

**Society of Christian Philosophers**  
**A Service of Lament**

**Call to Worship:**

God is full of compassion and mercy.  
*We bow the knees of our hearts.*

**Litany of Confession:**

Let us confess our failures to free academic philosophy from sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Lot offered his daughters to be raped.

*But we have fostered a culture of entitlements and handed the vulnerable over to the consequences of undisciplined desires.*

Jephthah bought military glory with the sacrifice of his daughter.

*But we have covered up for abusers who boost our ratings in the Leiter Report.*

Delilah enticed Samson, and Abelard seduced Heloise.

*But we have let our field be strewn with invitations to trade sexual favors for professional advancement.*

David got Bathsheba pregnant and saw to the death of her husband.

*But we have turned blind eyes while sexual predators destroyed families.*

Susanna's character was assassinated by peeping toms who saw her in the bath.

*But we have been readier to blame the victim than to hold one another to account.*

Socrates mostly restrained himself from "hitting on" attractive students.

*But we have overdrawn the divide between philosophical competence and private morality and failed to enforce self-control as a professional norm.*

Plato taught that it is never right to do what will make someone worse.

*But we have acquiesced in department cultures that damage psyches, twist characters, and keep us from doing our best work.*

Aristotle held up the Golden Mean, while still insisting that some things are always wrong.

*But we have been eager to believe excuses and allowed perpetrators to reverse the charges.*

Aquinas pointed to our responsibility for fraternal correction.

*But we have prized untroubled camaraderie and shirked our duty to recall one another to our better selves.*

Kant warned against treating other people as means only.

*But we let mutual consent wipe out moral differences of status and power.*

Kant worried that forgiveness would slippery-slope into condonation.

*But we have soft-pedalled harms in our rush to reinstate the guilty.*

We have been false to philosophy, prizing fame more than wisdom, personal privilege more than justice.

*God, forgive us!*

We been false to our calling as teachers, betraying the trust of those who turn to us to help them grow.

*God, forgive us!*

We have put colleagues and co-workers at risk by failing to make our work place safe.  
*God, forgive us!*

We have been callous to the costs for others.  
*God, forgive us!*

We have been content to treat the symptoms when what is needed is root and branch reform.  
*God, forgive us!*

May God, who made each person in God's own image, who commands us to love neighbor as self and to respect the dignity of every human being, have mercy on us and forgive us, enlighten our minds and change our hearts! Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Reading:** Matthew 22:34-40

### **Homily**

**Psalm 103:8-14** (in unison)

The LORD is full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and of great kindness.  
He will not always accuse us,  
nor will he keep his anger forever.  
He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.  
For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.  
As far as the east is from the west,  
so far as he removed our sins from us.  
As a father cares for his children,  
so does the LORD care for those who fear him.  
For he himself knows whereof we are made;  
he remembers that we are but dust.

**Reading:** Matthew 5:13-16

### **Litany of Petition:**

O God, you are experienced at creation and re-creation. We need your help to set things right.

Heal those whose lives have been broken by sexual predation: students, staff, and faculty, who have been led on by seduction or traumatized by sexual violence, whose careers have been jeopardized by refusals to go along, whose relationships have been compromised by entanglement in affairs they didn't start.  
*God, help us!*

Bring those who have used others sexually to remorse and recognition: give them honesty to face themselves, courage to accept responsibility, sensitivity to the costs and claims of others, and determination to change their behavior from now on.  
*God, help us!*

Strengthen us all who are made of the same stuff--rational animals with unruly desires--with will-power for self-control that respects other people's boundaries.  
*God, help us!*

Make us alert to notice and discrete to warn one another about ambiguous behaviors that could slippery-slope into something worse.

*God, help us!*

Turn our analytical precision towards institutional dynamics. Show us what it is about the ways we do business that welcomes sexual harassment in our midst.

*God, help us!*

Make our leaders--in the APA and philosophy departments, in colleges and universities--allergic to denial and "quick-fixing." Give them courage to dare deep-structure reforms; wisdom that knows how to be fair to everyone; and expertise to re-organize our work together in wholesome ways.

*God, help us!*

O God, you are wisdom itself. Loving philosophy is a way of loving you. Rebuilding our institutions is a way of loving our neighbors. Keep disturbing the consciences of each and all of us until professional philosophy is safe for everyone. Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Dismissal:** Go in peace! Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God!

*In the name of Christ. Amen.*