

Refocusing our lives



Introduction

We are midway through the Season of Lent. Perhaps it is time to recommit ourselves to our Ash Wednesday promises.

Next week the season of Ramadan begins for our Muslim brothers and sisters. Their dedicated commitment to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving challenges us Christians to take those practices more seriously ourselves.

St. Augustine said: “If you want your prayers to fly to God, equip them with the two wings of fasting and almsgiving.” These three practices can help us turn away from sin and self-centeredness and toward God and his love.

Let us acknowledge tonight how important God’s love is to us.

Chant: Center of My Life

Reading I: Joel 2:12-18

Yet even now says the LORD — return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the LORD, your God, For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting in punishment.

Perhaps he will again relent and leave behind a blessing, grain offerings and libations for the LORD, your God.

Blow the horn in Zion! Proclaim a fast, call an assembly!

Gather the people, sanctify the congregation; Assemble the elderly; gather the children, even infants nursing at the breast; Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her bridal tent.

Between the porch and the altar let the priests weep, let the ministers of the LORD weep and say:

“Spare your people, LORD!

do not let your heritage become a disgrace, a byword among the nations!

Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”

The Lord was stirred to concern for his land and took pity on his people.

Center of My Life

Refrain



O Lord, you are the cen-ter of my life:



I will al-ways praise you, I will al-ways serve you,



I will al - ways keep you in my sight.

Verses 1-3



1. Keep me safe, O God, I take ref-uge in you. I
2. I will bless the Lord who gives me coun - sel, who
3. And so my heart re - joic - es, my soul is glad; 7



say to the Lord, “You are my God. My
e - ven at night di - rects my heart. I
e - ven in safe - ty shall my bod - y rest. For



hap - pi - ness lies in you a - lone; my
keep the Lord ev - er in my sight; since
you will not leave my soul a - mong the dead, nor



hap - pi - ness lies in you a - lone.”
he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.
let your be - lov - ed know de - cay.



4. You will show me the path of life, the



full - ness of joy in your pres - ence, at your right hand,



at your right hand hap - pi - ness for ev - er.

Song "Again We Keep This Solemn Fast"

Again We Keep This Solemn Fast

Reading II: Litany of Repentance (on last page)

Please respond: "Forgive us, we pray and Change our hearts."

Now we sit in silence for a few minutes.

Prayers of Petitions. Please respond singing: "O Lord hear my prayer."

May the Church be an instrument of healing and of reconciliation, we pray:

May world leaders listen to the cries of all people in need and provide resources for research, medicine, and personnel to address all illnesses and diseases, we pray:

May healthcare providers, family and friends who are caretakers, and those who offer support to those in need of healing, give flesh to Christ's compassion every day and know our support, we pray:

May people who are often neglected or dismissed be seen and heard, since when one part of the Body suffers, all of the Body suffers, we pray:

You are invited to add additional prayers and light a votive candle on the altar from the Easter Candle.

The Lord's Prayer

Sing "Hosea"

Closing Prayer

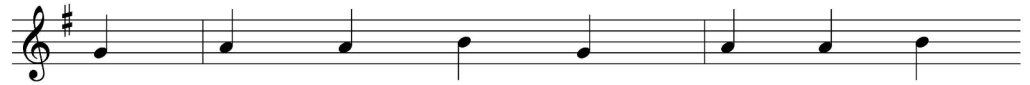
Song "Turn to Me"

Thank you for coming tonight. Please join us again on April 4 at 7 p.m. central time.

Music in this Worship Aid was reprinted with permission under onelicense.net, #A-725830



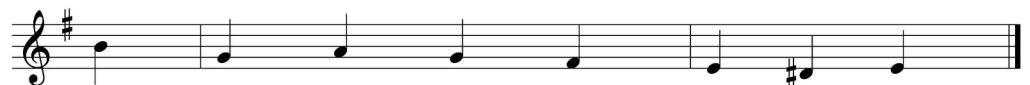
1. A - gain we keep this sol - emn fast,
 2. The law and proph - ets from of old
 3. More spar - ing, there - fore, let us make
 4. Let us a - void each harm - ful way
 5. We pray, O bless - ed Three in One,



A gift of faith from a - ges past,
 In fig - ured ways this Lent fore - told,
 The words we speak, the food we take,
 That lures the care - less mind a - stray;
 Our God while end - less a - ges run,



These for - ty days that, year by year,
 Which Christ, all a - ges' Lord and Guide,
 Our sleep, our laugh - ter, ev - 'ry sense;
 By watch - ful prayer our spir - its free
 That this, our Lent of for - ty days,

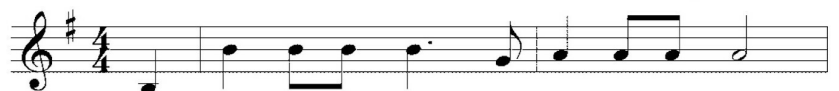


Bid con - trite hearts to Christ draw near.
 In these last days has sanc - ti - fied.
 Learn peace through ho - ly pen - i - tence.
 From schem - ing of the En - e - my.
 May bring us growth and give you praise.

Text: *Ex more docti mystico*; ascr. to St. Gregory the Great, c.540-604; tr. by Peter J. Scagnelli, b.1949, after John M. Neale, 1818-1866, © 1975, 2011
 Tune: ERHALT UNS HERR, LM: Klug's *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543; harm. by J. S. Bach, 1685-1750

O LORD, HEAR MY PRAYER

Jacques Berthier



O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer:



when I call an - swer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O



Lord, hear my prayer. Come and lis - ten to me.

Hosea

Verses



1. Come back to me with all your heart.
 2. The wil - der - ness will lead you
 In - teg - ri - ty and jus - tice,
 3. You shall sleep se - cure with peace;



- Don't let fear keep us a - part.
 so must we to oth - ers' call. (To refrain)
 to your heart where I will speak.
 With ten - der - ness, you shall know. (To refrain)
 faith - ful - ness will be your joy. (To refrain)

Refrain



Long have I wait-ed for your com - ing home to me and



liv - ing deep - ly our new life.

TURN TO ME

John Foley, S.J.



Turn to me, O turn, and be saved, says the Lord, for



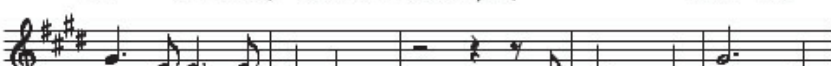
I am God; there is no oth - er, none be -



side me. I call your name.



1. I am God, who com-forts you; who are



1. you to be a - afraid of flesh that fades, is



1. made like the grass of the field, soon to with-er.



2. Lis-ten to me, my peo - ple; give ear to
 3. Lift up your eyes to the heav-ens, and look at the



2. me, my na-tion: a law will go forth from
 3. earth down be-low. The heav-ens will van - ish like



2. me, and my jus-tice for a light to the peo - ple.
 3. smoke, and the earth will wear out like a gar-ment.

Litany of Repentance

(From The Fire of Peace, c. 1992, PCUSA)

Reader:

We ask forgiveness for our complicity in the violence now unleashed in our world, and we repent for the violence in our hearts.

Please Respond:

"Forgive us, we pray and Change our hearts."

For hardness of heart..
 For wasting our gifts
 For wanting too much
 For wounding the earth
 For ignoring the poor
 For trusting in weapons
 For refusing to listen
 For exporting arms
 For desiring dominance
 For wanting to win
 For lacking humility

For failing to risk
 For failing to trust
 For failing to act
 For failing to negotiate
 For failing to hope
 For failing to love
 For our arrogance
 For our impatience
 For our cowardice
 For our pride
 For our silence

That we learn compassion..
 That we embrace nonviolence
 That we act with justice
 That we live in hope
 That we might be strong
 That we do your will
 That we might be peace.