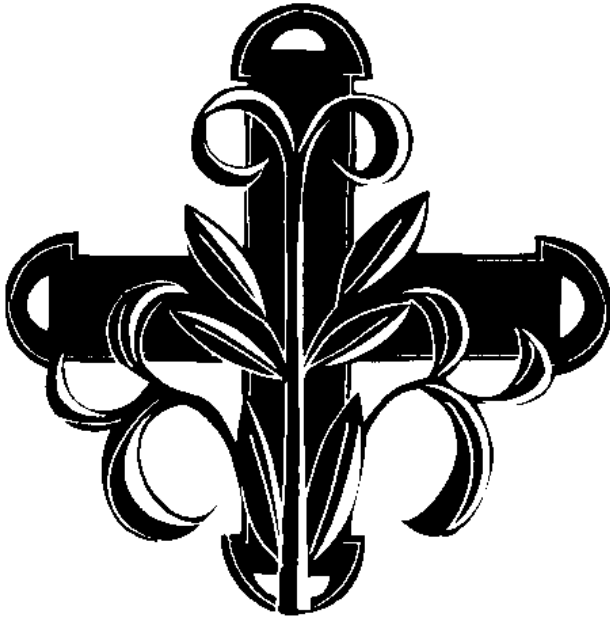


*St Mary's*



ASH  
WEDNESDAY  
LITURGY

The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

Brothers and sisters in Christ: since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the Church to prepare for this season with penitence and fasting.

At first this season of Lent was observed by those who were preparing for Baptism at Easter and by those who were to be restored to the Church's fellowship from which they had been separated through sin. In course of time the Church came to recognize that, by careful keeping of these days, all Christians might 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.

#### *COLLECT OF THE DAY*

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 your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

#### *OLD TESTAMENT READING*

*Joel 2.1-2,12-17*

<sup>1</sup> Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,  
for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near -

<sup>2</sup> a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and thick darkness!  
Like blackness spread upon the mountains  
a great and powerful army comes;  
their like has never been from of old,  
nor will be again after them in ages to come.

<sup>12</sup> Yet even now, says the LORD,  
return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

<sup>13</sup> rend your hearts and not your clothing.  
Return to the LORD, your God,  
for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,  
and relents from punishing.

<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;  
sanctify a fast;  
call a solemn assembly;

<sup>16</sup> gather the people.  
Sanctify the congregation;  
assemble the aged;  
gather the children, even infants at the breast.  
Let the bridegroom leave his room,  
and the bride her canopy.

<sup>17</sup> Between the vestibule and the altar  
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.  
Let them say, Spare your people, O LORD,  
and do not make your heritage a mockery,  
a byword among the nations.  
Why should it be said among the peoples,  
"Where is their God?"

*At the end the reader may say*

This is the word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.<sup>9</sup>**

*PSALM*

*Psalms 51.1-17*

<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.**

*NEW TESTAMENT READING*

*2 Corinthians 5.20b - 6.10*

<sup>20</sup> We entreat 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> As we work together with him,  
we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

<sup>2</sup> For the Lord 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!

<sup>3</sup> We are putting 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 have commended ourselves in every way:  
through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,

<sup>5</sup> beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger;

<sup>6</sup> by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit,

<sup>7</sup> genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God;

with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;

<sup>8</sup> in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute.  
We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;

<sup>9</sup> as unknown, and yet are well known;  
as dying, and see - we are alive;  
as punished, and yet not killed;

<sup>10</sup> 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.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*Stand*

### *THE APOSLES CREED*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.

## THE LITANY

Let us pray.

God the Father,  
*All* **have mercy upon us.**

God the Son,  
*All* **have mercy upon us.**

God the Holy Spirit,  
*All* **have mercy upon us.**

Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity,  
*All* **have mercy upon us.**

From all evil and mischief;  
from pride, vanity and hypocrisy;  
from envy, hatred and malice;  
and from all evil intent,  
*All* **good Lord, deliver us.**

From sloth, worldliness and love of money;  
from hardness of heart  
and contempt for your word and your laws,  
*All* **good Lord, deliver us.**

From sins of body and mind;  
from the deceits of the world, the flesh and the devil,  
*All* **good Lord, deliver us.**

From famine and disaster;  
from violence, murder and dying unprepared,  
*All* **good Lord, deliver us.**

In all times of sorrow;  
in all times of joy;  
in the hour of death,  
and at the day of judgement,  
*All* **good Lord, deliver us.**

By the mystery of your holy incarnation;  
by your birth, childhood and obedience;  
by your baptism, fasting and temptation,  
*All* **good Lord, deliver us.**

By your ministry in word and work;  
by your mighty acts of power;  
and by your preaching of the kingdom,  
*All* **good Lord, deliver us.**

By your agony and trial;  
by your cross and passion;  
and by your precious death and burial,  
*All* **good Lord, deliver us.**

By your mighty resurrection;  
by your glorious ascension;  
and by your sending of the Holy Spirit,  
*All* **good Lord, deliver us.**

Give us true repentance;  
forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance  
and our deliberate sins;  
and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit  
to amend our lives according to your holy word.

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

At the end of the litany,

*(still kneeling at the altar)*

Make our hearts clean, O God:  
**And renew a right spirit within us.**

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,  
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,  
in what we have thought,  
in what we have said and done,  
through ignorance, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We have wounded your love,  
and marred your image in us.  
We are sorry and ashamed,  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,**



**forgive us all that is past;  
and lead us out from darkness  
to walk as children of the light. Amen**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness and keep us in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray,

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

**The Address**

**The Vicar**

Almighty God,  
in whom we live and move and have our being,  
you have made us for yourself,  
and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you:  
grant us purity of heart and strength of purpose,  
that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will,  
no weakness from doing it;  
but that in your light we may see light,  
and in your service find our perfect freedom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Father, we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit**

**to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen**

## The Blessing

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you, and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

