

Holyford Mission Community

Prayers for Ash Wednesday at Home



You may wish to pick up a small sachet containing some ash made from old Palm Crosses used on Palm Sunday. These are available in churches. The best way is to open the bag by snipping the top of the bag with a pair of scissors. You may wish to pour the ash onto a small saucer.

You can use the ash to sign a cross on your forehead. Either use it dry, or mix it into a paste with just a few drops of olive oil or vegetable oil. Alternatively, you could mix the ash with water and mark the sign of the cross on a piece of plain card and place it on a shelf or mantelpiece. The ash has been blessed. If you would rather not use the ash at all, simply sprinkle it in some earth to dispose of it.

The following prayers and readings can be said alone or with members of your household.

Find a quiet place where you can be quiet and comfortable. You may wish to light a candle before saying the service.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, you have made and forgiven the sins of all those who are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who is alive with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel.

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said

among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” Then the LORD became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people.

Joel 2. 12–18

Thanks be to God.

A reading from the Gospel according to St Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

Matthew 6. 1–6 & 16–18

This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

The Imposition of Ashes

You may wish to spend a time in prayer and quiet reflection before taking the ash. As you mark a cross or sprinkle the ash, the words of imposition may be read or said aloud:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

Closing Prayers

Grant, we beseech you, O Lord, that by the observance of this Lent we may advance in the knowledge of the mystery of Christ, and show forth his mind in conduct worthy of our calling; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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.

Lord, thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the world were made thou art God, from everlasting, and world without end.

Psalm 90. 1–2.

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.