

# Liturgy Alive of Ash Wednesday

ASH Wednesday

AWAY WITH ALL MARKS

Greeting

The peace and reconciliation  
of the merciful Father

be always with you. R/ And also with you.

Introduction by the Celebrant

In many regions of the world people celebrate carnival in the days before Lent with much noise and merrymaking. Often they wear masks for the occasion. But today Lent begins, the time to put off our masks and to turn our face and heart to God and to people. In this holy season we reflect on the true meaning of our lives. Who am I  
and what am I living for? Am I living for God and the community? We shall be invited to receive ashes on our foreheads with the invitation, "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel." Away, then, with all masks and return to God, to your true self and to one another as God's people.

*Note. The penitential rite is omitted, since the rite of the ashes is a rite of penance and conversion.*

Opening Prayer

Let us pray that this Lent  
we may become more faithful to the gospel  
(Pause)  
God of life and Father of mercy,  
you want all your sons and daughters to be free  
and to live as your holy people.  
In this time of Lent we pray you:  
set us free from the shackles  
of our selfish concerns for honor and power,  
possessions and pleasure.

Make us live the life of your Son  
in the service of people.  
In honor of you, our living God.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. R/ Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading Introduction

True fasting and penance mean a sincere change of heart: turning away from evil to turn towards the loving God.

BLESSING OF ASHES

Introduction by the Celebrant

These palm leaves have turned  
from green branches into gray ashes.

This is the way it goes with us.

We do not remain the same;  
we grow older,  
we make life gray and dusty

for ourselves and for others.

These ashes remind us of the brittleness of life,  
of our guilt and the penance we need.  
We will humbly receive these ashes  
as we are marked with the sign of the cross,  
for our hearts are willing to follow Jesus

on the way of self-denial and love.

#### Prayer of Blessing

Bless + these ashes, Lord,  
as the sign of conversion and penance,  
as the token that we want  
to discover your Son today  
in the silence of our prayer  
and in our neighbors,

whom we encounter in their needs.

Let the sign of the cross,  
given in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit  
encourage and heal us,  
so that we may serve you and our neighbor

by the strength of Jesus Christ our Lord. *R/ Amen.*

The priest sprinkles the ashes in silence. Then follows the imposition of ashes:

*Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel.*

#### General Intercessions

At the beginning of this season of conversion, we look forward to reconciliation with God and our neighbor. Let us bring before our Father our cares and the needs of all, and let us say: *R/ Have mercy on your people, Lord.*

- For the Church of Jesus Christ, that it may be freed from human shortcomings so that it can show to all the light and the power of the gospel, let us pray: *R/ Have mercy on your people, Lord.*
- For people far and near who are stuck in sin and discouragement, that they may find reconciliation with God, with themselves, and with the people around them, let us pray: *R/ Have mercy on your people, Lord.*
- For those hardened by riches or power and insensitive to the needs of others, that in these forty days of penance they may discover ways of true happiness through generosity to their neighbor, let us pray: *R/ Have mercy on your people, Lord.*
- For all those who bear a heavy load of suffering and cares, that they may with courage follow the way of the Lord Jesus, let us pray: *R/ Have mercy on your people, Lord.*
- For one another, that each of us may be ready to go the way of peace and reconciliation, of service and commitment, let us pray: *R/ Have mercy on your people, Lord.*

Lord our God, every year you give us special opportunities to grow in love of you and our neighbor. Give us the strength to live these forty days in the spirit of Jesus our Lord. *R/ Amen.*

#### Prayer over the Gifts

God our Father,  
your Son Jesus gave up everything  
to be free for you and for people.  
We bring these gifts of bread and wine before you  
as signs that we want to be free  
to live for you and for those around us.  
Accept these offerings, and make them  
bread of happiness and wine of joy  
for our world today.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. *R/ Amen.*

**Invitation to the Lord's Prayer**

Let us pray to our merciful Father  
that we may forgive others

as he has forgiven our sins through Jesus: *R/ Our Father...*

**Deliver Us**

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil  
and grant us the peace of reconciliation  
with you and with people far and near.  
Help us to make up for the harm  
we have done to others  
and to live in hope and joy  
for the future you have prepared for us

through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *R/ For the kingdom...*

**Invitation to Communion**

This is Jesus the Lord,  
who showed us the way  
of forgiveness and love.  
Let us receive him with joy.

for he is our strength. *R/ Lord, I am not worthy...*

**Prayer after Communion**

Our merciful God,  
we are afraid of facing ourselves  
and giving up our attachments  
to our selfish ways.

We have heard Jesus' words  
and eaten his body.

May these help us rise from the ashes of sin  
and renew our fervor and love,  
that we may follow him  
on the narrow road of life  
to you and to people.

We ask this in this season of grace  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *R/ Amen.*

**Blessing**

Only God can make us whole again  
from our brokenness.  
Only God can give us the insight  
to discover how often we are alienated

from him, from people, even from our true selves.  
Only God can give us the strength  
to change our ways and to become all new.  
May the living and loving God bless you:

the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *R/ Amen.*

Go in peace

and may Christ be your strength. *R/ Thanks be to God.*