



LENT

Reconciliation

Our Lady of Dolours Parish Chatswood.

1 April 2009 7.30pm

Theme: God casts our sin into the depths of the sea.

[Symbols: Middle of sanctuary: large container of water ('well'), suitably decorated. Next to it, piles of rocks. People will be invited to pick up a rock (river stone) when they return from confession, the rock symbolising their sin. They drop their rock into the water as instructed in the leaflet.]

No procession: priests take their place on sanctuary

Welcome:

Welcome to this celebration of reconciliation. We are aware of our brokenness, and the ways we have distanced ourselves from God and each other. Yet we trust in the unconditional love of God who heals and frees us from the burden of sin. We turn now to Christ and his Church to reclaim our unity as one body of Christ.

Greeting

Celebrant: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

All: **Amen.**

Celebrant: **May the grace and peace of Jesus Christ our Lord
And the peace of the Holy Spirit be with you all.**

All: And also with you.

Opening Prayer:

Celebrant: **Brothers and sisters, in this season of Lent, the Gospel calls us to conversion; let us pray now that our hearts will be softened to receive God's grace.**

**Lord,
Send your Spirit among us
to heal the hardened places of our hearts,
and to release us from the burden of sin,
so that we may serve you in freedom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

Reading:

Celebration of the Word of God

Exodus 34: 1-7

God's self-revelation to Moses

**The Lord said to Moses:
Carve two tablets of stone
like the first,
and I will inscribe upon the tablets the words
that were on the first tablets
which you shattered.
Be ready by morning:
and in the morning come up to Mount Sinai,
and present yourself there to me,
on the top of the mountain.
No one shall come up with you,
and do not let anyone be seen throughout all the
mountain;
and do not let flocks or herds graze in front of that
mountain.
So Moses carved two tablets of stone,
like the first,
and early in the morning
he went up on Mount Sinai,
as the Lord had commanded him,
taking the two stone tablets with him.
The Lord came down in a cloud—
and stood with him there,
proclaiming the name Eternal.
The Lord passed before him
and proclaimed:**

Lord! Lord!
A God compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger,
abounding in kindness and faithfulness,
extending kindness to the thousandth generation,
forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

Homily / Reflection

Tonight is a chance to confess our sin
To release us of whatever burden we are carrying.
And I know you have come here with something specific in mind to confess.
That willingness to confess your sin is a precious sign to all of us of your
faith, of your desire to be close to God and to the church family.

In these remaining moments before confession,
I would like to ask us all to reflect deeply on the depths of God's mercy and
compassion.

Just how radically deep, unconditional and all-embracing is this forgiveness
that we seek from God.

Do we really trust in that? Can we feel it? Sense it? Taste it?

And do we understand how *ancient* is our belief in God's love?
Sometimes we Christians think the teaching about God's compassion started
with Jesus!

But Jesus himself was drawing on a teaching that was passed on to him
through his people, the Jewish people.

A teaching powerfully embedded in the Hebrew Scriptures,
A teaching that some Jews in Jesus' day had forgotten (just like we
Catholics can forget core teachings at times)

But nonetheless it was beautifully enshrined in the Jewish tradition; a
teaching that Jesus drew out, highlighted and lived in a radical way as the
Son of God.

With Jesus, let's touch that tradition now, reflecting on a passage from the
Hebrew Scriptures which he would have known and loved and pondered.

(You will find this passage in the centre-page of your liturgy sheet.)

It's taken from the Book of Exodus where, after the sin of the Golden Calf, God renews his covenant with his people, and reveals to Moses something more about who God is.

So it's a moment of reconciliation between God and his people.
And it's a moment of great intimacy, a revelation of God's self.

(Gen or Jenni reads the straight English version)

Now, let's read it again, this time with the help of a Jewish way of reading the Scriptures.

The ancient sages of Israel loved to explore the biblical text,
By elaborating, illuminating, even 'playing' with it to reveal its deeper meaning. And so they interpreted it in an expansive way.

Let's listen to our reading again, in three ways: In Hebrew, in English, and with its expanded interpretation.

And as the text is read, ask yourself:

- Which quality of God especially speaks to you?
- Which quality do you desire most strongly tonight?

Let God's word of compassion feed you in this moment of reflection.
When the reading is finished we will have time for quiet reflection, to search our hearts.

Read Ex 34:6-7 a second time.

Follow with silence and instrumental music, giving people time to reflect.

Rite of Reconciliation

General Confession of Sins

Celebrant: (Our Act of Sorrow is written on the front of your leaflet.)

**In the footsteps of generations of believers,
we recognise our need for forgiveness,
and turn now to
our God who is generous in mercy,**

**our God who is rich in compassion,
our God who casts our sins into the depths of the sea.
Together we confess our sorrow as we pray:**

All: *Loving Father, we are truly sorry for our sins. Your only Son lived among us to reveal to us the fullness of your loving compassion. In the depths of our hearts we admit our sinfulness. We seek your forgiveness, for you are our God whose mercy knows no bounds. We ask this through, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Individual Confession:

[Instructions to people: Vince reminds people to

- Come up the centre aisle,
- After confession, pick up a stone and drop the stone into the water, praying silently “You cast our sins into the depths of the sea.”]
- For penance: Spend some quiet time after confession re-reading the Scripture passage from Exodus 34 (inside this leaflet), reflecting on how this Word speaks to your life.

[Taped instrumental music: *Officium*]

CONCLUDING PRAYER & BLESSING

Now that we have celebrated God’s forgiveness, let’s conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving. To each line I invite you to respond: ‘Thanks be to God’

Almighty God, in this sacrament you have shown us your mercy and love.

R.

You have made us new and given us a fresh start to love you and each other.

R.

You have made us one family again in Christ.

R.

You have given us new strength to go out and love in Jesus’ name.

R.
And may almighty God bless us all, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen. Our ceremony has ended go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

R.
May I offer our congratulations to those who made their first reconciliation tonight, we have here a certificate and small gift for you... (*Distribute in a low key way*)

And now, let's finish by offering each other a sign of peace.

ENDS.