

## ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY

Psalm 51 (Read responsively)

P: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your lovingkindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

**C: Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

P: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

**C: Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. So you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment.**

P: For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

**C: Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me and I shall be clean indeed.**

P: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

**C: Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

P: Give me the joy of your saving help again, and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

**C: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. AMEN.**

The Invitation to Lent:

P: Brothers and sisters: God created us to experience joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all of his creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our creator intended for us. Also, by our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment, but to turn to him and live. As disciples of the Lord Jesus we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love--the discipline of Lent--help us to wage our spiritual warfare. I invite you, therefore, to commit yourselves to this struggle, asking our Father for strength to persevere in your Lenten discipline.

\* The Confession of Sin:

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

**C: Most Holy and merciful God, we confess to you and to one another, and to the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous 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. We have shut our ears 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. Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us, for your mercy is great. Amen.**

\*The Imposition of Ashes:

*Blessing of the Ashes:*

**P:** Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ until this mortal life is ended, and all that is earthly returns to dust. May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and penitence, and a reminder that only by your gracious gift are we given eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. **C: Amen.**

**(The mark of the cross in ashes is offered, to those desiring it, with the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”**

**Those desiring ashes may come forward using the center aisle, and after receiving the ashes, may return to their seats in silence.)**

\* P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live.

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

Lesson and Meditation

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

\* The Offertory Prayer:

P: Let us pray. Blessed are you, **C: O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

\* The Great Thanksgiving:

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts. **C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we might receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Again, after the supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

For as often as we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Lord remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

P: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Communion

\* Post Communion Blessing:

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C: Amen.**

\* Post Communion Prayer:

P: Lord God of compassion, through your Son Jesus Christ you reconciled your people to yourself. Following his example of prayer and fasting, may we obey you with willing hearts and serve one another in holy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

\* Benediction

P: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

\* Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**