

The Preparation

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

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

All And also with you.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: since early days Christians have observed with love and 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.

By carefully keeping these days, Christians 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.

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

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully,

**All: 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. Amen.**

First Reading: Psalm 51:1-18

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgement.
- ⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

- ⁶ You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.
- ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- ¹⁶ For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased.
- ¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

At the end:

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

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

¹ 'Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² 'So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵ 'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But whenever 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 whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹ 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your

treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Talk

The Liturgy of Penitence

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.

Trinity of love,

All: have mercy on us.

**All: Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart,
and mind, and strength.

We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

All: Lord, have mercy.

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us.

We have not been true to the mind of Christ.

We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

All: Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you, Lord ...

all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Our anger at our own frustration

and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts

and our dishonesty in daily life and work.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Our negligence in prayer and worship 3

and our failure to commend the faith that is in us.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Accept our repentance, Lord ...

for the wrongs we have done,
for our blindness to human need and suffering,
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty.

All: Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgements,
for uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbours
and for our prejudice and contempt towards those who differ from us.

All: Accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation
and our lack of concern for those who come after us.

All: Accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

All: Favourably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

All: that we may show your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

All: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Silence is kept.

**All: We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

The Imposition of Ashes

Dear friends in Christ, I invite you to receive these ashes
as a sign of the spirit of penitence
with which we shall keep this season of Lent.

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.

All are invited to come forward for prayer and the imposition of ashes

At the end we pray

God our Father,
the strength of all who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers;
and because, in our weakness,
we can do nothing good without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in keeping your commandments
we may please you, both in will and deed;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Peace

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.