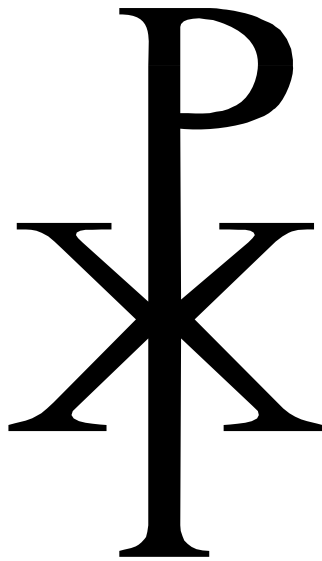


# A Prayer Guide For Personal Repentance And Renewal



## CHRIST CHURCH VENTURA

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### A Prayer Guide for Lent

Lent, a period of 40 days before Easter, was originally a period of preparation for those to be baptized at Easter. It later became a time of penitence and self-examination for all Christians. Thus, it reflects the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert resisting temptations prior to His ministry.

Trusting in Christ's resurrection, we listen for the word of God in the time-honored stories of the Church's Lenten journey. We follow Jesus into the wilderness, resist temptation, pray, and proceed 'on the way' to Jerusalem, and the cross.

Our Lenten journey is one of repentance, that is, changing directions from self-serving patterns toward the life giving way of the cross. The power of the resurrection draws us in repentance toward the cross. The intervention of God's gracious resurrection makes life-long changes become possible. Turning from the old self at Lent prepares us to affirm the joy of Easter.

The following outline for this period of prayer is intended to assist you as you pray. It is not meant to be followed in a slavish manner. We do, however, need help as we seek to order our time. This guide is designed to provide that help.

Use as much or as little of this as seems appropriate for you. Remember that we are in the season of Lent and our praying has repentance as its focus. Repentance leads to faith. Repentance is a two-fold spiritual discipline.

First, it is an acknowledgment of our sin as it shows itself in the different aspects of our being, wrong thinking and attitudes, wrong affections and aspirations, wrong behaviors and actions.

Second, it is a turning from our sin to Christ for forgiveness and strength to amend our lives. It is a sober reflection upon our condition, which leads us to faith and fresh appropriation of the finished work of Christ. This sober reflection upon sin increases our wonder at the love of God.

### Suggested Order for Prayer

- ✚ Read and Meditate on Psalm 51 (see handout)  
*Silence and meditation*
- ✚ Sing or Read the Hymn: 'To Mock You Reign'
- ✚ Read aloud the devotional: 'The Precious Blood'  
*Silence and meditation*
- ✚ Read through the list of confessions in silence.
- ✚ Read through the list again aloud pausing to focus prayer on each of the confessions.
- ✚ Spend several minutes examining your own life using these headings to confess particular sins:  
Leader: We confess that we have not loved the Lord with all of our heart and soul and mind and strength.  
*People: Lord, hear our prayer*  
Leader: We confess our sins of pride, hypocrisy, and impatience.  
*People: Lord, hear our prayer*  
Leader: We confess our sins of self-indulgence.  
*People: Lord, hear our prayer*  
Leader: We confess our sins of anger, envy, hatred, Bitterness, and resentment toward others.  
*People: Lord, hear our prayer*  
Leader: We confess our sins of the love of worldly goods and our dishonesty in life and work.  
*People: Lord, hear our prayer*  
Leader: We confess our sins of lust and greed.  
*People: Lord, hear our prayer*  
Leader: We confess our sins of neglect in worship, prayer, study, fellowship, and mercy.  
*People: Lord, hear our prayer*  
Leader: We confess our sins of unbelief: failing to trust God in the affairs of life and believe that Christ's work is sufficient for us.
- ✚ Sing or Read the Hymn  
'Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed' (see handout)
- ✚ Celebrate the Lord's Supper
- ✚ Read aloud the devotional: 'Continual Repentance'
- ✚ Read and Meditate on Psalm 32 (see handout)
- ✚ Close by Augustine's prayer in unison

## *The Precious Blood*

Blessed Lord Jesus

Before your cross I kneel and see  
the heinousness of my sin,  
my iniquity that caused you to be 'made  
a curse',  
the evil that excites the severity of  
divine wrath.

Show me the enormity of my guilt by  
the crown of thorns,  
the pierced hands and feet,  
the bruised body,  
the dying cries.

Your blood is the blood of incarnate God,  
its worth infinite,  
its value beyond all thought.

Infinite must be the evil and guilt that demands  
such a price.

Sin is my malady, my monster, my foe, my viper  
born in my birth,  
alive in my life,  
strong in my character,  
dominating my faculties,  
following me as a shadow,  
intermingling with my every thought,  
my chain that holds me captive in the  
empire of my soul.

Sinner that I am, why should  
the sun give me light,  
the air supply breath,  
the earth bear my tread,  
its fruits nourish me,  
its creatures serve my ends?

Yet your compassions yearn over me,  
your heart hastens to my rescue,  
your love endured my curse,  
your mercy bore my deserved stripes.

Let me walk humbly in the lowest depths of  
humiliation,  
bathed in your blood,  
tender of conscience,  
triumphing gloriously as an heir of salvation.

## *To Mock Your Reign*

To mock your reign, O dearest Lord,  
They made a crown of thorns;  
Set you with taunts along that road  
From which no one returns.

They could not know, as we do now,  
How glorious is your crown;  
That thorns would flower upon your brow,  
Your sorrows heal our own.

In mock acclaim, O gracious Lord,  
They snatched a purple cloak;  
Your passion turned for all they cared,  
Into a soldier's joke.

They could not know, as we do now,  
That though we merit blame,  
You will your robe of mercy throw  
Around our naked shame.

A sceptered reed, O patient Lord,  
They thrust into your hand;  
And acted out their grim charade  
To its appointed end.

They could not know, as we do now,  
Though empires rise and fall,  
Your Kingdom shall not ever end,  
You will return to rule.

## *Continual Repentance*

O God of Grace,  
You have imputed my sin to my substitute, and have  
imputed his righteousness to my soul,  
clothing me with a bridegroom's robe,  
decking me with jewels of holiness.

But in my Christian walk I am still in rags;  
my best prayers are stained with sin;  
my penitential tears are so much impurity;  
my confessions of wrong are so many  
aggravations of sin;  
my receiving the Spirit is tintured with  
selfishness.

I need to repent of my repentance;  
I need my tears to be washed;

I have no robe to bring to cover my sins,  
no loom to weave my own righteousness;

I am always standing clothed in filthy garments,  
and by grace am always receiving change of  
raiment,  
for you always justify the ungodly;

I am always going in the far country,  
and always returning home as a prodigal,  
always saying, Father, forgive me,

Every morning let me wear it,  
every evening return in it,  
go out to the day's work in it,  
be married in it,  
be wound in death in it,  
stand before the great white throne in it,  
enter heaven in it shining as the sun.

Grant me never to lose sight of  
The exceeding sinfulness of sin,  
The exceeding righteousness of salvation,  
The exceeding glory of Christ  
The exceeding beauty of holiness,  
The exceeding wonder of grace.