



## *The Light Is ON for You* Prayer Service Open to God's Healing Grace in our Lives and in our Church

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### **Entrance Hymn Suggestions**

<i>If no Exposition:</i>	"Healer of Our Every Ill"	Haugen (GIA)
	"Change Our Hearts"	Cooney (OCP)
	"Draw Near, O Lord/ Attende Devote"	Melvin (WLP)
<i>If Exposition:</i>	"O Salutaris Hostia/O Saving Victim"	traditional

### **Introduction**

Leader: My friends,  
as we gather this evening to pray, to reflect,  
and to ask the Lord's mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation,  
let us pause from the hectic activities of our day  
and ask the Lord to enter deep within our hearts.  
May our hearts be open to his mercy  
and may that mercy overflow to everyone we meet.

[Pause]

Leader: Let us pray.  
Loving God,  
your healing mercy softens the hardest hearts  
and welcomes the sinner home.  
Change our hearts  
and transform us to become more faithful servants.  
Relieve our burdens of sin and guilt  
that we may rejoice in the light of the Gospel.  
May each one of us play a part in rebuilding our wounded Church,  
so that abuse, suffering, and injustice  
may give way to peace, joy and love.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

### **Scripture**

**James 5: 7-10**

A reading from the letter of James

Be patient, therefore, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the

Lord is at hand. Do not complain about one another, that you may not be judged. Behold the Judge is standing before the gates. Take as an example of hardship and patience the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Indeed we call blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of the perseverance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, because the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

**Reflection: This Year's Lent Could be Just What the Struggling Church Needs**

*We in the American Catholic Church have been through a year of tremendous suffering and tremendous upheaval and frustration in the wake of recent reports of sexual misconduct and cover up by church leaders. Some Catholics stopped going to church, scandalized by the actions of a few. Perhaps this Lent can serve as a strong reminder that God is never finished with us. This year we can say: "This is my church. It's got its sins - it always has had its sins and sinners - but Christ calls me to convert my life to his image and likeness and that call is not for individuals only, it is for the entire community. --Conventual Franciscan Father Jude DeAngelo*

*For this Lent, we should do what the church has always asked us to do: prayer, fasting and almsgiving - concentrating on those things that will bring us closer to God and to one another. In the current church climate, Lent offers a time for Catholics to say: "Wow, we have completely hit bottom and we have to depend on God's grace to build us up again." --Paulist Father Larry Rice*

*To live the spirit of Lent there has to be a path away from the personal and systemic sin that led to this crisis. Lent provides a time for Catholics to listen to one another and to begin to raise the question: "How do we move forward?" It is not unlike the time when the apostles were in the upper room wondering what to do next. "We have to trust our faith in the resurrection, in the grace that God will provide. Hold the loss and the grief, and hold one another in it. This is a critical moment to return to the core of what Catholics believe." --Sister of Charity Teresa Maya*

**Examination of Conscience**

Leader: As we celebrate the gift of God's mercy this evening in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayerfully reflect on the following questions:

- Although we are redeemed by Christ, each of us is still a "work in progress". Given our struggles with sin, how has God been patient with you? How has sinfulness kept you from experiencing God's tender compassion?
- Our parish, and indeed the whole Church, is also "a work in progress." How has the Church failed to reflect the loving care of our God? What can we do to restore our community and to let God's life and love flow through us?

*The faithful then move to the confessional/reconciliation room for the individual Sacrament of Reconciliation.*