



# Ash Wednesday

## February 14, 2024

### 12:00 PM

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

*Celebrant and People* Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### A reading from the book of Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand - a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come. "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. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God. Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, "Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

*Reader:* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People:* Thanks be to God.

#### Psalms 103:8-14

*Benedic, anima mea*

8 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, \*  
**slow to anger and of great kindness.**

9 He will not always accuse us, \*  
**nor will he keep his anger for ever.**

10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, \*  
**nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.**

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, \*  
**so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.**

12 As far as the east is from the west, \*  
**so far has he removed our sins from us.**

13 As a father cares for his children, \*  
**so does the Lord care for those who fear him.**

14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; \*  
**he remembers that we are but dust.**

**A reading from the second letter of the Apostle St. Paul to the Corinthians 5:20b-6:10**

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he 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! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see-- we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

*Reader:* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

*People:* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

*Deacon:* The Gospel of the Lord.

*People:* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**Sermon**

**The Rev. Javier G. Ocampo**

## Invitation to the observance of a Holy Lent

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 which 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 kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

*Silence is then kept for a time.*

*Celebrant:* 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.**

*The people go forward for the imposition of ashes by the Priest.,*

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

## Litany of Penance

*The Celebrant and People pray together:*

**Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

*The Celebrant and People pray responsively*

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

**Have compassion on us, Lord.**

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

**Have compassion on us, Lord.**

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,  
**We confess to you, Lord.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,  
**We confess to you, Lord.**

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,  
**We confess to you, Lord.**

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,  
**We confess to you, Lord**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,  
**We confess to you, Lord.**

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,  
**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,  
**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,  
**Accept our repentance, Lord.**

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;  
**Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.**

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,  
**That we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,  
**Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

*The Celebrant alone stands and says*

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live, has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Celebrant:* The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
*People:* **And also with you.**

### **Offertory Sentence**

If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.  
Matthew 5:23, 24

*The altar is prepared for Holy Communion and an offering is received to support Ascension's ministry of sharing God's love with the world.*

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## **The Holy Communion**

*Celebrant:* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*Celebrant*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to live no longer for ourselves alone, but for him who died for us and rose again.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

*Celebrant and People*

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

*Celebrant*

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

## *Celebrant and People*

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

*Celebrant continues*

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say – in the language of our hearts –

*All:*

**Our Father in heaven,**

**holy is 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 BREAKING OF THE BREAD**

*Celebrant:* Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

*People:* **Therefore, let us keep the feast.**

*Celebrant:* The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ lives in you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.*

## **Prayer for Spiritual Communion**

**Lord Jesus, we believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. We offer you praise and thanksgiving as we proclaim your resurrection. We love you above all, and long for you in our souls. Since we cannot receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into our hearts. Cleanse and strengthen us with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let us never be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come. Amen.**

*All are welcome to receive Holy Communion at Church of the Ascension. Please follow the directions of the Priest. In addition to using a communion kit or receiving bread only, you may now receive in both parts. Intincting ("dipping") is not yet permitted; only receiving the wine by drinking from the cup is allowed.*

*After receiving communion, the people are seated.*

## **Prayer after Communion**

**Faithful God, in the wonder of your wisdom and love you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels, and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life. We thank you for the Body of Christ, the bread of heaven, and for the offering of Christ's holy presence, the gift of spiritual communion, which feeds us when we must be apart. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we become One Body in the sacrament of Christ's Body. Transform our lives with your life, for the love we share becomes bread for the world. AMEN.**

*The people are seated for the announcements.*

## **Announcements**

### **The Blessing**

*All stand as able and the Celebrant blesses the people*

*Celebrant:* Bow down before the Lord

Grant, most merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Service Participants:**

The Rev. Javier García Ocampo – *Rector*

The Rev. Rosa Briones – *Deacon*

J. Michael McMahon- *Guest Organist/Director*

Tracey Forfa – *Lay Eucharistic Minister*

Jesse Velazquez – *Spanish Service Music Director*

The Ascension Choir

The Ascension Tech Team

**PERMISSIONS:**

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