



## Eucharist for the Beginning of Lent Ash Wednesday

### **The Preparation**

Scripture says:

O God, you have made us a little lower than angels,  
and crowned us with honour and glory.

*Psalm 8.5*

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

*Genesis 3.19*

### **Gathering**

We meet in the communion of the Holy Spirit:  
the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

**The love of God dwell in your heart.**

### **Introduction to the Meaning of Lent**

Brothers and sisters in Christ: since early days 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 of Lent was observed by those who were preparing for Baptism at Easter and by those who were to be restored to the Church's fellowship from which they had been separated through sin. In course of time the Church came to recognize that, by a careful keeping of these days, all Christians might 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.

### **Prayer for the Day**

**O God, you have made us for yourself,  
and against your longing there is no defence:  
mark us with your love,  
and release in us a passion for your justice  
in our disfigured world;  
that we may turn from our guilt and face you,  
our heart's desire. Amen.**

### **Ministry of the Word**

***A reading from the Hebrew Scriptures: Isaiah 58.1–8***  
*after which the reader says:*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

**Thanks be to God.**

***Psalm Prayer (Psalm 51.10–12)***

We say together:

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right Spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

## **The Gospel: John 7.53–8.11**

*Before the Gospel reading the reader says:*

A reading from the Gospel according to St John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*At the end of the Gospel reading the reader says:*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **Sermon**

### **The Litany** (*led by three voices*)

Jesus, by your cross and resurrection: **deliver us.**

By your witness to the truth: **deliver us.**

By your passion and death: **deliver us.**

By your victory over the grave: **deliver us.**

From the desire for power: **deliver us.**

From the conspiracy of silence: **deliver us.**

From the worship of weapons: **deliver us.**

From the slaughter of the peoples: **deliver us.**

From the nightmare of hunger: **deliver us.**

From peace that is no peace: **deliver us.**

From security that is no security: **deliver us.**

From the politics of terror: **deliver us.**

From the plundering of the earth's resources:

**deliver us.**

From the dispossession of the poor: **deliver us.**

From the despair of this age: **deliver us.**

By the light of your gospel: **give us peace.**

By the good news for the poor: **give us peace.**

By your healing of our wounds: **give us peace.**

By faith in your word: **give us peace.**

By hunger and thirst for justice: **give us peace.**

By the coming of your kingdom: **give us peace.**

## **Prayers of Penitence**

*We sing:*

**Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison**

For our incapacity to feel the sufferings of others,  
and our tendency to live comfortably with injustice,  
**God, forgive us.**

For the self-righteousness which denies guilt,  
and the self-interest which strangles compassion,  
**God, forgive us.**

For those who live their lives in careless unconcern,  
who cry 'Peace, peace' when there is no peace,  
**We ask your mercy.**

For our failings in community, our lack of understanding,  
**We ask your mercy.**

For our lack of forgiveness, openness, sensitivity,  
**God, forgive us.**

For the times we were too eager to be better than others,  
when we are too rushed to care,  
when we are too tired to bother,  
when we don't really listen,  
when we are too quick to act from motives other than love,  
**God, forgive us.**

## **The Imposition of the Ashes**

As a sign of the spirit of penitence with which we shall keep this season of preparation for Easter, I invite you to receive on your head in ash the sign of the cross, the symbol of our salvation.

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.**

Choose this day whom you will serve:

**We will choose the living God.**

The road is narrow that leads to life:

**We will walk the way of Christ.**

Faith is not our holding on:

**Faith is letting go.**

We offer more than words, O God:

**We offer you our lives.**

*We receive the imposition of ashes, the minister saying to each person:*

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

Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ. **Amen.**

## **Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession**

### **The Peace**

The peace of the Lord be always with you:

**And also with you.**

*We share a sign of Peace and gather round the altar.*

### **The Preparation of the Gifts**

*The minister thanks God for the bread and wine and for ourselves. At the end of each prayer we say together:*

**Blessed be God for ever.**

### **Thanksgiving Prayer**

May God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Open up your hearts.

**We open them to God.**

Let us give thanks to the God of all.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*The minister offers our thanks and praise, after which we sing:*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of heaven and earth adored,  
Ceasing never, God for ever,  
Holy, holy Lord.**

*The minister says the words of institution, after which we say:*

**By your cross and resurrection  
you have set us free:  
you are the liberator of the world.**

Spirit of God, come afresh on us  
and on these gifts of bread and wine  
**that they may make us one body in Christ.**

Open our eyes  
**that we may recognise you walking with us;**

Open our ears and our minds  
**that we may hear your word;**

Open our hearts  
**that your love may flow through us  
and bring the blessing of new life to all we meet;**

For you are the God who makes all things new,  
and surprises us into understanding.

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

## **The Lord's Prayer**

O God in heaven,

**Mother and Father of us all,  
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 for ever. Amen.**

## **Breaking the Bread**

We break this bread for the broken earth,  
**ravaged and plundered for greed.**

We break this bread for our broken humanity,  
**for the powerless and the powerful  
trapped by exploitation and oppression.**

We break this bread for our broken selves,  
**for the unhealed hurts and wounds  
that lie within us.**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ:  
**through our brokenness, O God, make us whole.**

## **Invitation**

*The minister invites all to receive Communion.*

## **The Communion**

*As each person receives the bread and wine:*

The body of Christ, the bread of life: **Amen**

The blood of Christ, the cup of blessing: **Amen**

*We remain around the altar until everyone has received communion, and then return to our seats.*

## **Prayer after Communion**

**God of our pilgrimage,  
you have led us to the living water:  
refresh and sustain us  
as we go forward on our Lenten journey,  
in the name of Jesus Christ,  
our liberator and our friend. Amen.**

## **Final hymn**

### **Take up your Cross**

Jesus said: Take up your cross.

**We will follow you, O Christ,  
into the needs of the world,  
into the truth of our lives,  
into the pain of our hearts,  
into the presence of God. Amen.**

## **Blessing**

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,  
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;  
and the blessing of the God of Love,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

Go in the peace of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**