

Evening Prayer for Wednesday, February 17, 2021
with the Imposition of Ashes
6:00pm
Ash Wednesday

Opening Sentences

Book of Common Prayer (BCP) p. 76

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 repents of evil.

Joel 2: 13

The Invitatory and Psalter

BCP p. 117

Officiant O God, make speed to save us.

People O Lord, make haste to help us.

All Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Then the following is said

O Gracious Light *Phos hilaron*

BCP p. 118

O gracious light, pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun, and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

Psalms 103: 8-14

BCP p. 733

- ⁸ The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness.
⁹ He will not always accuse us, nor will he keep his anger for ever.
¹⁰ He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.
¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.
¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us.
¹³ As a father cares for his children, so does the LORD care for those who fear him.
¹⁴ For he himself knows whereof we are made; he remembers that we are but dust.

At the end of the Psalm is said

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

The Lessons

First Lesson

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Reader Return to the Lord, your God.

People **For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

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

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that

no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Reader Return to the Lord, your God.

People **For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.**

The Song of Mary *Magnificat*

BCP p. 119

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever.

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

Second Lesson

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. "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. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "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. 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. "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. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 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. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Song of Simeon *Nunc dimittis*

BCP p. 120

Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised;

For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see:

A Light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Reflection

Invitation to a Holy Lent

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need, which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

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. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now pray before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Imposition of Ashes

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Those at home make the mark of ashes on their own foreheads, or those of others in their household, with the following words
Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Litany of Penitence

Leader and people together.

Most holy and merciful father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

The Leader continues

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven,
Have mercy on us. Lord.

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;
Have mercy on us. Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives;
We confess to you, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people;
We confess to you, Lord

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves;
We confess to you, Lord

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work;
We confess to you, Lord

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us;
We confess to you, Lord

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;

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us;

Accept our repentance, Lord.

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

Accept our repentance, Lord.

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

Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation;

That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord;

Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Absolution

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live, has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Announcements

The General Thanksgiving

BCP p. 125

Officiant and People

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The Officiant concludes

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Ephesians 3: 20,21