

Restorative Justice Sunday

Collect:

Jesus, you are never reluctant to make us uncomfortable as you call us to be your light in the broken places we live. Your call is to grow and expand our vision and to live out your healing law of love. We are grateful, for you are with us always, and ready to give us the courage to open our hearts and the strength to respond by working together to build a world of justice and mercy. We open our hearts to you to hear your word and accept it and live it out. Thank you, Risen Lord, for nailing our sins to the cross and empowering us through the Holy Spirit to do your will. Amen.

Prayers of the People:

On this day, let us pray for all who are affected by harm and crime in our communities.

As we are challenged to face difficult questions of justice and compassion, we ask you to guide us in our decision making.

Be merciful, O God, as we strive to love others as You have loved us.

For those who are hurt by the behavior of others in our community, we ask you to give them hope that they may be surrounded by support and care so they may heal.

Be merciful, O God, as we strive to love others as You have loved us.

For those who help others, either professionally or as compassionate brothers and sisters in Christ, that they may be inspired by your example Jesus, and be faithful to Your vision of healing, patience and hopefulness.

Be merciful, O God, as we strive to love others as You have loved us,

For those who serve as our agents of law enforcement, we ask that You keep them strong in character, gentle in heart, and devoted to you.

Be merciful, O God, as we strive to love others as You have loved us.

For those who have caused harm to others, we ask that You convict them so that they may stand up and be accountable and resolve never to harm another again.

Be merciful, O God, as we strive to love others as You have loved us.

For those who will not be accountable, we ask for Your guidance as we wrestle with the dilemma of what to do with them.

Be merciful, O God, as we strive to love others as You have loved us.

For those who work in the legal system, striving to embody justice, may they be mindful and empowered by the needs of everyone affected by their work.

Be merciful, O God, as we strive to love others as You have loved us.

For all who live, work and visit prisons, including wardens, correctional officers and chaplains, and those who volunteer to work with inmates and ex-offenders from this parish, we pray for their safety and well-being.

Be merciful, O God, as we strive to love others as You have loved us.

For incarcerated persons, we pray O Lord that that they seek you and repent and with Your help be transformed and walk in the spirit now and upon release.

Be merciful, O God, as we strive to love others as You have loved us.

For ourselves, we pray that we may respond with reconciling love in every situation where we are challenged by fear, hatred, helplessness or anger.

With Your help, Lord Jesus, these actions we commit ourselves to take. Amen

Scriptures for Daily Living:

It is all God's work; He reconciled us to himself through Christ and he gave us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5: 18)

Peter went up to him and said, "Lord how many times must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times? Jesus answered, Not seven, I tell you, but seventy times seven." (Matthew 18: 21-22).

You have heard how it was said; You will love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; so that you may be children of your father in heaven... (Matthew 5: 44-45).

So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with him, and come back and present your offering (Matthew 5: 24-25).

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment and the second is like it.' 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" All the Law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.' (Matthew 22: 36-40).

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace!

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt; faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light; and

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive; it is pardoning that we are pardoned; and,

It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.