

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

The First Reading - Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

A proclamation that the Day of the Lord has arrived, with a call for repentance, and a plea for God's mercy.

The Psalm - Psalm 51: 1-18

David's plea for God to cleanse him after his adultery with Bathsheba is exposed by Nathan the prophet.

The Second Reading - 2 Corinthians 5: 20b - 6:10

Paul explains the suffering he and other apostles have endured in order to proclaim God's appeal for repentance, and God's offer of salvation.

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

The most authentic way to give, fast and pray – Jesus explains the true practice of the Lenten disciplines.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Joel%202:%201-2,%2012-17%20%0Acw%20Psalm%2051:%201-18%0A2%20Corinthians%205:%2020b%20-%206:10%0AMatthew%206:%201-6,%2016-21

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Almighty and everlasting God,
who hatest nothing that thou hast made,
and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent;
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we worthily lamenting our sins,
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This collect may be said after the Collect of the day until Easter Eve.

Collect Two

www.churchnewsireland.org

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 we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

L Let us pray to the Lord.

P May our prayer be acceptable to God, our Rock and our Redeemer.

L Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation
that we may show forth your glory in the world.

P By the cross and passion of your Son, our Lord,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

- various intercessions ending with "Lord hear our prayer" and
response "And in your love, answer"

Father in heaven, the greatness of Your love is beyond words to describe.
By the power of Your Spirit, liberate us from all self centeredness, that
we may be free to love others as Christ loves us.... Lord hear our
prayer....

Lord God of Hosts: Make of us pilgrims throughout these forty days. Lead
us through discipline to discipleship, through fasting to feasting, through
privation to freedom. Free us from our own struggles, so that we may more
fully serve one another.... Lord hear our prayer....

Loving Master and faithful friend - help us to be obedient and joyful,
humble and caring, merciful and loving. Anchor us in your live giving word
and make us radiant for you - fitting ambassadors of your message of
reconciliation..... Lord, hear our prayer....

Father of all mercy - as we work together with Christ, help us to not to
accept your grace in vain, but to remember that now is the day of
salvation, and to call upon you and serve you as you desire..... we ask
these things in his most glorious name. Amen

POST COMMUNION

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 ourselves
to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

O Lord of Grace, lead us and guide us from a life of self-centredness and satisfaction for what we are and what we do to a life of dependence on you. Inspire our hearts that we rise beyond the daily trifles of our existence and join with you in love and concern of the whole creation, that we may always remind ourselves that we are the disciples of one who did not help himself but was a man for others. Grant that we may, through our life and example, work for a world where God is praised and we all live like salt and leaven in the midst of this mass of humanity and in a bond of charity. O God the Holy Spirit, inspire, hallow and guide us in this vocation of wholeness and healing, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Church of Bangladesh*

Righteous God,
in humility and repentance
we bring our failures in caring, helping, and loving,
we bring the pain we have caused other,
we bring the injustice in society of which we are a part,
to the transforming power of your grace.
Grant us the courage to accept the healing you offer
and to turn again toward the sunrise of your reign,
that we may walk with you in the promise of peace
you have willed for all the children of the earth,
and have made known to us in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Gracious and merciful God,
you see into the secret places of our hearts,
where we mourn our sins.
As we turn again to your grace, receive our prayers.
Intercessions
Look with mercy on our contrite hearts,
wash from us the stain of iniquity,
and create a new and right spirit in us,
that we may declare your praise
and offer an acceptable sacrifice in these Lenten days;
through Christ Jesus, who bore our sins on the cross. Amen.

O God, you delight not in pomp and show,
but in a humble and contrite heart.
Overturn our love of worldly possessions
and fix our hearts more firmly on you,
that, having nothing,
we may yet possess everything,
a treasure stored up for us in heaven. Amen.

See also

Maize litany

The sung response is by Jacques Berthier, Taize

Scroll down -

<http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocC/C19ashwd.htm>

Liturgy for Ash Wednesday

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-ashwed.php>

SERMON

Ever since the bottom fell out of the sackcloth and ashes business, we've not known what to do about Lent.

By the Very Rev. Anthony F.M. Clavier

Ever since the bottom fell out of the sackcloth and ashes business, we've not known what to do about Lent. "What do I give up?" seems to be the primary question, an inversion of Jesus' call for us to give. Lent isn't a time to slim or to save money by not buying chocolate or going out to dine. Too easily our resolutions begin to look like holy variations on New Year's resolutions, and we know how long they last!

Part of the problem is that we individualize Lent. We begin with me. Because we begin with me, the whole thing slides into another form of personal spirituality, perhaps somewhat ruined by our sly hints to others about just what it is we are sacrificing.

Sacrifice in Christianity, as with our Jewish ancestors, means the offering of life. Its culmination is Jesus' offering for us on Calvary. The central way we commemorate this is in our offering of the Eucharist, a corporate offering "together" of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord. In baptism, each of us is joined to those who "in Christ" offer the sacrifice, the life-offering of the Savior. We make this offering through Jesus for the world, in all its reality: for the homeless, refugees, those starving to death, those terrified by war and civil war, and even the rich living hopeless lives of denial and indulgence. In short, we get involved with the reality of life as it is.

Lent's forty days prepare us for the Cross and the Resurrection, and no good intentions about giving up something gets us to that "Green Hill far away." True, once our goal for Lent is established, fasting and abstinence is a way to keep us on track, but the goal comes first. The goal is simple but profound. It begins with our parish church. How does our community of the faithful intend to spend Lent together? What extra acts of worship or study will be added to the calendar? In what ways will the parish reach out to the world? We begin there. These extras on the calendar are not for the holy few. They determine how each of us may spend Lent, and guide us to choose individual acts of love that fit into that wider program.

At the same time, we remember that what we do doesn't earn us God's love. The question rather is how may I, and we, as a parish, become worthy of Christ's death and passion? How do we deserve His conquering death for us and giving us eternal life?

On the one hand, we can't earn and can never deserve God's love for us in Christ. But we can open ourselves to the gift and seek to rid ourselves of those things that get in the way of God's redeeming grace. We used to call these impediments the Seven Deadly Sins. Obviously gluttony was among them. Those old sins – do look them up or Google them – were neat ways of reminding us just how "self" gets in the way of service. Now, of course,

you may feel you do pretty well in avoiding these failings and fallings. But just ask your partner, your children, your parents, or your best friends. With a little nudging they will come up with examples of bad temper, feeling sorry for yourself, being envious, or angry.

The point isn't that we dwell on these things, but that we offer them daily to God in our devotions, certain that God forgives and strengthens us.

The gospel today reminds us that the smudge of ashes on our foreheads may either be a boast, or it may be a sign to us and to others that this Lent will be about more than giving up chocolate; it will be a time when God's redeeming work transforms each of us and our parishes.

So may it be.

— Fr. Tony Clavier is rector of [St. Paul's Episcopal Church](#), La Porte, Indiana, in the Diocese of Northern Indiana. He is also dean of the Michigan City deanery.

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

Good News in the Ashes - Sermons that Work Episcopal Digital Network

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2015/02/05/ash-wednesday-abc-2015/>

What Audience? - Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2014/02/18/ash-wednesday-abc-2014/>

Rend your hearts - Rockies net

Scroll down - Emphasis on fasting.

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-ashwed.php>

Basics of Ash Wednesday - Agenda of Prophets

Lent is a period of preparation for Easter, and it's a season of the Church's year where the emphasis is on penitence. That doesn't mean we're obliged to reflect in a gloomy or cynical or hopeless way about how weak and sinful human beings are. The Season of Lent is really about the fact that in Christ *God has rescued us* from our weakness and sinfulness, and so if we turn to God, conversion and holiness and the real fulfilment of our lives are possible. Today's readings bring that meaning out.

http://www.agendaforprophets.org.uk/displayhomily.php?homily_id=25

Making an impression - Bruce Pewer

Short and to the point. Scroll down.

<http://www.brucepewer.com/DocC/C19ashwd.htm>

CHILDREN

Worshipping with Children, Ash Wednesday

Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown

<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2015/01/years-abc-ash-wednesday-february-18-2015.html>

Worshipping with Children - Ideas for Ash Wednesday

<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/year-c-ash-wednesday-february-13-2013.html>

Ash Wednesday with Children and Families

Faith Formation Journeys

<http://faithformationjourneys.org/?p=1939>

Three Reasons to Include Children on Ash Wednesday

Carolyn C. Brown

<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/three-reasons-to-include-children-on.html>

Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to churchnewsireland@gmail.com with the message Passwords in the title