

# Ash Wednesday

*Celebrant* Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins;

*People* His mercy endures for ever.

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.*

## **A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians [5:20b-6:10]**

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says,

"At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see- we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The Word of the Lord.

*People* Thanks be to God.

## Homily

### 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.

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.

*If ashes are to be imposed, the Celebrant says the following prayer*

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

*The ashes are imposed with the following words*

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

### Litany of Penitence

*Celebrant says the following prayer*

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.*

### **The Peace**

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

### **The Blessing**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

### **The Dismissal**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
*People* Thanks be to God.