

2018

# Liturgy

National Day of Sorrow and  
Promise

SUNDAY 2 DECEMBER 2018

By **SCOTT HANNAH**



*There are several opportunities for prayerful silence throughout the liturgy in solidarity with those whom have been abused, their families and communities. We remember that many of us have also been impacted by the tragedy of abuse in our church, directly and indirectly.*

# LITURGY of LAMENT and PROMISE

Catholic Religious Australia

2 December 2018

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge and pay respect to the first Australian people as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this land. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside indigenous people for reconciliation and justice.

## GATHERING

*The liturgy begins with the following proclamation of words spoken by different voices:*

Isolation

Shame

Brokenness

No way out

Ambivalence

Courage

Powerlessness

Betrayal

Inferiority

Struggle

Deep pain

Voice in the wilderness

Righteous anger

Silent

Desperation

*Pause for reflection*

Leader: We gather together as religious men and women.  
We gather together with ..... *(there may be others from our broader community with us)*  
We come in pain, disillusionment, anger and confusion;  
We come in sadness, shame and vulnerability.  
We come humbly to walk with Christ in the way of the Cross.  
We come in the name of Christ who walks the path of pain and brokenness.  
We come in the promise of new resolve that this must never happen again.

All: We gather with sadness and resolve to raise our hearts and voices and hands to God.  
We gather in the hope that as we lament our sinfulness, hurt and neglect, and our failure to hear and believe, we will enable God's justice and love to come to all.  
May the solace of God soothe and heal deep woundedness so that together, in the name of Christ, we may find the way forward.  
Together, with those of us who have been sinned against and those who have sinned,  
may we know the transforming power of God's love, now and into the future.  
We come in the name of Christ. Amen.

*The prayer continues with some moments of quiet reflection recalling why we have gathered, during which the music is played (4.35 mins): "Cry" -Songs from the River Volume 1 © Ruth Fazal. Used with permission [www.ruthfazal.com](http://www.ruthfazal.com)*

## THE WORD: HEARING THE SURVIVORS AND FAMILIES

*69-year-old male survivor (audio: Male-Survivor.mp3 or reader)*

“I was raised in a Catholic family, the fourth of ten children. We would pray the Rosary every night as a family and along with my brothers I served as an altar boy several times a week.

I was proud to have won a scholarship to sing in the cathedral choir and also to attend a top independent Catholic school. When aged nine, while at my Catholic primary school, I was called for regularly by a senior member of staff – a religious brother – who would lock his office door and wouldn’t release me until he had reached his emotional and sexual satisfaction from me. No one ever knew.

He was like God to me, so how could I question his actions?

A couple of years later, one Tuesday morning, just after hitting puberty, and while going about my duties as an altar server, I found myself in the presbytery where a parish priest – a religious – lacked no discretion and would blatantly pressure me to engage in all sorts of inappropriate sexual acts. Again, no one ever knew.

How could I question his authority? It was as though he had power over everyone around him.

What could I do with these experiences but bury them, and silence them? But they never went away. I resisted them constantly from ravaging my body, my mind, my very soul, my every relationship.



By **SCOTT HANNAH**

I have had a very fruitful life and played major roles in the arts, in education, in politics, and was an outstanding sportsman. But five decades later, everything began to unravel – and very badly.

Where am I at today? Well, Catholicism has been my whole life, but today I feel cut off. How can I go near the Church, which for many years was also my employer? It feels as though the Church has put a knife straight through me, that it has crucified me. I cannot, and I will not, lie and hide any

longer. I don't want to see the whole issue of childhood sexual abuse compounded by continuing the lies.

Today, I'm not just a lapsed Catholic ... I feel banned, rejected, and yes, spiritually murdered. I know there are many others like me, which heightens my sadness. Many of these fellow survivors continue to live in silent agony while the Church takes no action. Like me, so any aspects of their lives – physical, emotional, financial – have also been devastated.

But I'm not rejected by Christ – I'm now closer to Him. But I yearn, truly yearn, for things to be different, for a reconnection and reconciliation with the Church.

Everyone who knows me knows that at heart I'm a Catholic. I'm still grateful for my Catholicism, and for many wonderful priests and religious who had a positive impact on me. But I cannot move forward unless true reconciliation takes place. I just long to be at peace within and for my soul to find its home again.”

*Silence*

***Mary (mother of a victim of abuse)***

“My son drank himself to death. He was only 40. I never knew until now why he was so troubled as a teenager and I guess why he couldn't even talk to me for the past 10 years. Why didn't he tell me?”

I put him in that school, so he would get the best Catholic education. I feel so guilty and I'm so angry."

*Silence*

*Sue (wife of a survivor)*

"We had been married for 20 years before he told me about the abuse. He had always been difficult to live with and I never understood his anger or his withdrawal. I used to always blame myself and try to make him happy – but nothing worked. He turned the kids away from him because he was so angry and sometimes drank too much. Now that he's opened up about the childhood abuse and he's getting help I think it's getting a bit better – except he cries a lot now. I nearly left him so many times because he was so messed up. I hope I can stick it out".

*Silence*





## *They Say (by Z.T. a survivor)*

Reader proclaims:

They say with time it gets better  
They say you stop asking why  
They say talking helps  
They say writing helps  
They say you're safe  
They say it can't happen again  
They say he can't reach you again  
They say relax  
They say be happy  
They say stop looking over your shoulder  
THEY don't know that the fear never stops, never goes  
away, the shadows never leave, and the hands never  
stop  
THEY don't know that he is always behind me,  
reminding me, reliving it, and never forgetting  
THEY don't know

*To allow the words of the victims to enter deeply into our hearts  
we enter into fifteen minutes of silence during which the music  
is played (4.54 mins): "Overwhelmed" - Songs from the River  
Volume 3 © Ruth Fazal. Used with permission  
[www.ruthfazal.com](http://www.ruthfazal.com)*

## OUR RESPONSE

### Psalm 51

Reader: Have mercy on me, O Gracious One,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant kindness  
forgive me where my thoughts and deeds have hurt  
others.

Lead me in the paths of justice  
guide my steps on paths of peace!

**All:** Teach me, that I may know my weaknesses,  
the shortcomings that bind me,  
the unloving ways that separate me,  
that keep me from recognising  
Your Life in me;  
for I keep company with fear,  
and dwell in the house of ignorance.  
Yet, I was brought forth in love  
and love is my birthright.

Reader: You have placed your truth in my inner being;  
therefore, teach me the wisdom of the heart.  
Forgive all that binds me in fear,  
that I might radiate love;  
cleansing me that your light might shine in me.  
Fill me with gladness; help me to  
transform weakness into strength.  
Look not on my past mistakes  
but on the aspirations  
of my heart.

**All:** Create in me a clean heart, O Gracious One  
and put a new and right spirit within me.  
Enfold me in the arms of Love, and  
fill me with your Holy Spirit.  
Restore in me the joy of your saving grace,  
and encourage me with a new spirit.

**Reader:** O Gracious One, open my lips and  
my mouth shall sing forth your praise.  
For You do not want sacrifice;  
You delight in our friendship with You.  
A sacrifice most appropriate is a humble spirit;  
a repentant and contrite heart;  
O Merciful One,  
receive our gratitude and love.

**All:** O Blessed and Compassionate Friend,  
melt our hearts of stone,  
break through the fears that  
lead us into darkness, and  
guide our steps toward the way of peace.

*Psalms for Praying* Nan Merrill,  
Continuum International Publishing in 2007 ©

## LITANY OF LAMENT

Reader: We lament the crimes and sins of sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse perpetrated by clergy and religious and workers in our institutions against children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**All:** We are sorry

Reader: We lament the failure of pastors and shepherds in our faith-based institutions who refused to respond to the cries of the abused.

**All:** We are sorry

Reader: We lament the exploitation of women, men and children for the purposes of personal pleasure, pornography and profit.

**All:** We are sorry

Reader: We lament the sexual harassment of men and women perpetrated in the workplaces of the church.

**All:** We are sorry

Reader: We lament the deep pain of those who have been unable to share the story of their abuse.

**All:** We are sorry

Reader: We lament the many lives tragically cut short by the indescribable pain of childhood abuse.

**All:** We are sorry

Reader: We lament the sadness and distress of loved ones of victims who have been left to grieve with unanswered questions.

**All:** We are sorry

Reader: We lament the damage suffered by secondary victims: the spouses, children and family members of those who survived childhood sexual abuse and other forms of abuse.

**All:** We are sorry

Reader; We lament the damage and pain to all religious and workers in our Church who have also been betrayed by the abuse that has occurred in our church

**All:** We are sorry

Reader: We lament our betrayal of trust and 'power over' victims; our arrogant and suspicious attitudes towards them and our inability to admit our wrongdoing.

**All:** We are sorry

*Pause for participants to add their own silent lamentations*

Reader: Together we say:

**All:** We are sorry

Reader: With sad and humble hearts, we entrust to the tender embrace of Mary, Mother of God, those who have been abused, their families and those who support them.

**All:** Hail Mary ...

*Pause for a moment of silent reflection*



## LITANY OF PROMISE

Leader: Stirred by sorrow for all the failings of the past, while holding the pain, we now move to a place of resolution, committed to doing all we can to work for the safety of those who have been abused, in prevention and child safety.

*Let us stand and, with heartfelt resolve, pray our responses.*

Reader: *God of Creation* - You promise to bring new life to all that humanity has tainted with death.

**All:** We turn again to You, and, with Your help, **promise** to let Your power and love have free range in us to accomplish infinitely more than we could ever ask or imagine.

Reader: *God of the Innocent* – Your desire was that the little children be free to come to You in joy.

**All:** We turn again to You, and, with Your help, **promise** to continue through every means possible the work already begun to secure the protection of children and vulnerable persons, throughout our ministries

Reader: *God of Community* – God, Communion of love, You are forever one; unite us as one in You.

**All:** We turn again to You, and, with Your help, **promise** to work tirelessly and humbly to build a culture in

Your Church which is answerable, accountable, loving and open to the community at large.

Reader: *God of Every Soul* – You restore us to our original dignity and bring us to the fullness of life.

**All:** We turn again to You, and, with Your help, **promise** to commit to listening, believing, supporting and doing all we can to ensure the tragedies of the past never happen again.





## THE GOSPEL: HEARING THE WORD OF JESUS

John 4: 10a,13-14, 15a.

“If you knew the gift of God,  
you would ask and God would give you living water.”  
... whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.  
Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of  
water  
gushing up to eternal life.”

“Give me this water so I may never be thirsty.”

## CONCLUDING RITUAL

*(Basin filled with water and towel)*

Leader: To fulfil the promises we have made requires that we  
have clean hands and pure hearts.

As a symbol of our desire to remain fully committed  
to the path ahead of us, and trusting in Jesus Christ,  
the unending spring of living water within us, we are  
invited to come forward and to dip or wash our  
hands in the basin of water. As we do this, let us pray  
in the words of the hymn:

*Prayer of St Francis - Hymn*

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.

## PROMISE STATEMENT

As Catholic Religious of Australia, we are stirred by sorrow for the failings of the past. We encounter the depth of pain endured within our midst.

WE promise to listen to and support those who have been harmed by abuse

WE promise to act to prevent abuse, respond with compassion and justice and put the protection of children and the vulnerable at the heart of all our ministries

WE promise to support all those walking courageously with the abused and those working fearlessly for the prevention of abuse

WE promise to work tirelessly and humbly to build a culture in our Church which is loving and answerable to the wider community

WE promise to partner with those who have been abused, with governments, civil agencies and society at large to continue to learn and work towards a safer, more respectful and accountable Church

WE promise to be people of action, to embed prevention and safeguarding practices and governance reforms throughout our Church

WE promise to remember and to be forever changed

2 December 2018



MY DADDY'S HEART, BY SOPHIA, 9 YR OLD DAUGHTER  
OF A MALE ABUSE SURVIVOR



CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS AUSTRALIA  
PO Box 1518 NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060  
[www.catholicreligiousaustralia.org.au](http://www.catholicreligiousaustralia.org.au)