

# 2nd Sunday Before Lent

God is gracious and merciful, working with us in our weakness, teaching us through the challenges of life and helping our faith to grow. Let us therefore come before him in a spirit of thanksgiving.

## Invitation to Confession:

We don't always find faith easy, especially when life is difficult. But even when we fall short our heavenly Father never abandons us. So let us, therefore, confess our shortcomings and receive forgiveness afresh.

When hard times lead us to question God's love.  
Lord, have mercy.

When we go it alone in life's storms instead of seeking God's help.  
Christ, have mercy.

When we underestimate God's grace.  
Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins  
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

## Collect of the Day

Almighty God,  
you have created the heavens and the earth  
and made us in your own image:  
teach us to discern your hand in all your works  
and your likeness in all your children;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things,  
now and for ever. Amen.

## A reading from Genesis (2:4-9, 15-25 NRSV)

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;

and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.' So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.' Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

### **Psalm - 65 (NRSV)**

Praise is due to you,  
O God, in Zion;  
and to you shall vows be performed,  
O you who answer prayer!  
To you all flesh shall come.  
When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us,  
you forgive our transgressions.  
Happy are those whom you choose and bring near  
to live in your courts.  
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple.

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,  
O God of our salvation;  
you are the hope of all the ends of the earth  
and of the farthest seas.  
By your strength you established the mountains;  
you are girded with might.  
You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves,  
the tumult of the peoples.  
Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs;  
you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy. .

## **Gospel**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Open our heart, O Lord,  
to accept the words of your Son. Alleluia.

### **A reading from the Gospel according to Luke (8: 22-25 NRSV)**

One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake.' So they put out, and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A gale swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. They went to him and woke him up, shouting, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?'

### **Thought for the Day**

We all face our own storms. By asking for Christ's help at such times, we demonstrate faith. That faith will often be far from perfect, as was the disciples', but Christ will strengthen and help us in our troubles and, as a result, enable that seed of faith in us to grow and become ever stronger.

### **Intercessions**

*Take some time to reflect on your life this week. Where do you need God's presence and help? Give thanks for where you feel you have received it and pray for those situation - places and people - who are in particular need at this time.*

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### **An Act of Spiritual Communion**

**Our Father, who art in heaven...**

### **Act of Reception**

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there  
and unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

## **Final Prayer**

God our creator,  
by your gift the tree of life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise,  
and the bread of life at the heart of your Church:  
may we who have been nourished at your table on earth  
be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross  
and enjoy the delights of eternity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Blessing**

In the challenges that the week ahead will bring,  
may our faith deepen as we turn to Christ for help.  
And may the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon us, now and evermore. Amen.