

Lent 2026  
Mercy Critical Concern: Women  
Lent Prayer Service

**Opening Song:** Hosea

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1ntir3qgdY&list=RDi1ntir3qgdY&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1ntir3qgdY&list=RDi1ntir3qgdY&start_radio=1)

**Collect:**

*Adapted from Intercessions of Mercy, page 69.*

Gracious God of Mercy, in baptism we were made you sons, daughters, and children. We were called to live lives worthy of our calling. Throughout this Lenten season, may we put aside all that keeps us from responding freely to your love. May our deeds and words give glory to you and draw others to your family of faith. Now is the acceptable time, O Lord. Give us the courage to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with you. This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Sharing the Word:**

***The Reckless Way of Love: Notes on Following Jesus***  
**Excerpts from the writings of Dorothy Day**

“Does God have a set way of prayer, a way that he expects each of us to follow? I doubt it. I believe some people—lots of people—pray through the witness of their lives, through the work they do, the friendships they have, the love they offer people and receive from people. Since when are *words* the only acceptable form of prayer?” (page 43)

“Love and ever more love is the only solution to every problem that comes up. If we love each other enough, we will bear with each other’s fault and burdens. If we love enough, we are going to light that fire in the hearts of others. And it is love that will burn out the sins and hatred that sadden us. It is love that will make us want to do great things for each other. No sacrifice and no suffering will then seem too much.” (page 26)

“Many young people have come here and worked with us, and they tell us after a while that they have learned a lot and are grateful to us, but they disagree with us on various matters—our pacifism, our opposition to the death penalty, our interest in small communities, and our opposition to the coercive power of the state. You people are impractical, they tell us, nice idealists, but not headed anywhere big and important. They are right. We *are* impractical, as one of us put it, as impractical as Calvary. There is no point in trying to make us into something we are not. We are *not* another community fund group, anxious to help people with some bread and butter and a cup of coffee or tea. We feed the hungry, yes; we try to shelter the homeless and give them clothes, if we have some, but there is a strong faith at work; we pray. If an outsider who comes to visit doesn’t pay attention to our praying and what that means, then [he or she will] miss the whole point of things.” (page 51-52)

**Pausing in the Quiet**

*(hold space for quiet meditation)*

**Sharing An Insight from the Word**

*(open the space for group sharing on the reflection and quiet)*

**Offering Intentions:**

*Adapted from Intercessions of Mercy, page 90.*

Gracious God, in the women of the Hebrew Scriptures, you have given us strong models for life and faith. For the grace to reverence and imitate them, we turn to you in prayer.

Sarah laughed at the thought of becoming a mother in her old age:

*Grant us appreciation for the surprises of your grace.*

Rebecca secured a blessing for her son:

*May we be resourceful in facing the challenges of life.*

Miriam danced before the ark:

*May we be joyful in your presence.*

Deborah and Judith were fearless in facing the enemies of their people:

*Give us courage before whatever threatens us.*

Ruth proved the value of relationship and fidelity:

*May we be loyal to our friends and faithful to our commitments.*

Esther endangered herself for the sake of her people:

*Give us a share in her integrity and devotion.*

For what else do we pray today?

*Lord, hear our prayer.*

**Closing Prayer:**

*Adapted from Intercessions of Mercy, page 90.*

God of life, love, and Mercy, we thank you for all the women in our families and communities who have been strong role models for us. Through these forty days, may we reflect once again on the path they have marked for us. May our memories of them fill us with joy and sustain us as we make our journey to you. We ask this in the company of Mary, whose life embraces both the old and the new covenants. Amen.

**Closing Song:** Return to God

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuzHsp7eCF8&list=RDEuzHsp7eCF8&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuzHsp7eCF8&list=RDEuzHsp7eCF8&start_radio=1)

## Hosea

Verses



1. Come back to me with all your heart.  
    & Trees do bend, 'though straight and tall;
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.

Text: Hosea 6:1, 3:3, 2:16, 21; Joel 2:12; Weston Priory, Gregory Norbet, OSB, b.1940  
 Tune: Gregory Norbet, OSB, b.1940; arr. by Mary David Callahan, OSB, b.1923  
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Return to God

Refrain

Re - turn to God with all your heart, the source of grace and  
mer - cy; come seek the ten - der faith - ful - ness of God.

Verse 1

1. Now the time of grace has come, the day of sal -  
va - tion; come and learn now the way of our God. **D.C.**

Verse 2

2. I will take your heart of stone and place a heart with -  
in you, a heart of com - pas - sion and love. **D.C.**

Verse 3

3. If you break the chains of op - pres - sion, if you  
if you share your bread with the hun - gry, give pro -  
give a shel - ter to the home - less, clothe the  
set the pris - 'ner free; midst, then your light shall break  
tec - tion to the lost;  
na - ked in your  
forth like the dawn. **D.C.**

Text: Marty Haugen, b.1950  
Tune: Marty Haugen, b.1950  
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