

# A LITURGY FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

## GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

*An Invocation, or an Acclamation such as follows, may be said before or after the greeting.*

Blessed be the Lord who forgives all our sins,  
**whose mercy endures for ever.**

*The priest greets the congregation*

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

*The following Sentence may be used*

As far as the east is from the west, so far has God set our sins from us.

<b>Lord, have mercy</b>	<b>Kyrie eleison</b>
<b>Christ, have mercy</b>	<b>Christe eleison</b>
<b>Lord, have mercy</b>	<b>Kyrie eleison</b>

*and/or*

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy on us.**

*The priest says*

Let us pray.

*Silence*

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you hate nothing that you have made,  
and you 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 brokenness,  
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, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*or the Prayer of the day (APBA page 481)*

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

*One or two lessons and the Gospel Reading are read.*

*Joel 2.1-2,12-17 or Isaiah 58.1-12*

*Ps 51.1-17 (or Ps 90.1-12, if Ps 51 is to be used at the Ashing)*

*2 Corinthians 5.20b - 6.10*

*Matthew 6.1-6 (7-15)16-21*

*The Sermon*

## THE ACT OF PENITENCE

*The priest says these or similar words*

Sisters and brothers in Christ, from the earliest days of the Church, Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

At first this season was observed by those who were preparing for baptism at Easter and by those who, having been excommunicated, were to be restored to the communion of the church. By keeping these days with care and attention Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and grow in faith and devotion to our Lord.

So, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer and fasting, by self-denial and acts of generosity and by reading and meditating on the word of God, let us keep a holy Lent

*Silence is kept.*

*Ps 51.1-17 may be said or sung.*

### THE RECEIVING OF ASHES

*The ashes are placed on the Lord's Table,  
and the priest says*

Blessed are you, God of all creation.  
You are eternal,  
we are mortal,  
formed from the dust of the earth.  
As we receive these ashes, make them a sign for us  
of repentance and returning to you.  
Breathe into us again the breath of life.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

Come, receive the sign of ashes.

*The ashes are placed on each person's forehead in silence,  
or with the words*

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

*and/or*

Repent and believe the gospel.

*and/or*

Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

*Each person may answer **Amen***

### LITANY

Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth,

**have mercy on us.**

Incarnate Word, redeemer of the world,

**have mercy on us.**

Abiding Spirit, giver of light and life,

**have mercy on us.**

For turning away from your presence,

for disobeying your word and commandments,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For trusting in our own strength instead of yours,  
for betraying your trust and the trust of others,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For resisting your grace and refusing your blessings,  
for holding back from proclaiming our faith in you,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For damaging this earth and exploiting its creatures,  
for neglecting and wasting the gifts you have given us,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For failing to forgive as we have been forgiven.  
for judging others and bearing grudges,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For skimping on our commitments and relationships,  
for failing in hospitality,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For tolerating oppression, injustice, and wrong,  
for keeping silent when we should have spoken up,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For turning away when others have offered us love,  
for closing our hearts when others have needed compassion,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

For all we have done unkindly, unjustly and dishonestly,  
for our careless speech and hurtful words,  
**forgive us, Lord.**

Most merciful God,  
**we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,  
and in what we have failed to do:  
we have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;  
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.**

**Father, forgive us.  
Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The priest pronounces the absolution*

With our hearts turned to God in repentance,  
with the knowledge of our sins  
laid bare before the cross of Jesus Christ,  
in the name of the living God,  
your sins are forgiven.  
Receive God's mercy,  
take hold of your forgiveness,  
and, in the power of the Holy Spirit.  
walk in the light of Christ. **Amen.**

#### THE GREETING OF PEACE

*All stand. The Greeting is introduced with these or other appropriate words*

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.  
**We meet in his name and share his peace.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

*All may exchange a greeting of peace.*

*A hymn may be sung.*

*(If there is no Eucharist, then the service may end here with the Lord's Prayer and the saying of the Grace.)*

#### PREPARATION OF THE LORD'S TABLE

*The gifts of bread and wine are placed on the table. They may be presented in silence, or with the accustomed prayer.*

#### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*Any authorized Thanksgiving may be used.*

*Note the proper for Lent on APBA p 151.*

*It is suggested that Thanksgiving 2 on APBA page 130 not be used, nor any other Thanksgiving with a festive tone.*

#### THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

*See the Prayer after Communion APBA page 151.*

*For the Blessing see APBA page 152. Note that it is not necessary to pronounce the Blessing as such.*

*The second option on APBA page 152 allows for a Prayer over the People, saving the festive Blessing until Easter.*

*In place of the above the following may be used.*

*The priest says this blessing prayer*

God of life and death,  
from the fullness of yourself  
you have created all that is;  
through the power of your love  
you call us towards you;  
in the giving of your Son  
our salvation has been wrought.  
Our flowering and our passing,  
all the seasons of the vine,  
belong to you.  
Bless us now and in all our days,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The deacon says*

Go in the peace of Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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