

HOLY TRINITY  
CHURCH  
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON



# **The Eucharist on Ash Wednesday**

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Lent is to prepare Christians for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ in Holy Week and Easter.

The keeping of Lent was, at first, undertaken by baptismal candidates, before initiation into the Church at Easter. Soon, the Church realised the benefit to all Christians of joining these people in a season of preparation and penance expressed by prayer and fasting. It is this sense of preparation and eager expectation with Good Friday and Easter Day always in view, that should characterise the season of Lent. The popular idea of 'giving things up' in Lent has its liturgical expression in the simplicity of Lenten worship. In part this is to express a spirit of penitence. But it is also in order to provide a striking contrast with the joyful celebration of Easter. This 'giving up' traditionally includes the omission of the Gloria at the Eucharist, the restrained use of the organ and the absence of flowers in church.

This service for Ash Wednesday is characterised by silence, reflection and penitence. It is an important day in the Christian Year when we face our need for forgiveness and reconciliation. We must recognise our mortality and imperfection first, if Lent is to be a time of spiritual renewal and growth.

*Cover: Detail from window in North Transept. Photograph: John Cheal*

## ¶ THE PREPARATION

### PROCESSIONAL HYMN *the words for which are found on the separate sheet*

*President* In the name of the Father, and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit

**All** Amen.

*President* The Lord be with you

**All** and also with you.

*President* Brothers and sisters in Christ: since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the early Church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting. At first this season of Lent was observed by those who were preparing for Baptism at Easter and by those who were to be restored to the Church's fellowship from which they had been separated by sin. In the course of time the Church came to recognise that, by a careful keeping of these days, all Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel and so to 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.

### THE COLLECT *(Remain standing)*

*President*      Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

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.

**All:**              **Amen.**

## ¶ **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

***Please sit***

**A READING FROM THE BIBLE** *concluding*

*Reader*              This is the word of the Lord.

**All**                      **Thanks be to God.**

***Please stand***

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM (51:1-18)

*The response is sung first by the cantor, then we all sing:*



*The cantor sings the verses – the response is sung by all after each section:*

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness; according to the abundance of your compassion blot out my offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults and my sin is ever before me. Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, So that you are justified in your sentence and righteous in your judgement.

I have been wicked even from my birth, a sinner when my mother conceived me. Behold, you desire truth deep within me and shall make me understand wisdom in the depths of my heart.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the bones you have broken may rejoice.

Turn your face from my sins and blot out all my misdeeds. Make 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. Give me again the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your gracious spirit;

Then shall I teach your ways to the wicked and sinners shall return to you. Deliver me from my guilt, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. For you desire no sacrifice, else I would give it; you take no delight in burnt offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

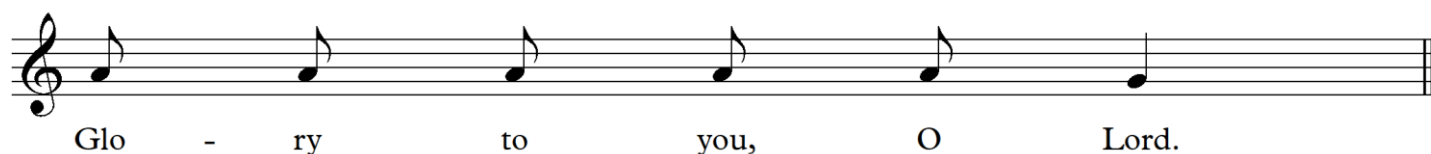
***Please turn to face the Gospel as it is read***

**GOSPEL**      **Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

*Reader*      The Lord be with you,  
**All**            **and also with you.**

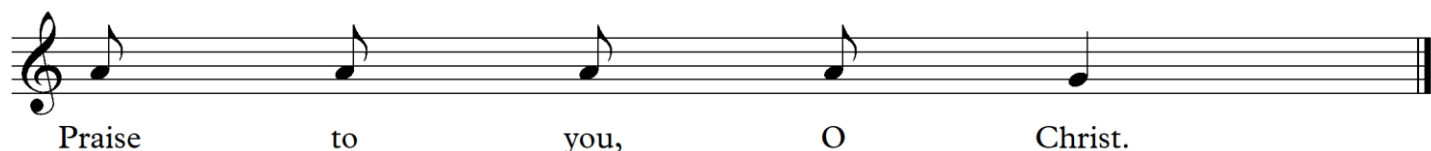
*Reader*      Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to  
Matthew.

**All sing**      **Glory to you, O Lord.**



**At the end**

*Reader*      This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**All sing**      **Praise to you, O Christ.**



## **THE LITURGY OF PENITENCE**

*President*      The Lord is gracious and full of compassion; his mercy is  
over all that he has made. Trusting in the goodness and  
loving kindness of God let us turn to him in penitence for  
our sins.

**All Kneel**

*President* God the Father,  
**All have mercy on us.**

*President* God the Son,  
**All have mercy on us.**

*President* God the Holy Spirit,  
**All have mercy on us.**

*President* Trinity of love,  
**All have mercy on us.**

**All Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.**

*President* We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind,  
and strength.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

*President* We have been deaf to your call to serve,  
as Christ served us.  
We have not been true to the mind of Christ.  
We have grieved your Holy Spirit.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

*President* We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness:  
the pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

*President* Our self-indulgent appetites and ways,  
and our exploitation of other people.  
**All Lord, have mercy.**

*President* Our anger at our own frustration,  
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.  
**All** **Lord, have mercy.**

*President* Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts,  
and our dishonesty in daily life and work.  
**All** **Lord, have mercy.**

*President* Our negligence in prayer and worship,  
and our failure to commend the faith that is in us.  
**All** **Lord, have mercy.**

*President* Accept our repentance, Lord,  
for the wrongs we have done:  
for our blindness to human need and suffering,  
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty.  
**All** **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

*President* For all false judgements,  
for uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbours,  
and for our prejudice and contempt towards those who  
differ from us.  
**All** **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

*President* For our waste and pollution of your creation,  
and our lack of concern for those who come after us.  
**All** **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

*President* Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.  
**All** **Favourably hear us, for your mercy is great.**

*President* Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,  
**All** **that we may show your glory in the world.**

*President* By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,  
**All** **bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

*Silence is kept for recollection of personal sins*



*President* Let us confess our sins, joining together in the words of the Confession:

**All** **We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy, forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be;  
that we may do justly, love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God.  
Amen.**

## **THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

*The ash, in accordance with tradition, is that of burnt palm crosses from last year's Palm Sunday. The President takes the ash and says:*

*President* As a sign of the spirit of penitence with which we shall keep this season of preparation for Easter, I invite you to receive on your head in ash the sign of the cross, the symbol of our salvation. Let us pray for God's blessing upon these ashes.

God our Father, you create us from the dust of the earth: bless † these ashes, that they 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.

**All** **Amen.**

*The president and people receive the sign of the cross in ash with these words:*

Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.  
Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

*During the imposition of ashes, quiet organ music is played and the choir may sing.*

## THE ABSOLUTION

*President* Sisters and brothers, we have confessed our sins to the all-merciful God, which gives us confidence to stand before him, for we are an Easter people. Let us now stand to hear the words of God's forgiveness declared to us:

***Please stand***

*President* Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
who in his great mercy  
has promised forgiveness of sins to all those  
who with heartfelt repentance and true faith turn to him:  
have mercy on you,  
pardon† and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness;  
and bring you to everlasting life,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

***All*** Amen.

## ¶ THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

### THE PEACE

*President* Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

*President* The peace of the Lord be always with you,  
***All*** and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

***It is our custom to shake hands and say "Peace be with you"***

## THE OFFERTORY

*During the following hymn, the bread and wine are brought to the altar.*

**OFFERTORY HYMN** *the words for which are found on the separate sheet*

## PRAYER OF PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

*President* Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation.  
Through your goodness we have this bread to set before you, which earth has given and human hands have made.  
It will become for us the bread of life.

**All** **Blessed be God for ever.**

*President* Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation.  
Through your goodness we have this wine to set before you, fruit of the vine and work of human hands.  
It will become for us the cup of salvation.

**All** **Blessed be God for ever.**

## THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

*We remain standing. However, feel free to sit or kneel if you need to.*

*President* The Lord be with you,  
**All** **and also with you.**

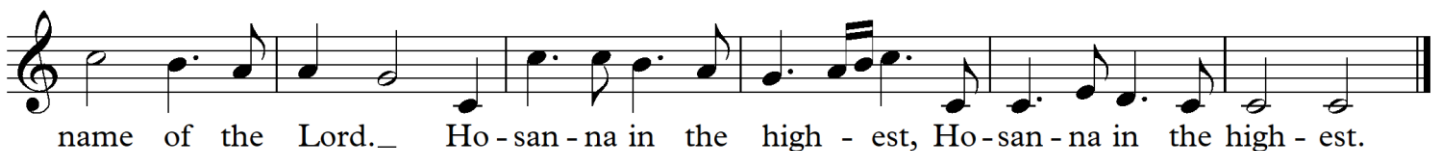
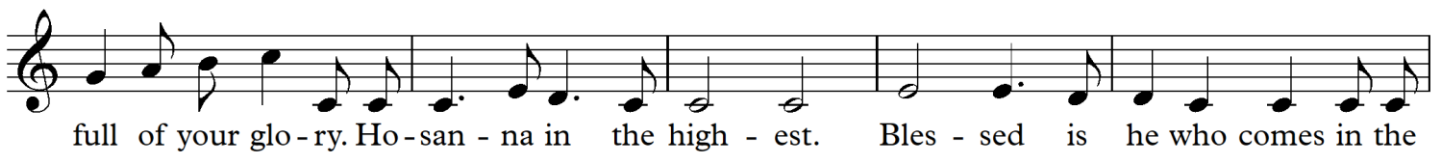
*President* Lift up your hearts.  
**All** **We lift them to the Lord.**

*President* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**All** **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

*President*

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:



*President*

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.



Lord Je - sus Christ\_ by your cross and res - ur - rec - tion  
You have set the whole world\_ free, you are our sa - viour Lord.

*President*

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 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.



*We acknowledge the presence of Christ in our midst as the consecrated  
bread and wine are elevated and the bell is rung*

***Please kneel or sit when the president bows***

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

*The president introduces the Lord's Prayer*

**All**            **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,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## BREAKING OF THE BREAD

*The president breaks the consecrated bread*

*President*        We break this bread  
to share in the body of Christ.

**All**            **Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

## THE INVITATION

*The president invites the people to receive Holy Communion*

*President*        Draw near with faith.  
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.  
Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith and with thanksgiving.

**All**

**We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord,  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.  
Amen.**

## **AGNUS DEI**

O Lamb of God, come cleanse our hearts  
and take our sin away.

O Lamb of God, your grace impart,  
and let our guilty fear depart,  
have mercy, Lord, we pray,  
have mercy, Lord, we pray.

O Lamb of God, our lives restore,  
our guilty souls release.  
Into our lives your Spirit pour  
and let us live for evermore  
in perfect heav'nly peace,  
in perfect heav'nly peace.

*Words Michael Forster (c) Kevin Mayhew Ltd (tune: Repton)*

*Please come forward to the High Altar when indicated by a warden.  
Baptised communicant members of any church are able to receive  
communion. Otherwise, do come forward anyway, holding this order of  
service, and a minister will give you a blessing instead. During the  
distribution anthems and hymns may be sung, and quiet music played.*



*You may wish to use the following personal prayer:*

Lord, in these days of mercy, make us quiet and prayerful;  
In these days of challenge, make us stronger in you;  
In these days of emptiness, take possession of us;  
In these days of waiting, open our hearts to the mystery of  
your cross.

Amen.

*(Angela Ashwin)*

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

*President* 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.

*All* **Amen.**

*All* **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 DISMISSAL**

***Please stand***

## **BLESSING**

*President*      The Lord be with you.  
**All**              **And also with you.**

*President*      Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourself,  
to take up your cross and follow him.  
And the blessing of God almighty, †  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you, and remain with you always.  
**All**              **Amen.**

**RECESSIONAL HYMN** *the words for which are found on the separate sheet*

***We face the doors of the church as we prepare to go out and continue our journey through Lent.***

*President*      Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**All**              **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

*The ministers and people depart*

*Please leave this order of service in church*