



## Ash Wednesday

February 14, 2024

The Lord's Mercy Is Great St. John Passion:  
The Powerless "I Am"

### As We Gather

From earliest days the Christian Church employed the weeks before Easter—what came to be called the season of Lent—as the time of the year to prepare candidates for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the catechumenate. Paul wrote, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3–4). Baptism involves death, burial, and resurrection. During Lent, we discover that Jesus is not the only one who suffers, dies, and rises again. Our midweek Lenten services prepare us to consider our identity and connection with the Passion of Christ as the baptized children of God. We do so through the eyes of the Holy Evangelist, Saint John, as we hear, in John 18–19, of Jesus’ betrayal and arrest, Jesus facing Annas and Caiaphas, Jesus before Pilate, Jesus delivered, Jesus crucified, and Jesus’ death and burial. Look for this Lenten season to provide a deeper understanding of your Baptism into the passion and death of Christ, with the result as Paul describes it: we are “always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies” (2 Corinthians 4:10).

### Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

### Confession and Absolution

- P** Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God, our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

*A period of silence is kept for self-examination.*

- P** O almighty God, merciful Father,  
**C** **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**  
**P** Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

### Blessing and Imposition of Ashes

*Psalm 69:16–18; Psalm 51:7*

- P** Answer me, O LORD, for Your steadfast love is good; according to Your abundant mercy, turn to me.  
**C** **Hide not Your face from Your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me. Draw near to my soul, redeem me; ransom me because of my enemies!**  
**P** The Lord be with you.  
**C** And with your spirit.

**P** Let us pray.

O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

**P** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

*The people come forward to receive the ashes as the pastor repeats Genesis 3:19 over each penitent.*

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

*After all have received the ashes, the people are signaled to stand.*

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And with your spirit.

**P** Let us pray.

Grant, O Lord, that we who with prayer and fasting have put on the armor of our Christian warfare may be defended against all spiritual wickedness and, at the last, obtain the victory, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## Introit

*Psalm 51:1-3, 10-12; antiphon: v. 17*

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.  
Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin!  
For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.  
**Glory be 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.**

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

## Prayer of the Day

**P** Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## Holy Gospel

John 18:1–11

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the eighteenth chapter.

**G** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.” Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**G** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

## Creed

Nicene Creed

**C** **I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,  
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life  $\dagger$  of the world to come. Amen.**

## Sermon

## Prayer of the Church

- P** As we begin our journey through this season of repentance and renewal, let us return to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. O God, You call us to turn from sin and to live in the joy and freedom of the forgiveness earned through the merits of Jesus Christ. Give us strength to persevere on our Lenten journey. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- P** O God, You call people everywhere to work in harmony for the good of all humanity. Empower the leaders of the nations to be peacemakers. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- P** O God, grant compassion to all who minister to the sick and infirm: medical professionals, healing practitioners, and all caregivers. Show Your mercy to those who are ill... and bring them peace of mind and heart. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- P** O God, You call us to turn from our sin and to live for You alone. Guide us through these forty days of Lent to a fuller appreciation of Your baptismal grace. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- P** Merciful God, hear our cry when we call to You; renew and uphold us with Your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** **Amen.**

## Offering

### Lord's Prayer

- C** 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  
and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## Prayer

- P** Let us pray.  
Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, friend of sinners and our light and hope, we give thanks to You for enfolding us in Your mercy and grace this day. Help us by our Baptism into Your death to rise and live Your new life now and in the life to come where You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

## Benediction

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
- C** **Amen.**

## Acknowledgments

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