

COME BEFORE THE LORD IN ASHES

AS WE GATHER

Throughout the Bible, ashes have been associated with humility, repentance, and mortality. In Genesis, we read of the great patriarch: “Abraham answered and said, ‘Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes’” (Genesis 18:27). In Job, we read that the long-suffering Job said of his life: “I have become like dust and ashes” (Job 30:19b). Daniel the prophet states: “Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking Him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes” (Daniel 9:3). Ash Wednesday brings us the opportunity to follow the pattern set by our spiritual ancestors and to begin the observance of “a holy Lent” as we come before the Lord in ashes.

PREPARATION

OPENING HYMN “CHIEF OF SINNERS THOUGH I BE”

#611



1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed His
2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love, High - er than the
3 On - ly Je - sus can im - part Balm to heal the
4 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Christ is all in
5 O my Sav - ior, help af - ford By Your Spir - it



blood for me, Died that I might live on high,
heav'ns a - bove, Deep - er than the depths of sea,
wound - ed heart, Peace that flows from sin for - giv'n,
all to me; All my wants to Him are known,
and Your Word! When my way - ward heart would stray,



Lives that I might nev - er die. As the branch is
Last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty! Love that found me—
Joy that lifts the soul to heav'n, Faith and hope to
All my sor - rows are His own. He sus - tains the
Keep me in the nar - row way; Grace in time of



to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.
won - drous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.
walk with God In the way that E - noch trod.
hid - den life Safe with Him from earth - ly strife.
need sup - ply While I live and when I die.

Text: William McComb, 1793–1873, alt.

Tune: Richard Redhead, 1820–1901

Text and tune: Public domain

INVOCATION

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

C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Psalm 6:1–2; 79:8–9

P O LORD, rebuke me not in Your anger,

C nor discipline me in Your wrath.

P Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;

C heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.

P Do not remember against us our former iniquities;

C let Your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low.

P Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name;

C deliver us, and atone for our sins, for Your name's sake!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P Let us now confess our sins to our heavenly Father, imploring Him for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness. We sing together the words of a confessional hymn as our words of confession for this day.

613 TO THEE, OMNISCIENT LORD OF ALL



1 To Thee, om - ni - scient Lord of all, In grief and shame I
2 O Lord, my God, to Thee I pray: O cast me not in
3 O Je - sus, let Thy pre - cious blood Be to my soul a



hum - bly call; I see my sins a - gainst Thee, Lord,
wrath a - way! Let Thy good Spir - it ne'er de - part,
cleans - ing flood. Turn not, O Lord, Thy guest a - way,



The sins of thought and deed and word. They press me
But let Him draw to Thee my heart That tru - ly
But grant that jus - ti - fied I may Go to my



sore; I cry to Thee: O God, be mer - ci - ful to me!
pen - i - tent I be: O God, be mer - ci - ful to me!
house at peace with Thee: O God, be mer - ci - ful to me!

Text: Magnus Brostrup Landstad, 1802–80; tr. Carl Döving, 1867–1937, alt.

Tune: attr. Martin Luther, 1483–1546

Text and tune: Public domain

ABSOLUTION

P In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

WORD

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent.

C **Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness;**

P through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

HYMN SEQUENCE

P Two hymns mention ashes in a special way. The Pentecost hymn “Come Down, O Love Divine” contains a prayer verse asking that the Holy Spirit would, by His gracious working, remake the life of the Christian person. As we come to God in repentance, we are asking that the Spirit’s power reshape our lives.

501 COME DOWN, O LOVE DIVINE

sts. 1–2



1 Come down, O Love di - vine; Seek Thou this soul of mine,
2 O let it free - ly burn, Till world - ly pas - sions turn



And vis - it it with Thine own ar - dor glow - ing;
To dust and ash - es in its heat con - sum - ing;



O Com - fort - er, draw near; With - in my heart ap - pear,
And let Thy glo - rious light Shine ev - er on my sight,



And kin - dle it, Thy ho - ly flame be - stow - ing.
And clothe me round, the while my path il - lum - ing.

Text: Bianco da Siena, c. 1350–1434; tr. Richard F. Littledale, 1833–90

Tune: Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958

Text and tune: Public domain

PART 2

P The hymn “God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It” also mentions ashes, speaking of them in conjunction with death. As we hear the words “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” during the Imposition of Ashes, we are reminded of our mortality and our dependence on the forgiving grace of our God in life and in death.

594 GOD’S OWN CHILD, I GLADLY SAY IT

sts. 1, 4–5



1 God’s own child, I glad - ly say it: I am bap - tized
4 Death, you can - not end my glad - ness: I am bap - tized
5 There is noth - ing worth com - par - ing To this life - long



in - to Christ! He, be - cause I could not pay it,
in - to Christ! When I die, I leave all sad - ness
com - fort sure! O - pen - eyed my grave is star - ing:



Gave my full re - demp - tion price. Do I need earth’s
To in - her - it par - a - dise! Though I lie in
E - ven there I’ll sleep se - cure. Though my flesh a -



trea - sures man - y? I have one worth
dust and ash - es Faith’s as - sur - ance
waits its rais - ing, Still my soul con -



more than an - y That brought me sal -
bright - ly flash - es: Bap - tism has the
tin - ues prais - ing: I am bap - tized



va - tion free Last - ing to e - ter - ni - ty!
strength di - vine To make life im - mor - tal mine.
in - to Christ; I’m a child of par - a - dise!

Text: Erdmann Neumeister, 1671–1756; tr. Robert E. Voelker, 1957

Tune: Johann Caspar Bachofen, 1695–1755, alt.

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Tune: Public domain

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Joel 2:12–19

¹²“Yet even now,” declares the LORD,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³and 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.
¹⁴Who 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?
¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 consecrate a fast;
 call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶gather 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.
¹⁷Between 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?'"
¹⁸Then the LORD became jealous for his land
 and had pity on his people.
¹⁹The 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."

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For 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. ³We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

VERSE

Joel 2:13b

Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

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. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so 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. ⁶But 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. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that 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, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

607 FROM DEPTHS OF WOE I CRY TO THEE



1 From depths of woe I cry to Thee, In trial and
 2 Thy love and grace a-lone a-vail To blot out
 3 There-fore my hope is in the Lord And not in
 4 And though it tar-ry through the night And till the
 5 Though great our sins, yet great-er still Is God's a-



trib-u-la-tion; Bend down Thy gra-cious
 my trans-gres-sion; The best and ho-liest
 mine own mer-it; It rests up-on His
 morn-ing wak-en, My heart shall nev-er
 bun-dant fa-vor; His hand of mer-cy



ear to me, Lord, hear my sup-pli-ca-tion.
 deeds must fail To break sin's dread op-pres-sion.
 faith-ful Word To them of con-trite spir-it
 doubt His might Nor count it-self for-sak-en.
 nev-er will A-ban-don us, nor wa-ver.



If Thou re-mem-b'rest ev-'ry sin, Who then could heav-en
 Be-fore Thee none can boast-ing stand, But all must fear Thy
 That He is mer-ci-ful and just; This is my com-fort
 O Is-rael, trust in God your Lord. Born of the Spir-it
 Our shep-herd good and true is He, Who will at last His



ev-er win Or stand be-fore Thy pres-ence?
 strict de-mand And live a-lone by mer-cy.
 and my trust. His help I wait with pa-tience.
 and the Word, Now wait for His ap-pear-ing.
 Is-rael free From all their sin and sor-row.

Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-78, alt.

Text and tune: Martin Luther, 1483-1546

Text and tune: Public domain

SERMON

CREED

Nicene Creed

**☩ 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 † of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For cleansed and renewed hearts, that our God who knows our every transgression would also forgive them by His Holy Word and Sacrament, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all ministers of reconciliation, that through all things they would worthily and courageously serve God and His Church, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all the families of Your Church, that husbands, wives and children would be cleansed from their sins and live together in God's peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For faithful hearts to serve both God and man in selfless love, and for the reward that comes only from our heavenly Father, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

- P** For our nation and its leaders, all civil servants, and those who protect us and work for the common good, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** That He would drive away all disease and fear from us, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the sick, the suffering and those who rejoice, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For all expectant mothers, all whose work is dangerous, the unemployed, those near death and those who mourn, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For all of us who are dust and must return to dust, that we may firmly believe “a broken and contrite heart God will not despise,” let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For all who commune, that they may trust in Christ who has offered Himself as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, eating and drinking His body and blood with repentance and faith for the forgiveness of sins, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** To Him alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

SACRAMENT

PREFACE

- 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 208



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.



Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho-san - na to the Lord;



Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Text: Stephen P. Starke

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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

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

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

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

AGNUS DEI

LSB 210

C 1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
 2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
 You take the sin of the world a - way;
 You take the sin of the world a - way;
 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
 Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,
 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
 And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

DISTRIBUTION

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

P Let us pray.

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

ADDRESS FOR SYMBOLIC IMPOSITION OF ASHES

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.

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 preaching 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 prayers;
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.

SYMBOLIC IMPOSITION OF ASHES – *we will follow the same procedure as for Holy Communion. When released by the Usher, proceed to center aisle, proceed forward to Pastor, receive the 'ash-cross cloth from Pastor, return to your seat via the pulpit side aisle.*

CLOSING COLLECT

P Almighty God, as we have come to You in ashes with repentant hearts, grant us true repentance and the presence of Your Holy Spirit within us, that our lives may be pure and holy and that at the last we may come to Your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
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.

418 O LORD, THROUGHOUT THESE FORTY DAYS

1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days You
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and You won; Your
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet You prayed And
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, And

prayed and kept the fast; In - spire re - pen - tance
faith - ful - ness en - dured; Lend us Your nerve, Your
fixed Your mind a - bove; So teach us to de -
all our earth - ly days, That when the fi - nal

for our sin, And free us from our past.
skill and trust In God's e - ter - nal Word.
ny our - selves, Since we have known God's love.
Eas - ter dawns, We join in heav - en's praise.

Text: based on Claudia F. Hernaman, 1838–98; para. Gilbert E. Doan, 1930
Tune: The Psalmes of David in Prose and Meeter, 1635, Edinburgh
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DISMISSAL

P Go in peace as you serve the Lord

C Thanks be to God.

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