



Healing and Reconciliation After an Abortion

Adapted from Project Rachel, Diocese of Covington Pro-Life Commission

Notes on Using the Prayer Service

The services in this collection were designed for a variety of settings, and we encourage you to adapt them to your particular needs. The role of the leader can be shared by one or more persons. Some advance preparation such as handouts or candles may be required. For this service, ask participants to bring a token gift and/or letter in memory of their child. Have a table to receive these tokens and a Memorial Book on hand to be inscribed with names. Suggested hymns are widely available.

GATHERING SONG *Song of the Body of Christ* (David Haas)

GATHERING PRAYER

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

Response: Amen.

Leader: Lord God, creator of life and of all that is, your compassion embraces all people. Your law is wisdom, freedom, and joy for the poor. Fulfill your promise of favor, that we may hear and believe the Gospel of Life. Anointed by your Holy Spirit, may we proclaim the sanctity of life. Grant this, we ask, in the name of Jesus the Christ.

Response: Amen.

SCRIPTURE

First Reading: (*Psalms 145*) A reading from the book of Psalms.

I will extol you, my God and king;
I will bless your name forever.
Every day I will bless you;
I will praise your name forever.
Great is the LORD and worthy of high praise;
God's grandeur is beyond understanding.
One generation praises your deeds to the next
and proclaims your mighty works.
They speak of the splendor of your majestic glory,
tell of your wonderful deeds.
They speak of your fearsome power
and attest to your great deeds.
They publish the renown of your abounding goodness
and joyfully sing of your justice.
The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in love.
The LORD is good to all,
compassionate to every creature.
All your works give you thanks, O LORD
and your faithful bless you.
They speak of the glory of your reign
and tell of your great works,
Making known to all your power,
the glorious splendor of your rule.
Your reign is a reign for all ages,
your dominion for all generations.
The LORD is trustworthy in every word,
and faithful in every work.
The LORD supports all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look hopefully to you;
you give them their food in due season.

You open wide your hand
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.
You, LORD, are just in all your ways,
faithful in all your works.
You, LORD, are near to all who call upon you,
to all who call upon you in truth.
You satisfy the desire of those who fear you;
you hear their cry and save them.
You, LORD, watch over all who love you,
but all the wicked you destroy.
My mouth will speak your praises, LORD;
all flesh will bless your holy name forever.

The word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Pause for silent reflection.

Second Reading: (*Jn 8:2–11*) A reading from the Gospel of John.

But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he bent down and wrote on the ground.

And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin any more."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Pause for silent reflection.

ACT OF OFFERING

Leader: I invite you all, if you so choose, to come forward in memory of your unborn children. Inscribe your child's name in this Memorial Book. If you have brought letters or gifts to your child, place them on this table. After you have done so, please remain standing around the table to receive a blessing.

BLESSING

Leader: [Lays hands on each participant's head and blesses her individually.]

Response: Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

Leader: Heavenly Father, we thank you for your mercy. We praise your kindness to us. Your faithful love assures us of our integrity and purpose.

Let us respond together: *Your will be done in our lives.*

Response: Your will be done in our lives.

Leader:

Father in heaven, we greet you with joy, your children, the work of your hand. We praise your greatness, we celebrate your goodness, we welcome the good news of your love. For all this we pray. *(Response)*

We pray for the coming of your kingdom. Set us free from fear and darkness, heal our brokenness, and reveal the lasting peace that is the heart of your creation. For all this we pray. *(Response)*

Give us the wisdom to seek your will, especially when we are hurting and confused, misled and misdirected, or trapped by our emotions. For this we pray. *(Response)*

We thank you for your daily gifts, which we so often take for granted: the food that nourishes our bodies, the experiences that nourish our minds, the love that nourishes our spirits, the faith that sustains us, the friends who comfort us, and the beauty of the world that brightens our day. For all this we pray. *(Response)*

Help us to forgive each other as you forgive us. We acknowledge our sins and we rejoice in the power of repentance. You wash away anger; you cleanse our hearts; you refresh our spirits; you awaken us from grief and silence into song. For all this we pray. *(Response)*

Give us courage and strength, Lord. Make us bold so we may reach out to others who need healing. Help us to build bridges rather than walls among your children throughout this world. For all this we pray. *(Response)*

Leader: In thankfulness, we place our trust in you, Heavenly Father.

Response: Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: In the certainty that God's love never fails, let us go in peace.

Response: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN *You Are Mine* (David Haas)

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