Repentance: 
Liturgy for the First Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Mark 6:14-29
Sermon focus: Repentance (understanding we have sacrificed others)

*Herod sacrifices John the Baptist to his vanity in fulfilling a drunken promise. We might smile if it were not so sad, but how often do we, completely sober, sacrifice others for our own vanity, pride, greed, comfort, or convenience?*

Call to Worship
Come, sisters and brothers, let us gather to worship God.
**We come to meet God and to be transformed.**
Come with your hopes and joys, your gladness and longing.
**We come to meet God and to be transformed.**
Come with your burdens, your secrets, your shame.
**We come to meet God and to be transformed.**
Let us open our hearts and minds to the God of second chances.
**We come to meet God and to be transformed.**

Invocation (unison)
God of Truth and Life, draw us near to you this day.
Let the assurance of your unfailing love
give us courage to see clearly
the parts of our lives that need to change.
Enfold us in your grace,
and empower us to begin again.

Prayer of Confession (unison)
*For this Sunday:*
Holy and Gracious God,
we confess we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves,
putting our own pride and vanity
before others’ well-being.
We confess we have not honored you
with our whole selves,
and we sincerely repent of our sins.
Forgive us, we pray.
Transform us by your love,
and empower us to change direction,
to choose a new life guided by your love.
**OR for the Lenten season:**
Holy and Gracious God,
as we reflect on our lives,
we confess we have not honored you with our whole selves,
and we have not loved our neighbors or ourselves in good measure.
We sincerely repent of our sins, and we seek to be restored
to a path of righteousness, reconciliation, and readiness to follow Christ.
Forgive us, we pray.
Transform us by your love,
and empower us to change direction,
to choose a new life guided by your love.

**Words of Assurance:**
No matter how many times we fail or fall short,
God’s grace goes before us,
reshapes and restores us,
re-forming us in God’s image each time.
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**Holy Communion**

**The Great Thanksgiving**
(*Communion Setting – Preface, TFWS 2257-a*)
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of the universe, you created us from dust,
and breathed into us the breath of life.
You made us for relationship, with you and with each other,
but so often we view the world
through the lens of our own desires, pride, and vanity.
When we forget our origins in the soil,
and hold ourselves as more valuable than others,
you gently humble us,
reminding us of our place in the universe,
calling us to honor all the life you have created,
setting us free from the tyranny of self-importance.
Together with those who have gone back to the dust
and those who share your breath of life still today,
we praise you with this joyful song:

(*Communion Setting – Sanctus, TFWS 2257-b*)
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is Jesus, born of stardust and Spirit,
created and called to remind us
that we are your beloved children,
and so is everyone else.
He walked a humble path with the poor and lowly,
and reminded those who had any form of power
that they were responsible for their treatment of others.
Through his life, suffering, death, and resurrection,
he bore witness to your saving love for all people.

On the night before Jesus gave up his life,
he had dinner with his friends.
And taking the bread, simple gift of the earth,
he gave thanks, blessed and broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying,
“Take and eat of the bread of life.
As the grain is crushed and the loaf torn apart,
so my body will be broken,
a sign of God’s self-giving love
and presence with all who suffer.
Each time you eat this bread, remember me.”

When the supper was over,
he took the cup, gave thanks to you,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take and drink of the cup of salvation:
as the grape is crushed, so my blood is poured out
as a sign of the new covenant
of forgiveness and compassion.
Remember me, whenever you drink this cup.”

And so,
remembering your life-giving work in Jesus Christ,
we joyfully re-dedicate ourselves to your purposes,
seeking to let our lives become a sign of your power
to transform and make all things new,
as together we proclaim the mystery of faith:

(Communion Setting – Memorial Acclamation, TFWS 2257-c)
Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.
Breathe your Spirit of life into us again today, God, and bless these gifts of bread and cup. May they remind us to keep turning our lives toward you, following the example of Jesus as we seek to become the Body of Christ in the world, witnessing to your life-giving love. By your Spirit draw us into right relationship, in unity with Christ and with all the saints, inviting all people to be transformed and made whole.

*Through your Son Jesus Christ,*

*with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,*

*all honor and glory is yours, almighty God,*

*now and forever.*

*(Communion Setting – Great Amen, TFWS 2257-d)*

Amen.