

## Lent Fast Day reconciliation service

### Introduction

We gather here as a community of believers seeking reconciliation with each other and with other communities. We are reminded that we are all part of one global human family living together in an unfair world.

Through our actions or through our silence we all share responsibility for the ways our world is unfair.

We ask God to help us see how we have harmed our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We seek God's forgiveness for our failure to act on behalf of poor and marginalised communities and commit ourselves to working for a better world for all.

**Key to text: L – leader R – reader bold – All**

### Invocation of Holy Spirit

**L:** Spirit of wisdom,

**Guide us**

Spirit of openness,

**Change us**

Spirit of truth,

**Lead us**

Draw us closer to you

and to one another

**through our reflections**

**and your reconciling power.**

**Amen**

**L:** Let us greet those who journey with us in our faith community by taking a moment to introduce ourselves to our neighbours.

### Water rite

**L:** We bring the world before us.

*(A bowl is placed at the centre of assembled group)*

*(Water is poured into the bowl from a jug)*

Let this water be a symbol both of our common baptism with all Christians and the source of life shared with all people.

*(Some salt is poured into the water)*

Let this salt be a symbol of the sorrow and bitterness in our broken world.

We know too that salt and water can help cleanse and heal.

Let us bless ourselves with this salt water as a sign of our commitment to healing divisions between people, through our prayers and by our actions.  
*(Everyone is invited forward, as directed, to bless themselves)*

### **First Reading**

**L:** Let us now listen to God's word  
**R:** This is the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

### **Gospel reading**

**R:** A reading from the Holy Gospel according to...  
**Glory to you Lord**  
**R:** This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

## **Reconciliation service**

### **The search for reconciliation in our world**

**R:** During a recent visit to the UK, Betty Evans, a Peruvian educator, spoke about Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Commission was due to report on the 20 years of violence arising from the war between the Shining Path movement and the Peruvian security forces. The violence cost over 40,000 lives. CAFOD's partners in Peru regard the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as an essential foundation for building a just society in Peru. As Betty put it, 'It's not a question of "forgive and forget." It's "remember and change".'

### **Examination of conscience**

**L:** With this challenge to 'remember and change' let us recall in the silence of our hearts our role in causing division and brokenness.  
*(Pause)*

**R:** Do I recognise the dignity of all people?  
Do I allow God to speak to me through the lives of the poor and marginalised?  
Do we create barriers between people?  
Do we welcome visitors to our worshipping community?  
Do I play my part in creating a fair and just society?  
Do I allow unjust structures to go on unchallenged?  
Are we a sign of hope in our local and global community?  
Do we use the earth's resources wisely?  
Do I live out the Gospel values through my daily life?  
Have I ever refused God's invitation to bring Good News to the poor?

Do we allow our society to degrade and dehumanise people?  
Do we speak out when others are fearful, oppressed or treated unfairly?

### **Act of repentance**

**We recall our past wrongs  
And pray for God's people and God's earth harmed by our way of living.  
Lord, we ask your forgiveness and healing  
To help us live out our calling  
As your children.  
Give us courage to remember and strength to change.  
Amen**

### **Lord's prayer**

**L:** Let us say the Lord's Prayer together.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving and Act of Commitment**

**Merciful God,  
We trust in your unfailing love.  
We give thanks for your forgiveness  
Which draws us closer to you and inspires us to start afresh.  
Let us recommit ourselves to your people and this world,  
Bless our efforts to bring life in all its fullness to everyone.  
Amen**

**L:** Let us share with one another a sign of peace

### **Blessing and dismissal**

**L:** Life-giving Spirit,  
Live in us,  
Love in us,  
Light in us  
Your passion for justice.  
And lead us with new hope  
To bring your liberating Gospel to all.  
**Amen.**

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