

ASH WEDNESDAY

Prayer at Home and Imposition of Ashes



As we begin our Lenten journey towards Easter, we desire to take upon ourselves that ancient symbol of repentance and humility by imposing ashes on our foreheads or sprinkling them on the crown of the head. By doing so, we proclaim our need of God's mercy, we recognise our humility, and we begin our journey of more intense conversion and repentance so we can experience the joy and peace of the Divine Mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As you have decided to begin this journey today, think for a moment now how those three great pillars of Lent will guide your journey towards Easter: How will you give yourself to prayer with

greater effect? What sacrifices can you make that will impinge upon your daily routine and help you to freedom from excessive and distracting attachment to food, technology, ways of behaving, etc.? How can you reach out in generosity to the poor and the vulnerable, remembering that we share the same flesh and, but for the grace of God, we might share the same hardships? Take a few moments now to think on this. Allow the silence around you to make an impact; breathe it in. Let your heart be quiet....

When you are ready, begin the prayer:

Leader: O God, come to our aid.

R. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
R. as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Hymn

Lord God and Maker of all things,
Creation is upheld by you.
While all must change and know decay,
You are unchanging, always new.

You are man's solace and his shield,
His Rock secure on which to build.
You are the spirit's tranquil home,
In you alone is hope fulfilled.

To God the Father and the Son
And Holy Spirit render praise:
Blest Trinity, from age to age
The strength of all our living days.



Psalm 129

Antiphon: *As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked man; rather let him turn from his evil way and live.*

This psalm reflects on how the heart realises the true significance of sin and its consequences for our relationship with God, with others, and with ourselves. The heart longs for the peace that only Jesus can give, revealed in the cross and resurrection. Lent begins our long vigil of waiting that draws the heart towards God and His mercy.

If more than one person is present, alternate the verses between the leader and the others (in bold)

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you.



My soul is waiting for the Lord.
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.
Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.

**Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity.**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Antiphon: *As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked man; rather let him turn from his evil way and live.*

Short Reading

Zechariah 1:3-4

Return to me, says the Lord of Hosts, and I will return to you. Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the prophets in the past cried 'Turn back from your evil ways and evil deeds' but they would not listen.

God's Blessing is now invoked upon all who will impose ashes upon themselves as a sign of their repentance and desire to change.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly ask God our Father that he be pleased to bless with the abundance of his grace those who will put these ashes on their heads in penitence.

O God, who are moved by acts of humility
and respond with forgiveness to works of penance,
lend your merciful ear to our prayers
and in your kindness pour out the grace of your blessing

on your servants who are marked with these ashes,
that, as they follow the Lenten observances,
they may be worthy to come with minds made pure
to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of your Son.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

You may now impose ashes upon yourself, if alone, or upon each one present in your household. By adding some Holy Water, you can place them on your forehead in the form of a cross, or you can sprinkle them dry over the crown of your head, with the words:

Remember that you are dust and unto dust you will return

OR

Repent, and believe in the Gospel

Pause for silent reflection



Let us pray:

Support us, Lord, as with this Lenten fast
we begin our Christian warfare,
so that in doing battle against the spirit of evil
we may be armed with the weapon of self-denial.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Making the sign of the cross, we say: May the Lord bless us, keep us from all evil, and bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

Leader: Let us praise the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.