

Ash Wednesday



*A Service of
Holy Communion with
imposition of Ashes
to mark the beginning of Lent*

Introduction to the Season

Ash Wednesday marks the onset of the Lent, the 40-day period of fasting and abstinence. It is also known as the Day of Ashes; so called because the faithful have their foreheads marked with ashes in the shape of a cross.

Day of Ashes comes from “Dies Cinerum” in the Roman Missal and is found in the earliest existing copies of the Gregorian Sacramentary. Though the exact origin of the day is not clear, the custom of marking the head with ashes on this day is said to have originated during the papacy of Gregory the Great (590-604).

In the Old Testament ashes were used for two purposes: as a sign of humility and mortality; and as a sign of sorrow and repentance for sin. Receiving ashes on the head as a reminder of mortality and a sign of sorrow for sin was a practice of the Anglo-Saxon church in the 10th century. It was made universal throughout the Western church at the Synod of Benevento in 1091.

Originally the use of ashes to betoken penance was a matter of private devotion. Later it became part of the official rite for reconciling public penitents. In this context, ashes on the penitent served as a motive for fellow Christians to pray for the returning sinner and to feel sympathy for him. Still later, the use of ashes passed into its present rite of beginning the penitential season of Lent on Ash Wednesday.

Welcome

A minister my give notices of upcoming services and events.

The congregation are welcomed to the service.’

M. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit:
a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.

Psalm 51.17

M Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

All **and also with you.**

Brothers and sisters in Christ: since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the Church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

At first this season of Lent was observed by those who were preparing for Baptism at Easter and by those who were to be restored to the Church's fellowship from which they had been separated through sin. In course of time the Church came to recognize that, by a careful keeping of these days, all Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

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.

The Trisagion or another suitable penitential song may be used

All **Holy God,**
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

The Collect

Silence is kept.

P Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.
Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent.
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that, lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness,
we may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect forgiveness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

Readings

Joel 2.1-2,12-17

2 Corinthians 5.20b - 6.10

The reader may say.

R This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

R 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.

All Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

R Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

John 8.1-11

At the end.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

The Liturgy of Penitence

P Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

God the Father,

All have mercy on us.

God the Son,

All have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit,

All have mercy on us.

Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity,

All have mercy on us.

From all evil and mischief;

from pride, vanity and hypocrisy;

from envy, hatred and malice;

and from all evil intent,

All Good Lord, deliver us.

From sloth, worldliness, and love of money;

from hardness of heart

and contempt for your word and your laws,

All Good Lord, deliver us.

From sins of body and mind;
from the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil,

***All* 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,

***All* Good Lord, deliver us.**

By the mystery of your holy incarnation;
by your birth, childhood, and obedience;
by your baptism, fasting, and temptation,

***All* Good Lord, deliver us.**

By your ministry in word and work;
by your mighty acts of power;
and by your preaching of the kingdom,

***All* Good Lord, deliver us.**

By your agony and trial;
by your cross and passion;
and by your precious death and burial,

***All* Good Lord, deliver us.**

By your mighty resurrection;
by your glorious ascension;
and by your sending of the Holy Spirit,

***All* Good Lord, deliver us.**

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.

All Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

Silence is kept for a time, after which is said

Make our hearts clean, O God;
All and renew a right spirit within us.

Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.

We have wounded your love,
and marred your image in us.

We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

P As a sign of the spirit of penitence with which we shall keep this season of preparation for Easter, I invite you to receive on your head in ash the sign of the cross, the symbol of our salvation.

God our Father,
you create us from the dust of the earth:
grant that these ashes may be for us
a sign of our penitence
and a symbol of our mortality;
for it is by your grace alone
that we receive eternal life
in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

All Amen.

Please press your thumb into the **dry** ash and then make the sign of the cross on your forehead (a mirror might be helpful). If you prefer, trace this cross with your thumb.

If ashing another person

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



If ashing yourself

I remember that I am dust,
and to dust I shall return.
I turn away from sin and will
be faithful to Christ.

We invite you to keep a few moments of silence for reflection

Absolution

P The Lord enrich you with his grace,
and nourish you with his blessing;
the Lord defend you in trouble and keep you from all evil;
the Lord accept your prayers,
and absolve you from your offences,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour

All Amen.

The Peace

P Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All and also with you.

Preparation of the Table

P Merciful Father, turn us from sin to faithfulness
and from disobedience to love, and prepare us to celebrate
the death and resurrection of Christ our Saviour
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

All Amen.

The president says.

P The Lord be with you (or) The Lord is here.

All and also with you. His Spirit is with us.

P Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right and good
to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
For in these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline
we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.
Through study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.
As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast
with joyful hearts and minds we bless you for your mercy
and join with saints and angels
for ever praising you and saying:

All Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

P Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine may be to us
the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;
who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me. □ †

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:

Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me. †

P Christ is the bread of life:

All When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.

P And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection
and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company of [*N and*] all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord;
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever. †

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

M Lord Jesus, remember us in your kingdom
and teach us to pray.

All **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, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

P Every time we eat this bread
and drink this cup

All we proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes.

The Agnus Dei may be said or sung as the bread is broken.

All Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.

P Jesus is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word,
and I shall be healed.

P Draw near with faith.
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.
Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

P The body of Christ, given for you.

All Amen

P The blood of Christ, shed for you.

All Amen

Silence is kept

Prayer after Communion

P Almighty God,
you have given your only Son to be for us
both a sacrifice for sin and also an example of godly life:
give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive
these his inestimable gifts, and also daily endeavour
to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

All God of our pilgrimage,
you have fed us with the bread of heaven.
Refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This is love, not that we loved God,
All but that he loved us and sent his Son.

He is the sacrifice for our sins,
All that we might live through him.

If God loves us so much
All we ought to love one another.

If we love one another
All God lives in us.

Final Blessing

P 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.

All Amen.

Dismissal

M. Isaiah proclaims: Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them?

M Stay in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

Lower Wensleydale

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