

# Liturgy Alive of 4th Sunday of Lent -C-

## Greetings *(See Second Reading)*

Blessed be God our Father  
who has reconciled us to himself through Christ  
and has entrusted to us  
the work of reconciliation in this world.  
May his pardon and peace be always with you.

*R/ And also with you.*

## Introduction by the Celebrant

### A. A Father Prodigal With His Love

Can you imagine that, when half-heartedly sorry for the stupidities of your sins, you tell God that you come back to him, he embraces you and prepares a feast for you? It is almost like a hero's welcome! A God prodigal with his love waits for us; the past belongs to the past. Let us join in the feast of forgiveness.

### B. A Scandalizing Mercy

Sometimes it is said of good, tolerant people: "that's going too far to tolerate this, to forgive such a loss of face. Is there no spunk in him or her?" No, we shouldn't be anybody's fool, but when it comes to forgiveness and patience we have still much to learn from God our Father. Has he not kept forgiving us? Has he ever stopped being patient with us? This is what we have to learn from him, however difficult it may be. Let us ask Jesus with us here to give us that strength.

## Penitential Act

Why do we still hesitate

to return to the forgiving Father?  
(pause)  
Lord Jesus, you sat at table  
with outcasts and sinners:  
Lord, have mercy. R/ Lord, have mercy.  
Jesus Christ, you forgave  
those who nailed you to the cross:  
Christ, have mercy. R/ Christ, have mercy.  
Lord Jesus, you invite us sinners  
to the marriage feast of heaven:  
Lord, have mercy. R/ Lord, have mercy.  
Lord, thank you for your patience  
that does not tire of forgiving us.  
Let your love change us completely

and lead us to everlasting life. *R/ Amen.*

## Opening Prayer

Let us pray to God our Father

that we may experience the joy  
of his lasting forgiveness  
???(pause)  
God with a big heart,  
when we have lost our way,  
when we seek fake happiness  
in the dark land of sin,  
you send your Son to search for us  
and to bring us back home to you.  
Let us feel deeply that you are looking forward  
to welcome us with joy  
and to restore us in your life and love.  
Give us the humble courage to return to you.

our God and Father for ever. *R/ Amen.*

## Liturgy of the Word

### First Reading Introduction: [The Joy Of A Homeland](#)

God had led his people from the land of slavery into their new homeland. They celebrated this homecoming by renewing the covenant with God. Then they had to live as his faithful people.

# Second Reading Introduction: [Reconciled And Reconcilers](#)

God offers us a new world of forgiveness and reconciliation. We have to bring that reconciliation to all.

### Second Reading: [2 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 he made him to be sin who did not know sin,

so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

### Gospel Introduction: [Welcome Back Home!](#)

In the parable of the Father and his two sons, the father welcomes the repentant son back home with joy, but the self-righteous elder son, with the scribes and the Pharisees, refuses forgiveness.

# General Intercessions

Let us pray to our merciful Father that his patience and love may be a constant invitation to everyone and all to return to him notwithstanding failures, and let us say: *R/ Lord, renew us in your love.*

- For the Church, that it may be to this world of fallible people a constant sign of reconciliation and peace, let us pray: *R/ Lord, renew us in your love.*
- For priests, that in the sacrament of penance they may always welcome repentant sinners with the patience and joy of the heavenly Father, let us pray: *R/ Lord, renew us in your love.*
- For our Christian families, that they may always be places of forgiveness where people take one another as they are and where prodigal children are received back with the warmth of love and joy, let us pray: *R/ Lord, renew us in your love.*
- For all Christians, that we who have experienced the Lord's forgiveness may learn to forgive one another wholeheartedly and without regrets and that we may not look down on people who have erred, let us pray: *R/ Lord, renew us in your love.*
- For our Christian communities, that we may welcome back in our midst social outcasts and ex-prisoners and give them the chance to rehabilitate themselves, let us pray: *R/ Lord, renew us in your love.*

Lord God, we thank you for the joy of forgiveness. Help us to express this gratitude by becoming new people in Jesus Christ our Lord. *R/ Amen.*

### Prayer over the Gifts

Lord our God,

your Son welcomed sinners  
and ate with them from the same table.  
May our gathering here  
around the table of your Son  
also bring us, today's sinners,  
reconciliation and peace  
with one another and with you,  
our understanding and patient Father,

on account of Christ Jesus our Lord. *R/ Amen.*

### Introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer

Let us with joy give thanks to the Father for always forgiving us without conditions and without regrets.

#### Invitation to the Lord's Prayer

Repentant, like the prodigal son,  
we turn to our Father in heaven;  
we ask him to forgive us as we forgive others,  
  
and to keep us from evil. *R/ Our Father...*

#### Deliver Us

Deliver us Lord, from every evil,  
and grant us today the peace of forgiveness.  
Guide our hesitant steps  
and keep us from stumbling.  
When in moments of weakness  
we have turned away from you,  
let the memories of your kindness  
be stronger than our feelings of guilt,  
and help us to return to the joy of your home,  
as we look forward to the full coming  
of our Savior Jesus Christ.  
  
*R/ For the kingdom...*

#### Invitation to Communion

We are not worthy to be called  
sons and daughters of the heavenly Father,  
but here is the sinless Lamb of God  
who bore our sins  
to give us the life and love of the Father.  
Happy are we sinners to be invited  
to eat his bread of life and strength.  
  
*R/ Lord, I am not worthy...*

#### Prayer after Communion

Father, in your patient mercy  
you have prodigally poured out your love on us.  
You have gathered us in your Son;  
let him speak to us your forgiving words  
and nourish us at his sumptuous meal,  
even though we have offended you.  
Let your love live on in us  
and make us bring your reconciliation  
to everyone far and near.  
For we want to proclaim that you are  
a Father who loves without measure  
and embraces even the sinner.  
  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. *R/ Amen.*

#### Blessing

We know from experience  
that it is hard to forgive  
when we have been hurt deeply.  
We have all come to wear scars  
of betrayed trust and friendship,  
of love turned down or left unanswered,  
of hopes in one another never fulfilled.  
This has been God's experience with us too.  
Yet he takes us back with joy,  
holds no grudges, loves us no less.  
May our love grow more mature  
through our encounter with a forgiving God  
so that we too forgive those who have hurt us  
without condition and with joy,  
with the blessing of Almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *R/ Amen.*

Go in the peace of a loving and forgiving Father. *R/ Thanks be to God.*

