

Ash Wednesday

A Service of the Word

PREPARATION

*The words in **bold** are said by all.*

Gathering

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

Address

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'.

It is through baptism that we die into Christ's death 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.

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.**

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Reading - Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Reflection

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 Strong

Holy Immortal

Have mercy on us.

Silence

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

Almighty God,

Creator of heaven and earth,

we confess that we have sinned

in thought, word, and deed.

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.
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,
for the sake of your Son who died for us,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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.

*The Rector will make the sign of Christ's cross in ashes,
a mark with which we are signed at Baptism, and by which we are forgiven our sins and live to the
glory of God. You are invited to make a mark of the cross in some form in your homes (in ash, dust,
or steam) at this point or after the service.*

The following words can be used.

I am/We are redeemed by the Cross of Christ.

Silence

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.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Our Father in heaven,
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.
Do not bring us to the
time of trial
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power
and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

CONCLUSION

Act of Dedication

A verse from one of the Readings from Holy Scripture is read – Matthew 6.16.

Responsory

Your word is a lantern to my feet.
Your word is a lantern to my feet.
A light upon my path.
A lantern to my feet.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
Your word is a lantern to my feet.

Almighty God,
we thank you for the gift of your holy word:
may it be a lantern to our feet,
a light upon our paths,
and a strength to our lives.
Take us and use us to love and serve all people
in the power of the Holy Spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dismissal

The Lord be with you.

The Lord bless you.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, evermore. Amen.**