



USC Caruso  
Catholic Center

## Ash Wednesday

### Family Prayer Service

**Presider:** In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit

Let us acknowledge the times which we have not been faithful to God.

Penitential Rite A

**All:** I confess to almighty God  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned,  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,  
(striking your breast, say:)  
through my fault, through my fault,  
through my most grievous fault;  
(Then continue with:)  
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,  
all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

**Opening Prayer:**

**Presider:**

Grant, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting this campaign of Christian service, so that, as we take up battle against spiritual evils, we may be armed with weapons of self-restraint. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**All: Amen**

**A Reading from the Prophet Joel:**

**Joel 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

*Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and 17*

**R. (see 3a) 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.

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

Give me back the joy of your salvation, and a willing spirit sustain in me. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

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

## A Reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians:

*2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2*

Brothers and sisters:

We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing 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

## Verse before the Gospel

*See Psalm 95:8*

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

## A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Matthew:

*Matthew 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 appear 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

**Reflection/Family Discussion on the readings and Gospel:**  
**by Fr. Richard Sunwoo**

Today begins the great season of Lent. This is a deeply reflective season—a chance for us to reflect on our life, but in particular our live with God.

From our 1st Reading, I hope that you can listen to how much Our Lord is pleading for us to draw closer to himself! Our goal for this season is return to the Lord, but with our WHOLE heart! Our days are filled with “to-dos” and zoom meetings, but out of all of the things that we “do” throughout the day, how much of it do we intentionally offer to God? Do we really give our WHOLE heart to things that we do? That is why we need Lent. We need this whole season to try to grow closer to God with our WHOLE heart. We need this time to try and fail and try again. We need this season to be frustrated as we wrestle with ourselves and then to rise above the frustration to re-discover authentic peace—the only kind of peace that God can give.

Remember that today is a penitential day. That means that we are called to fast, pray, and abstain from eating meat. Like anything, we can tolerate anything for a day. However, I warn you against this mentality. Rather, take on the mindset that we are entering into a process of changing our lives and TODAY is the first day. Even if you have forgotten, begin again NOW and TODAY!

As we begin Lent, let us do things with charity and with hearts full of love for God. The small penances and mortifications that we do each day of Lent are nothing compared to the cross of Jesus! Yet, like little children, it warms the heart of The Father to see his children offer small sacrifices and mortifications to join with Jesus. For Jesus, the cross was his ultimate act of love for us. In our small sacrifices and mortifications, may we pray before them and through them asking God to expand our hearts to grow in love of Him. Know too that daily sacrifices and mortifications are a powerful prayer when offering them for a particular intention or for a particular person!

Let us do the “things” of Lent with sincerity and intention! Beyond the “things,” this is probably the hardest for us to “do.” Before, we just did the “things” of Lent without much thought or prayer. Let this Lent be different! May the “things” that we “do” for Lent keep afresh our mindfulness of God and offer, with a spirit of charity, every moment of suffering to be joined with Jesus on the cross. These are the hidden and secret prayers that offer to The Father that our Gospel today speaks of! This is the hidden language of love that we communicate with God! To the rest of the world, it would seem that you are going about your day, but you are spending each moment with God! In junior high, my best friend started to date a girl in our class. However, he was embarrassed and didn’t tell any of us. Yet, when spending time with the both of them, things seemed different—subtle at first, but then grew more obvious! Let this time of Lent be our love language that we speak with Our Father. May our love speak to Him in our prayers, sacrifices, charity, and the times where we sneak in a few minutes to be with him in adoration, or by making a short “visitation” to Him virtually through an internet broadcast of adoration. Remember Our Father’s longing for you. Jesus has been waiting for 2,000 years in the tabernacle and monstres of the world to see you. Don’t keep him waiting. You might be thinking that you’re waiting on God, but have you thought that maybe He’s waiting on you?

Have a blessed Lent!

**Nicene Creed:**

**ALL:**

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(bow)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

(raise from bow)

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen

**Presider:** Now is the acceptable time! The day of salvation has come! With confident hope, then, let us pray:

**Intercessions:**

For our Church and our parish community, that reconciliation with God and with one another will be the center of our Lenten observance:

*(Pause for silent prayer).*

**All:** Lord, hear us.

For the peoples and nations of the world, that they may become instruments of God's justice and peace:

*(Pause for silent prayer).*

**All:** Lord, hear us.

For those who will be preparing for baptism and for reception into the Church during the Lenten season, that these forty days may be a time of joyful discovery of God's great love for them:

*(Pause for silent prayer).*

**All:** Lord, hear us.

For families and households, that this Lent may be a time for renewing the bonds of love, trust, and acceptance:

*(Pause for silent prayer).*

**All:** Lord, hear us.

For the poor and the suffering, for the rejected and forgotten, that our prayers and sacrifices this Lent may be the source of new hope and new beginnings for them:

*(Pause for silent prayer).*

**All:** Lord, hear us.

For those who have died in the peace of Christ, that the joy of salvation may be theirs:

*(Pause for silent prayer).*

**All:** Lord, hear us.

**Presider:**

Merciful God, you bring us to life from the dust of the earth; you recreate us in the waters of baptism; you breathe into us the new life of the Risen Christ. Look upon us as we enter these forty days, bearing on our heads the mark of ashes. May our fasting be a hunger for justice; may our alms be the making of peace and reconciliation; may our prayers be the hopes we are prepared to work and sacrifice for. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Our Father:**

**Presider:** At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

**All:**

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.

Amen

**Sign of Peace:**

**Presider:** Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you; look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen

**Presider:**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**All:**

And with your spirit.

**Presider:**

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.



(At this time please offer a moment of silence before the Spiritual Communion is said.)

**Spiritual Communion:**

**All:** I wish my Lord, to receive you with the purity, humility and devotion with which your most holy Mother received you, with the spirit and fervor of the saints.

**Closing Prayer:**

**Presider:**

May the Sacrament we have received sustain us, O Lord, that our Lenten fast may be pleasing to you and be for us a healing remedy. Through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen