



Welcome to St Alban's

Ash Wednesday



OPENING HYMN: *George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870) adapted by Michael Forster © 1999 Kevin Mayhew Ltd*

**1. Forty days and forty nights
you were fasting in the wild;
forty days and forty nights,
tempted still, yet unbeguiled.**

**2. Sunbeams scorching all the day,
chilly dew-drops nightly shed,
prowling beasts about your way,
stones your pillow, earth your
bed.**

**3. Let us your endurance share,
and from earthly greed abstain,
with you vigilant in prayer,
with you strong to suffer pain.**

**4. Then if evil on us press,
flesh or spirit to assail,
victor in the wilderness,
help us not to swerve or fail.**

**5. So shall peace divine be ours;
holy gladness, pure and true:
come to us angelic powers,
such as ministered to you.**

**6. Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
ever constant by your side,
that with you we may appear
at the eternal Eastertide.**

† In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

The Lord be with you.

And also with you

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting. By carefully keeping these days, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

ALL: Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.

THE COLLECT

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

Silence is kept.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:

create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

After each reading... This is the word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God**

FIRST READING: Joel 2.1-2, 12-17

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5.20b-6.10

Please stand for the Gospel reading

WE SING: Hear us O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have sinned against thee.

THE GOSPEL – John 8.1-11

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end of the reading: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

Make our hearts clean, O God; **and renew a right spirit within us.**

Father eternal, giver of light and grace,

we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,

in what we have thought, in what we have said and done,

through ignorance, through weakness,

through our own deliberate fault.

We have wounded your love, and marred your image in us.

We are sorry and ashamed, and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all

that is past; and lead us out from darkness

to walk as children of light. Amen.

THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Dear friends in Christ, I invite you to receive these ashes as a sign of the spirit of penitence with which we shall keep this season of Lent.

God our Father, you create us from the dust of the earth: grant that these ashes may be for us a sign of our penitence and a symbol of our mortality; for it is by your grace alone that we receive eternal life in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Please come forward for the imposition of ashes

THE ABSOLUTION

The Lord enrich you with his grace, and nourish you with his blessing; † the Lord defend you in trouble and keep you from all evil; the Lord accept your prayers, and absolve you from your offences, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **AMEN**

THE PEACE *Please stand if you are able*

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

OFFERTORY HYMN: *Bishop Synesius (325-430) tr. A. W. Chatfield (1808-96)*

**1. Lord Jesus, think on me
And purge away my sin;
From earthborn passions set me free
And make me pure within.**

2. Lord Jesus, think on me,
With care and woe oppressed;
Let me Thy loving servant be
And taste Thy promised rest.

3. Lord Jesus, think on me
Amid the battle's strife;
In all my pain and misery
Be Thou my Health and Life.

4. Lord Jesus, think on me
Nor let me go astray;
Through darkness and perplexity
Point Thou the heavenly way.

5. Lord Jesus, think on me
When flows the tempest high;
When on doth rush the enemy,
O Saviour, be Thou nigh!

6. Lord Jesus, think on me
That, when the flood is past,
I may th'eternal brightness see
And share Thy joy at last.

THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

Risen Lord and Saviour, present among us with the wealth of your love. Cleanse us from sin and give us the faith to offer our praise and grow in your grace. **Amen**

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Lord be with you: **And also with you**

Lift up your hearts: **We lift them to the Lord**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God: **It is right to give thanks and praise**

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise, almighty God and everlasting Father, through Jesus Christ your Son. For in these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.

Through fasting, prayer and acts of service you bring us back to your generous heart.

Through study of your holy word you open our eyes to your presence in the world and free our hands to welcome others into the radiant splendour of your love.

As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast with joyful hearts and minds we bless you for your mercy and join with saints and angels for ever praising you and singing

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. *New People's Mass, A Gregory Murray ©1975, 1987 McCrimmon*

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; Do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith

Christ has died: Christ is risen: Christ will come again.

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with St Alban, and all the saints to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name; Your kingdom come, your will be done; on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory, are yours, now and for ever. Amen

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

We sing....

**Just as I am without one plea
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871)

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessèd are those who are called to his supper.
**Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I
shall be healed.**

*All baptised Christians who receive communion in their own churches are
welcome to receive communion. Any member of the congregation may come to
receive a blessing*

COMMUNION HYMN *Carol Owens © 1972 Bud John Songs/EMI Christian Music Publishing*

**1. God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name;
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his love as he told me to.**

***He said: 'Freely, freely, you have received;
freely, freely give.***

***Go in my name, and because you believe,
others will know that I live.'***

**2. All power is given in Jesus' name,
in earth and heaven in Jesus' name;
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his power as he told me to.**

**3. God gives us life in Jesus' name,
He lives in us in Jesus' name;
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share his peace as he told me to.**

He said: 'Freely, freely, you have received...'

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

We pray together

**God of our pilgrimage,
you have fed us with the bread of heaven.
Refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;
and the blessing....

Amen

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen

CLOSING HYMN: *Bianco da Siena (d. 1434)*

1. Come down, O love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own
ardour glowing;
O comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame
bestowing.

2. O let it freely burn,
till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat
consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round,
the while my path illuming.

3. Let holy charity
mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become mine
inner clothing;
true lowliness of heart,
which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings
weeps with loathing.

4. And so the yearning strong,
with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of
human telling,
for none can guess its grace,
till he become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes
his dwelling.

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