

SERVICE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY THE BEGINNING OF LENT

The Gathering of God's People

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.

Psalm 51: 17

Lord, have mercy.

In these or other suitable words, the presiding minister explains the meaning of Lent and invites the people to observe it faithfully

Brothers and sisters in Christ: since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the Church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

At first this season of Lent was observed by those who were preparing for baptism at Easter and by those who were to be restored to the Church's fellowship from which they had been separated through sin. In course of time the Church came to recognize that, by a careful keeping of these days, all Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Lord to observe a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

THE COLLECT

Silence may be kept.

Then the priest says

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

Almighty and everlasting God

you hate nothing that you have made

and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent.

Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,

that we may be truly sorry for our sins
and obtain from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

THE FIRST READING

Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58: 1-12

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM

Psalm 51: 1-18

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, in | your great | goodness; ■
according to the abundance of your compassion |
blot out | my of|fences.
2. Wash me thoroughly | from my | wickedness ■
and | cleanse me | from my | sin.
- 3 For I ac|knowledge my | faults ■
and my | sin is | ever be|fore me.
- 4 Against you only | have I | sinned ■
and done what is | evil | in your | sight,
- 5† So that you are justified | in your | sentence ■
and | righteous | in your | judgment.
- 6 I have been wicked even | from my | birth, ■
a sinner | when my | mother con|ceived me.
7. Behold, you desire truth | deep with|in me ■
and shall make me understand wisdom
| in the | depths of my | heart.
- 8 Purge me with hyssop and I | shall be | clean; ■
wash me and I | shall be | whiter than | snow.
- 9 Make me hear of | joy and | gladness, ■
that the bones you have | broken | may re|joice.
10. Turn your | face from my | sins ■
and | blot out | all my mis|deeds.

- 11 Make me a clean | heart, O | God, ■
and re|new a right | spirit with|in me.
12. Cast me not a|way from your | presence ■
and take not your | holy | spirit | from me.
- 13 Give me again the joy of | your sal|vation ■
and sustain me | with your | gracious | spirit;
- 14†Then shall I teach your | ways • to the | wicked ■
and sinners | shall re|turn to | you.
- 15 Deliver me from my guilt, O God,
the God of | my sal|vation, ■
and my | tongue shall | sing of your | righteousness.
16. O Lord, | open my | lips ■
and my | mouth shall pro|claim your | praise.
- 17 For you desire no sacrifice, | else • I would | give it; ■
you take no de|light in | burnt | offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a | broken | spirit; ■
a broken and contrite heart, O God, | you will | not des|pise.

THE SECOND READING
2 Corinthians 5: 20b - 6:10

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CANTICLE
*Saviour of the World
or a hymn may be sung*

- 1 Jesus, Saviour of the world,
come to us | in your | mercy: ■
we look to | you to | save and | help us.
- 2 By your cross and your life laid down
you set your | people | free: ■
we look to | you to | save and | help us.
- 3 When they were ready to perish you | saved • your dis|ciples: ■
we look to | you to | come to • our | help.

- 4 In the greatness of your mercy, loose us | from our | chains, ■
forgive the | sins of | all your | people.
- 5† Make yourself known as our Saviour and | mighty • De|liverer; ■
save and | help us • that | we may | praise you.
- 6 Come now and dwell with us | Lord Christ | Jesus:■
hear our | prayer • and be | with us | always.
- 7 And when you | come in • your | glory:■
make us to be one with you
and to share the life of your | kingdom. | A|men.

Stand

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 6: 1-6 and 16-21

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Saviour Christ according to Saint Matthew
chapter 6 beginning at verse 1

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

and concludes with

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE SERMON

The Liturgy of Penitence

The presiding minister says

Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

THE COMMANDMENTS

Hear these commandments which God has given to his people, and
take them to heart:

I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD: YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BUT ME.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul,
and with all your mind and with all your strength. *Matthew 22: 37*

YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF ANY IDOL.

God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. *John 4: 24*

YOU SHALL NOT DISHONOUR THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD.

You shall worship him with reverence and awe. *Hebrews 12: 28*

REMEMBER THE LORD'S DAY, AND KEEP IT HOLY.

Christ is risen from the dead: set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. *Colossians 3: 1,2*

**Lord, have mercy on us,
and write these your laws in our hearts.**

HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.

Live as servants of God, honour all people, love your brothers and sisters in Christ. *1 Peter 2: 16*

YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER.

Be reconciled to your brother and sister: overcome evil with good. *Matthew 5: 24, Romans 13: 21*

YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

Know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. *Corinthians 6: 19*

YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.

Be honest in all that you do and care for those in need. *Ephesians 4: 28*

YOU SHALL NOT BE A FALSE WITNESS.

Let everyone speak the truth. *Ephesians 4: 25*

YOU SHALL NOT COVET ANYTHING WHICH BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus: It is more blessed to give than to receive. Love your neighbour as yourself, for love is the fulfilling of the law. *Acts 20: 35, Romans 13: 9,10*

**Lord, have mercy on us,
and write all these your laws in our hearts.**

THE LITANY

1

God the Father, creator of heaven and earth,
have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit, giver of life,

have mercy on us..

Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, three Persons in one God,

have mercy on us.

2

Save us, good Lord, from all sin and wickedness, from pride, hypocrisy and conceit, from envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness,

save us, good Lord.

From sins of thought, word and deed, from the lusts of the flesh, from the deceits of the world and the snares of the devil,

save us, good Lord.

From fire, storm and flood, from disease, pestilence and want, from war and murder, and from dying unprepared,

save us, good Lord.

From all false doctrine, from hardness of heart, from contempt of your word and commandment, and from the evil of schism.

save us, good Lord.

In times of sorrow and in times of joy, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment,

save us, good Lord.

3

Save us, Lord Christ, by the mystery of your holy incarnation, by your birth, childhood and obedience, by your baptism, fasting and temptation,

save us, Lord Christ.

By your ministry in word and work, by your mighty acts of power, and by your preaching of the kingdom,

save us, Lord Christ.

By your agony and trial, by your cross and passion, and by your precious death and burial,

save us, Lord Christ.

By your mighty resurrection, by your glorious ascension, and by your sending of the Holy Spirit,

save us, Lord Christ.

Section 4 of the Litany may be omitted. If required it is to be found in The Litany Two pages 176-178

Saviour of the world, forgive our sins, known and unknown, things done, and left undone; grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit that we may amend our lives according to your holy word, and share with all your people the joys of your eternal kingdom.

Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, Redeemer of the world,
give us your peace.

Silence is kept for a time, after which is said

Make our hearts clean, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought, in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.**

We have wounded your love, and marred your image in us.

We are sorry and ashamed, and repent of all our sins.

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;**

and lead us out from darkness to walk as children of light. Amen.

This prayer is said:

God our Father,
the strength of all who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers;
and because, in our weakness,
we can do nothing good without you,
grant us the help of your grace,

that in keeping your commandments
we may please you, both in will and deed;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

or

The priest pronounces the Absolution.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Prayers of the People

*If the Holy Communion is not to follow, one of the forms of Intercession
(pages 237-239) or the following is used*

Gracious God and Father,
you have given your Son for us all,
that his death might be our life
and his affliction our peace.

We pray for THE SUFFERING
the hungry ...
the refugees ...
the prisoners ...
the persecuted ...
all who bring sin and suffering to others ...
all who seek to bring care and relief ...

**In darkness and in light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us to trust your love,
to serve your purpose
and to praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer in either form is said.

A hymn may be sung

Going Out as God's People

The following prayer is said after which the service may conclude in silence, the congregation leaving the church quietly

Lord our God,
grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart;
that so desiring, we may seek and find you;
and so finding, may love you;
and so loving, may hate those sins from which you have delivered us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May God the Father,
who does not despise the broken spirit,
give to you a contrite heart. **Amen.**
May Christ,
who bore our sins in his body on the tree,
heal you by his wounds. **Amen.**
May the Holy Spirit,
who leads us into all truth,
speak to you words of pardon and peace. **Amen.**
And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

or

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves,
and to take up your cross and follow him;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be with you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
in the name of Christ. Amen.

This service may be adapted to meet local custom.

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