



## **Prayer During the Day for the First Sunday of Lent**

### **Introduction**

We meet in the name of God.

*All*    **Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Good morning and a very warm welcome to you wherever you may be. Our service for the First Sunday of Lent comes from Christ Church, Long Lane.

I am very grateful to Frances Rymer, Steve Johnson, and David Vincett, who is playing the organ for their contributions to this service. As usual, my husband David is doing the recording.

The forty days of Lent remind us of the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan. Traditionally it is a time for self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, almsgiving and preparation for Easter.

The calculation of the forty days has varied considerably in Christian history. It is now usual in the West to count them continuously to the end of Holy Week (not including Sundays), beginning Lent on the sixth Wednesday before Easter, Ash Wednesday. At our Ash Wednesday service recorded

earlier this week, we symbolically set fire to the Palm Crosses we held aloft on Palm Sunday last year.

Churches are kept bare of flowers and decoration. The Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare or Refreshment Sunday*) was allowed as a day of relief from the rigour of Lent, and is now linked to the modern observance of Mothering Sunday.

As Holy Week approaches, the atmosphere of the season darkens; the readings begin to anticipate the story of Christ's suffering and death.

We recall Jesus's time in the wilderness as we sing the Lenten hymn, *Forty Days and Forty Nights*.

## **Hymn**

Forty days and forty nights  
thou wast fasting in the wild;  
forty days and forty nights  
tempted, and yet undefiled.

Sunbeams scorching all the day;  
chilly dew-drops nightly shed;  
prowling beasts about thy way;  
stones thy pillow, earth thy bed.

Let us thine endurance share,  
and awhile from joys abstain,  
with thee watching unto prayer,  
strong with thee to suffer pain?

Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,  
ever constant by thy side;  
that with thee we may appear  
at the eternal Eastertide.

*George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870), Francis Pott (1832-1909)*

## **The Opening Canticle -The Song of Christ's Glory**

*We say together*

Christ Jesus was in the form of God, ♦

but he did not cling to equality with God.

<sup>2</sup> He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, ♦  
and was born in our human likeness.

<sup>3</sup> Being found in human form he humbled himself, ♦  
and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him, ♦  
and bestowed on him the name above every name,

<sup>5</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, ♦  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth;

<sup>6</sup> And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, ♦  
to the glory of God the Father.

*Philippians 2.5–11*

Glory to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning is now

and shall be for ever. Amen.

### **Confession**

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Let us confess our sins remembering before God the times when we have fallen from temptation into sin.

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love:  
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:  
fill us with your Spirit.

Christ, have mercy.

**All Christ, have mercy.**

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:  
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

## **Absolution**

May the Father of all mercies cleanse *us* from *our* sins,  
and restore *us* in his image to the praise and glory of his name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All Amen.**

*This opening prayer is said*

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Silence is kept.*

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,  
so may the light of your presence, O God,  
set our hearts on fire with love for you;  
now and for ever.

**Amen.**

**Psalm appointed for today is: Psalm 25, verses 1-9**

- <sup>1</sup> To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;  
O my God, in you I trust; ♦ let me not be put to shame;  
let not my enemies triumph over me.
- <sup>2</sup> **Let none who look to you be put to shame, ♦  
but let the treacherous be shamed and frustrated.**
- <sup>3</sup> Make me to know your ways, O Lord, ♦  
and teach me your paths.
- <sup>4</sup> **Lead me in your truth and teach me, ♦  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you have I hoped all the day long.**

- <sup>5</sup> Remember, Lord, your compassion and love, ♦  
for they are from everlasting.
- <sup>6</sup> **Remember not the sins of my youth  
or my transgressions, ♦  
but think on me in your goodness, O Lord,  
according to your steadfast love.**
- <sup>7</sup> Gracious and upright is the Lord; ♦  
therefore shall he teach sinners in the way.
- <sup>8</sup> **He will guide the humble in doing right ♦  
and teach his way to the lowly.**
- <sup>9</sup> All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth ♦  
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

**All Glory to the Father, and to the Son,  
And to the Holy Spirit:  
As is was in the beginning is now,  
And shall be forever. Amen.**

*A reading from the book of Genesis, chapter 9 beginning at the 8<sup>th</sup> verse.*

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ‘As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.’ God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and

you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.'

God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

This is the word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God**

*A reading from the gospel of Mark, chapter 1 beginning at the first verse.*

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

And a voice came from heaven,

'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

This is the word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God**

**Homily**

## Hymn

Be thou my guardian and my guide,  
and hear me when I call;  
let not my slippery footsteps slide,  
and hold me lest I fall.

The world, the flesh, and Satan dwell  
around the path I tread;  
O save me from the snares of hell,  
thou quickener of the dead.

And if I tempted am to sin,  
and outward things are strong,  
do thou, O Lord, keep watch within,  
and save my soul from wrong.

Still let me ever watch and pray,  
and feel that I am frail;  
that if the tempter cross my way,  
yet he may not prevail.

*Isaac Williams (1802-1865)*

## Intercessions

Almighty God, we pray for the courage to give up other things  
so that we may give ourselves to you this Lent.

Give your Church the courage  
to give up her preoccupation with herself  
and to give more time to your mission in the world.  
*help us to remember that we are your Church, give us the grace to  
bring your good news to those we meet.*

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
**All give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give your world the courage to give up war, bitterness and  
hatred, and to seek peace.

*We pray for nations in conflict; for those enduring civil war or the suppression of democracy: especially for the people of Myanmar.*

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up quarrels, strife and jealousy in our families, neighbourhoods and communities.

*We pray for those whose relationships have broken down, for those suffering from domestic abuse..*

May the presence of the risen Jesus, his body once broken and now made whole, bring peace *and healing* as we live with one another.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up our selfishness as we live for others, and to give time, care and comfort to the sick.

*We pray for all those ill in hospital or at home and for those who care for them.*

May the wounded hands of Jesus bring his healing touch, and the light of his presence fill their rooms.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up our fear of death and to rejoice with those who have died in faith.

*Especially as we hold Mike, Margaret, Muriel and John in our hearts and minds.*

May the feet of the risen Lord Jesus, once nailed to the cross, walk alongside the dying and bereaved in their agony, and walk with us and all your Church through death to the gate of glory.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All** give us strength and hear our prayer,  
here and in eternity.      **Amen.**

## **Collect for the First Sunday of Lent.**

Heavenly Father,  
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,  
and grew closer to you in the desert:  
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer  
that we may witness to your saving love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

Trusting in the compassion of God  
let us pray to our heavenly Father;  
**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.**  
**Lead us not into temptation**  
**but deliver us from evil.**  
**For the kingdom, the power,**  
**and the glory are yours**  
**now and for ever.**  
**Amen.**

This is love, not that we loved God,  
**All but that he loved us and sent his Son.**  
He is the sacrifice for our sins,  
**All that we might live through him.**  
If God loves us so much  
**All we ought to love one another.**  
If we love one another  
**All God lives in us.**

## **Blessing**

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,  
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;  
and the blessing ...

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