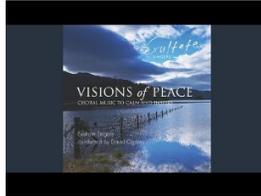


## ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the important start to our Lenten journey together. It marks the first day of Lent 40 days during which Christians often abstain from rich foods or everyday habits such as watching excessive amounts of television. We take part in the annual abstinent period to commemorate Jesus Christ, who spent 40 days and nights fasting in the Judean Desert while being tempted by Satan. During this time he came close to God by retreating from the world around him and through prayer and listening he discerned God's will. This time of Lent is our opportunity to come close to God by adjusting our lens from everyday routine to that of God's will for our lives and our church community. Although this is a solemn season it also serves as a reminder to live life to the fullest, appreciating God's Kingdom around us which nourishes and sustains us rather than relying on our earthly wants and needs.



In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**All Amen.**

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you

**All and also with you.**

### Introduction

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting. By carefully keeping these days, Christians 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 Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

**All Holy God,  
holy and strong,  
holy and immortal,  
have mercy upon us.**

### The Collect

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

*Silence is kept.*

Holy God,  
our lives are laid open before you:  
rescue us from the chaos of sin  
and through the death of your Son  
bring us healing and make us whole  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All Amen.**

## Readings

### Isaiah 58 1-12

“Shout it aloud, do not hold back.

Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion  
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup> For day after day they seek me out;  
they seem eager to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that does what is right  
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions  
and seem eager for God to come near them.

<sup>3</sup> “Why have we fasted,” they say,  
“and you have not seen it?”

Why have we humbled ourselves,  
and you have not noticed?”

“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please  
and exploit all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,  
and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today  
and expect your voice to be heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,  
only a day for people to humble themselves?

Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed  
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?

Is that what you call a fast,  
a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup> “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
to loose the chains of injustice

and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free

and break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—

when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light will break forth like the dawn,

and your healing will quickly appear;  
then your righteousness<sup>[a]</sup> will go before you,  
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup>Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;  
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

<sup>10</sup>and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,

then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.

<sup>12</sup>Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and will raise up the age-old foundations;

you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

This is the word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading**

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

The Lord is a great God, O that today you would listen to his voice.

Harden not your hearts. *cf Psalm 95.3, 8*

**All Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *Matthew* .

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

### **Matthew 6 1-6, 16-21**

“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.<sup>[a]</sup>

### **Concerning Prayer**

<sup>5</sup>“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their

reward. <sup>6</sup> But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.<sup>[b]</sup>

### Concerning Fasting

<sup>16</sup> “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.<sup>[a]</sup>

### Concerning Treasures

<sup>19</sup> “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust<sup>[b]</sup> consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust<sup>[c]</sup> consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

### Sermon



*The Liturgy of Penitence* ↑

### Self-examination and Confession

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

God the Father,

**All have mercy on us.**

God the Son,

**All have mercy on us.**

God the Holy Spirit,

**All have mercy on us.**

Trinity of love,

**All have mercy on us.**

Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us.  
We have not been true to the mind of Christ.  
We have grieved your Holy Spirit.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you, Lord ...  
all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

Our anger at our own frustration  
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts  
and our dishonesty in daily life and work.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship  
and our failure to commend the faith that is in us.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

Accept our repentance, Lord ...  
for the wrongs we have done,  
for our blindness to human need and suffering,  
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty.  
**All Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For all false judgements,  
for uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbours  
and for our prejudice and contempt towards those who differ from us.  
**All Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For our waste and pollution of your creation  
and our lack of concern for those who come after us.  
**All Accept our repentance, Lord.**

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.  
**All Favourably hear us, for your mercy is great.**

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

**All** that we may show your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

**All** bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection

.

*Silence is kept.*

**All** We have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

In your mercy

forgive what we have been,

help us to amend what we are,

and direct what we shall be;

that we may do justly,

love mercy,

and walk humbly with you, our God.

Amen.

## The Imposition of Ashes



*If the imposition of ashes is to follow, the president says*

Dear friends in Christ,

I invite you to receive ashes

as a sign of the spirit of penitence with which we shall keep this season of Lent.

God our Father,

you create us from the dust of the earth:

grant that these ashes may be for us

a sign of our penitence and a symbol of our mortality;

for it is by your grace alone

that we receive eternal life

in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**All** Amen.

*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

*Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.*

The Lord enrich you with his grace,

and nourish you with his blessing;

the Lord defend you in trouble and keep you from all evil;

the Lord accept your prayers,

and absolve you from your offences,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

**All Amen.**

### **The Peace**

Since we are justified by faith,  
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has given us access to his grace.

*Romans 5.1,2*

The peace of the Lord be always with you

**All and also with you.**

### **Responsory**

This is love, not that we loved God,  
**All but that he loved us and sent his Son.**

He is the sacrifice for our sins,  
**All that we might live through him.**

If God loves us so much

**All we ought to love one another.**

If we love one another

**All God lives in us.**

*cf 1 John 4.12*

### **The Dismissal Gospel**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

*Luke 15.4-7*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **The Blessing**

May God the Father,  
who does not despise the broken spirit,  
give to you a contrite heart.

**All Amen.**

May Christ,  
who bore our sins in his body on the tree,  
heal you by his wounds.

**All Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit,

who leads us into all truth,  
speak to you words of pardon and peace.

**All Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ. Amen.**

