

# LITURGICAL RESOURCES MARKING THE CENTENARY OF THE OPENING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND PARLIAMENT

## Introduction

This year marks the centenary of the creation of Northern Ireland. It provides us with an opportunity to look back and reflect on the last 100 years, and also to look forward in the present to the future that lies before us.

The Government of Ireland Act 1920 came into force on 3rd May 1921, partitioning Ireland and creating Northern Ireland. The first election to the Northern Ireland Parliament took place later that month, and on 22nd June 1921 the new parliament was formally opened by King George V at Belfast City Hall. In his speech, the King called for "... all Irishmen to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and forget, and to join in making for the land which they love a new era of peace, contentment and goodwill."

Sadly, this call was left unheeded by some sections of society at various points in the last 100 years with tragic episodes of conflict, discontentment and ill-will. Thankfully, good has prevailed over evil with a new era emerging in recent times and a fresh commitment to peace, prosperity and power-sharing resulting in better relations between North and South, and East and West.

The focus of this service is on good governance and civic responsibility. The prayers of repentance encourage us to learn from the mistakes of the past, individual and corporate. As HM Queen said in her speech in Dublin ten years ago, "With the benefit of historical hindsight we can all see things which we would wish had been done differently or not at all". The prayers of thanksgiving invite us to give thanks for all that has been good and true over the past 100 years, and the prayers of intercession remind us of our various needs and the needs of others as well as our continued dependence on God for his help and succour.

Stanley Gamble

# A SERVICE OF THE WORD

## Preparation

GREETING

Welcome in the name of Christ.

God's grace,  
mercy and peace  
be with you.

**And also with you.**

SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE

‘Unless the Lord build the house,  
those who build labour in vain.’ *Psalms 127:1*

‘Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.’ *Isaiah 40:31*

‘What does the Lord require of you but to do justice,  
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.’ *Micah 6:8*

‘But the wisdom from above is first pure,  
then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield,  
full of mercy and good fruits,  
without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.’ *James 3:17*

Brothers and sisters,  
in meeting today we recall and commemorate  
the one hundredth anniversary of the foundation of Northern Ireland.  
Let us come together to offer to almighty God  
our worship and praise and thanksgiving,  
to draw near to the throne of God  
in penitence and humility;  
to pray for ourselves and for all who seek to better our common life  
through public service and Christian citizenship.  
And to pray that in the power of his Spirit  
we may serve him in the pursuit of his heavenly realm.

*or*

Almighty God,  
you call us into a common fellowship  
of solidarity and love;  
as we remember the foundation of Northern Ireland one hundred years ago,  
and reflect on the hopes and disappointments of the past century;  
draw near to us,  
and move us to work for peace  
and justice in the world around us;  
in the name of him who is the Prince of Peace,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or*

We worship God,  
who is good and just and true.  
He created and sustains the world,  
and loves us though we have failed him.  
Today we gather to confess our sins and receive his forgiveness,  
to listen to his word,  
and to pray for the members of our legislative assembly and its executive.  
We ask for God's guidance and blessing,  
that we may do his will,  
and that all people may acknowledge his gentle and just rule.

*A hymn may be sung*

## Penitence

Let us confess to God our share of the sins and shortcomings of the world,  
its pride, its selfishness, its greed,  
its evil divisions and hatreds.

Let us confess our share in what is wrong,  
and our failure to seek and establish that peace  
which God wills for his children.

**Most merciful God,**  
**we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed.**  
**We have not loved you with our whole heart.**  
**We have not loved our neighbour as ourselves.**  
**In your mercy forgive what we have been,**  
**help us to amend what we are,**  
**and direct what we shall be;**  
**that we may do justly, love mercy,**  
**and walk humbly with you;**  
**through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*If a priest is officiating, he/she pronounces this absolution:*

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
Have mercy on you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*If no priest is present the following is said:*

May the Father  
forgive us and strengthen us  
to reject violence and division  
and to obey his call to healing and peace. **Amen.**

*or*

The gospel calls us to turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.  
As we offer ourselves to him in penitence and faith,  
we renew our confidence and trust in his mercy.

Lord God, our maker and our redeemer,  
this is your world and we are your people:  
**come among us and save us.**

We have wilfully misused your gifts of creation;  
Lord, be merciful:  
**forgive us our sin.**

We have seen the ill-treatment of others  
and have not gone to their aid;  
Lord, be merciful:  
**forgive us our sin.**

We have condoned evil and dishonesty  
and failed to strive for justice;  
Lord, be merciful:  
**forgive us our sin.**

We have heard the good news of Christ,  
but have failed to share it with others;  
Lord, be merciful:  
**forgive us our sin.**

We have not loved you with all our heart,  
nor our neighbours as ourselves;  
Lord, be merciful:  
**forgive us our sin.**

May God who loved the world so much  
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour  
forgive *us our* sins and make *us*  
holy to serve him in the world,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

God of our past, God of our future,  
from whom all authority comes.

On this centenary of the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament  
we pray for the legislative assembly and its executive.

By your gracious help may it give Northern Ireland good governance,  
serve with integrity and seek the common good,  
that all people may live peaceably and grow in respect for one another;  
this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or*

Heavenly Father and Sovereign God,  
whose love of justice and mercy is from everlasting.

We pray for the members of our legislative assembly and its executive.  
May they govern with wisdom and compassion,  
serve with integrity and seek the common good,  
that all the people of Northern Ireland may live in peace and prosperity,  
this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Ministry of The Word

At least one of the readings below must be used.

If only one reading is used it must be from the New Testament.

### FIRST READING

Isaiah 61, Micah 6:6-8

### PSALM

Psalm: 33:1-5, 20-22; 72:1-4, 13-14; 100; 121

### SECOND READING

Matthew 5:1-12, Matthew 6:9-13, Matthew 22:17-21, Luke 4:16-21,  
Romans 13:1-7, II Corinthians 5:16-21; I Timothy 2:1-6a, I Peter 2:13-17

### THE SERMON

*A hymn may be sung*

## Response

### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*or*

Let us proclaim our faith in God:

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son  
who took our human nature, died for us, and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*The Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed may also be used.*

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSIONS

Almighty God,  
you promised through your Son Jesus Christ  
to hear the prayers of those who ask in faith...  
We pray for your Church in all the world,  
for its unity and mission, (for this diocese and for N. our bishop...)  
and for all Christian leaders.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray that we may work for peace  
and embody Christ's ministry of reconciliation ...

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those whose discipleship  
brings them into places of conflict and risk  
and those who help to demolish walls of mistrust and prejudice ....

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who stand alongside  
victims of hatred and sectarianism,  
that your Church may work unceasingly  
for human rights, equality and justice in the world ...

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for our MLAs and members of the Northern Ireland Executive,  
that the leaders of this and of all nations  
may be given the courage to choose good  
and reject evil in accordance with your will ...

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**



We pray for all who display courage  
in upholding justice and in preserving peace throughout the world ...

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for our fellow countrymen and women  
who work for the resolution of conflict in our society and beyond ...

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the sick, suffering and bereaved.  
We especially remember those among us  
who bear physical and psychological scars from the past ...

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

**Merciful Father,  
accept these our prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*THE LORD'S PRAYER may be said here or following the ACT OF COMMITMENT*

*or*

*A selection of these prayers may be used*

## THE COLLECT FOR PEACE

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord,  
to know you is eternal life, and to serve you is perfect freedom:  
Defend us in all assaults of our enemies,  
that we, surely trusting in your protection,  
may not fear the power of any adversaries;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FOR CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

Look, we beseech thee, O Lord,  
upon the people of this land who are called after thy holy Name;  
and grant that they may ever walk worthy of their Christian profession.  
Grant unto us all that, laying aside our divisions,  
we may be united in heart and mind  
to bear the burdens which are laid upon us.  
Help us to respond to the call of our country according to our several powers;  
put far from us selfish indifference to the needs of others;  
and give us grace to fulfil our daily duties with sober diligence.  
Keep us and give us grace to fulfil our daily duties with sober diligence.  
Keep us from all uncharitableness in word or deed;  
and enable us by patient continuance in well-doing to glorify thy Name;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FOR IRELAND

Almighty and merciful God,  
who In days of old didst give to this land  
the benediction of thy holy Church;  
Withdraw not, we pray thee, thy favour from us,  
but so correct what is amiss,  
and supply what is lacking,  
that we may more and more bring forth fruit to thy glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## THE COLLECT OF THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin  
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts  
whereby we call you Father:  
Give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,  
that we and all creation may be brought  
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### FOR THE NATIONS

Lord God Almighty,  
who hast made all peoples of the earth for thy glory,  
to serve thee in freedom and peace:  
Grant to the people of our country  
a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance,  
that we may use our liberty in accordance with thy gracious will;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### FOR THOSE WHO GOVERN

Eternal God, Fount of wisdom;  
we ask you to bless the representatives we have elected;  
grant that through their discussions and decisions  
we may solve our problems effectively,  
enhance the well-being of our nation,  
and achieve together a fairer and more united society. **Amen.**

### FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD

Give peace in our time, O Lord:  
peace and reconciliation among the nations;  
peace and unity within the churches;  
peace and harmony in our communities and our homes;  
peace and love in all our hearts;  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

Almighty God,  
we long for the time when your kingdom shall come on earth:  
when people and nations shall acknowledge your sovereignty,  
seek your glory, and serve your good and righteous will.  
Help us not only to pray but also to work for that new day;  
and enable us by your grace  
to promote the cause of justice and peace, truth and freedom,  
both in our own society and in the life of the world;  
for the honour of Christ, our Saviour and our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Act of Commitment**

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.

Will you strive for all that builds a peaceful society?

**We will.**

Will you seek to heal the wounds of the past?

**We will.**

Will you work for a just society for all?

**We will.**

Merciful God,  
may we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people  
and live lives of justice, courage and mercy,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or*

Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and humanity,  
That we may help, encourage and comfort others,  
and support those working for the relief of the needy  
and peace and welfare of all people.

**Lord God our Father,**  
**we pledge ourselves to serve you and all people,**  
**in the cause of peace, for the relief of want and suffering,**  
**and for the praise of your name.**

**Guide us by your Spirit;**  
**give us wisdom, give us courage, give us hope**  
**and keep us faithful now and always. Amen.**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,**

hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

**Give us today our daily bread.**

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

**Lead us not into temptation**

but deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

*or*

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

**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.

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

*A hymn may be sung*

# Going Out as God's People

## CONCLUDING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,  
as we mark the centenary of the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament,  
grant to us a true sense of what it is to be your people in the world.  
We ask you to so guard and guide all who reflect on the past,  
all who lead us in the present,  
and all who shape our future,  
that we may model our society on the image of Christ and to his glory,  
in whom we trust and through whom we pray. **Amen.**

## A DISMISSAL PRAYER

To him who is able to keep us from falling  
and to present us before his glorious presence  
without fault and with great joy,  
to the only God our Saviour  
be glory, majesty, power and authority,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
before all ages, now and for evermore. **Amen.**

## BLESSING

May the God of all power and might  
make you strong in faith and love,  
defend you on every side,  
and guide you in truth and peace;  
and the blessing....

*or*

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage;  
hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the faint hearted;  
support the weak; help the afflicted; honour everyone;  
love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;  
and the blessing .....

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**