

A liturgy for ASH WEDNESDAY

The School community gathers and sits quietly in their usual places.

INTRODUCTION

The Dean welcomes everyone to this special liturgy and explains the significance of this day in Christian practice.

- Solemn event
- No singing
- Simple/basic symbols
- Naming/Rejecting evil
- Turning to Life/God
- Embrace wonder of this precious life on earth
- Ecumenical/Interfaith sensitivities

We gather in the name of God:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

CALL TO REPENTANCE

Like the sound of a trumpet or the crack of thunder, God calls us to return.

Return from where? *silence*

Where have we been? *silence*

Sometimes in the busy-ness of life,
it's hard to stop and remember what we're doing.
Let's take a moment to think back over the past week ...
or month ...
or year ...

Let us consider what we have done with our time,
how we have used our abilities,
how we have spent our money,
what we have done with our energy.
Where has our heart been?

silence

Like the sound of a trumpet or the crack of thunder, God calls us to return.
God invites us to come home,
from wherever we have let ourselves wander.

Sometimes we have strayed only a little.
Sometimes we have lost our way.
Where we have been doesn't matter.

From wherever we are in our lives,
God calls us to return,
to come home to God who is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.
Come, let us return to God.

Jesus, Son of David have mercy on us.
Jesus, Son of David have mercy on us.
Have mercy, have mercy, have mercy on us.
Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us

SCRIPTURE READING

A reading from the prophet Joel (2:1-2, 12-17)

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?""

Hear the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

LITURGY OF THE ASHES

Ashes are poured into the bowls.

From the branches of last year's palms, from the echoes of last year's Hosannas,
from the brittleness of last year's good intentions, come the ashes of our
repentance.

Come, receive the sign of ashes.
May our loving God direct each of us through our Lenten journey.

The ashes are placed on each person's forehead 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***

Staff come forward, receive the sign of the cross as a sign of repentance, then stage coordinators, taking a bowl with ash, return to their classes and make the sign of the cross on their students.

Background Music from CD or live —

Come as you are [AOV 1-031] 2 min 34 secs

Act Justly [AOV 1-050] 3 min 54 secs

Blest Are They [AOV 1-055] 4 min 31 secs

PRAYERS OF REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

When all have resumed their seats:

Let us remember before God our selfish ways,
the things we have done wrong,
the mistakes we have made,
the times we have failed to show others our love.

God of grace and mercy,

forgive us for the wrongs we have done to one another and to you.

Help us to mend our ways.

Help us to know we are forgiven so we can live your love in our lives.

This we ask through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Water is poured into a clear bowl as the following is said:

From the life-giving waters of creation, from the birthing waters of our baptism,
from the cleansing waters of God's forgiveness, come the waters of our pardon.
God forgive you your sins and keep you in life eternal. **Amen.**

Water is sprinkled over the community

You have created a clean heart in us, O God,
and washed us thoroughly.

You have put a new and right spirit in us.

As we make our Lenten journey,
sustain this willing spirit within us.

As we journey from the ashes of repentance
to the wonder of resurrection,
restore to us the joy of your salvation.

God, creator of all life, O come and be with us.

God, creator of all life, O come and be with us.

O come and be, O come and be,

O come and be with us.

God, creator of all life, O come and be with us.

FINAL PRAYERS

The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

God be in my Head

God be in my head,
and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes,
and in my looking;
God be in my mouth,
and in my speaking;
God be in my heart,
and in my thinking;
God be at my end,
and at my departing.

The Lord bless us and keep us,
today and always. **Amen.**

Students are dismissed and return to classes