

## OUT OF THE HEART OF DARKNESS

Janèt Sullivan Whitaker

Out of the heart of darkness,  
from pain and doubt and fear,  
through loneliness and longing,  
your love awaits us here.  
You reach for those despairing,  
brought low with bitter shame:  
The sinful, brokenhearted,  
you call us each by name.

In dying and in rising  
your gift is life anew.  
And knowing our transgressions,  
you fling them far from you.  
Would that we leave behind us  
ourselves, and in you trust,  
we would behold the vision  
of your desire for us.

O God of tender mercy,  
of endless love for all.  
O Spirit of true kindness  
be with us when we fall,  
O Gentle Christ, the teacher  
guide us in all things true,  
and swiftly grant your mercy  
when we return to you.

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## Psalm 130 • Psalm 103

Both the seasons of Advent and Lent begin in the wilderness. One reveals John crying out for all those in need of repentance. The other shows us Jesus himself retreating to the desert where he fasted and prayed for 40 days and nights. The desert wilderness was a different place for these two cousins. John was a mere mortal with an urgent message meant for all of us. Jesus was God, in addition to living fully as a human being. Because he was one of us, he was vulnerable to challenges not unlike ours. We are all tempted to seek comfort in sinful ways. We are thirsty and hungry for the water of life and the true nourishment that comes from the word of God.

This text bears brief references to two penitential Psalms. The opening phrase “Out of the heart of darkness,” evokes a similar cry from Psalm 130: “Out of the depths do I cry unto you, O God.” Even in the darkness, the psalmist goes on to assure the penitent that “With our God there is mercy and plenteous redemption.” In faith, we believe that God’s love is there for us in our darkest hour. The second reference comes from Psalm 103, wherein God, our loving parent, takes away our worst transgressions and flings them far away. It is only in seeking true repentance that we find God’s most tender mercies, given free, and in great abundance.

*Use:* Advent, Lent, Ordinary Time, Darkness, Love of God for Us, Mercy, Penance/Reconciliation



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AURELIA


1. Out of the heart of dark - ness, from pain and doubt and  
2. In dy - ing and in ris - ing your gift is life a -  
3. O God of ten - der mer - cy, of end - less love for

1. fear, through lone - li - ness and long - ing, your  
2. new. And know - ing our trans - gres - sions, you  
3. all. O Spir - it of true kind - ness be

1. love a - waits us here. You reach for those de -  
2. fling them far from you. Would that we leave be -  
3. with us when we fall, O Gen - tle Christ, the



OUT OF THE HEART OF DARKNESS, cont. (2)



1. spair - ing, brought low with bit - ter shame: The  
2. hind us our - selves, and in you trust, we  
3. teach - er guide us in all things true, and



1. sin - ful, bro - ken - heart - ed, you call us each by name.  
2. would be - hold the vi - sion of your de - sire for us.  
3. swift - ly grant your mer - cy when we re - turn to you.

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Music: AURELIA; Samuel S. Wesley, 1810–1876.

