



ASH WEDNESDAY

February 17, 2021

A CALL TO RETURN

Through the words of the prophet Joel, God called to His people and commanded that they turn from their sinful ways and return to Him for His grace and blessings. The images the prophet uses are vivid and disturbing. The situation of God's people is desperate and needs immediate attention. This is a time for listening and responding to the call to return to faithfulness to the God who has ever been faithful to His people. "Return to the Lord, your God" is more than a verse sung as part of the liturgy. It is a heartfelt directive for our lives as together we follow the pathway of Lent.

+ PREPARATION +

Stand

ASH WEDNESDAY ADDRESS

P Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

Kneel/Stand

Silence for reflection.

LITANY

P O Lord,
C have mercy.
P O Christ,
C have mercy.
P O Lord,
C have mercy.
P O Christ,
C hear us.
P God the Father in heaven,
C have mercy.
P God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
C have mercy.
P God the Holy Spirit,
C have mercy.

P Be gracious to us.

C Spare us, good Lord.

P Be gracious to us.

C Help us, good Lord.

P By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity; by Your Baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial; by Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

C Help us, good Lord.

P In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the Day of Judgment:

C Help us, good Lord.

P We poor sinners implore You

C to hear us, O Lord.

P To prosper the teaching of Your Word; to bless our prayer and meditation; to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith; and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

C We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P To draw all to Yourself; to bless those who are instructed in the faith; to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned, and all who stand in need of our prayer; to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy; and to have mercy on us all:

C We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P To turn our hearts to You; to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers; and graciously to hear our prayers:

C We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

P Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C we implore You to hear us.

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C have mercy.

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C have mercy.

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C grant us Your peace.

P O Christ,

C hear us.

P O Lord,

C have mercy.

P O Christ,

C have mercy.

P O Lord,

C have mercy. Amen.

P O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

+ THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES +

The pastor and assistants receive ashes first, followed by the congregation. Using the right thumb, the pastor or an assistant places the ashes on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, saying:

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

After receiving the ashes, each person returns to his place in silence.

[After all have received the ashes, the service continues with Confession and Absolution in the Divine Service or with the rite of Corporate Confession and Absolution.]

+ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +

HYMN OF INVOCATION “As Rebels, Lord, Who Foolishly Have Wandered” (LSB 612)

Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Kneel/Stand

Silence for reflection on God’s Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You 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; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

Stand

PSALM

Psalms 51:1–13

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to Your steadfast love;
according to Your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

² **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!**

³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴ **Against You, You only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in Your sight,
so that You may be justified in Your words
and blameless in Your judgment.**

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

⁶ **Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being,
and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸ **Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that You have broken rejoice.**

⁹ Hide Your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ **Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**

¹¹ Cast me not away from Your presence,
and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² **Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.**

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
and sinners will return to You.

**Glory be 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.**

KYRIE

LSB, p. 152

- P** In peace let us pray to the Lord.
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
- C** **Amen.**

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

O God, You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Sit

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Joel 2:12–19

P The Old Testament Reading for Ash Wednesday is from Joel, the second chapter.

¹² “Yet even now,” declares the LORD,
“return to Me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³ and rend your hearts and not your garments.”

Return to the LORD, your God,
for He is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
and He relents over disaster.

¹⁴ Who knows whether He will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind Him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the LORD your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶ gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation;
assemble the elders;
gather the children,
even nursing infants.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep
and say, “Spare Your people, O LORD,
and make not Your heritage a reproach,
a byword among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples,
“Where is their God?””

¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for His land
and had pity on His people.

¹⁹ The LORD answered and said to His people,
“Behold, I am sending to you
grain, wine, and oil,
and you will be satisfied;
and I will no more make you
a reproach among the nations.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10

P The Epistle is from Second Corinthians, the fifth and sixth chapters.

^{20b} We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹ Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For He says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³ We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷ by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹ as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹ [Jesus said:] “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

² “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵ “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” . . .

¹⁶ “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Sit

HYMN

“Jesus Sinners Doth Receive” (LSB 609)

SERMON

Stand

NICENE CREED

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life \dagger of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P With repentant hearts, let us turn to God in prayer for the Church, the world, and all who are in need, trusting that God is gracious and merciful to us in Jesus, abounding in steadfast love.

For the Church, that this Lenten season draws us closer to God and to one another as we focus on Jesus' redemptive acts for us and the life that He calls us to live—marked by repentance, fasting, prayer, and acts of love toward our neighbors. In prayer,

C we return to You, O Lord.

P For leaders throughout the world, that all leaders—national, regional, and local—serve with wisdom, uphold justice, and provide means of caring for those most vulnerable among us. In prayer,

C we return to You, O Lord.

P For those in our community who struggle with poverty, addiction, or unemployment, that during this Lenten time, You reenergize Your Church to serve them and love our neighbors in need as You loved and served the poor and outcast during Your earthly ministry. In prayer,

C we return to You, O Lord.

P For those who are sick, hospitalized, or dying, [*including . . .*], that they experience healing according to Your will, and that in the midst of their suffering they would experience the presence of Jesus in words of hope and acts of care. In prayer,

C we return to You, O Lord.

P For this congregation, that our intensified repentance, fasting, and prayer lead us to live in renewed ways, dying to sin with Christ in Holy Baptism each day, and being raised to new life as well every day and into eternity. In prayer,

C we return to You, O Lord.

P For our loved ones who faithfully followed Jesus in this life and are now with Him in heaven, we give thanks. Bring us to that day when all Your saints, past, present, and future, are returned to You for all eternity. In prayer,

C we return to You, O Lord.

P By the words of the prophets and by the living voice of Jesus in our ears, You call us to return to You, O Lord. According to Your gracious mercy and abounding love, hear these prayers that we this day have spoken, as well as the prayers we have that are too deep for words; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C Amen.

Following the prayers, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, "Peace be with you," as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matthew 5:22–24; Ephesians 4:1–3).

Sit

Offerings placed in the plates at the Entrance.

Stand

OFFERTORY

LSB, p. 159

C What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?

I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.

I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.

**I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people,
in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.**

PREFACE

LSB, p. 160

- 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 Him thanks and praise.**

PROPER PREFACE

- P** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the Paschal Feast in sincerity and truth. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

LSB, p. 161

- C** **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna. Hosanna.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LSB, p. 161

- P** Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

- C** **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

LSB, p. 162

- P** 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.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

LSB, p. 162

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PAX DOMINI

LSB, p. 163

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

AGNUS DEI

LSB, p. 163

C Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

Sit

DISTRIBUTION

The pastor and those who assist him receive the body and blood of Christ first and then distribute them to those who come to receive, saying:

Take, eat; this is the true body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.

Amen.

Take, drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

Amen.

In dismissing the communicants, the following is said:

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.
C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

“Just as I Am, without One Plea” (LSB 570)

Stand

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

NUNC DIMITTIS

LSB, p. 165

C Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of ev’ry people:
A light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel.
Glory be 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.

“O Lord, throughout These Forty Days” (LSB 418)

A Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

Acknowledgments

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