

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. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is then kept for a time.

The ashes are imposed with the following words

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

The following Psalm is then sung or said

Psalm 51 *Miserere mei, Deus*

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; *
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- 2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions, *
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you only have I sinned *
and done what is evil in your sight.
- 5 And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment
- 6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.
- 7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- 8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
- 9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- 10 Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 12 Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
- 13 Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

- 14 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.
- 15 Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
O God of my salvation.
- 16 Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice; *
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Litany of Penitence

Most holy and merciful Father:

We confess to you and to one another,
and to the whole communion of saints
in heaven and on earth,
that we have sinned by our own fault
in thought, word, and deed;
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

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.

Have mercy on us, Lord.

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

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and
our dishonesty in daily life and work,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to
commend the faith that is in us,
We confess to you, Lord.

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,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our
neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those
who differ from us,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

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

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;
Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who
desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn
from their wickedness and live, has given power and
commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to
his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of
their sins. He pardons and absolves all those who truly
repent, and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his
Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on
this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure
and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



Ash Wednesday

*You are welcome to join us for our online service on
Ash Wednesday or you may use this service to pray
on your own. The ashes enclosed in the mailing have
been blessed at church and you may administer
them to yourself and/or a family member. This
service is also found in the Book of Common Prayer,
beginning on page 264.*

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and
forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and
contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging
our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect
remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Readings

You may choose to read from these lessons:

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

Psalms 103

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Invitation to a Holy Lent

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the
days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of
the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This
season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were
prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because
of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were
reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of
the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the
message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior,
and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their
repentance and faith.