

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 17, 2021

WELCOME TO OUR ASH WEDNESDAY PRAYER SERVICE

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Jl 2:12-18

Even now, says the LORD,
return to me with your whole heart with fasting, and
weeping, and mourning;
Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the
LORD, your God.
For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in
kindness, and relenting in punishment.
Perhaps he will again relent and leave behind him a
blessing, offerings and libations for the LORD, your God.
Blow the trumpet in Zion! Proclaim a fast, call an assembly;
Gather the people, notify the congregation;
Assemble the elders, gather the children and the infants at
the breast; Let the bridegroom quit his room and the bride
her chamber. Between the porch and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep, And say,
“Spare, O LORD, your people, and make not your heritage a
reproach, with the nations ruling over them!
Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their
God?’”
Then the LORD was stirred to concern for his land and took
pity on his people.

The Word of the Lord

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and 17

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me.

R. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

For I acknowledge my offense,
and my sin is before me always:
“Against you only have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight.”

R. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

SECOND READING

2 Cor 5:20—6:2

Brothers and sisters:

We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appeal-
ing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.
For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know
sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God
in him. Working together, then, we appeal to you not
to receive the grace of God in vain.
For he says: In an acceptable time I heard you,
and on the day of salvation I helped you.
Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is
the day of salvation.

The Word of the Lord *R. Thanks be to God*

GOSPEL: MT 6:1-6, 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Take care not to perform righteous deeds
in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will
have no recompense from your heavenly Father.
When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before
you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the
streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you,
they have received their reward. But when you give
alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is
doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret.
And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites,
who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on
street corners so that others may see them.
Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.
But when you pray, go to your inner room,
close the door, and pray to your Father in secret.
And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites.
They neglect their appearance, so that they may ap-
pear to others to be fasting.
Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.
But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your
face, so that you may not appear to be fasting,
except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father
who sees what is hidden will repay you.”

The Gospel of the Lord +

R Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

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PRAYER


Whatever form it takes, prayer heightens our awareness of the presence of God in whom "...we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:28). Our individual time of prayer not only makes us immediately aware of this graced relationship that God shares with us but should also spill over into everything we do: the care we give to preparing meals, the mood we bring home from the office, the way we relate to others, our efforts to promote peace and justice in this world. Our great challenge with adopting prayer as a Lenten penance is to *live* our prayers, not simply *say* them.



FASTING AND ALMS GIVING

 Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. In addition, all Catholics 14 years old and older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent. Fasting as explained by the U.S. bishops means partaking of only one full meal. **Abstinence** forbids the use of meat, but not of eggs or milk products. Fasting and abstinence are more than means of developing self-control. They are often an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God. By our Baptism, we are charged with the responsibility of showing Christ's love to the world, especially to those in need. Our principal participation in Alms Giving is through the annual Rice Bowl effort of Catholic Relief Services.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

 During Lent we are called to "contemplate the face of Christ." In the Stations of the Cross this is precisely what we do as we follow Jesus in the sequence of events that lead up to his death on the cross. As we accompany him in faith we draw nearer to Christ. To pray the way of the cross requires only that you meditate before each station. Before each station you may say: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world. After each station you may say an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...

Lent is a time of preparing our minds, our souls, and our bodies for the feast of the Resurrection of our Lord which opens for us the way of everlasting life. We should see this Lenten season as a time to live beyond the temptations of comfort, ego, selfishness but instead respond to life with mercy, compassion and forgiveness. In particular this Lent, let us keep in mind the poor and marginalized. Instead of giving something up for Lent we might consider following Jesus' commandment to show mercy, care and compassion to those in need.

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Download Walk with Me: A 21-Day Prayer Journey Around the World. The free book includes 21 days of prayers and reflections; devotions for people around the world; prayers for mothers, children, refugees and for the Church around the world; and stunning, full-color photographs of people helped by the work of Catholic Relief Services. [Visit our website or the CRS website.](#)

Rice Bowl: CRS Rice Bowls are available in the Narthex.