

St John's Cathedral Brisbane



Ash Wednesday

17th February 2010

6pm

Lent is a time of preparation for Easter: forty days of preparation for fifty days of celebration. Lent means waiting: for the cross, the water and the fire. God does not need Lent, but we do. The rhythm of fast and feast taps into some elemental need of ours, where denial creates longings to be satisfied so that we come to deeper appreciation of God's great gifts.

Lent is a time for preparing catechumens (baptismal candidates) for Easter baptism. It has its origins in the fact that preparation of catechumens is a process by which the whole Christian community is renewed. While Sunday is always a festival of the crucified and raised Christ, omission of the *Gloria (Glory to God)*, along with addition of other Lenten material provided in this liturgy help set the tone for the Season. Some words will be different, but they will remain the same for the whole of this season.

So while the mood of the liturgy is changed, let us pray that our thirst, our passion and our love for the Lord Jesus in our lives is undiminished.

A LITURGY FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

Blessed be the Lord who forgives all our sins,
whose mercy endures for ever.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has God set our sins from us.

The choir sings

Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy)
Christe eleison (Christ, have mercy)
Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy)

Charles Wood, in the Phrygian Mode

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

Let us pray.

Silence

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made,
and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we, worthily lamenting our sins,
and acknowledging our brokenness,
may obtain of you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Ministry of the Word

First Reading

Joel 2.1-2, 12-17

A reading from the book of Joel

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near – a day

of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

For the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Verses from Psalm 51.1-17 (The choir sings)

Have mercy on me, O God, in your enduring goodness:
according to the fullness of your compassion
blot out my offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness:
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my rebellion
and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned
and done what is evil in your eyes:
so you will be just in your sentence
and blameless in your judging.

Surely in wickedness I was brought to birth:
and in sin my mother conceived me.

You that desire truth in the inward parts:
O teach me wisdom in the secret places of the 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:
let the bones which you have broken rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins:
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God:
and renew a right spirit within me.

Do not cast me out from your presence:
do not take your holy spirit from me.
O give me the gladness of your help again:
And support me with a willing spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors your ways:
And sinners shall turn to you again.
O Lord God of my salvation, deliver me from bloodshed:
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.
O Lord, open my lips:
and my mouth shall proclaim you praise.
The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit:
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 50.20b-6.10

A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

For the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Gradual Hymn 26

tune: Thirsting for God

**Just as a lost and thirsty deer
longs for a cool and running stream,
I thrust for you, the living God,
anxious to know that you are near.**

**Both day and night I cry aloud;
tears have become my only food,
while all around cruel voices ask,
'Where is your God? where is your God?'**

**Broken and hurt, I call to mind
how in the past I served the lord,
worshipped and walked with happy crowds
singing and shouting praise to God.**

**Why am I now so lost and low?
Why am I troubled and confused?
Given no answer, still I hope
and trust my saviour and my God.**

Paraphrase by John L. Bewll 1949 –And Graham Maule 1958

The Holy Gospel

Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

The Lord is a great God, O that today you would listen to God's voice.
Harden not your hearts.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Sermon

THE ACT OF PENITENCE

The presider says;

Sisters and brothers in Christ, from the earliest days of the Church, Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord’s passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

At first this season was observed by those who were preparing for baptism at Easter and by those who, having been excommunicated, were to be restored to the communion of the church. By keeping these days with care and attention

Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and grow in faith and devotion to our Lord.

So, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer and fasting, by self-denial and acts of generosity and by reading and meditating on the word of God, let us keep a holy Lent

Silence is kept.

THE RECEIVING OF ASHES

The ashes are placed on the Lord’s Table, and the presider says:

Blessed are you, God of all creation.
You are eternal,
we are mortal,
formed from the dust of the earth.

As we receive these ashes, make them a sign for us
of repentance and returning to you.
Breathe into us again the breath of life.
Blessed be God for ever.

Come, receive the sign of ashes.

The ashes are placed on each person's forehead in silence or with the words

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

and/or

Repent and believe the gospel.

and/or

Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

Each person may answer **Amen**

LITANY

Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth,
have mercy on us.

Incarnate Word, redeemer of the world,
have mercy on us.

Abiding Spirit, giver of light and life,
have mercy on us.

For turning away from your presence,
for disobeying your word and commandments,
forgive us, Lord.

For trusting in our own strength instead of yours,
for betraying your trust and the trust of others,
forgive us, Lord.

For resisting your grace and refusing your blessings,
for holding back from proclaiming our faith in you,
forgive us, Lord.

For damaging this earth and exploiting its creatures,
for neglecting and wasting the gifts you have given us,
forgive us, Lord.

For failing to forgive as we have been forgiven.
for judging others and bearing grudges,
forgive us, Lord.

For skimping on our commitments and relationships,
for failing in hospitality,
forgive us, Lord.

For tolerating oppression, injustice, and wrong,
for keeping silent when we should have spoken up,
forgive us, Lord.

For turning away when others have offered us love,
for closing our hearts when others have needed compassion,
forgive us, Lord.

For all we have done unkindly, unjustly and dishonestly,
for our careless speech and hurtful words,
forgive us, Lord.

Most merciful God,
**we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The presider pronounces the absolution

With our hearts turned to God in repentance,
with the knowledge of our sins
laid bare before the cross of Jesus Christ,
in the name of the living God,
your sins are forgiven.
Receive God's mercy,
take hold of your forgiveness,
and, in the power of the Holy Spirit.
walk in the light of Christ
Amen.

THE GREETING OF PEACE

All stand

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.

We meet in his name and share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

All may exchange a greeting of peace.

Hymn 591

tune: Heinlein

**Forty days and forty nights
You were fasting in the wild,
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted, and yet undefiled;**

**Let us your endurance share
And from earthly greed abstain,
With you watching unto prayer,
With you strong to suffer pain.**

**And if Satan on us press
Flesh or spirit to assail,
Victor in the wilderness,
Grant we may not faint or fail.**

**Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
Even constant by your side,
That with you we may appear
At the eternal Eastertide.**

George Hunt Smytton 1822-70 and Francis Pott 1832-1909

PREPARATION OF THE LORD'S TABLE

The gifts of bread and wine are placed on the table.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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 offer thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God. We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary And lived as one of us. He was tempted in every way as we are, yet he did not sin. By his death on the cross and rising to new life, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to walk in the way of his love.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

The choir sings

Holy holy, holy: Lord God of hosts,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Charles Wood, in the Phrygian Mode

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son, and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom and in whom, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.

As our Saviour Christ has taught us we are confident 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.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread and the Communion

As this broken bread was once many grains,
which have been gathered together and made one bread:
So may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

The choir sings
The Agnus Dei

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.**

Charles Wood, in the Phrygian Mode

The Invitation

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The choir sings Turn Thy face from my sins – Thomas Atwood

Turn thy face from my sins and put out all my misdeeds
Make me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

God of mercy,
may we who have shared in this holy meal
know your forgiveness in our lives,
bring your reconciliation to others,
and be a sign of your wholeness in this broken world.

The Thanksgiving Hymn 684

tune: Picardy

**Love will be our Lenten calling,
love to shake and shatter sin,
waking every closed, cold spirit,
stirring new life deep within,
till the quickened heart remembers
what our Easter birth can mean.**

**Peace will be our Lenten living
as we turn for home again,
longing for the words of pardon,
stripping off old grief and pain,
till we stand, restored and joyful,
with the Church on Easter day.**

**Truth will be our Lenten learning:
hear the Crucified One call!
Shadowed by the Saviour's passion,
images and idols fall,
and, in Easter's holy splendour,
God alone is all in all.**

Elizabeth J. Smith 1956-

The Blessing

Christ our Saviour draw you to himself,
that you may find in him crucified a sure ground for faith,
a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sin forgiven;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

The Voluntary in D minor by *William Walton*

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