OPENING SONG:

WHERE CHARITY AND LOVE PREVAIL

1. Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found;
   Brought here together by Christ’s love, by love are we thus bound.

2. Forgive we now each other’s faults, as we our faults confess;
   And let us love each other well in Christian holiness.

3. Let strife among us be unknown, let all contention cease;
   Be God’s the glory that we seek, be ours God’s holy peace.

4. Let us recall that in our midst dwells God’s begotten Son;
   As members of His body joined, we are in Him made one.

OPENING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, examine our hearts. Where there is resentment or bitterness, send your sweet balm of healing. May we draw from the wellspring of forgiveness, which flood our hearts with understanding. May your peace flow like waters of life into our souls which long for your undying and merciful love. Give us a heart like Mary, your Mother; loving and understanding. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Envy: The painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another, joined with the desire to possess that same advantage.
Some ways in which envy manifests itself:

- In Greece or Italy, it was considered bad form or even dangerous to praise the beauty of a baby, lest envy snatch it. Many homes would post the effigy of an all-seeing eye to keep envy away. The “malocchio” was known as the evil eye; it places a curse on another by refusing to acknowledge their good fortune.
- In casual conversations we say, “I envy her.” or “He is the envy of everyone.”
- St. Thomas Aquinas described envy as sadness or *tristitia*, meaning: a complex tone of suppressed rage, melancholy and festering resentment directed at another) at the goods possessed by another.
- Green-eyed monster
- Passive-aggressive behavior
- Morose delectation: an envious person is delightful at the bad fortunes of others.
- Unhealthy human impulses
- A disordered life
- An envious person not only poisons his own life, but, when given the chance, will allow poison to seep out and harm others.
- One does not feel worthy or loved. Envy is the inordinate need for recognition, superiority; it can involve endless comparison with others. E.g. beautiful/ugly, dumb_smart, rich/poor, blessed/cursed, etc. Who has more privileges than the rest? Who has more freedom than others? Who has more friends? Who is better educated?
- One cannot ever measure up.
- One cannot ever go through another betrayal.
- One is never set free.

Consequences of envy:

- Destruction of relationships/gossip (one of the tactics of the envious; cutting one’s adversaries off at the knees)
- Unmerited outbursts
- Lack of contentment
- Lack of peace/obsessive behavior
- Negative attitude/tortuous thoughts
- Anxiety/Stress
- Physical Health Problems
- Anger
- Insecurity
- Shame/Paranoia
Envy in the Bible:

- **Genesis 3-4** Cain and Abel *Envy begets violence.*
- **1 Samuel 13** King Saul is insanely jealous of David and seeks to destroy him in spite of David’s professed loyalty.
- **1 Kings 3** Wise Solomon determines the true mother of the contested child. 
  > E.g. today we struggle with the parents’ decision to abort an unwanted child rather than to choosing to share that life with other available and desirous couples. Is there also deadly envy working beneath such destructive behavior?
- **Matthew 20** - *The Parable of the land owner, who sends workers to his vineyard:* “Am I not free to do as I wish with my own money, or are you envious because I am generous?”
- **Luke 15** - *The Prodigal Son:* There is envy between the prodigal son and his older brother.
- **1 Cor 13:4** – The Apostle, Paul describes envy as the opposite of love.
- **Galatians 5:21** – Paul lists envy as the fruit of the flesh.
- **James 3:14-16** – Envied is associated with jealousy, selfish ambition, evil and chaos.

Envy as told by philosophers:

- **Aristotle:** “Envy grows naturally in relationships between equals (or apparent equals).” 
  > E.g. The average blue collar worker is not as envious of a corporate CEO as he is with a co-worker. Priests are not so much envious of the bishop as they are with each other within the presbyterate. Envy can also happen within religious men and women.
- **Chaucer:** “Sorrow at the prosperity of others and joy in their hurt.”
- **St. Thomas Aquinas:** “Sorrow over another’s good; feeling so insecure, that the envious person sees anything good in another as detracting from his/her own personal value.”
- “Envy never enriched any man.” – Old English Proverb
- An envious person watches with an eagle eye to make sure no one gets ahead or becomes more equal than the rest of the pack.
- “If envy were a fever, all the world would be ill.” -Danish Proverb
- “Envy eats nothing but its own heart.” – German proverb
- “Too many Christians envy the sinners their pleasure and the saints their joy, because they do not have either one.” - Martin Luther
- “Beggars do not envy billionaires, though of course, they will envy other beggars who are more successful.” - Bertrand Russell
- “Envy is contrary to love, which is the source of the soul’s spiritual life.” - St. Thomas Aquinas
Ask yourself:

✓ What recent news story might be driven by envy and jealousy?
✓ How can envy appear in our lives, business, parish?
✓ How does one confront envy in one’s self? In one’s family? In one’s co-workers?
✓ How does Jesus confront the envious in the Gospels?
✓ How does love undermine the power of envy?

9 Freedom steps/actions on how to deal with jealousy and envy:

1. Believe God’s plan and purpose for your life.
2. Trust God’s best for you.
3. Walk in the Spirit.
4. Consider who you are jealous of and why.
5. Write a list and get creative.
6. Actively pursue freedom from jealousy.
7. Tend to your “heart-bruises”.
8. Know your true enemy.
9. No more comparison shopping.

Invocations to overcome envy

Leader: Because of our narrow-mindedness, we have refused to acknowledge the blessings and the goodness of others… ALL: Look on us Lord, and have mercy.

Leader: In our envious spirit, we have been reduced to competition instead of cooperation with each other… ALL: Look on us Lord, and have mercy.

Leader: For fear of feeling like failures, we have belittled and criticized the legitimate successes of others… ALL: Look on us Lord, and have mercy.

Leader: By comparing ourselves with others we have not embraced and appreciated our own blessings… ALL: Look on us Lord, and have mercy.

Leader: We have become self-righteous in our jealousy of the intimacy and friendship enjoyed by others… ALL: Look on us Lord, and have mercy.

Envy is opposite of admiration and love. The most powerful statement of love is in 1 Corinthians 13.
“Be angry but do not sin.” (Ephesians 4:26)

- Anger is a normal part of the human existence (like hunger).
- Anger is rooted in one of the other deadly emotions.
- It is borne out of fear, jealousy, pride or shame.
- It is an emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury/rage.
- It is not sinful except when taken to excess.
- “The sin of anger is unreasonable, irrational, and immoderate desire for vengeance.” – St. Thomas
  (Given in order to rein in humanity’s thirst to up the ante in the cycle of violence.)

**Anger in the Bible:**

- Luke 22:50-51 “Lord, shall we strike with a sword?” (How does Peter confront evil?)
- Matthew 26:50-54 “… all who take the sword will perish by the sword…” (How does Jesus confront evil?)
- Ephesians 4:26-32 “Do not let the sun go down on your wrath.”
- James 1:19-20 “Be slow to anger; human wrath does not work God’s justice.”

**What the saints say:**

- St. Francis de Sales: “Anger is nourished by a thousand false pretexts; angry persons never think their anger unjust.”
- St. John of the Cross: “Others again become indignant and highly impatient when they observe their own imperfections, and this great impatience derives from their ambition to become saints in a single day.”
- St. Augustine: “It is better to deny entrance to just and reasonable anger than to admit it, no matter how small it is. Once in, it is driven out again only with difficulty. It comes in as a little twig and, in less than no time, it grows big and becomes a beam.”
**Ask yourself:**

- Why do I feel angry?
- Will getting angry change the situation for the better?
- What are these feelings really about?
- When have I felt this way before?
- What does God’s Word say about this situation?
- Do I need to forgive someone?
- Who should really be in charge of the outcome of this situation?
- Do I need to show unconditional love to someone?
- What gift or lesson from God will I miss if I let anger or envy have control?

**Freedom Actions:**

1. **Let go of past regrets and failures.** (Release your failures to Christ and ask Him to heal those painful memories.)
2. **Acknowledge the anger is real.** (Don’t deny feelings.)
3. **Repent.** (When we repent of anger, we are acknowledging our dependence on God to overcome this deadly emotion.)
4. **Forgive.** (We must extend forgiveness to others over and over like Christ did. We must extend mercy.)
5. **Pray over your anger and lay it at the altar.** (Ask God to help you in your journey to overcome this deadly emotion.)
6. **Exercise self-control.** (Be slow to react and wait until the anger subsides before responding.)
7. **Keep your expectations realistic.** (Don’t expect people to fill your emotional needs. Don’t rely on your own willpower to counter years of built up anger. Let God truly be God in your life.)

**FREEDOM PRAYER FROM ANGER**

Lord, forgive me for sinning in my anger. I cry out to you for mercy. Please renew my mind and transform my heart. Peel away the layers of hardness that have built up through the sins of my bitterness and unforgiveness. Please strengthen me and help me forgive those who have wounded me. Forgive me for wounding others… and you… in my anger. Give me the strength and wisdom to be slow to speak. I need your living water to flow through me. Holy Spirit, replenish me. Cause love to pour from my heart and into the lives of all those around me. In Jesus’ name, amen.
PATIENCE/FORGIVENESS

- Meekness and love go hand in hand.
- It comes from an inner strength or grace, allowing one to embrace or endure an injury without self-pity or having to retaliate in kind.
- Jesus was meek and showed love to those who sought to murder Him.
- Pope John Paul II prayed with his assailant, Mehmet Ali Agca in a Roman prison cell.
- The world was astounded when one Amish community refused to cast blame when a number of their young people were killed by an angry gunman. Instead, they reached out with grace and compassion to the killer’s family.

Ask yourself:

- Is there somebody in your life that you need to forgive or be more patient with?
- What one positive, concrete step can you take today to confront your sin of anger with the forgiving power of Christ?
- Have you ever been in a situation where someone you know turned the other cheek? What was that like? What was the result?

Invocations for Patience and Forgiveness

Leader: We have harbored resentment against others, long after they have asked our forgiveness. ALL: Look upon us, Lord, and have mercy.

Leader: We have felt justified in retaliating against our adversaries and have refused to seek understanding and reconciliation. ALL: Look upon us, Lord, and have mercy.

Leader: We have controlled and intimidated others by our outbursts of rage and our threatening words and behavior. ALL: Look upon us, Lord, and have mercy.

Leader: In our misguided search for perfection, we have sadly dwelt in intolerance of our human weakness. ALL: Look upon us, Lord, and have mercy.

Leader: We have preferred to inflict pain on others rather than to be agents of healing and peace. ALL: Look upon us, Lord, and have mercy.
CLOSING SONG: Order My Life by Tom Franzak

REFRAIN:
Order my life, order my life, order my life wisely, O God.
Order my life, order my life, order my life wisely, O God.

2. O merciful God, grant that I may desire ardently, search prudently, recognize truly and bring to perfect completion whatever’s pleasing to you for the glory of your name. (To refrain)

3. O merciful God, grant that I may know what you require me to do
Grant me the power to accomplish your will,
as it’s fitting for the salvation of my soul. (To refrain)

4. May I not rejoice in anything unless it leads me to you.
May I not be saddened by anything unless it turns me from you. (To refrain)