

A Commination

*or denouncing of God's anger and judgements
against sinners with certain prayers to be used
on the first day of Lent and at other times
as the ordinary shall appoint.*

¶ After Morning Prayer, the Litany ended according to the accustomed manner, the priest shall in the reading pew or pulpit say,

Brethren, in the primitive church there was a godly discipline that, at the beginning of Lent, those persons who stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord, and that others, admonished by their example, might be more afraid to offend.

Instead whereof, until that discipline may be restored again (which is much to be wished), it is thought good that at this time (in the presence of you all) should be read the general sentences of God's cursing against impenitent sinners, gathered out of the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy and other places of Scripture, and that ye should answer to every sentence 'Amen'—to the intent that, being admonished concerning the great indignation of God against sinners, ye may rather be moved to earnest and true repentance, and may walk more warily in these dangerous days, fleeing from these vices, for which ye affirm with your own mouths the curse of God is due.

Cursed is the man that maketh any carved or molten image, to worship it.

¶ And the people shall answer and say, Amen.

Cursed is he that curseth his father or mother. *Amen.*

Cursed is he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. *Amen.*

Cursed is he that maketh the blind to go out of his way. *Amen.*

Cursed is he that perverteth the judgement of the stranger, the fatherless, and widow. *Amen.*

Cursed is he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. *Amen.*

Cursed is he that lieth with his neighbour's wife. *Amen.*

Cursed is he that taketh reward to slay the innocent. *Amen.*

Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, and taketh man for his defence, and in his heart goeth from the Lord. *Amen.*

Cursed are the unmerciful, fornicators and adulterers, covetous persons, idolaters, slanderers, drunkards, and extortioners. *Amen.*

¶ Minister.

Now seeing that all they are accursed (as the prophet David beareth witness) who do err and go astray from the commandments of God, let us—remembering the dreadful judgement hanging over our heads and always ready to fall upon us—return unto our Lord God with all contrition and meekness of heart, bewailing and lamenting our sinful life, acknowledging and confessing our offences, and seeking to bring forth worthy fruits of penance.

For now is the axe put unto the root of the trees, so that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He shall pour down rain upon the sinners—snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest; this shall be their portion to drink. For lo, the Lord is come out of his place to visit the wickedness of those who dwell upon the earth. But who may abide the day of his coming? Who shall be able to endure when he appeareth? His fan is in his hand, and he will purge his floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night, and when men shall say, 'Peace', and all things are safe, then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as sorrow cometh upon a woman travailing with child, and they shall not escape. Then shall appear the wrath of God in the day of vengeance, which obstinate sinners, through the stubbornness of their heart, have heaped unto themselves—who despised the goodness, patience, and long-sufferance of God, when he calleth them continually to repentance.

'Then shall they call upon me' (saith the Lord) 'but I will not hear; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; and that because they hated knowledge and received not the fear of the LORD, but abhorred my counsel and despised my correction.' Then shall it be too late to knock, when the door shall be shut; and too late to cry for mercy, when it is the time of justice. O terrible voice of most just judgement, which shall be pronounced upon them, when it shall be said unto them, 'Go, ye cursed, into the fire everlasting, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.'

Therefore, brethren, take we heed even now, while the day of salvation lasteth, for the night cometh when none can work. But let us, while we have the light, believe in the light, and walk as children of the light, that we may not be cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Let us not abuse the goodness of God, who calleth us mercifully to amendment, and of his endless pity promiseth us forgiveness of that which is past, if with a perfect and true heart we return unto him. For though our sins be as red as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; and though they be like purple, yet they shall be made white as wool. 'Turn ye' (saith the Lord) 'from all your wickedness, and your sin shall not be your destruction. Cast away from you all your ungodliness that ye have done. Make you new hearts and a new spirit. Wherefore will ye die, O ye house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Turn ye then, and ye shall live.'

Although we have sinned, yet have we an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins. For he was wounded for our offences, and smitten for our wickedness. Let us therefore return unto him, who is the merciful receiver of all true penitent sinners, assuring ourselves that he is ready to receive us and most willing to pardon us, if we come unto him with faithful repentance, if we submit ourselves unto him and from henceforth walk in his ways, if we will take his easy yoke and light burden upon us, to follow him in lowliness, patience, and charity, and be ordered by the governance of his Holy Spirit, seeking always his glory, and serving him duly in our vocation with thanksgiving.

If we do this, Christ will deliver us from the curse of the law, and from the extreme malediction which shall light upon those who shall be set on the left hand, and he will set us on his right hand, and give us the gracious benediction of his Father, commanding us to take possession of his glorious kingdom. Unto which, may he vouchsafe to bring us all, for his infinite mercy. Amen.

¶ Then shall they all kneel upon their knees; and the priest and clerks, kneeling in the place where they are accustomed to say the Litany, shall say this psalm.

Miserere mei, Deus. [Psalm 51](#)

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; * according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, * and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults, * and my sin is ever before me.

Against thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, * that thou mightest be justified in thy saying and clear when thou art judged.

Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, * and in sin hath my mother conceived me.

But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts, * and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.

Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; * thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness, * that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Turn thy face away from my sins, * and put out all my misdeeds.

Make me a clean heart, O God, * and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence, * and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

O give me the comfort of thy help again, * and stablish me with thy free Spirit.

Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, * and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Samuel L. Bray and Drew Nathaniel Keane, eds., *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church*, International Edition. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2021).

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Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health; * and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord, * and my mouth shall show thy praise.

For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee, * but thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; * a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.

O be favourable and gracious unto Sion; * build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt offerings and oblations; * then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, * and to the Holy Ghost;

Answer. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, * world without end. Amen.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. Amen.

Minister. O Lord, save thy servants,

Answer. Who put their trust in thee.

Minister. Send unto them help from above,

Answer. And evermore mightily defend them.

Minister. Help us, O God our Saviour,

Answer. And for the glory of thy name deliver us; be merciful to us sinners for thy name's sake.

Minister. O Lord, hear our prayer,

Answer. And let our cry come unto thee.

¶ **Minister.**

Let us pray.

O Lord, we beseech thee, mercifully hear our prayers, and spare all those who confess their sins unto thee, that those whose consciences by sin are accused, by thy merciful pardon may be absolved, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O most mighty God and merciful Father, who hast compassion upon all men and hatest nothing that thou hast made, who desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he should rather turn from his sin and be saved: Mercifully forgive us our trespasses; receive and

comfort us, who are grieved and wearied with the burden of our sins. Thy property is always to have mercy; to thee only it appertaineth to forgive sins. Spare us therefore, good Lord; spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed. Enter not into judgement with thy servants, who are vile earth and miserable sinners, but so turn thine anger from us, who meekly acknowledge our vileness and truly repent us of our faults, and so make haste to help us in this world, that we may ever live with thee in the world to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ Then shall the people say this that followeth, after the minister.

Turn thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned. Be favourable, O Lord, Be favourable to thy people, Who turn to thee in weeping, fasting, and praying. For thou art a merciful God, Full of compassion, long-suffering, and of great pity. Thou sparest when we deserve punishment, And in thy wrath thinkest upon mercy. Spare thy people, good Lord. Spare them, and let not thy heritage be brought to confusion. Hear us, O Lord, for thy mercy is great, And after the multitude of thy mercies look upon us, Through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ Then the minister alone shall say,

The LORD bless us, and keep us; the LORD lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and give us peace, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

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