



**NO GREATER LOVE**

*Ash Wednesday 2021*





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Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Ash Wednesday

## REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

Welcome and Worship Preparation

Dr. Blake Dempsey

Discipline of Silence

Prelude

Anna Williams

## A CALL TO BEGIN A JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

**READER 1:** People of God, each year we remember and celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which he overcame death and provided for us redemption from sin. Lent is a season of preparation for this celebration, a time of personal and communal renewal and repentance. Tonight we begin a journey that will lead us to the cross and finally to the empty tomb. Tonight we begin with ashes.

Ashes are a powerful symbol, reminding us of our mortality and our need for renewal. We invite you to self-examination, prayer, meditation upon God's Word, and fasting during this season of Lent. May God bless us as we strive to walk in the way of our Lord.

**READER 2:** *"Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity."* (Joel 2:12-13) - from *Come to the Water* by Alice F. Waanders and Mark Quist

Hymn

***Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross***

Words & Music by Fanny Crosby and William Doane

*Verse 1*            Jesus, keep me near the cross, there a precious fountain,  
Free to all, a healing stream, flows from Calvary's mountain.

*Chorus*            In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever,  
Till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.

*Verse 2*            Near the cross, a trembling soul, Love and mercy found me;  
There the Bright and Morning Star shed His beams around me.

*Verse 3*            Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me;  
Help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me.

Invitation to the Lenten Disciplines

Larry McCutcheon

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season, converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism.

It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way, the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now go before our Creator and Redeemer in a prayer of confession.

A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

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

11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

14 Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;  
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

<sup>11</sup> After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.

<sup>2</sup> When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples<sup>3</sup> to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

<sup>4</sup> Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. <sup>6</sup> Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

<sup>26</sup> When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> "As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

<sup>3</sup> Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup> and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. <sup>5</sup> "But not during the festival," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

<sup>6</sup> While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, <sup>7</sup> a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

<sup>8</sup> When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. <sup>9</sup> "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

<sup>10</sup> Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>11</sup> The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. <sup>12</sup> When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. <sup>13</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

<sup>14</sup> Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup> and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup> From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Hymn

***I Take the Cross of Jesus Christ***

KINGSFOLD

Words and Music by R. G. Huff; traditional English melody

I take the cross of Jesus Christ in ashes on my face.  
This ancient symbol made in dust reminds me of His grace.  
I beg for mercy from my Lord, to cleanse me deep within.  
I know myself, my faulty life, my tendency toward sin.

O cross of ashes, speak again in ways I understand;  
Speak forth repentance, let me know forgiveness from Your hand.  
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray; look deep within and find  
Our hearts made whole, our thoughts made pure, our eyes no longer blind.

This cross of ashes on my brow reminds me life is brief.  
From dust I came, to dust I go through sorrow, pain, and grief.  
These forty days are set aside for those who share the call  
To take the cross, deny themselves, and give to Christ their all.

**IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

Prayer

**Thanksgiving Over the Ashes**

Dr. Blake Dempsey

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,  
so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift  
are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Receiving the Sign of the Cross

**“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return”**

Genesis 3:19

Hymn

***Abide with Me***

Brian Pitts

Words by Henry Lyte, Music by Justin Smith

Verse 1                                    Abide with me; falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, abide with me.

Verse 2                                    Thou on my head, in early youth didst smile;  
And, though rebellious, and perverse meanwhile  
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee,  
On to the close, Lord, abide with me.

Verse 3                                    I need Thy presence, every passing hour.  
What but Thy grace, can foil the tempter's power?  
Who, like Thyself, my Guide and Stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, abide with me.

Verse 4                                    I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless.  
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.  
Where is thy sting, death? Where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still, abide with me.

Verse 5                                    Hold Thou Thy cross, before my closing eyes;  
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
In life, in death, Lord, abide with me.

A Lenten Discipline

**A Lenten Fast**

Brian Pitts

Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works.  
If you see a poor man, take pity on him.  
If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him.  
Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands  
and all the members of our bodies.

**Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice.**  
**Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.**  
**Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful.**  
**Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip.**  
**Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.**



For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes,  
but bite and devour our brothers?

**May He who came to the world to save sinners,  
strengthen us to complete the fast with humility,  
have mercy on us and save us.**

**Amen.** - John Chrysostom (347-407)

## SENDING FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

### A Closing Commission for the Beginning of Lent

Keith McLeod

In the footsteps of centuries of pilgrims,  
go now to embark on your Lenten journey.  
Consider how you may simplify your days,  
so that you may travel lightly.  
Be alert to all that could side-track you:  
notice that which beckons alluringly,  
or with apparently greater urgency,  
than the pilgrim journey Christ invites.  
Do not try to cover  
more than one good day's journey at a time.  
Know when to stop for food and sleep,  
so that the journey will not be too great for you.  
Walk humbly, knowing that the goal  
is not recognition, achievement or reward,  
but simply to have come to know Christ  
and yourself more intimately.  
Be on the lookout for other pilgrims,  
caring for those who limp, or fall;  
those who cannot see the way forward:  
pilgrimage is richer in community.  
Go now: place your hand  
into the outstretched hand of Jesus Christ,  
allow the words of the story to guide you,  
and pray for purity of heart and mind. **Amen.**

~ written by Ann Siddall

A Traveling Hymn

*We Are Travelers on a Journey*

BEACH SPRING

We are travelers on a journey, fellow pilgrims on the road;  
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.  
I will hold the Christ-light for you in the nighttime of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

Sister, let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you;  
Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant, too.  
Brother, let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you;  
Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh, I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.  
When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,  
Born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Benediction

Dr. Blake Dempsey