



KNEELING IN REPENTANCE

Note: The response ("When I fall on my knees ...") can be sung (GTG 525, PH 513) or spoken. For digital worship consider using a soloist to sing or speak.

One: Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord.
Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.
(Psalm 130:1–2)

**ALL: When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.**

One: O God, we make this confession in your presence
and in the presence of those whom we have sinned against.
We confess that we have broken your community by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
Through long years of neglect and denial
we have perpetuated brokenness through our inaction.
We say, "I wasn't there" or "I wasn't alive then" or "You cannot blame me."

**ALL: When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.**

One: We confess that we have benefited from a broken community
without acknowledging our own complicity.
We claim that the acts of past generations have nothing to do with us.
We say, "That was then,"
yet we stand on the shoulders of those who went before,
those who made excuses for inaction,
enforced separation,
and participated in death.

**ALL: When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.**

One: We confess that we have reinforced a broken community.
Even as we celebrate that we are created in your image,
our inherent racism denies that Black and Brown people are created in your image.
Because we have consistently violated the sacred bonds of your covenant, O God,
we now confess and reject the sin of systemic racism.
We have sinned against you and your children.

**ALL: When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.**

One: We confess that we have perpetuated a broken community, when your covenant, O God is with all people. We have perpetuated a broken covenant by our silence, our fearfulness, and our helplessness as we enjoy our privilege. This day we say the names of those we have sinned against: Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Trayvon Martin, *[other names may be added]* and far too many others, whose names we say in the silence of our own hearts.

**ALL: When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.**

One: We give you thanks and praise, O God, that you do not hold our sin against us. We pray for your forgiveness. We pray for the forgiveness of those whom we have wronged generation after generation even up to this day. Through your gift of Jesus Christ, we declare today that we reject the sin of racism and will commit our lives to ending evil. We will live as you would have us live: as people baptized into a covenant community of grace and love.

**ALL: You have shown us what is good.
And what do you, O Lord, require of us?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with you
all the days of our lives.**
(Micah 6:8, paraphrased)

**When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.**

Note: We fall on our knees in an act of repentance. We fall on our knees to confess our corporate sin. It is time to fall on our knees, to hold a mirror up to our lives and our structures and confess that we are participants in a structural racism that is as deadly as the coronavirus. (Brian Heron)

Kneeling is a penitent posture. But it is not the posture of the body. It is the attitude of the heart that counts when we pray. The Bible speaks of kneeling on one's face before God, the most important thing is not the position of the body but the condition of the soul. When I kneel, it is like a signal to my entire being that it is time to concentrate on God, not on the world. Kneeling is as an outward sign of an inward condition: humility, supplication, gratitude.

Rev. Rosemary C. Mitchell, 6-10-2020