

LITURGY FOR THE CLEANSING OF A GENOCIDE SITE



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In Holy Scripture the action of blessing imparts LIFE. As God spoke creation into existence in Genesis 1, Life was imparted into all that God created. God's purpose in separating light from dark, establishing water and earth, and bringing forth plants and animals was to create the perfect environment for Life to abound through man and woman. Each creative act received a blessing from God. BLESSING and LIFE belong together.

When death comes upon the land through sin, a curse falls upon the earth and greatly affects the well-being of mankind. The only thing that can overcome a curse is BLESSING. God's LIFE always overpowers death. His BLESSING always overpowers curses.

Wherever sin, death, and curses have been present in a place it is necessary to pray for the outpouring of God's BLESSINGS OF LIFE to overcome the effects of such actions. In such places as on this genocide site we come together in the Name of Jesus to pray for the Light of Christ, the Blessing of the Almighty Father, and the power of the Holy Spirit to shine brightly where once darkness reigned.

In the beginning God separated the Light from the darkness (Gen. 1:4), and He continues to desire to turn our darkness into light (2 Samuel 22:29). We once were darkness but now, as we believe in Christ, we are Light and we are to live as children of the Light. The fruit of the Light is found in all that is good and righteous and true, causing us to seek those things that please the Lord (Ephesians 5:8).

God is all Light. In Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. (I John 1:5-7).

Until we choose to be cleansed in God's way, we are forever shaped by the sins and evil of the past. God states His way of redemption clearly for us in I John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Therefore, according to God's word, today we will confess our own sins and the sins of others so that blessings might fall upon this land, upon our own lives and upon our children and our children's children.

In the words of Jesus (Matthew 6:14): "If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Therefore, today we will also choose to forgive those who gave themselves over to the enemy and brought such despair upon our land and in our lives. We will leave their sins to God and to His judgment, but we will forgive those who committed the sins, so that our unforgiveness does not keep the effects of their sins bound to our lives.

In Ezekiel 36:25-29 God promises: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep My laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be My people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness."

Water has always been an ancient symbol of God's cleansing power over anything where darkness or evil has had a stronghold.

We remember the Great Flood in Noah's day, after which mankind had the opportunity to become cleansed and holy as God is holy.

We remember baptism in water that signifies the cleansing of the soul as we confess our sins, are forgiven and receive the power of Jesus to live a new life.

The sanctifying power of the Spirit of God delights in making all things clean and new and useful for His purposes.

We will use blessed water today as we invite His Presence into our midst to cleanse this land for His holy purposes. We will ask Him to drive out any remaining darkness, the memories of death and destruction, the power of evil, and the residue of grief, sorrow and despair. We will ask His divine Light to overcome any darkness and bring Blessing and Hope to all who may walk upon this place from this time forth.

You may find it meaningful to pray God's blessings over some water (a blessing of water follows) as a symbol of the cleansing, sanctifying power of the Spirit of God who delights in making all things clean. We invite His Presence into our midst to hallow space and land for His purposes, and to drive out anything of darkness or evil that has been here so that His Divine Light may shine forth and His people be blessed.

You may want to sprinkle water liberally over the property as you pray, making the sign of the Cross of Christ, the sign of eternal Life.

THE BLESSING OF THE WATER

LEADER: Numbers 8:7 says of the purification of priests, "To purify them, do this: Sprinkle the water of cleansing on them."

Because we who are born-again believers are a royal priesthood, we take our proper places as priests in these blessings and prayers. For hundreds of years the cry of the faithful has been as the leper, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." (Matthew 8:2)

Keeping in mind that it is *only* the blood of Jesus that has the power to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, we also acknowledge the significance of the deep spiritual washing with water that God instituted in ancient days among His people. His words to Ezekiel ring in our ears: "I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your iniquities and from all your idols." (Ezekiel 36:25)

Using salt and water we pray the following ancient prayers of the Church:

LEADER: Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Who has made heaven and earth.

LEADER: (taking a small amount of salt)

I take this salt and pray that by the living God, the true and holy God, that this salt be set apart for the health of believers. As salt was cast by the prophet Elisha into water to heal it, I pray that You, O God, would use this salt for the soundness of the soul and body wherever it shall be sprinkled. Wherever there is wickedness, the wiles of the devil and unclean spirits through sin, let them depart by the Name of Him, who judges both the quick and the dead, and the world by fire. AMEN.

PRAYER (ALL):

Almighty and everlasting God, we ask that by Your great and endless mercy, that You would bless and set apart this salt to be used for the health of mind and body of Your people, that wherever it would be touched or sprinkled, all would be free from uncleanness and from all spiritual wickedness. Through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

LEADER: (taking a container of water)

I take this water, and ask that in the Name of God the Father Almighty, the Name of Jesus Christ His Son our Lord, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, that it become water set apart for putting to flight all the power of the enemy, to cast out and send forth that enemy and all his evil spirits, and by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to judge the quick and the dead and the world by fire. AMEN.

PRAYER (ALL):

O God, You have set apart water for the sacrament of Baptism, bringing us to new life in You. We ask You to pour out Your power upon this water, that it might receive Your divine grace and blessing to cast out devils, put sickness to flight, and cleanse the dwellings of Your people from all uncleanness and all evil, so that no pestilence may abide, no hidden wiles of the enemy may remain, and so that

those who live in the house may live in peace and safety. If there be any residue of evil in this place, let it fly with the sprinkling of this water, so that the health of those who love You may be protected against all things that threaten it as they call upon Your holy Name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

LEADER: (sprinkling the salt into the water)
Let this salt and water be mingled together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. AMEN.

The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

PRAYER (ALL):
O God, who is the King of the Empire that cannot be overthrown, the ever glorious Conqueror, You rule over the raging of the fierce enemy. You fight against the wickedness of Your foes. It is with fear and trembling that we come to You, O mighty God. We ask You to take this salt and water, to shine Your presence upon it, to send Your lovingkindness over it. We ask that wherever it might be sprinkled, along with the invocation of Your holy Name, that all unclean spirits might be driven away, and that the evil one might be cast out. We ask that wherever this water and salt is sprinkled that the Presence of the Holy One might shine forth, that His Light might reign, and that Jesus might be revealed. We ask this through Your Son our Lord, Jesus Christ, who with You and the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns forever, world without end. AMEN

CLEANSING AT A GENOCIDE SITE

LEADER: We are gathered here today in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of His willingness to die for our sins and because of the faithfulness of our Father in Heaven to raise Him from the dead, we can stand assured that He is present to bless and sanctify whatever we set apart for Him.

On this site evil was unleashed and our brothers' and sisters' blood cries out from the ground. As in the day when Cain killed his brother, Abel, (Genesis 4:8-14) there has been a curse placed upon this ground because of the sins that have been committed here.

ALL: We now confess the sins committed in this place.

LEADER: In the holy Name of Jesus we confess that in this place men listened to Satan and followed his ways rather than listen to God and obey Him. In following the ways of Satan, evil was released and many lives were taken in brutal ways.

Without the power of God a curse will remain upon this place, causing pain and sorrow unto future generations, forever binding the sins of others to the lives of this present generation.

Therefore, in obedience to God's word, we name the sins of those who murdered and maimed their brothers and sisters in this place.

(Perhaps a time of silence or confession of particular sins or names of the slain can be presented to the Lord at this time).

We choose to release them to God by forgiving those who were deceived and those who committed such despicable acts. We place them in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, asking Him alone to be their judge.

ALL: We choose to forgive those who have taken life. We release them all into the hands of Jesus.
We know that only the Blood of Jesus can speak to the cries that come from this land. And we know that only in His Blood can the sins of the past be redeemed.

LEADER: Let us also confess our own sins against men, women, children, and against our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

ALL: Almighty God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved You with our whole heart;
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have harbored resentment, bitterness, hatred and unforgiveness in our hearts.
These sins have bound the evil of others to our own lives.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ,
Have mercy on us and forgive us;
That we may delight in Your will,
And walk in Your ways,
To the glory of Your Name. AMEN.

LEADER: May the Almighty God, according to His Word, have mercy on you, Forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, Strengthen you in all goodness,

And by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. AMEN.

ALL: We receive Your forgiveness, O God, and ask You to heal our land.

LEADER: (Psalm 91:1-6) **He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.**

ALL: We will say to the Lord, "He is our refuge and our fortress, our God, in whom we trust."

LEADER: Surely He will save us from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover us with His feathers and under His wings we will find refuge.

ALL: His faithfulness will be our shield and rampart.

LEADER: We will not fear the terror of night nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

ALL: We release to You, Almighty God, our pain, fear, sorrow, and terrors of the night. We see them go into Your mighty Cross.

LEADER: And now we come in the mighty Name of Jesus to ask for the healing power of His Love to flow upon this land.

Where there have been curses, let there be Blessings. AMEN.

Where there has been bloodshed, let there be Life. AMEN.

Where there has been fear, let there be Hope. AMEN.

Where there has been darkness, let there be Light. AMEN.

(The leadership should sprinkle the blessed water liberally around the site, invoking the holy Name of Jesus and His Light which makes all things new. The people present should sing songs of adoration to the Lord who delights in making them whole).

Lord, set apart this site as a Place of Promise. You have promised that when we confess our sins to You You forgive, cleanse and restore us to Your righteousness. (I John 1:9)

Now Lord, we ask You to set upon this site a Tabernacle of Hope and let the Hope of Your restoration come into all who inhabit or visit this place and let the remembrance of evil committed in this place remind all future generations of Your eternal promise to make all things new, no matter how badly they need to be restored.

READER: A reading from the Truth of the Word of God: Ezekiel 37:1-14
"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?'

I said, 'O Sovereign Lord, You alone know.'

Then He said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them."

LEADER: A people such as we are, who have been wounded by the events of the past, may indeed come back together like the dry bones God showed to Ezekiel. We may have tendons and flesh and begin to function in basic ways as the people of God. But God has much more for such dry bones and He has more for us! Listen to the rest of the story.

READER: "Then God said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.' So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet -- a vast army.

Then He said to me: 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophecy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, My people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put My Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'

LEADER: We, the people of God in Rwanda, no longer can say, "We are dried up and we have no hope." We have been renewed by the Spirit of God and He is restoring our land according to His promise. He is breathing His Life into us once more and we will live in Hope, standing to our feet and doing His will. We will know that He has spoken and that He has done it.

ALL: We rejoice in God's Hope for the future and the Resurrection Life He pours out upon His people!

LEADER: On the basis of God's holy word, as we have confessed our sins and forgiven our enemies, we declare that the curse has lifted. Without a cause a curse cannot find a resting place. (Proverbs 26:2)

May the blessings of God Almighty, reign in this place and upon each person gathered here today. May the true blessings of New Life be carried back to each home and may the Hope of the Lord take root and grow and bear much fruit for His Kingdom.

Now may Blessings, Life and Hope be your inheritance in this land, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN.

(A symbol of the blessed land should be set in place on the site. The day should end with much singing and rejoicing because of what God has done).