

ST. JOHN - ST. PAUL COLLABORATIVE ASH WEDNESDAY HOME LITURGY



As we begin the season of mercy, we take a moment to acknowledge that today is a defining moment in our year. This time imprints a deep mark of identity on the faithful. The outward sign of that identity is an ashen cross, however it symbolizes something much deeper: a call to *prayer*, *fasting* and *almsgiving*.

St. Thomas Aquinas said that mercy is the greatest attribute of God Himself. For you and I, the greatness of this season depends on the greatness of our repentance and the greatness of God's mercy. Of the latter we can be assured.

Let us turn to God now, in the confidence of His mercy and love.

Opening Hymn: [CLICK HERE](#) for *We Rise Again From Ashes*

Opening Prayer:

God our Father, as we begin our Lenten journey, help us to see that Your merciful love is always with us. During these forty days change our hearts Lord, so that by our prayer and sacrifice, and above all the deep well of Your grace, we might greet one another transformed as an Easter people.

Penitential Rite:

I confess to almighty God,
And to you my brothers and sisters
That I have sinned through my own fault,
In my thoughts, and in my words
In what I have done and in what I have failed to do.
And I ask blessed Mary, ever-virgin,
All the angels and saints,
And you, my brothers and sisters,
To pray for me to the Lord, our God.

First Reading: (Joel 2, 12-14)

A reading from the prophet Joel:

"But even now," says the Lord,

"Repent sincerely and return to me with fasting and weeping and mourning.

Let your broken heart show your sorrow; tearing your clothes is not enough.

(cont.)

Come back to the Lord your God.
He is kind and full of mercy;
He is patient and keeps his promise;
He is always ready to forgive and not punish."
The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 51: [CLICK HERE](#) for a sung Responsorial Psalm

Gospel: (Mt. 6: 1-6, 16-18)

Jesus said to his disciples:

Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

"When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Silent Personal Prayer:

Take a brief moment to quiet your heart before God. Ask Him to reveal to you where He would like your focus this Lent. Ask Him to direct your mind to one offering you might make to Him. Ask Him for His guidance in discerning areas in Your life you might bring before Him in the sacrament of reconciliation. Ask Him to remind You of your firmest identity, as Beloved Child of God. Ask for the perseverance to sustain your lenten promises, and softness of heart to be changed by His grace.

Distribution of Ashes:

Sign yourself, or your family members with the ashes in the sign of the cross on the forehead saying:

Repent, and believe in the Gospel.

Reverent Disposal of Ashes and Closing Prayer:

While you place the ashes outside, near the foundation of your home, close with the following prayer:
God our Father, You formed us from the dust of the Earth. You brought us to new life by the work of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. As we journey through these forty days of Lent, Help us to see Jesus in everyone we meet. Help us to serve Him in all persons, especially the poor, sick, and lonely. By Your grace, may our prayers and sacrifices this Lent help us grow closer to You and to Your one family in Jesus. Bless this home, make it a vessel of Your love and peace.

Closing Hymn: [CLICK HERE](#) for *Forty Days and Forty Nights*