

1305
1925

Midday Prayer - 885

7.3.83
11.3.91

885

Lord of Heaven (Baldil Pa 1st)
Song of the Exile

[With Open Hands]
15

From a responsory song for Lent, based on Ps 41. Now a prayer for the season of Lent, one of the Preface-prayers for the celebration of the Eucharist at this time: @@ MISSAL p 660 [P.8]

Did you notice a, maybe, surprising word in that prayer? "This joyful season", it said: yes, joyful. Hardly the most obvious word that comes to mind at the mention of Lent... rather is contradiction, in fact, to the ordinarily accepted idea of what Lent is — something more in keeping with gloom and depression that the weather often provides us with at this time of the year. More than a hint, then, in that prayer of the Church, that maybe we're missing something about the meaning of Lent, are overlooking the gloom & doom bit. Penance, self-denial, fasting, alms-giving, renewing one's mind and heart — there's nothing that says this has to be a depressing, dreary or gloomy experience: rather, didn't Jesus himself indicate that when we fast, pray, give alms, it should be done joyfully and without drawing attention to ourselves — and that might include self-attention too. Certainly, it's a time of renewal, of turning again more closely to God, of changing oneself, making oneself more ready & open to be transformed by the grace of God, especially in the coming celebration at Eastertide of Christ's resurrection & the new life He gives us. But it's a preparation time too, a deepening time, and a memory time. Trouble is, maybe, Lent has too much been presented in negative ways, and thought of too much in self-centred ways. The prayer I began with, and others too

that focus on different aspects of the season, should be an antidote to that. It would, I think, be a helpful way to renewal of spirit, to listen carefully to those words and pray with them: to listen to the scriptures that are chosen for use in public worship & prayer this season, for they're often, too, not quite the message we expect. Each year, there's something new, something that maybe last year we weren't ready or able to hear. May our prayers at this time help us to have our hearts and minds open to the love and providence of God, to His calling, to His sharing of His own life with us through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose life & passion & message for us we specially recall & remember at this time of the year.

PREFACE P8 (repeat)

(Another)^A responsory song

for Lent, now, this one based on a psalm that's traditionally been used a lot in Lent, Ps 90. MUSIC (With Open Hands 1st)

PRAYERS (Deiss p 30, 31)
29

BLESSING (id).