

Eucharist – Ash Wednesday

17th February 2021

If you have collected a packet of ashes from church, please have them ready to use during the service. Please remember you need to add a drop of oil to the ashes (NOT water which can irritate or burn your skin when mixed with ashes).

HYMN: Forty days and forty nights
sung by St Martin's Voices

- 1 Forty days and forty nights
 thou wast fasting in the wild;
 forty days and forty nights
 tempted, and yet undefiled.
- 2 Sunbeams scorching all the day;
 chilly dew-drops nightly shed;
 prowling beasts about thy way;
 stones thy pillow, earth thy bed.
- 3 Let us thine endurance share,
 and awhile from joys abstain,
 with thee watching unto prayer,
 strong with thee to suffer pain?
- 4 And if Satan, vexing sore,
 flesh or spirit should assail,
 thou, his vanquisher before
 grant we may not faint nor fail.
- 5 So shall we have peace divine;
 holier gladness ours shall be;
 round us too shall angels shine,
 such as ministered to thee.
- 6 Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
 ever constant by thy side;
 that with thee we may appear
 at the eternal Eastertide.

George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870), Francis Pott (1832-1909)

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
Slow to anger and of great kindness.

Psalm 103:8

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

Amen.

The Lord be with you.
and also with you.

INTRODUCTION

Sisters and brothers 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 meditation on God's holy word.

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

THE COLLECT

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, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING - Isaiah 58: 1-12

¹ Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practised righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God.

³ 'Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?'

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day, and oppress all your workers.

⁴ Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice,

to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear-guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING

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?' 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.

ADDRESS

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,
have mercy on us.

God the Son,
have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit,

have mercy on us.

Trinity of love,

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.

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.

Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you, Lord...

all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives.

Lord, have mercy.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people.

Lord, have mercy.

Our anger at our own frustration and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

Lord, have mercy.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts and our dishonesty in daily life and work.

Lord, have mercy.

Our negligence in prayer and worship and our failure to commend the faith that is in us.

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.

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.

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.

Favourably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

that we may show 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.

Silence is kept.

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

Dear friends in Christ, I invite you, if you have collected ashes for this purpose, to receive them now as a sign of the spirit of penitence with which we shall keep this season of Lent.

If you have ashes please hold them up now and we say together.

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.

Amen.

If you have ashes at home you are invited to mark your forehead or the back of your hand with the sign of the cross with the ashes. These words are said as you do so:

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

Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

During the ashing the Lent Prose is sung by St Martin's Voices:

Hear us, O Lord, have mercy upon us:

for we have sinned against thee.

To thee, Redeemer, on thy throne of glory:

lift we our weeping eyes in holy pleadings:

listen, O Jesu, to our supplications.

Refrain

O thou chief Corner-stone, Right Hand of the Father

Way of Salvation, Gate of Life Celestial

cleanse thou our sinful souls from all defilement.

Refrain

God, we implore thee, in thy glory seated
bow down and hearken to thy weeping children
pity and pardon all our grievous trespasses.

Refrain

Sins oft committed now we lay before thee
with true contrition, now no more we veil them
grant us, Redeemer, loving absolution.

Refrain

Innocent, captive, taken unresisting
falsely accused, and for us sinners sentenced,
save us, we pray thee, Jesu our Redeemer.

Refrain

*'Attende, Domine', anonymous Latin from the Mozarabic Breviary (5th to 8th century),
compiled by Dom Pothier (fl.1824)*

After the ashing:

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.

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
and also with you.

HYMN: From ashes to the living font

sung by St Martin's Voices

- 1 From ashes to the living font
your Church must journey, Lord,
baptised in grace, in grace renewed
by your most holy word.
- 2 Through fasting, prayer, and charity
your voice speaks deep within,
returning us to ways of truth
and turning us from sin.
- 3 From desert to the mountaintop
in Christ our way we see,
so, tempered by temptation's might
we might transfigured be.

4 For thirsting hearts let waters flow
our fainting souls revive;
and at the well your waters give
our everlasting life.

5 From ashes to the living font
your church must journey still:
through cross and tomb to Easter joy,
in Spirit-fire fulfilled.

Alan J Hommerding

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THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

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.

The priest praises God for his mighty acts and we respond:

**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.**

The priest recalls the Last Supper.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

The Prayer continues.

At the end we respond:

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we 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 sins,
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 forever.
Amen.**

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.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.**

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.**

GIVING OF COMMUNION

You are invited to use the prayer for Spiritual Communion below asking Jesus to be with you now.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day.
Amen.

The anthem is sung, Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake by Farrant.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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

A blessing is given.

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

HYMN: Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
sung by St Martin's Voices

- 1 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
 o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
 guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us
 for we have no help but thee;
 yet possessing every blessing,
 if our God our Father be.

- 2 Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
 all our weakness thou dost know;
 thou didst tread this earth before us,
 thou didst feel its keenest woe;
 self denying, death defying,
 thou to Calvary didst go.

- 3 Spirit of our God, descending,
 fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
 love with every passion blending,
 pleasure that can never cloy:
 thus provided, pardoned, guided,
 nothing can our peace destroy.

James Edmeston (1791-1867)

The ministers depart. An organ voluntary is played.

Spiritual Communion.

The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ. The form of prayer offers Christians an opportunity to give thanks for their communion with him, particularly at times when they would ordinarily be present at the Eucharist.

The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves. Making a Spiritual Communion is particularly fitting for those who cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the duty of receiving Holy Communion 'regularly, and especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun or Pentecost' (Canon B 15).

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.