

Welcome and Opening Prayer:

Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian message.

As followers of Jesus we are called upon to forgive our brothers and sisters from our hearts. Let us look at the way Jesus forgave people.

When you pass judgment, O God Most High,  
justice and mercy meet in perfect measure,  
and you pardon us as we pardon one another.

Create in us a new heart,  
formed in the image of your Son,  
a heart strong enough to bear every wound  
and gentle enough to forgive every offense,  
that the world may see  
how your people love one another.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever. AMEN.

Confession and Forgiveness:

Our God is a forgiving God.... full of compassion and mercy.  
However, as our readings today point out, we cannot expect any  
forgiveness or mercy from God if we do not forgive other people.

### Litany of Praise

Lord Jesus, you forgave Peter after he denied you:

*Lord, have mercy.*

Lord Jesus, you asked your Father to forgive those who crucified you:

*Christ, have mercy.*

Lord Jesus, you teach us that the forgiven person must forgive in return:

*Lord, have mercy.*

O God, Most High,  
you are slow to anger and rich in compassion.

Keep alive in us the memory of your mercy;  
calm our anger  
and take away all our resentments.  
May we discover the forgiveness promised to those who forgive  
and become a people rich in mercy.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever. AMEN.

PRAYERS of the People:

Let us pray to our merciful God that we, who have experienced his  
forgiveness, may bring the joy of reconciliation to the world.

Our response is: *Hear our Prayer*

1. For all **Christian churches**, long divided by grudges and pride. *(pause)* May they be brought together in the unity of the gospel of Jesus: Lord, in your mercy:
2. For those among us who find it **difficult to forgive**. *(pause)* May the realization of God's generous mercy to humankind touch their hearts and enable them to extend the hand of reconciliation. Lord, in your mercy:

3. For **all of us** gathered here. (*pause*) May we be able to forgive those who have sinned against us and so be healed of our bitterness and resentment. Lord, in your mercy:

Compassionate God, you are slow to anger and rich in mercy. Listen to our prayers and fill us with a spirit of true forgiveness. We ask this through Jesus, the Lord. AMEN.

#### LORD'S PRAYER

Asking God to forgive our many sins,  
and with love and forgiveness toward all, we now pray:

#### BENEDICTION

May God show you mercy and fill you with grace. May God give you peace and a vision of glory. May God move your hearts to forgive from the heart.