

**Readings & Collect**  
**for Ash Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

**Collect for Ash Wednesday:**

O Lord, grant that your faithful people  
may enter this season of penitence with faithfulness,  
and complete it with steadfast devotion;  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, world without end. **Amen.**

**Old Testament Reading:**

**Isaiah 58: 1-12**

Thus says the Lord: Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practised righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God.' Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?'

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 51: 1-18** (Being read)

1. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness;  
in your great compassion blot out my offences.
2. Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.
3. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
4. Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.
5. And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgement.
6. Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb.
7. For behold, you look for truth deep within me,  
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
8. Purge me from my sin and I shall be pure; wash me and I shall be clean indeed.
9. Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice.
10. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.
11. Create in 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 the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
14. I shall teach your ways to the wicked, and sinners shall return to you.
15. Deliver me from death, O God,  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.
16. Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
17. Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice,  
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
18. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart,  
O God, you will not despise.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 5: 20b-6.10**

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made himself 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 the Lord 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, labours, 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 honour and dishonour, 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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

### **Glory to Christ our Saviour.**

'Beware of practising 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.'

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

### **Praise to Christ our Lord.**

### **Post Communion Prayer:**

Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us

both a sacrifice for sin

and also an example of godly life:

give us grace

that we may always most thankfully receive these his inestimable gifts,

and also daily endeavour to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**