

Ash Wednesday 2023



A Lenten Journey

North East Lutheran Parish
Saskatchewan

HEART TO HEART: SACKCLOTH AND ASHES TO ROBES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Sackcloth and ashes—the signs of mourning and repentance in the pages of Scripture. Today, we begin our Lenten journey. Today, we begin our return from exile. This is not a journey that begins with rejoicing and excitement; it begins with ashes. Our Lenten journey begins with ashes on our foreheads, a sign of broken and repentant hearts. God does not desire our sacrifices, as if we could atone for or cover our own sin. God desires broken and contrite hearts which He will not despise (Psalm 51:17). Any efforts to cover up, to pay for, or to atone for our own sin only results in more sackcloth and ashes, even death. It is God who responds to the ashes of our repentance by sending His only-begotten Son. Jesus Christ, on the cross, has washed our foreheads of the ashes of our sins, has removed the sackcloth of our guilt, and has clothed us in His robes of righteousness and garments of salvation. The pure and holy white linen garments that adorn the saints in heaven cover us as we long for the day when we will join them around the throne.

Stand

ASH WEDNESDAY ADDRESS

P Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

With that in mind, this year our theme for our Lenten worship will focus upon the journey, and our overall theme will be “Return from Exile: A Lenten Journey.” We begin our journey today wearing sackcloth and ashes while lamenting our sins. We then complete our journey rising with Christ out of Baptism wearing robes of righteousness.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

HYMN # 418 - O Lord, throughout These Forty Days

Kneel/Stand

Silence for reflection.

LITANY

- P O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
P O Christ,
C **have mercy.**
P O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
P O Christ,
C **hear us.**
P God the Father in heaven,
C **have mercy.**
P God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
C **have mercy.**
P God the Holy Spirit,
C **have mercy.**
P Be gracious to us.
C **Spare us, good Lord.**

P Be gracious to us.

C **Help us, good Lord.**

P By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity; by Your Baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial; by Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

P In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

P We poor sinners implore You

C **to hear us, O Lord.**

P To prosper the teaching of Your Word; to bless our prayer and meditation; to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith; and to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P To draw all to Yourself; to bless those who are instructed in the faith; to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned, and all who stand in need of our prayers; to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy; and to have mercy on us all:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P To turn our hearts to You; to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers; and graciously to hear our prayers:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C **we implore You to hear us.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **grant us Your peace.**

P O Christ,

C **hear us.**

P O Lord,

C **have mercy.**

P O Christ,

C **have mercy.**

P O Lord,

C **have mercy. Amen.**

P 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.**

+ THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES +

Sit

The pastor and assistants receive ashes first, followed by the congregation. The pastor or an assistant places the ashes on the forehead of each person in the sign of the cross, saying:

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

After receiving the ashes, each person returns to his place in silence.

HYMN #878 – Abide With Me (Sung During Imposition of Ashes)

After all have received the ashes, the service continues with the Service of Confession and Absolution

+ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +

Stand

- P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Kneel/Stand

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

- P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
- C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**
- P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, the First Adam disobeyed You, barring humanity from the tree of life and casting us into the dust of death. Because You do not desire the death of any sinner, You sent your only-begotten Son, Jesus—the Second Adam—to rescue and redeem us from the curse of sin and death by having Him become our sin and die our death. Grant that we, during this season of Lent and all seasons, follow Jesus, whose obedience unto death, even death on the tree of the cross, has earned our way back to the tree of life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Sit

SCRIPTURE READING

Joel 2:12–19

SERMON

HYMN OF THE SEASON # 430 – My Song is Love Unknown

Vs 1-4

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

C: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have

done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.

OFFERING (as we sing the final hymn)

HYMN OF THE SEASON # 430 – My Song is Love Unknown

Vs 1, 5,6,7

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 T give you peace.

C Amen.

Acknowledgments

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