



Ash Wednesday
February 17, 2021
Night Prayer with the imposition of Ashes

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?
Isaiah 58:6-8

The angels of God guard us through the night, **and calm the powers of darkness.**
The Spirit of God be our guide **To lead us to peace and glory.**
*For those beloved of God **are given gifts even while they sleep.***

Dear God, thank you for all that is good, for our creation and our humanity, for the stewardship you have given us of this earth, for the gifts of life and of one another, for the care of our young people, and for your love, which is unbounded and eternal. **Amen.**

Confession

We are sorry for the wrongs we have done; we have wounded your love.

O God heal us.

We stumble in the darkness

Light of the world, transfigure us.

We forget that we are your home.

Spirit of God, dwell in us.

All together

**Eternal Spirit, living God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
All that we are, have been, and shall be is known to you,
to the very secret of our hearts
and all that rises to trouble us.
Living flame, burn into us,
cleansing wind, blow through us,**

**fountain of water, well up within us,
that we may love and praise You in deed and truth.**

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 that 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 bow our heads before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

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.**

If you have blessed ashes, you may make a cross on your forehead; if you are not alone, you may make a cross on each other's foreheads, saying the following words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Psalm 51

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; *
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- 2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions, * and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you only have I sinned * and done what is evil in your sight.
- 5 And so you are justified when you speak * and upright in your judgment.
- 6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, * a sinner from my mother's womb.

7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

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

9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, *that the body you have broken may rejoice.

10 Hide your face from my sins * and blot out all my iniquities.

11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, * and renew a right spirit within me.

12 Cast me not away from your presence *and take not your holy Spirit from me.

13 Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

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

15 Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

16 Open my lips, O Lord, * and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

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

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

19 Be favorable and gracious to Zion, * and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

20 Then you will be pleased with the appointed sacrifices,
with burnt-offerings and oblations; *
then shall they offer young bullocks upon your altar.

Reading

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

- Matthew 11:28-30

Prayers

V. Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;

R. **For you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.**

V. Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of your eye;

R. **Hide us under the shadow of your wings.**

The Lord's Prayer

Be our light in the darkness, O Lord, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

I will lie down in peace and take my rest,
for it is in God alone that I dwell unafraid.
Let us bless the Earth-maker, the Pain-bearer, the Life-giver,
let us praise and exalt God above all for ever.

Night Prayer

Lord, it is night.

The night is for stillness.

Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.

What has been done has been done;

what has not been done has not been done;

Let it be.

The night is dark.

Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.

The night is quiet.

Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,

all dear to us,

and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.

Let us look expectantly to a new day,

new joys,

new possibilities.

In your name we pray. **Amen**