

ReCommitment:

Leader: One of the reasons to remember past tragedy is so that it will not be repeated. One of the reasons to remember tragedy that still continues is so that we can be motivated to bring it to an end. Let us give an offering in memory of those millions of babies. Let us offer ourselves.

All: Our Father in heaven, we offer ourselves to You and ask that You use the varied gifts You have given us to serve You in Your Kingdom. Particularly today we ask that You give us the opportunities and the willingness to use our gifts to witness, in word and deed, to the sacredness of life. Help us speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Help us defend those who cannot defend themselves. Help us love and support those facing difficult life choices. Help us love and forgive and bring the healing of the Gospel to those who have made wrong choices. We offer ourselves so that others may see and give glory to You through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Prayer of St. Francis (Sebastian Temple)

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there's doubt, true faith in You.

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, only light,
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console.
To be understood, as to understand.
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving of ourselves that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.



Opening/Closing Prayers



Based on A Memorial Service
for the Victims of Abortion
by Lutherans for Life

Introduction

A Prayer of Commitment to the Unborn (Priests for Life)

Almighty Father, we gather here today in repentance,
in resolve, and in rejoicing.

We gather in repentance, because we, Your people, could long ago
have ended child-killing in this nation.

We gather in repentance, for so many of Your people rightly call on You
to act to save the unborn, but fail to realize that You call them
to act to save the unborn.

We gather in repentance, for so many of Your people rightly lift up
their hands and say "Lord have mercy,"
but fail to lift a finger to have mercy on the unborn.

We gather in repentance, because not one drop of innocent blood is shed
upon the land, without every person in the land sharing responsibility for it.

We gather, Lord, in resolve.

We are resolved to reach our goal, not just to *fight* abortion, but to *end it*.

We will stop at no sacrifice and count no cost in defending the unborn.

We resolve that we will continue to challenge public servants who fail
to serve the public yet unborn, and will continue to
challenge voters to elect only those who will advance a Culture of Life.

Finally, Lord, we gather in rejoicing.

We rejoice that You have called us to do pro-life work, not as some
"hobby" to be squeezed in when we have time, but as
the very heart and soul of our quest for justice in this world.

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. We pray for women
and men struggling with a crisis pregnancy.

People: **Lord, have mercy upon them and help them choose life
and help us support them.**

(Silent prayers for those in crisis pregnancies.)

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. Let us pray for
mothers and fathers who are suffering the aftermath of an
abortion. They, too, are its victims.

People: **Lord, have mercy upon them and help them find
healing in the cross of Jesus and help us share this
forgiving love with them.**

(Silent prayers for those with post-abortion suffering.)

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. Let us pray for
children, born and unborn.

People: **Lord, have mercy upon the children and in Your grace
bring them to the fullness of life that You have promised
in Your Son.**

(Silent prayers for the children.)

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. As we remember the
children whose lips never had a chance to speak it, we pray
softly the Lord's prayer.

People: **Our Father, who art in heaven . . .**

Leader: We know we are not forsaken.

People: “Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go.” (Genesis 28:15a)

Leader: We know God is always at work for our good.

People: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Leader: In God’s love, in God’s forgiveness, in God’s presence, in God’s goodness is our comfort and hope.

People: “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:57)

Responsive Prayers

Leader: Let us pray for our nation, a nation richly blessed by God, but a nation that tragically sanctions the murder of so many human children.

People: Lord, have mercy upon our nation and change our hearts.

(Silent prayers for our nation.)

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. We pray for the Church, a Church richly blessed by God’s grace, but too often sadly silent as the innocent are being slaughtered.

People: Lord, have mercy upon Your Church and change our hearts.

(Silent prayers for the Church.)

A Memorial Service for the Victims of Abortion

Opening Hymn:

Here I am (Dan Schutte)

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry,
All who dwell in dark and sin,
My Hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

R: Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people’s pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My Word to them.
Whom shall I send?

R: Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

Leader: O Lord, open my lips.

People: And my mouth will declare Your praise.

Leader: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

People: Make haste to help me, O Lord.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray. Gracious Father, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Your ways higher than our ways and Your thoughts higher than our thoughts. We do not understand the disregard for the work of Your hands and the wanton destruction of human life that has taken place these past years through the atrocity of abortion. But we are not here to understand. We are here to remember. We are not here to understand. We are here to trust in You. Help us remember. Help us trust. In Jesus holy name.

People: Amen.

A Rite of Hope and Comfort

Leader: When filled with grief, we turn to God for comfort and reassurance, which can come only from Him. He does not explain to us why He allows the modern day slaughter of the innocents in the womb. He does call us in faith, in the midst of the darkness of abortion, to acknowledge Him to be our heavenly Father, who has given us His first and best in Christ Jesus.

People: “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32)

Leader: Our grief over abortion is compounded because abortion deprives children of the opportunity for holy baptism and, therefore, raises painful questions we cannot answer with certainty. We entrust such questions and the hurting hearts which ask them to the infinite compassion and wisdom of our God.

People: “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” (Romans 11:33-34)

Leader: Because of what we do not know our grief is heavy, but we do not grieve as those who have no hope. Our hope lies in what we do know. We know we are loved.

People: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.” (Jeremiah 31:3b)

Leader: We know we are forgiven.

People: “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)

What Wondrous Love Is This (Alexander Means)

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul.
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I am,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on!
And through eternity I'll sing on.

Scripture Reading

A reading from the Book of Exodus (1:15-22):

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live." But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live."

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (2:16-18)

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.[Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:
"A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

Dialog of Sorrow and Hope

Leader: “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

People: **“For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”** (Psalm 43:2)

Leader: “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

People: **“I say to God, my rock: ‘Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?’”** (Psalm 42:9)

Leader: “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

People: **“My eyes long for your promise; I ask, ‘When will you comfort me?’”** (Psalm 119:82)

Leader: “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

People: **“My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!”** (Psalm 119:28)

Leader: There are other victims of abortion, victims who have not died, but who have been wounded. Let us remember the mothers of aborted children who, in weakness, desperation, and fear, listened to the voices of death.

People: **Lift their hearts to You, O God, that they might know the sin of abortion, lay their burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.**

Leader: Let us remember the fathers of aborted children who, unable or unwilling to protect a defenseless life, are in conflict with their responsibility to their preborn child, to the mother of that child, and to God.

People: **Lift their hearts to You, O God, that they might know the sin of abortion, lay their burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.**

Leader: We remember grandparents of aborted children who, unable or unwilling to protect a defenseless life, are in conflict with both their conscience and God.

People: **Lift their hearts to You, O God, that they might know the sin of abortion, lay their burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.**

Leader: Let us remember the doctors, counselors, and all who have been deceived by Satan to see abortion as a solution to difficult problems of life.

People: **Lift their hearts to You, O God, that they might know the sin of abortion, lay their burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.**

Leader: We remember ourselves, members of the Body of Christ, who in ignorance or fear have been silent when we should have spoken; passive when we should have acted to defend the “least of these.”

People: **Lift our hearts to You, O God, that we might know the sin of abortion, lay our burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.**

Leader: Let us remember the farmers who would never reap the fruits of the earth.

People: Wholesome, hardworking lives that were never lived.
(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember laborers whose hands could never form or craft or build.

People: Productive lives that never were.
(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember artists and musicians who will never be able to express the joys and the sorrows within them for others to identify with and appreciate.

People: Works of art never seen, melodies never heard.
(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: Let us remember little girls who will never hold and nurture a child of their own and little boys who will never grow up to be called “daddy.”

People: Generations yet unborn never to be.
(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: Let us remember those children with special needs that will never touch our hearts in ways no one else could.

People: God’s unique purpose for them never realized.
(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember those who would have been born into what we might call, “less than desirable circumstances.”

People: Opportunities for God to shape and form and do mighty things through suffering taken away.
(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”
(Matthew 5:4)

People: “Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress.”
(Psalm 31:9a)

Leader: “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.” (John 16:20)

People: “My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes.” (Psalm 6:7)

Leader: “‘Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work,’ declares the LORD”
(Jeremiah 31:16)

People: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4)

Leader: “And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isaiah 35:10) “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming soon.’” (Revelation 22:20a)

People: “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20b)

Psalm 51: Be Merciful, O Lord (Haugen)

R: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned;
be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, God, in Your Kindness;
In Your compassion, blot out my offense.
O wash me more and more from my guilt and my sorrow,
And cleanse me from all of my sin. **R:**

My offenses, truly I know them,
and my sins are always before me.
Against You alone have I sinned, O Lord,
What is evil in Your sight I have done. **R:**

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
put your steadfast spirit in my soul.
Cast me not away from Your Presence, O Lord,
And take not Your Spirit from me. **R:**

Give back to me the joy of your salvation,
let your willing spirit bear me up
And I shall teach your way to ones who have wandered,
And bring them all home to your side **R:**

Litany of Remembrance

Leader: Millions of babies have been murdered through abortion. This is so incomprehensible. Perhaps that is why we do not mourn for them as a nation the way we mourn for children killed in tragic accidents or natural disasters. But let us try, as best we can, to remember them. Let us try to remember them as the individuals they were. Let us try to remember them as gifts from God whose lives were cut short before they could serve Him according to the purpose for which they were created. Let us remember the sons and daughters that were never born.

People: **Little arms that never stretched out asking to be held.**
(A brief silence is observed)

Leader: Let us remember the brothers and sisters who were never able to play with their siblings.

People: **Their laughter was never heard.**
(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember the teachers who were never able to teach and the pastors who were never able to preach.

People: **Wisdom that was never shared.**
(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember the physicians, nurses, technicians, researchers, and other medical professionals through whom God's hand of healing was never able to be extended.

People: **Mercy that was never given.**
(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: Let us remember business people and courageous leaders who were never able to extend a godly influence upon our nation.

People: **Good examples that could never be followed.**
(A brief silence is observed.)