

# Ash Wednesday

Order for Confession and the Imposition of Ashes



*“I have this against you,  
that you have abandoned the  
love you had at first.”*

Revelation 2:4

## Psalm 51

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your lovingkindness;

**in your great compassion blot out my offenses.**

<sup>2</sup>Wash me through and through from my wickedness

**and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions,

**and my sin is ever before me.**

<sup>4</sup>Against you only have I sinned

**and done what is evil in your sight.**

<sup>5</sup>And so you are justified when you speak

**and upright in your judgment.**

<sup>6</sup>Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,

**a sinner from my mother's womb.**

<sup>7</sup>For behold, you look for truth deep within me,

**and will make me understand wisdom secretly.**

<sup>8</sup>Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;

**wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.**

<sup>9</sup>Make me hear of joy and gladness,

**that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

<sup>10</sup>Hide your face from my sins

**and blot out all my iniquities.**

<sup>11</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God,

**and renew a right spirit within me.**

<sup>12</sup>Cast me not away from your presence

**and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

<sup>13</sup>Give me the joy of your saving help again

**and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

<sup>14</sup>I shall teach your ways to the wicked,

**and sinners shall return to you.**

<sup>15</sup>Deliver me from death, O God,

**and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,**

**O God of my salvation.**

<sup>16</sup>Open my lips, O LORD,

**and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

<sup>17</sup>Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,

**but you take no delight in burnt offerings.**

<sup>18</sup>The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;

**a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

<sup>19</sup>Be favorable and gracious to Zion,

**and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.**

## **LBW HYMN #306 “Chief of Sinners though I Be”**

### **Call to Worship**

**P:** Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. (Joel 2:13)

**C: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**P:** Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus said: “If any would come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

**C: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.** (Psalm 23:4)

**P:** Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus — the pioneer and perfecter of our faith — who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

**C: Lord, we believe; help us in our unbelief.** (Mark 9:24)

### **Prayers of Confession and Repentance**

**P:** Let us draw near to God with an honest heart, confessing our sins to God the Father, and appealing to him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

*Silence is observed for reflection and self-examination.*

**P:** Almighty God,

**C: We confess to you that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

**P:** We have received your many blessings with a lack of gratitude; and have failed to be good stewards of your Creation.

**C: Have mercy on us, Lord.**

**P:** We have followed our own selfish will and ways, and have failed to be your trusting and obedient servants.

**C: Have mercy on us, Lord.**

**P:** We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven, and have failed to be your witnesses in the world.

**C: Have mercy on us, Lord.**

**P:** We confess to you, Lord, all our unfaithfulness – our fear, our anger, our pride, and our trust in our own righteousness.

**C: Accept our repentance, Lord.**

**P:** We confess to you, Lord, our lack of concern for the needs of others, and our sense of entitlement to all we possess.

**C: Accept our repentance, Lord.**

**P:** We confess to you, Lord, our negligence in worship, and our rejection of your Word in our lives.

**C: Accept our repentance, Lord.**

**P:** Create in us a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within us.

**C: Cast us not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from us. Give us the joy of your saving help again, and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Amen**

## **The Imposition of Ashes**

**P:** As children of a fallen humanity, each of us shares in the consequences of human sin. In the words that the Lord first spoke to Adam, he now reminds us all: “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:19)

Therefore, face-to-face in the presence of God, we offer our confession in the spirit of our ancestor Job, who prayed:

**C: I had heard you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**

(Job 42:5-6)

**P:** As a sign of repentance, all may come forward to receive the mark of the cross in ashes on their brow.

*As worshipers come forward, the minister marks the sign of the cross in ashes on the forehead of each individual, saying:*

*P: Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.*

### **The Promise of Christ**

**P:** Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

**C: that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

**P:** By the cross and passion of your Son, our Lord,

**C: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

**P:** In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake, God forgives you all your sins. By his Holy Spirit, may he grant you true repentance, that you may live with him in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

### **Scripture Readings**

#### **First Reading: Joel 2:12-19**

<sup>12</sup>"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; <sup>13</sup>and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. <sup>14</sup>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? <sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; <sup>16</sup>gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. <sup>17</sup>Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" <sup>18</sup>Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. <sup>19</sup>The LORD answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations."

## **Second Reading: Revelation 2:1-7**

<sup>1</sup>“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. <sup>2</sup>“I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup>I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup>But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. <sup>6</sup>Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’”

## **Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

<sup>1</sup>Jesus said, “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup>Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>5</sup>And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But when 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. <sup>16</sup>“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>19</sup>Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

## **Homily**

## Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,  
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
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.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son, he is worshiped and  
glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen

**LBW HYMN #296 "Just As I Am, without One Plea"**

**Conclusion of the Service**

**The Prediction of the Passion**

**P:** Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem...

And the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, who will condemn him to death...

And they will hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him and scourge him, and finally, they will crucify him...

But on the third day, he will rise.

*Worshippers exit the sanctuary in silence.*

*First Lutheran Church*  
*Miles City, Montana*



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