



Est. 1955  
DIOCESE OF PENANG  
MALAYSIA

## THINGS TO PREPARE

- Ashes used during this prayer service may be made by burning old palms or leaves that are available.
- Holy Water

## OPENING HYMN: HOSEA ([https://youtu.be/Mcl2\\_5ZZj\\_4](https://youtu.be/Mcl2_5ZZj_4))

Come back to me, with all your heart  
Don't let fear keep us apart  
Trees do bend though straight and tall  
So must we to others' call.

Long have I waited for  
Your coming home to me  
And living deeply our new lives

The wilderness will lead you  
To the place where I will speak  
Integrity and justice  
With tenderness, You shall know

Long have I waited for  
Your coming home to me  
And living deeply our new lives

Come back to me with all your heart  
Don't let fear keep us apart  
Trees do bend though straight and tall  
So must we to others' call

Long have I waited for  
Your coming home to me  
And living deeply our new lives

## OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

**Leader:** Grant, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting this campaign of Christian service, so that, as we take up battle against spiritual evils, we may be armed with weapons of self-restraint. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen

*(Take a moment of silence)*

**Leader:** As we respond to this Psalm, let us allow each word of this Psalm to speak to our hearts.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM (*Psalm 50(51):3-6,12-14,17*)

**Response:** Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.  
In your compassion blot out my offence.  
O wash me more and more from my guilt  
and cleanse me from my sin. **R/**

My offences truly I know them;  
my sin is always before me  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;  
what is evil in your sight I have done. **R/**

A pure heart create for me, O God,  
put a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **R/**

Give me again the joy of your help;  
with a spirit of fervour sustain me,  
O Lord, open my lips and my mouth  
shall declare your praise. **R/**

*(Take a moment of silence)*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**ALL:** Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory! A pure heart create for me, O God, and give me again the joy of your help. Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

## GOSPEL READING (Matthew 6:1-6,16-18)

*Leader: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So, when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them; I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

'When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'

*Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.*

*All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## REFLECTION (1/2)

A 10-year-old boy wrote to his mother one day and declared that he will not do any more household chores or errands unless his mother pays him. Assertively, he tells his mother that he is tired of all these chores. He, however, can only be motivated to "work" if his tasks are paid for. So, he elaborates in his letter the following price list:

RM 2 for throwing the trash  
 RM 2 for washing the dishes  
 RM 1 for sweeping the floor  
 RM 0.50 for feeding the pets  
 RM 0.50 for setting the table

He then posted the letter at the fridge; visible enough for his mum to see it when she arrives from work.

## REFLECTION (2/2)

Excited to see her reaction, he kept a close watch of the letter. He felt relief when she finally arrived and waited for her to read the letter. As soon as she closed the door behind her, she placed her recently bought groceries on the table and started putting them in the cupboards and two packs of milk into the boxes at the terrace. She then prepared dinner. Yes, she stopped to read the note on the fridge but just went on to get the cabbage and some ladyfingers and she was even humming as she was cooking! No comment about the letter was made at dinner time and this made the boy a bit restless but still, he waited and continued to observe his mother's actions. She was cheerful and asked her son how his day had been and offered to help him understand his lessons. As he quietly washed the dishes and fed the pets, his mother meanwhile, cleaned the terrace of the house and pointed to him some boxes on the floor that were now filled with other groceries. She said that they can already drop by the parish tomorrow to deliver the boxes which are to be given to the refugees who are at the settlement area. 'So, the groceries are for them', he concluded. He has observed how his mother had been putting items into the boxes day after day.

A realization came to him after that: his own mother, whom he despises for ordering him around, has been a silent worker who never complains. Moreover, she is very generous even to those whom she doesn't even know. Hurriedly, he removed the note from the fridge. Pope Francis aptly wrote in his encyclical about fraternity and social friendship, *Fratelli Tutti* (140), that Life without fraternal gratuitousness becomes a form of frenetic commerce, in which we are constantly weighing up what we give and what we get back in return. God, on the other hand, gives freely, to the point of helping even those who are unfaithful (...).

**Are we like the calculating boy in the story or the generous mother who quietly and cheerfully fulfills her motherly responsibilities and goes out of her way to help those in need without expecting anything in return?**

*(Take a moment of silence)*

**Sharing Time:** You may want to share with each other what strikes you the most in the Gospel reading and the reflection.

## BLESSING & IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES

**Leader:** Loving God, you created us from the dust of the earth; may these ashes be for us a sign of our penitence and our mortality, and a reminder that only by the cross do we receive eternal life in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**All:** Amen

*(The leader sprinkles the ashes with Holy Water)*

Take turns imposing ashes on one another's forehead in the shape of a cross while saying:

**Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.**

or

**Repent and believe in the Gospel.**

- *Those who don't have ashes can still mark each other's forehead with the sign of the cross while saying the same.*

## CLOSING PRAYER

**All:**

God our Father, you formed us from the dust of the earth and brought us to new life in Christ through the waters of baptism. We ask you to change our hearts as we journey through these forty days of Lent. Help us to see Jesus in everyone we meet, and to serve him in all persons, especially the poor, the sick and the lonely. By your grace, may our prayers and sacrifices this Lent help us grow closer to each other and to you, as one family in Jesus. We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

*(Conclude the prayer by reciting the prayer of Our Father, offering for all those who will be receiving the Sacrament of Baptism at Easter this year.)*

*All offer one another the sign of peace.*

## CLOSING HYMN: ASHES TO ASHES

 [youtu.be/NM1MYet8kNc](https://youtu.be/NM1MYet8kNc)

Ashes to ashes, from dust unto dust,  
The cross on our forehead,  
Your promise, O God  
Ready us to follow the way of Your Son,  
To rise from these ashes,  
redeemed in the fire of Your love.

Sound the trumpet in Sion!  
Announce from the Lord  
That the day of God's favor  
Is ever close at hand.

Ashes to ashes, from dust unto dust,  
The cross on our forehead,  
Your promise, O God  
Ready us to follow the way of Your Son,  
To rise from these ashes,  
redeemed in the fire of Your love.

We have seen in the heavens  
And held in our arms  
What the hand of our Maker  
Can fashion out of dust.

Ashes to ashes, from dust unto dust,  
The cross on our forehead,  
Your promise, O God  
Ready us to follow the way of Your Son,  
To rise from these ashes,  
redeemed in the fire of Your love.

You will receive a Kit for the Holy Week by 21 March 2021.

*Blessed Lent 2021!*