my ears to hear you.

Lord God, I open my eyes to see you.

Lord God, I open my heart to love you.

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You, Lord, have the words of eternal life.

Confession

A time of silent confession may be held here instead.

God our Father, we confess to you and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and in what we have failed to do. We are truly sorry. Forgive us our sins, and deliver us from the power of evil, for the sake of your Son who died for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Kyrie

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy

Collect for Third Sunday of Lent

Father of mercy, alone we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves. When we are discouraged by our weakness, strengthen us to follow Christ, our pattern and our hope; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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Readings

Exodus 20.1-17

20Then God spoke all these words:

2 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me.

4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

8 Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹For six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your

son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

12 Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

13 You shall not murder.

14 You shall not commit adultery.

15 You shall not steal.

16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

17 You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Psalm 19

¹ The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

² Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.

³ There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;

⁴ yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,

⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hidden from its heat.

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;

the decrees of the Lord are sure,
making wise the simple;

⁸ the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;

the commandment of the Lord is clear,
enlightening the eyes;

⁹ the fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring for ever;

the ordinances of the Lord are true
and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;

sweeter also than honey,
and drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² But who can detect their errors?
Clear me from hidden faults.

¹³ Keep back your servant also from the insolent;
do not let them have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

1 Corinthians 1.18-25

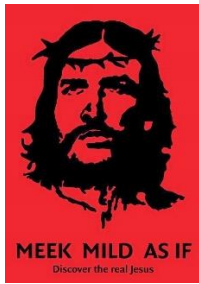
¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,
'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

John 2.13-22

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' ¹⁹Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' ²⁰The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Reflection



Copyright: churchads.net

The poster here is from the Church Advertising Network's Easter 1999 campaign. Jesus is in the classic Che Guevara pose, complete with a crown of thorns instead of beret. The caption reads: "Meek. Mild. As If."

At the time it was hugely controversial, winning acclaim and calls of blasphemy in equal measure. Either way, as an advertisement the poster worked. It generated far more controversy, and therefore column space, than more recent church advert pleas to "Try Praying".

However, there is an argument that Jesus, unlike Che Guevara, was not a guerrilla revolutionary leader, despite many hopes during his time that he would be. When he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday many people were convinced this Messiah hailed the beginning of the end of the Roman regime. Jesus, on the other hand, had different ideas about what the Messiah had come to do. The Cross, not a political coup, was on the agenda.

Even though Jesus was not interested in a revolutionary uprising, this does not mean he was indifferent to people's living conditions. The Gospels are full of Jesus' social commentary, be it in parables or direct challenge. Free labourers and slaves were treated poorly, tax farming was rife, and corrupt officials reaped the benefits of the deliberately flawed system. All this would be (and often is) bad enough in our own time where religion and politics occupy overlapping but distinct spheres. In 1st Century Palestine, as well as the rest of the Roman Empire, where the spiritual and political were virtually the same thing, this political corruption was overtly, indisputably spiritually sinful.

Therefore, it is small wonder that Jesus lost his temper in the Temple. The House of God had become a house of profit. Whole villages might save for months, then send one man to travel weeks on dangerous roads to reach Jerusalem. At the Temple they changed their money for Temple currency, then bought sacrificial animals at vastly inflated prices, before paying a priest to offer up the sacrifice on their behalf. This was not about worshipping God anymore. This was about making money. Of course Jesus was angry.

But Jesus didn't "do" anything with that anger. He didn't use it to mount a revolution that made any sort of sense politically. Instead, he continued to teach and heal, discriminating neither the Roman Centurion nor the Samaritan woman. He showed corrupt officials and the oppressed people that money and power counts for nothing in God's Kingdom. This indeed, is foolishness in a world where these two things are often interchangeable terms. Instead weakness, humiliation, suffering and death bring God's Kingdom into the world. No violent mob. No words in the right people's ear. No financial transaction. Just the Cross: a coup d'etat which overthrows the world and all the world's concerns, and restores the Kingdom, and its King, to its rightful place.

What is your reaction to the "Meek Mild As If" poster? Do you think it's helpful or unhelpful for spreading the Good News?

Imagine yourself at the Temple and read the Gospel passage again. How do you feel watching Jesus' actions and speech? What do you want to ask him?

Are there places in your life where you feel that money and power have become more important than your relationship with God? Talk to God about these places and invite God in.

Creed

A short silence should be kept before reciting the creed.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

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Prayer

The prayer here is a shortened, adapted form of intercession. If your church has shared intercession for the Sunday service beforehand, it can be said here instead. You may also find the intercessions for use during a pandemic suitable here.

I pray to you, Lord, that I will build your Kingdom in every place. Hear my prayers:

I pray for the church,

For....

I pray for my community,

For...

I pray for the world,

For...

I pray for those who are ill,

For....

I pray for those who have died,

For....

Hear my prayers Lord, that I will build your Kingdom in every place.

Amen.

Meditation



Sit with this image for a few minutes of quiet meditation.

How does it make you feel?

How do you want to respond to God?

Copyright: Alexander Smirnov, *The Cleansing of the Temple*

The Lord's Prayer

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
Forever and ever,
Amen.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread,
and forgive our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against
us.
Do not bring us to the time of trial,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the
glory are yours,
Now and forever,
Amen.

Conclusion

Lord, all that I have done in your name, accept as my offering today.

Lord, as I remember to always build your Kingdom in the world, I ask your blessing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.