

Ash Wednesday

Greeting

Leader: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

People: His mercy endures forever.

Today, Ash Wednesday, is the beginning of Lent, a purple season in the church year. Purple seasons are always times to get ready. Lent is when we get ready for Easter, the happy day when Jesus rose from the dead.

Lent is forty days long – not counting Sundays. In the Old Testament, God's people were in the wilderness for forty years, and he fed them manna from heaven every day. God did this to teach everyone that there's something even more important than food, and that's God's word, the Bible. Just like it's good to eat breakfast every day, it's even more important to read or listen to God's word, the Bible, every day.

During the purple season of Lent, one of the ways we get ready for Easter is by fasting, which is when we choose to give up eating something we like, in order to remember what God's people learned in the wilderness about feeding on God's Word. Jesus did this same thing when he began his ministry with forty days of fasting in the wilderness.

We also begin Lent today by receiving the sign of the cross on our foreheads. God's Word teaches us that we all have sinned, or disobeyed God, and everyone who sins will someday die. But Jesus died on the cross for our sins, so that we might rise from the dead like him. So today we take the sign of Jesus' cross on our heads to remember his gift to us. We are so sorry that Jesus had to die on the cross for us. We don't want to sin any more. But we're also so happy that Jesus rose from the dead, and by faith *in* him, we will live forever *with* him.

A Collect for Ash Wednesday

Almighty God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who repent: Create in us clean hearts, so that we, being sorry for our sins and rebellion against you, may receive forgiveness from you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Burning of the Palm Fronds

Each year, we burn the palms we used to praise Jesus on Palm Sunday, as he went to the cross, in order to make our ashes, so that his cross might show on our foreheads.

(Instruct families to come one by one to place their palms in the firepit)

Hymn – Create in me a Clean Heart
Create in me a clean heart, O God
And renew a right Spirit within me.
Create in me a clean heart, O God
And renew a right Spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence O Lord
Take not thy holy spirit from me
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation
And renew a right Spirit within me.

The Lessons

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Homily - Dan Claire

Confession of Sin

Leader: Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

Silence may follow. The Officiant and People together, all kneeling, pray

Most merciful God, we confess that 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 are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Leader:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who in his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all those who sincerely repent and with true faith turn to him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Ashes

Almighty God, please bless these ashes that remind us how you created us out of dust. Forgive us of our hard hearts. Make our hearts soft so we can receive your love and be grateful for your gift of life. Amen.

The ashes are imposed with the following words:

Remember that you are but dust, and to dust you shall return—apart from the grace of Christ.

Have Mercy by Sandra Mcracken

Have mercy on us
Have mercy on us, O Lord
Have mercy, O Lord
Have mercy

Oh help my unbelief
Oh help my unbelief, O Lord
Have mercy, O Lord
Have mercy

His mercy is More by Matt Papa and Matt Boswell

Chorus
Praise the Lord!
His mercy is more
Stronger than darkness, new every morn
Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more

What love could remember no wrongs we have done
Omniscient, all-knowing, He counts not their sum
Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore
Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more

Chorus

What patience would wait as we constantly roam
What Father, so tender, is calling us home
He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor
Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more

Chorus

What riches of kindness He lavished on us
His blood was the payment, His life was the cost

We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford
Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more

Chorus

An Exhortation to Make a Holy Lent

The Lord's Prayer

The Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.



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