

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Ash Wednesday

Holy Communion

## INTRODUCTION

*Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.*

## GATHERING (p. 251)

### GREETING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

**Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### FIRST READING: Joel 2: 12–19

A reading from \_\_\_\_\_.

*Because of the coming Day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.*

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

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**PSALM: Psalm 51:1–19**

<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

<sup>2</sup> **Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup> **Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.**

<sup>5</sup> And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment.

<sup>6</sup> **Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb.**

<sup>7</sup> For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

<sup>8</sup> **Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.**

<sup>9</sup> Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice.

<sup>10</sup> **Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.**

<sup>11</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

<sup>12</sup> **Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me.**

<sup>13</sup> Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

<sup>14</sup> **I shall teach your ways to the wicked, and sinners shall return to you.**

<sup>15</sup> Deliver me from death, O God, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

<sup>16</sup> **Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

<sup>17</sup> Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.

<sup>18</sup> **The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

<sup>19</sup> Be favorable and gracious to Zion, and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

**SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10**

A reading from \_\_\_\_\_.

*The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.*

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. <sup>1</sup>Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>For 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. <sup>3</sup>We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; <sup>7</sup>by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

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

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21**

The holy gospel according to \_\_\_\_\_. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.*

<sup>1</sup>“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.

<sup>2</sup>“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. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“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. <sup>6</sup>But 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.

<sup>16</sup>“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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>that 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.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **SERMON (ELW p. 151)**

#### **HYMN OF THE DAY: *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling* (ELW 608)**

1 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me. See, on the portals he's waiting and watching, watching for you and for me.

Refrain

"Come home, (Come home,) come home! (come home!) You who are weary, come home." Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling, "O sinner, come home!"

2 Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading, pleading for you and for me? Why should we linger and heed not his mercies, mercies for you and for me? Refrain

3 Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised, promised for you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me. Refrain

## INVITATION TO LENT

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

## CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most holy and merciful God,

**we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

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, O God.**

We have shut our ears 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, O God.**

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us. **Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

## IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

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

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior, **bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Gathered by the Spirit, let us return to the Lord our God and pray for the church, the world, and all who yearn for new life.

Merciful God, lead your church to true repentance, restore all that is broken, and reconcile all people to you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Guard us from careless disregard of the earth and its treasures. Guide us in faithful stewardship of the soil, the water, the air, and all living things. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Instill within the leaders of all nations a passion for peace and justice, and be with those who live or work in harm's way (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Have mercy on those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit (*especially*). Sustain them with your healing presence and give them the joy of your salvation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless those preparing for baptism and those who guide their way. Grant that in all things we bear witness to your abiding love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks for the communion of saints who lived and died in you. Give us grace to trust in your promise of eternal life with those who have gone before us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, you have commanded us to pray, and you promise to hear us. Hear the prayers of your people and grant us all that we need, for the sake of the one in whose name we pray, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## OFFERING (ELW p. 152)

### OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life.

Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might: Heav'n 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.

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

## **COMMUNION (ELW p. 154)**

## **COMMUNION SONG**

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

## **HYMN DURING COMMUNION: *Jesus Calls Us; o'er the Tumult* (ELW 696)**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Thanks be to God.**

## **CONGREGATIONAL SONG: *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* (ELW 884)**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

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## Listening for the Promise

### Weekly Devotional

Ash Wednesday — March 5, 2014

“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.” Joel 2:13

After Jesus was baptized, he was sent into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. This was a time of preparation for Jesus, of prayer and of temptation. The devil came to him during the forty days and tempted him to feed his flesh, his heart and his ego. Jesus stood firm on the Word of God, and demonstrated clearly who he was — and whose he was — and committed himself to the mission for which he had come into the world.

Today we begin a similar journey: Lent. For forty days, we focus on the ministry of Jesus Christ while learning about ourselves and the faith which we have been given. It is a time of discipline — not punishment, but training. It is a time when we can develop better habits of prayer and healthier ways of living. It is a time for growing closer to God, to learn who we are and to whom we belong. It is also a time to face the temptations of our lives, our flesh, our hearts and our egos, and to conquer them with God’s Word as we delve more deeply into the Scriptures.

Many people will give up something for Lent, but God wants us to rend our hearts, not our garments. Instead of temporarily giving up treats and indulgences, we should seek to set aside the real spiritual stumbling blocks that get in the way of faith. Instead of giving up something only to take it up again the day after Easter, we should consider the real temptations of our hearts and minds that are not so easy to let go of. That is where our true bondage lies.

Ask yourself, “What is it in my life that is keeping me from a full and right relationship with God?” Instead of sacrificing something trivial in a purely symbolic gesture, consider the ways in which God is already pruning you as the branches of his true vine (John 15). As Luther said in the Catechism, “fasting and other outward disciplines serve a good purpose”, but at the center of Lent is the promise of what Christ has done for us — the promise in which we believe. No matter what you do during this forty-day journey, the real blessing of Lent is the forgiveness Christ won for us on the cross. We pray that we would be transformed by God’s love and mercy to reflect that change in our daily lives — now and throughout the year.

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