

## The Litany of Penitence

### from the Liturgy of Ash Wednesday

*with reflection questions and prayer prompts*

Most holy and merciful Father:  
We confess to you and to one another,  
and to the whole communion of saints  
in heaven and on earth,  
that we have sinned by our own fault  
in thought, word, and deed;  
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.  
**Have mercy on us, Lord.**

*Who is it hard to love?  
What is it hard to forgive?  
Ask God to show you God's love for those people;  
ask God's grace to heal the hurts that cling to you.*

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us.  
We have not been true to the mind of Christ.  
We have grieved your Holy Spirit.  
**Have mercy on us, Lord.**

*What biblical story or image of Jesus serving us touches your heart?  
What is one small thing you can do this week that serves others?  
Ask God to help you feel closer to Christ.*

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness:  
the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,  
**We confess to you, Lord.**

*What makes you impatient?  
Where do you fail to practice what you preach?  
Where is it easy to let things slide?  
Ask God to help you see the impact of your words and actions on others.*

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,  
**We confess to you, Lord.**

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,  
**We confess to you, Lord.**

*Do you know who made the appliances, technology, and clothing you're using today?  
Do you want anything that you don't really need?  
Ask God to help you pay attention to the gifts you receive each day.*

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,  
**We confess to you, Lord.**

*What small errors or bad choices do you let slide to make yourself more comfortable?  
Ask God to help you be brave and generous.*

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,  
**We confess to you, Lord.**

*What is stopping you from praying more?  
What parts of your life don't seem to be touched by your faith?  
Ask God to help you pay attention to God's presence more often.*

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done:  
for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,  
**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

*Notice which news stories of suffering or injustice leave you indifferent;  
notice who at work or at school is excluded or laughed at.  
Ask God to show you how to act to help.*

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice  
and contempt toward those who differ from us,  
**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

*Whose story do you not know?  
Who seems to you to be to blame for their own problems?  
Ask God to open your heart and ears.*

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after  
us,  
**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

*What have you thrown away this week?  
What do you think the world will be like in 100 years?  
Ask God to help you see and love the wonders of creation.*

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;  
**Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.**

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,  
**That we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,  
**Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

*What and who in your daily life reminds you of God's mercy,  
Jesus' love, and the ongoing work of salvation?  
Give thanks to God for this.*

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**