

MASS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF RECONCILIATION

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MASS 14: THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF RECONCILIATION

The season of Lent has both a baptismal and a penitential character (see SC, art. 109). From Ash Wednesday the words of the apostle re-echo in the liturgy: “We beg you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled with God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). This text is also used in this Mass (1 Read, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

The Church has with ever greater clarity acknowledged the role of our Lady in reconciling sinners with God. The Fathers of the Church in the early centuries, in discussing the mystery of the incarnation of the Word, speak frequently of the virginal womb of the mother of the Lord as the place where “peace” between God and the human race came to be. The teaching of the popes of our own age fits in admirably with this patristic thought: the Blessed Virgin, in the words of Pope John Paul II, “became associated with God in the very work of reconciliation through her divine maternity” (Postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentiae*, no. 35: AAS 77 [1985], p. 275).

In the Middle Ages ecclesiastical writers, deepening their understanding of the maternal role of the Blessed Virgin, gave her the titles of “way of reconciliation,” “general cause of reconciliation” as well as “mother of reconciliation,” because it was from her that Jesus Christ, the “reconciliation of sinners,” was born: “There is no reconciliation,” says St. Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109), “except the reconciliation that you bore in purity” (H. Barre, *Prieres anciennes de l’Occident a la Mere du Sauveur*, Ed. P. Lethielleux, Paris, 1963, p. 305). Hence the faithful turn to the Blessed Virgin in order that, through her intercession, they may obtain “the grace of reconciliation,” and, from the twelfth century at least, devoutly venerate her under the title of “refuge of sinners.”

In our own day the Blessed Virgin is honored liturgically in many places under the title of “reconciler of sinners,” thanks especially to the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette.

Hence, if Mass is celebrated during Lent in honor of our Lady, especially in sanctuaries where the faithful gather in large numbers for the sacrament of penance, this formulary is appropriate, extolling as it does the “mercies” of God “to every creature” (Ent Ant, A, Psalm 145:9) and honoring the Blessed Virgin for her “heart of compassion for sinners” (Pref).

Except for the preface, almost all the Mass texts are taken from the *Missa propria beatae Mariae Virginis Reconciliatricis peccatorum*, Vatican Polyglot Press, 1978, pp. 4-6.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

A—Gracious and merciful is the Lord, slow to anger, full of love.
The Lord is good in every way, merciful to every creature.
(*Psalm 145:8-9*)

B—Hail, full of grace; you are called upon by sinners
because you are merciful
and look on our distress with compassion.

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord our God,
through the precious blood of your Son
you reconciled the world to yourself
and at the foot of his cross you chose the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of reconciliation for sinners;
grant through her intercession
that we may obtain pardon for our sins.
We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. (Amen)

FIRST READING: *On behalf of Christ we implore you to be reconciled to God.*

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians (5:17-21)

Brothers and sisters:

Whoever is in Christ is a new creation:
the old things have passed away;
behold, new things have come.

And all this is from God,

who has reconciled us to himself through Christ
and given us the ministry of reconciliation,
namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ,
not counting their trespasses against them
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

So we are ambassadors for Christ,
as if God were appealing through us.
We implore you on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.
For our sake God made Christ to be sin who did not know sin,
so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

The word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: *(Psalm 103: 1-2, 3-4, 8-9, 13-14, 17-18a)*

Refrain: O bless the Lord, my soul.

Bless the LORD, my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name!
Bless the LORD, my soul; do not forget all the gifts of God.

Refrain: O bless the Lord, my soul.

Who pardons all your sins, heals all your ills,
delivers your life from the pit,
surrounds you with love and compassion.

Refrain: O bless the Lord, my soul.

Merciful and gracious is the LORD,
slow to anger, abounding in kindness.
God does not always rebuke, nurses no lasting anger.

Refrain: O bless the Lord, my soul.

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on the faithful.
For he knows how we are formed,
remembers that we are dust.

Refrain: O bless the Lord, my soul.

But the LORD'S kindness is forever
toward the faithful from age to age.
God favors the children's children of those who keep the covenant.

Refrain: O bless the Lord, my soul.

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL: *(See Genesis 9:17)*

The cross of Christ is the sign of the covenant
I have established between me and all living things on earth.

GOSPEL: *(This is your son. This is your mother.)*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John *(19:25-27)*

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother
and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas,
and Mary of Magdala.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved
standing beside her, he said to his mother,
“Woman, behold, your son.”

Then he said to the disciple,
“Behold, your mother.”

And from that hour
the disciple took her into his home.

The gospel of the Lord. (Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.)

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS:

Lord,
we offer you these gifts of reconciliation and praise,
that through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
refuge of sinners,
you may in your mercy pardon our sins
and steady our wavering hearts.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. (Amen)

PREFACE FOR MARY, MOTHER OF RECONCILIATION: (*P 14 of Vol. I*)

The Blessed Virgin as the refuge of sinners and mother of reconciliation

PRIEST: The Lord be with you.

PEOPLE: And also with you.

PRIEST: Lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE: We lift them up to the Lord.

PRIEST: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

PEOPLE: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,
we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks
in all things and for all things
and to proclaim your mighty deeds.

In your infinite goodness
you do not abandon those who stray from you,
but in marvelous ways you call them back to your love:
you gave the Blessed Virgin Mary,
sinless as she was,
a heart of compassion for sinners;
seeing her love as their mother,
they turn to her with trust
as they ask your forgiveness;
seeing her beauty of spirit,
they seek to turn away from sin in its ugliness;
taking to heart her words and example,
they learn to keep your Son's commandments.

Through him the angels of heaven
offer their prayer of adoration
as they rejoice in your presence for ever.

May our voices be one with theirs
in their triumphant hymn of praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might . . .

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

Glory and praise are yours, Mary:
from you rose the sun of justice, Christ, our God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

Lord our God,
we have received the body and blood of your Son,
the sacrament of our reconciliation;
grant through the intercession
of the Blessed Virgin Mary
that this sacrament may bring us
the grace of your loving forgiveness
and the reward of eternal redemption.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. (Amen)