

- Oh God. (murmuring) Open my lips, oh Lord. (murmuring) ♪ Oh God, the Father, creator of Heaven and Earth ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh God, the Son, Redeemer of the world ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh God, the Holy Ghost, sanctifier of the faithful ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh holy, blessed, and glorious trinity, one God ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Remember not Lord Christ our offenses ♪ ♪ Nor the offenses of our forebearers ♪ ♪ Neither reward us according to our sins ♪ ♪ Spare us good Lord, spare thy people ♪ ♪ Whom thou has redeemed with thy most precious blood ♪ ♪ And by thy mercy preserve us forever ♪ ♪ Help us good Lord ♪ ♪ From all evil and wickedness ♪ ♪ From sin ♪ ♪ From the crafts and assaults of the devil ♪ ♪ And from everlasting damnation ♪ ♪ Good Lord deliver us ♪ ♪ From all blindness of heart ♪ ♪ From pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy ♪ ♪ From envy, hatred, and malice ♪ ♪ And from all want of charity ♪ ♪ Good Lord deliver us ♪ ♪ From all inordinate and sinful affections ♪ ♪ And from all the deceits of the world ♪ ♪ The flesh and the devil ♪ ♪ Good Lord deliver us ♪ ♪ From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism ♪ ♪ From hardness of heart ♪ ♪ And contempt of thy Word and commandment ♪ ♪ Good Lord deliver us ♪ ♪ From lightning and tempest ♪ ♪ From earthquake, fire, and flood ♪ ♪ From plague, pestilence, and famine ♪ ♪ Good Lord deliver us ♪ ♪ From all oppression, conspiracy, and rebellion ♪ ♪ From violence, battle, and murder ♪ ♪ And from dying suddenly and unprepared ♪ ♪ Good Lord deliver us ♪ ♪ By the mystery of thy holy incarnation ♪ ♪ By thy holy nativity and submission to the law ♪ ♪ By thy baptism, fasting, and temptation ♪ ♪ Good Lord deliver us ♪ ♪ By thine agony and bloody sweat ♪ ♪ By thy cross and passion ♪ ♪ By thy precious death and burial ♪ ♪ By thy glorious resurrection and ascension ♪ ♪ And by the coming of the Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Good Lord deliver us ♪ ♪ In all time of our tribulation ♪ ♪ In all time of our prosperity ♪ ♪ In the hour of death and in the day of judgment ♪ ♪ Good Lord deliver us ♪ ♪ We sinners to beseech thee to hear us, oh Lord God ♪ ♪ And that it may please thee to rule ♪ ♪ And govern thy holy church universal ♪ ♪ In the right way ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to illumine ♪ ♪ All bishops, priests, and deacons ♪ ♪ With true knowledge and understanding of thy Word ♪ ♪ And that both by their preaching and living ♪ ♪ They may set it forth and show it accordingly ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to bless and keep all thy people ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to send forth laborers ♪ ♪ Into thine harvest ♪ ♪ And to draw all people into thy kingdom ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to give to all people ♪ ♪ Increase of grace to hear and receive thy Word ♪ ♪ And to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to bring into the way of truth ♪ ♪ All such as have heard and are deceived ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to give us a heart ♪ ♪ To love and fear thee ♪ ♪ And diligently to live after thy commandments ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee ♪ ♪ So to rule the hearts of thy servants ♪ ♪ The President of the United States ♪ ♪ And all others in authority ♪ ♪ That they may do justice and love mercy ♪ ♪ And walk in the ways of truth ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to make wars to cease ♪ ♪ In all the world ♪ ♪ To give to all nations unity, peace, and concord ♪ ♪ And to bestow freedom upon all peoples ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee ♪ ♪ To show thy pity upon all prisoners and captives ♪ ♪ The homeless and hungry ♪ ♪ And all who are desolate and oppressed ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use ♪ ♪ The fount of the fruits of the earth ♪ ♪ So that in due time all may enjoy

them ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to inspire us ♪ ♪ In our several callings ♪ ♪ To do the work with which thou gives us to do ♪ ♪ With singleness of heart as thy servants ♪ ♪ And for the common good ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee, ♪ ♪ to preserve all who are in danger ♪ ♪ By reason of their labor or their trouble ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to preserve and provide for ♪ ♪ All women in childbirth, young children and orphans ♪ ♪ Widowed and all whose homes are broken or torn by strife ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to visit the lonely ♪ ♪ To strengthen all who suffer in mind, body, and spirit ♪ ♪ And to comfort with thy presence ♪ ♪ Those who are failing and infirm ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to support, help, and comfort ♪ ♪ All who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to have mercy upon all people ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to give us true repentance ♪ ♪ To forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances ♪ ♪ And to endure us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit ♪ ♪ To amend our lives according to thy holy Word ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to forgive our enemies ♪ ♪ Persecutors and slanderers and to turn their hearts ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to strengthen such as to stand ♪ ♪ To comfort and help the weak hearted ♪ ♪ And to raise up those who fail ♪ ♪ And finally, to beat down Satan under our feet ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee ♪ ♪ To grant all the faithful ♪ ♪ departed eternal life and peace ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to grant that ♪ ♪ In the fellowship of all the saints ♪ ♪ We may attain to thy heavenly kingdom ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us ♪ ♪ Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us ♪ ♪ Oh Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of our world ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world ♪ ♪ Help us, I plead thee ♪ ♪ Oh Christ, hear us ♪ ♪ Oh Christ, hear us ♪ ♪ Lord have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Christ have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Lord have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ♪ ♪ Thy kingdom come, thy will be done ♪ ♪ On earth as it is in heaven ♪ ♪ Give us this day our daily bread ♪ ♪ Forgive us our trespasses ♪ ♪ As we forgive those who trespass against us ♪ ♪ And lead us not into temptation ♪ ♪ But deliver us from evil ♪ ♪ For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory ♪ ♪ Forever ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Oh Lord, let thy mercy be showed upon us ♪ ♪ As we (mumbles) ♪ ♪ Let us pray ♪ ♪ Almighty God, who has promised to hear ♪ ♪ The petitions of those who ask in thy Son's name ♪ ♪ We beseech thee mercifully to incline thine ear to us ♪ ♪ Who have now made our prayers ♪ ♪ and supplications unto thee ♪ ♪ And grant that those things ♪ ♪ which we have asked faithfully ♪ ♪ According to thy will may be obtained eventually ♪ ♪ To the relief of our necessity ♪ ♪ And to the setting forth of thy glory ♪ ♪ Through Jesus Christ our Lord ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ♪ ♪ And the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Be with us all evermore ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- Let us pray together the prayer for illumination printed in your bulletin. Open our hearts and minds, Oh God, by the power of your Holy Spirit. So that as the Word is read and proclaimed we may hear your message to us this first Sunday of Lent. Amen. The first reading is from Genesis chapter three beginning with the first verse. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say you shall not eat "from any tree in the garden?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit "of the trees in the garden, but God said "you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree "that is in the middle of the garden. "Nor shall you touch it or you shall die." But the serpent said to the

woman, "You will not die. "For God knows that when you eat of it, "your eyes will be opened and you will be like God "knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. And she also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate. Then the eyes of those were open and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made loin cloths for themselves. This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. The Psalm for today is number 32 found on page 766 in the hymnal. Please stand and join in singing the Psalm and Gloria responsively. (organ playing) ♪ Blessed are those whose transgression is forgiven ♪ ♪ Whose sin is covered ♪ ♪ Blessed are those who are not found guilty ♪ ♪ And in who there is no iniquity ♪ ♪ When I did not declare my sin ♪ ♪ My body wasted away ♪ ♪ Through my groaning all day long ♪ ♪ For day and night, your hand was heavy upon me ♪ ♪ My strength dried out as in the heat of summer ♪ ♪ I acknowledged my sin to you ♪ ♪ And I did not hide my iniquity ♪ ♪ I said, I confess my transgressions to the Lord ♪ ♪ And you took the away the guilt of my sin ♪ ♪ Therefore let those who are godly offer prayer to you ♪ ♪ At the time of distress ♪ ♪ The great flood waters shall not reach them ♪ ♪ You are a hiding place for me ♪ ♪ You protect me from trouble ♪ ♪ You encompass me with deliverance ♪ ♪ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go ♪ ♪ I will counsel you with my eye upon you ♪ ♪ Do not be like an unruly horse or a mule ♪ ♪ Without understanding ♪ ♪ Whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle ♪ ♪ Many are the sorrows of the wicked ♪ ♪ But mercy surrounds those who trust in you ♪ ♪ Make light in the Lord and rejoice oh righteous ♪ ♪ Those who are upright in heart ♪ ♪ All glory be to you Creator and to Jesus Christ our Savior ♪ ♪ And to the Holy Spirit the Trinity ♪ ♪ As it was when time begun ♪ ♪ And now until forevermore ♪ You may be seated.

- The gospel reading is taken from the book of Matthew chapter four, beginning with the first verse. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted 40 days and 40 nights and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God "command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, one does not live "by bread alone, but by every word "that comes from the mouth of God." Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, "throw yourself down, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you "and on their hands they will bear you up, "so that you will not gash your foot against a stone." Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, "do not put the Lord your God to the test." Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor and he said to him, "All these "I will give you if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you Satan, for it is written, "worship the Lord your God and serve only him." This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. (organ playing) (choir singing)

- Last semester at the University of California in Berkeley, Mr. Andrew Martinez began appearing on campus all natural, attending class and strolling about campus in the nude. He said that he was doing so as a protest against social repression. The President of the University of California at Berkeley, as university presidents often are, was not amused. Mr. Martinez was sent home. He plans to write a book about his experiences. Today's text from Genesis, it is traditional to read on this the first Sunday of Lent. And it is an early primordial story. And you know it is an old story, because it says that Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed. They were naked and unashamed. And the story is meant to ask you how long ago was that in your story? You can't stroll around Duke or Berkeley in the nude. But of course, it is okay for a toddler to

stroll about the nursery all natural, cuddly baby flesh, smooth, unmarked, innocent. And that was the way we were, says Genesis. That was the way we were. We were all, Adam and Eve, all of us, the toddler romping gleefully naked after the bath. Naked and unashamed. And of course we were very young then. We were only a few hours old. Innocent, smooth, unselfconscious in the good garden. And surely you're not surprised that our early primordial innocence did not last long. That Adam and Eve's unashamed-ness didn't last long because yours didn't last long. Adam and Eve, Luther notes, grew up already by the afternoon of their first day. Their eyes were opened. And their eyes were opened and they saw that they were naked and they were ashamed. How long did it take for your eyes to be opened, for you to grow up? Enter into the story the serpent. The serpent whom we are told was the most subtle of all God's creatures. Smart, savvy, it's not Satan, it's a serpent. Smart. And the Hebrew writer of Genesis has a pun here. The Hebrew (speaking foreign language) "naked" is set next to in the next verse the Hebrew word (speaking foreign language), "wise". Adam is naked, the serpent is wise. Whereas we are nude, the serpent is shrewd. And self-conscious knowledge is the promise of the snake. The serpent says, God doesn't want you to eat the tree of knowledge because God knows what will happen to you after you eat of this fruit, this forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. The Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong, Sophistication. Don't you wanna get smart? The serpent and Adam and Eve, seniors with freshman, let me help you get smart without God, promises the serpent. Eat, open your eyes, grow up. And so our peaceful innocent existence lasted no longer than afternoon of the very first day on earth. So the story says that the forbidden fruit is eaten by the woman and the man, a mutual act of self-assertion and our eyes are opened. Our eyes are opened. And look at what we see. The promise was that we would eat of the forbidden fruit and we would be as wise as gods. We would be able to have limitless god-like vistas. Eyes were opened and what do we see? Our genitals. I think the story is meant to be a joke. A joke on us. The irony that in our lust for knowledge, after eating the forbidden fruit we now know one piece of information we did not know before, and that only, namely, that we are naked. Our eyes are opened, oh, but yet how little we see. We now see that we are naked, we see that we are exposed. And immediately we set to work now having only one human project on earth, namely to cover our nakedness. Shame becomes the main human motivation in the story. We sew fig leaves together. We make aprons, fashioning aprons for ourselves. Sometime in the privacy of your own dorm room, try fig leaves as lingerie. It's bound to be an unpleasant experience. And I think the writer of Genesis is here having fun with us, making fun of human creativity and self-exultation. It's laughable, the joke is on us. Just a few days after God creates the world and everything in it, our first act of human creativity and fabrication is fig leaf aprons. "Where are you," God asks, on God's afternoon stroll through the garden? And we pitifully reply, "Where?" We were naked. We were naked, we were vulnerable, we were exposed, we were ashamed. Who told you that you were naked? And then the pitiful blaming begins, the pitiful attempt, correlative our fig leaf wardrobe to cover ourselves, Adam says, well it was this woman, this woman that you created. The one that you thought of and gave to me. She thought of it. Then the woman says it was this serpent that you created. He gave me the fruit. He opened my eyes. And this story begins to ring true with our primordial experience. The great Baptist Prophet Carlyle Marney who loved to preach from this pulpit, was once asked by a visiting group of youth, where was the Garden of Eden? And Marney replied, "The Garden of Eden is located at "135 Elm Street, Knoxville, Tennessee." And they said, "You're crazy, it's someplace in Mesopotamia, "isn't it?" And he says, "No, no, it's 135 Elm Street, Knoxville, Tennessee, "because that was where I went "and I opened my mother's purse "and I took a quarter and I went down to the corner store "and I bought some candy "and I ate it all on the way home. "And when I got home, I was so ashamed I hid in

the closet. "It was there in the closet that she found me." "And she said, "Where are you? "Who told you? "What have you done?" The philosopher Ernest Becker says that all human culture, art, architecture, philosophy, religion, all human culture is but pitiful fig leaf-like attempt to cover our nakedness, to cover ourselves. All cultural learning is but a protective hedge against the awesome realization that we are naked and exposed. The awesome awareness that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Naked came I out of my mother's womb, says Job. And naked I shall return to the dust. I tell you, this is a story about the shady side of wisdom. It's a story about the downside of growing up and becoming big and adult and our eyes to be opened. It is a story about the cost of the knowledge even higher than Duke tuition. Funny, he said to me, funny. I had more self confidence when I was a senior in high school than now that I'm a senior at Duke. And I said, "Oh, I can explain that to you. "Senior in high school, block letter sweater, "world at your feet, young man on the way up. "You were stupid. "But here at Duke, you've taken a few courses "and you've been around the dorm a couple of times "and your eyes have been opened and now you know "just how small you are. "You know, namely, what you don't know." Eye opening wisdom extracts a price. Caught, caught in the shame of our nakedness, our physical, psychological, our mortality, our nakedness, something deep within is, we want to go home. Even in our brokenness, this story has the power to evoke a memory, as if deep genetically, the memory of what we once were, that innocence, that smooth flesh, unmarked innocence. The memory of the way life should be. And so we feel a sense of tragedy. Our eyes are open, we see that we're naked, we're self-conscious, we can suddenly see ourselves. All animals die. But only human beings are animals who know that we shall die. The poet Archibald MacLeish, "our exile is that our eyes see. "Hawk and fish have eyes, "but we behold "what they can only be." Our exile is ourselves. Naked, before the truth we stand exposed, ashamed. Now on the first Sunday of Lent as I said, it is our custom to read these lesson, as it is our custom to chant the Great Litany, to chant the Great Litany. And you don't like it. And I don't know if I like it. Not because of the music, but because of the meaning. Cause we don't like to have to stand up til we're tired and be forced by the church to say over and over again we have failed, we have fallen, we have slipped, we've goofed, we've rebelled, we've garbled, we've disobeyed, we have sinned, Lord have mercy. Why would the church insist on rubbing our noses into this awesome naked truth? Which, if Ernest Becker be believed, this truth which we expend most of our intellectual creativity avoiding. I was naked, I was ashamed, and I hid myself. Why force us to stand before this harsh Lenten mirror? What good does that do? I am haunted by Robert Penn Warren's long poem "Brother to Dragons." In Brother to Dragons, the poet has an imaginary conversation with Thomas Jefferson sometime in time with Thomas Jefferson and the members of the Jefferson family. The poet asks Jefferson about an event, an almost forgotten and buried event that actually happened within the Jefferson family. One of Jefferson's relatives, Lilburn Lewis hacked to death a black slave with a meat ax. Because the slave had broken a pitcher that belonged to Lilburn's mother. And the poet asked Jefferson why in all of his writings, in all of his speeches and letters, Jefferson never mentioned that event from the family. He confronts Jefferson with the event and Jefferson is obviously very uncomfortable, cause Jefferson cannot square that horrible, brutal murder with his vervain, deistic, humanistic philosophy about the nobility of human nature. That horrible fact of that slave hacked to death with a meat ax in a fit of rage, just won't square with Mr. Jefferson's tame humanism. And the poem ends with Mr. Jefferson pondering his own complicity in that horror. But not only his complicity but ours as well. We have lifted the meat ax in the elation of love and justice, charges the poet. We have lain on our bed and devised evil intent in the heart. We have stood in the sunlight and we have named the bad thing good and the good thing bad. We have done this. Sounds like notes from the

Great Litany, doesn't it? But why? Why rub the nose of the great Thomas Jefferson in such sordid human nastiness? What good is there in such exposure? Such naked stare at the human condition. The poet answers the question. Listen to the poet. "The recognition of complicity "is the beginning of innocence. "The recognition of necessity "is the beginning of freedom. "Death to the self "is the beginning of self good. "All else is surrogate of hope. "All else is destitution of spirit." Surely this is what Chesterton meant when he spoke about the good news of original sin. There is good news and unless stating the truth, the bad news, the naked truth of ourselves. This may not be the end of wisdom but it is surely its beginning. Or as the novelist Thomas Hardy said, "if a way to the better there be, "it exacts a full look at the worst." Cowering in the bushes, fig leaf aprons, ashamed of our nakedness, God comes to us. Earlier we got smart, we asked God questions. Did God say, did God really mean? But now God asks us questions. Where are you? Who told you? What have you done? And the naked truth about us is exposed. We are naked and we're ashamed. In the Bible, shame, shame is not just a matter of things you've done that you shouldn't have done, but shame is the realization of who you are that you're not who you ought to be. Shame is standing before the mirror of the naked truth about ourselves and desperately wanting to turn away or to cover ourselves, but knowing that we can't. Yet as I said that there is planted deep within the human memory, deep within the psyche, deep within genesis, memory of primal innocence. And thus there is deep within us the hope of renovation, of return, not to ignorance, but to innocence, no, return to trust, trust in God who comes to us and who sees us as we really are, but comes to us and takes us, and thus we pray with the old hymn, Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways. And a verse I've never noticed before, reclothe us in our rightful minds. And pure lives thy service find in deeper reverence praises. Reclothe us, oh God, in a rightful mind. And next Sunday, second Sunday of Lent, you're gonna meet an old man named Nicodemus, who comes and asks Jesus, "How can you be born again when you're old? "Is it possible to enter a second time in your mama's womb and be born?" Can you go back to pre-kindergarten innocence when you're all grown up and you've been to Duke and you've seen the sights and you've been exposed? Promise to Nicodemus is that day when we shall be born anew, when our eyes shall be opened to a new world fresh, renovated. When we shall be before God, a toddler romping gleefully naked after the bath. (organ playing) (singing)

- You may be seated. We are called as stewards in God's garden, entrusted with care of all the earth and of God's people. Let us give account of our stewardship as we dedicate material offerings and as we rededicate ourselves to the task Christ has set before us. (organ playing) (choir singing) (organ playing) ♪ Praise God from whom ♪ ♪ All blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise him all creatures ♪ ♪ Here below ♪ ♪ Praise him above ♪ ♪ Ye heavenly hosts ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son ♪ ♪ And Holy Ghost ♪

- Let us pray. Thank you God for providing so bountifully for our needs and for coming to us in our nakedness. Above all we are filled with gratitude that you sent Jesus to minister among us, accepting us where we are and leading us on grace-filled paths toward the way of renovation and righteousness. We offer with our treasures our renewed obedience and our desire to be born anew according to your purposes. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. Let us go forth renewed by the power of God to bear witness to the love of Christ to all the world. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, be with you and keep you. Amen. (organ playing) (singing) (organ playing)