

ST HILDA'S ASHFORD



THE LITURGY OF ASH WEDNESDAY

14 FEBRUARY 2024

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THE GATHERING

Introit Hymn

Forty days and forty nights
Thou wast fasting in the wild,
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted and yet undefiled.

Sunbeams scorching all the day,
Chilly dew-drops nightly shed,
Prowling beasts about thy way,
Stones thy pillow, earth thy bed.

Let us thine endurance share,
And awhile from joys abstain,
With thee watching unto prayer,
Strong with thee to suffer pain.

And if Satan, vexing sore,
Flesh or spirit should assail,
Thou, his vanquisher before,
Grant we may not faint nor fail.

So shall we have peace divine,
Holier gladness ours shall be,
Round us too shall angels shine,
Such as ministered to thee.

Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
Ever constant by thy side,
That with thee we may appear
At the eternal Eastertide.

[G H Smyttan and Francis Pott]

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

The Greeting

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

All and also with you

Introduction

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared 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 upon us.**

The Collect - *The Collect is said after a moment of silence*

Holy God, our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 58 vv 1 - 12

Shout out, do not hold back!
Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.
Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practised righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgements,
they delight to draw near to God.
'Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?'
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day,
and oppress all your workers.
Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.
Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,

a day acceptable to the Lord?

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,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

The Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading – 2 Corinthians 5 v 20b - 6 v 10

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, labours, 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 honour and dishonour, 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.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading – John 8 vv 1 - 11

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

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

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

THE LITURGY OF PENITENCE

Self-examination and Confession

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.

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 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.

At the imposition the minister says to each person:

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

At the end:

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 LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The Peace – *We stand*

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.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Offertory Hymn

It is a thing most wonderful,
Almost too wonderful to be,
That God's own Son should come from heav'n,
And die to save a child like me.

And yet I know that it is true:
He chose a poor and humble lot,
And wept, and toiled, and mourned, and died
For love of those who loved him not.

But even could I see him die,
I could but see a little part
Of that great love, which, like a fire,
Is always burning in his heart.

It is most wonderful to know
His love for me so free and sure;
But 'tis more wonderful to see
My love for him so faint and poor.

And yet I want to love thee, Lord;
O light the flame within my heart,
And I will love thee more and more,
Until I see thee as thou art.

[W. Walsham How]

The table is prepared, and bread and wine are placed upon it.

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.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you

All and also with you

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, we give you thanks and praise
through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word,
through whom you have created all things;
who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our
Saviour.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin,
he lived on earth and went about among us;
he opened wide his arms for us on the cross;
he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

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 singing:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
All 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.**

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.*

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.**

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 Hilda 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

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.

Every time we eat this bread
and drink this cup,
All we proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes..

Agnus Dei

**Jesus, Lamb of God,
All have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.**

Giving of Communion

The president says the invitation to communion

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.

The president and people receive communion.

Communion Hymns

**Lord Jesus, think on me,
And purge away my sin;
From earthborn passions set me free,
And make me pure within.**

**Lord Jesus, think on me,
With care and woe oppressed;
Let me thy loving servant be,
And taste thy promised rest.**

Lord Jesus, think on me,
Amid the battle's strife;
In all my pain and misery
Be thou my health and life.

Lord Jesus, think on me,
Nor let me go astray;
Through darkness and perplexity
Point thou the heavenly way.

Lord Jesus, think on me,
When flows the tempest high;
When on doth rush the enemy,
O Saviour, be thou nigh.

Lord Jesus, think on me,
That, when the flood is past,
I may the eternal brightness see,
And share thy joy at last.

[Synesius of Cyrene, tr. A. W. Chatfield]

Drop, drop, slow tears,
And bathe those beauteous feet
Which brought from heaven the news and Prince of Peace.

Cease not, wet eyes,
His mercies to entreat;
To cry for vengeance sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods
Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let his eye see sin but through my tears.

[Phineas Fletcher]

**Father of heaven, whose love profound
A ransom for our souls has found,
Before thy throne we sinners bend:
To us thy pardoning love extend.**

**Almighty Son, incarnate Word,
Our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord,
Before thy throne we sinners bend:
To us thy saving grace extend.**

**Eternal Spirit, by whose breath
The soul is raised from sin and death,
Before thy throne we sinners bend:
To us thy quickening power extend.**

**Thrice Holy! Father, Spirit, Son,
Mysterious Godhead, Three in One,
Before thy throne we sinners bend:
Grace, pardon, life to us extend.**

[Edward Cooper]

Prayers after 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
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.

Hymn

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Be all else but naught to me, save that thou art,
Be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;
Be thou ever with me and I with thee, Lord,
Be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
Be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
Be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
Be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Be thou mine Inheritance now and always:
Be thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys after vict'ry is won,
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

*[Irish c. 8th century
tr. Mary Byrne, versified Eleanor Hull]*

THE DISMISSAL

Responsory

- 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.

The Dismissal Gospel - Luke 15 vv 4-7

- Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
All Glory to you, O Lord.

‘Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.” Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

- This is the Gospel of the Lord.
All Praise to you, O Christ.

Blessing

May God the Father,
who does not despise the broken spirit,
give to you a contrite heart.

All Amen.

May Christ,
who bore our sins in his body on the tree,
heal you by his wounds.

All Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
who leads us into all truth,
speak to you words of pardon and peace.

All Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ.

All Thanks be to God.

The minister and people depart.

Praying for peace in Israel and Gaza

Bishop Sarah encourages us to join in with Archbishop Hosam Naoum of Jerusalem, who has offered the following prayer:

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples. Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children – for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen

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