

The Liturgy of Ash Wednesday

17 February 2021 at 9.30am

Gathering

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

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

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. **Amen.**

Gospel Reading: John 8.2-11

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

Glory to you, O Lord.

Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And

once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' ¹¹ She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection: Kate Brookbank

Liturgy of Penitence

As we hear once more the call of Christ,
let us confront the poverty of our lives
and seek grace to fulfil our calling.

Jesus said,
*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

**We have asserted our own importance
and been jealous of others.**

Jesus said,
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

**We have allowed anger to give way to violence
and returned evil for evil.**

Jesus said,
Blessed are those who weep, for they shall be consoled.

**We have failed to show compassion
and care for those who suffer.**

Jesus said,
*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice,
for they shall be satisfied.*

**We have cared little for injustice
and deafened our ears to the cries of the oppressed.**

Jesus said,
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

**We have judged those around us harshly
and closed our hearts to forgiveness.**

Jesus said,
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

**We have become preoccupied with petty concerns
and indifferent to that which is really important.**

Jesus said,
*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.*

**We have disordered our relationships
and refused to be agents of reconciliation.**

Jesus said,
*Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

**We have not shown solidarity
with our brothers and sisters
and have shied away from challenging their oppressors.**

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

**Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
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.**

Receiving the Ash Cross

Ashes are an ancient symbol of human frailty and penitence. It has been the custom from the Middle Ages to commence the season of Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross.

Gracious God,
we are children of clay;
may these ashes be for us
a symbol of our frailty
and a sign of repentance.
May they remind us
that it is by grace alone
that we share in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **Amen.**



*You are invited to make the sign of the cross on the palm of your hand
as the minister's household are marked with the sign of the cross.*

The following words will be spoken:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

Silence is kept

The Lord enrich you with grace,
and nourish you with 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. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Sacrament

Greeting of Peace

Jesus says, "Peace is my parting gift to you,
my own peace, such as the world cannot give.
Set your troubled hearts at rest and banish your fears."
We meet in Christ's name and share in his peace.

John 14.27

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Preparation of the Table

God of humility, we seek you,
bearing the offering of our lives
and needful of your grace. **Amen.**

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us pray.

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good
to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.

For in these forty days
you lead us into the desert of repentance
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline
we may grow in grace
and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.

Through study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.

As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast
with joyful hearts and minds
we bless you for your mercy
and join with saints and angels forever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore, heavenly Father,
we remember his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Christ is the bread of life:
**When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.**

Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus, teach us to pray:

**OUR FATHER in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sin
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

The bread is broken.

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.**

Giving of Communion

Jesus is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.
**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

*As the priest receives communion on behalf of the whole congregation
you are invited to pray privately:*

Come Lord Jesus, dwell in me
and send your Holy Spirit
that I may be filled with your presence.

Afterwards, silence is kept

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray.

Almighty God,
you have given your only Son to be for us
both a sacrifice for sin
and also an example of godly life:
give us grace
that we may always most thankfully receive
these his inestimable gifts,
and also daily endeavour
to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Blessing

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross,
and follow him;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
rest upon you and all whom you love,
both living and departed,
now and always. **Amen.**

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

The following sources have been used in compiling this service: 'Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England,' and 'Common Worship: Times and Seasons,' copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2000 & 200 as well as 'All Desires Known,' by Janet Morley. Based on a liturgy used at St Mark's Broomhill, Sheffield www.stmarkssheffield.co.uk