



Ash Wednesday



Saint Miriam Parish & Priary

Missal

A Deeper Lent

Today begins this Holy Season of Lent with *Ash Wednesday*.



Lent provided a time in which the new converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism and reception into the community of faith. It was also a time when those who, because of *notorious* sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were *reconciled* by penitence and forgiveness and restored into full communion with the fellowship of the greater Church Catholic. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of *pardon* and *absolution* set forth in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and of the need, which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

“I invite you, therefore, in the Name of God and of God’s Church, to the observance of a Holy Lent, by self examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, self-denial, and by reading and meditation upon the Holy Word of God. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our moral nature, let us come before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.”

I have used the above collect, or prayer, because I have come to see that there is a benefit to being reminded of our sinfulness; being reminded that ‘*we are dust and to dust we shall return*.’ In Lent, you will notice that at Saint Miriam we often enter or depart in complete silence or use the Great Litany. All of these serve to further remind us to think of these things and to offer a time to reflect.

We are an Easter people and even from the depths of the grave we sing our song, Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Therefore, we are no longer stuck in our sins. However, it is good to be sometimes reminded of our mortal nature, of how *dirty* we were before we were washed *clean* by the blood of our Christ.

I pray that all of us together honor and have a blessed Lent.

Monsignor Jim

Ash Wednesday Service

When the community has gathered, a suitable song or Antiphon may be said/sung.

Sign of the Cross & Greeting

Priest: Bless the Lord who forgiveth all our sins...

All: His mercy endureth forever and ever.

Priest: In the Name of the Father, and of the  Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Priest: The grace, the mercy, and the peace of God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior be with you.

All: And with your spirit!

Priest: My brothers and sisters, the hour of God's favor draws near, the day of his mercy and of our salvation approaches, when death was destroyed and eternal life began. As we begin this season of Lent, we gather today to acknowledge that we are sinners. As we express our sorrow, may God be merciful to us and restore us to his friendship.

Collect

All remain standing for the reading of the Opening Prayer.

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Priest: Let us pray.

After a brief period of silence, the minister continues:

Father in heaven, the light of your truth bestows sight to the darkness of sinful eyes. May this season of repentance bring us the blessing of your forgiveness and the gift of your light. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading - Sit

A reading from the Hebrew Testament, will be offered, except in Easter Season. The Response from the Reader, or Lector, comes at the end of the reading and is followed by the acclamation of the Assembly :

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

The Cantor comes to the front, and will indicate the response time by raising his or her arm for the people of the Assembly to join in the refrain.

Second Reading

The Response from the Reader, or Lector, comes at the end of the reading and is followed by the acclamation of the Assembly:

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel - Stand

Reading of the Gospel

Priest or Deacon: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Priest or Deacon: A Reading from the Holy Gospel....

All: Glory to you, O Lord!

After the Gospel is Proclaimed

Priest or Deacon: The Gospel of the Lord!

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Reflection - Sit

Rite of Penitence

The Celebrant sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then the Celebrant and other ministers place ashes on the heads of all those present who come to them, and says to each one: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Rite of Penitence and Imposition of Ashes

Exhortation

The Celebrant invites the Assembly to the observance of a Holy Lent. At the end of the Exhortation, all pray in a period of silence.

The Celebrant alone stands and the Assembly remains seated. The Celebrant blesses the ashes, saying:

Prayer of Blessing

Priest: Daniel turned to the LORD God, pleading in earnest prayer, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. O LORD, we are shamefaced, like our kings, our princes, and our fathers, for having sinned against you. But yours, O LORD, our God, are compassion and forgiveness! (Dan.9:3,8-9)

Celebrant: Dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly ask God our Father that he be pleased to bless with the abundance of his grace these ashes, which we will put on our heads in penitence.

After a brief prayer in silence, and, with hands extended, the Celebrant continues:

Celebrant: O God, who desire not the death of sinners, but their conversion, mercifully hear our prayers and in your kindness be pleased to bless ✠ these ashes, which we intend to receive upon our heads, that we, who acknowledge we are but ashes and shall return to dust, may, through a steadfast observance of Lent, gain pardon for sins and newness of life after the likeness of your Risen Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

The Celebrant and Assisting Ministers will distribute ashes in three ways today: (1) as per custom with imposition of blessed ashes on forehead and sanitizing in between each person, (2) By placing blessed ashes in the palm of an extended hand for self-imposition, (3) By a person coming to the priest with arms crossed over their chest in the form of St Andrew's Cross for a blessing with no imposition of ashes. After the distribution of the ashes, the Celebrant and other ministers wash their hands. Those who practiced self-imposition may retire to the corridor outside of the sanctuary to cleanse their hands. Afterwards, the Assembly, led by the Celebrant, recite the Litany of Penitence.

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

Litany of Penitence

All: Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

The Celebrant continues:

Celebrant: We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

All: Have mercy on us, Lord.

Celebrant: 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: Have mercy on us, Lord.

Celebrant: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,

All: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,

All: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

All: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,

All: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

All: We confess to you, Lord.

Celebrant: 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.

Celebrant: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

All: Accept our repentance, Lord.

Celebrant: For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

All: Accept our repentance, Lord.

Celebrant: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;

All: Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Celebrant: Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,

All: That we may show forth your glory in the world.

Celebrant: By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

All: Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Celebrant: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live, has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and absolves all those who truly repent, and with sincere hearts believe his holy Gospel.

Therefore we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Priest: At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

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. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Priest: Let us pray.

After a brief period of silence, the minister continues:

Priest: Father, our source of life, you know our weakness. May we reach out with joy to grasp your hand and to walk more readily in your ways. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Concluding Rite

Greeting

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: **And with your spirit.**

The priest concludes the rite by saying:

Priest: May the Father bless us, for he has adopted us as his children.

All: **Amen.**

Priest: May the Son come to help us, for he has received us as brothers and sisters.

All: **Amen.**

Priest: May the Spirit be with us, for he has made us his dwelling place.

All: **Amen.**

Blessing

Priest: And may almighty God bless you all, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

Dismissal

Priest: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, ✠ and bring us to everlasting life.

All: **Amen.**

Exhortation



Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the holy 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. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.



Saint Miriam
Parish & Friary