

Service for Ash Wednesday

Song for reflection

Confitemini Domino (Let us confide in the Lord) – Taizé [Listen here](#)

Preparation

O God, make speed to save us.

All O Lord, make haste to help us.

Hear our voice, O Lord, according to your faithful love,

All according to your judgement give us life.

‘The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit:
a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.’ *Psalm 51.17*

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

Silence is kept.

Holy God,
our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.



The Word of God

Psalm 51.1-18

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness; ♦
according to the abundance of your compassion
blot out my offences.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness ♦
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I acknowledge my faults ♦
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you only have I sinned ♦
and done what is evil in your sight,
- 5 So that you are justified in your sentence ♦
and righteous in your judgement.
- 6 I have been wicked even from my birth, ♦
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- 7 Behold, you desire truth deep within me ♦
and shall make me understand wisdom
in the depths of my heart.
- 8 Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; ♦
wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, ♦
that the bones you have broken may rejoice.
- 10 Turn your face from my sins ♦
and blot out all my misdeeds.
- 11 Make 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 again the joy of your salvation ♦
and sustain me with your gracious spirit;

- 14 Then shall I teach your ways to the wicked ♦
and sinners shall return to you.
- 15 Deliver me from my guilt, O God,
the God of my salvation, ♦
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.
- 16 O Lord, open my lips ♦
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 17 For you desire no sacrifice, else I would give it; ♦
you take no delight in burnt offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; ♦
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

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 –
² 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.

¹² 'Even now,' declares the LORD,
'return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.'

¹³ 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.
14 Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave behind a blessing –
grain offerings and drink offerings
for the LORD your God.
15 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly.
16 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.
17 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?”’

2 Corinthians 5.20 – 6.10

We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. ² For he says,

‘In the time of my favour I heard you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you.’

I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation.

³ We put no stumbling-block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. ⁴ Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; ⁵ in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; ⁶ in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; ⁷ in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; ⁸ through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; ⁹ known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Thoughts and questions on the readings

- Joel is writing about a plague – a plague of locusts. What is God saying to people through the plague? What might he be saying to us through coronavirus?
- Joel goes on to remind people that God is gracious and compassionate (v.13). In 2 Corinthians 6.1 Paul also speaks of God's grace. Where can we see his grace at work today?
- Look through 2 Corinthians 6.3-10. How can these verses help us in what we are going through today?
- What do you think God is saying to you at the start of this Lent?

Song for reflection

You are the centre, Lord of my life – Margaret Rizza

[Listen here](#)

Self-examination and Confession

Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

God the Father,

All have mercy upon us.

God the Son,

All have mercy upon us.

God the Holy Spirit,

All have mercy upon us.

Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity,

All have mercy upon us.

From all evil and mischief;
from pride, vanity, and hypocrisy;
from envy, hatred, and malice;
and from all evil intent,

All good Lord, deliver us.

From sloth, worldliness and love of money;
from hardness of heart
and contempt for your word and your laws,

All good Lord, deliver us.

From sins of body and mind;
from the deceits of the world, the flesh and the devil,

All good Lord, deliver us.

In all times of sorrow;
in all times of joy;
in the hour of death,
and at the day of judgement,

All good Lord, deliver us.

By the mystery of your holy incarnation;
by your birth, childhood and obedience;
by your baptism, fasting and temptation,

All good Lord, deliver us.

By your ministry in word and work;
by your mighty acts of power;
and by your preaching of the kingdom,

All good Lord, deliver us.

By your agony and trial;
by your cross and passion;
and by your precious death and burial,

All good Lord, deliver us.

By your mighty resurrection;
by your glorious ascension;
and by your sending of the Holy Spirit,

All good Lord, deliver us.

Give us true repentance;
forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance
and our deliberate sins;
and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit
to amend our lives according to your holy word.

**All Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Silence is kept.

Make our hearts clean, O God;
All and renew a right spirit within us.

**All Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love,
and marred your image in us.**

**We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen.**

God our Father,
the strength of all who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers;
and because, in our weakness,
we can do nothing good without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in keeping your commandments
we may please you, both in will and deed;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer is said

Trusting in the compassion of God,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

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.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

OR

Trusting in the compassion of God,
as our Saviour has taught us, so we pray

All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be 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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Hymn Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

[Listen here](#)

The Conclusion

May God our Redeemer show us compassion and love.

All Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

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