

Ash Wednesday

A Rite for the Beginning of Lent



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Greeting

Grace and peace to you from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Introduction

Dear friends in Christ, as we begin the season of Lent we are reminded that, in our Christian lives, we seek to realise the death of Jesus so that God may be glorified in our worship and through our witness in the world.

Saint Paul writes of *'carrying around the death of Jesus in our bodies, so that the life of Jesus may be clearly shown in our bodies'* (2 Cor 4. 10).

It is through baptism that we die into Christ's death (Rom 6. 3-4) so that we may share in his resurrection. In beginning our Lenten observance, we are therefore reminded of our baptism, and how Christ's death on the cross may clearly be shown in our lives.

We now come before God in penitence, reflecting on our life in Christ. We pledge ourselves to observe this season of self-examination, discipline, and self-denial with sincerity, prayer, and reverent reflection on holy Scripture, seeking God's purpose for us, and modelling our lives on the example of Christ Jesus.

The Litany†

God the Father,
have mercy on us.

God the Son,
have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit,
have mercy on us.

Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity,
have mercy on us.

From all evil and mischief:
from pride, vanity, and hypocrisy:
from envy, hatred, and malice:
and from all evil intent.
good Lord, deliver us.

From sloth, worldliness, and love of money:
from hardness of heart
and contempt for your word and your laws,
good Lord, deliver us.

From sins of body and mind:
from the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil;
from error and false doctrine,
good Lord, deliver us.

In all times of sorrow,
in all times of joy:
in the hour of death,
and at the day of judgement,
good Lord, deliver us.

Govern and direct your holy Church: fill it with love and truth:
and grant it that unity which is your will.

Hear us, good Lord.

Give us boldness to preach the gospel in all the world,
and to make disciples of all the nations.

Hear us, good Lord.

Enlighten your ministers with knowledge and understanding,
that by their teaching and their lives
they may proclaim your word.

Hear us, good Lord.

Give your people grace to hear and receive your word,
and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Hear us, good Lord.

Bring into the way of truth
all who have erred and are deceived.

Hear us, good Lord.

Strengthen those who stand:
comfort and help the faint-hearted:
raise up the fallen;
and finally beat down Satan under our feet.

Hear us, good Lord.

Give us true repentance:
forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance
and our deliberate sins:
and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit
to amend our lives according to your holy word.

**Holy God
Holy and Strong
Holy and Immortal
Have mercy on us.**

Silence

or

Intercessions†

Act of Penitence

Create in us clean hearts, O God:
and renew a right spirit within us.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence

Creator of heaven and earth,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word, and deed.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

We have not loved you with all our being,
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves:
we have disfigured your image in which we are made.
Amen. Christ, have mercy.

In your mercy, forgive what we have been
and what we have done,
guide us and help us to amend our lives,
and bring us to fullness of life in you.
Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Silence

Collect†

O Lord,
grant that your faithful people
may enter this season of penitence with faithfulness,
and complete it with steadfast devotion;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end. **Amen.**

Readings

Old Testament reading

Psalm

Epistle

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.
The Lord is a great God,
O that today you would listen to his voice.
Harden not your hearts.
Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Gospel

Sermon†

Imposition of Ashes

Almighty God,
you have compassion on all your children,
and hate nothing you have made;
you do not desire the death of sinners,
but that they turn from their ways and live.

May these ashes be for us,
who are redeemed through the cross of Christ,
a sign of our death to sin,
and the pledge of our life in Christ;
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

I invite you to receive the mark of Christ's cross,
with which we are signed at Baptism,
and by which we are forgiven our sins
and live to the glory of God.

*The imposition of ashes may be received standing or kneeling,
at the Font or before the Holy Table.*

*The imposition may be done in silence,
or the following words can be used.*

You are redeemed by the Cross of Christ;
Turn from sin and walk in the way of the Cross.

or

(Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.†)
Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

Silence

Prayer

Lord God Almighty,
your people are washed clean in the saving flood of baptism,
and born again:

As we follow the way of the cross,
we ask you to unseal for us the wellspring of your grace,
cleanse our hearts of all that is not holy,
and cause your gift of new life to flourish in us;
grant this through Jesus Christ your Son,
who sets us free from sin,
and lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
holy and mighty God, world without end.

Amen.

The Peace

Being justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We meet in Christ's name

Let us share his peace.

The Eucharist

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The Blessing

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