

## *Ash Wednesday 2019*

The blessing and distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday normally takes place during the celebration of Mass. However, when circumstances require, the blessing and distribution of ashes may take place apart from Mass, during a celebration of the Liturgy of the Word.

A sample format for the celebration of the reception of ashes outside Mass is provided below. This celebration assumes that the ashes being used have already been blessed.

## *Ash Wednesday*

### *Sample liturgy for the reception of ashes outside Mass*

#### **Opening song**

Choose one of the following:

- ‘Again we keep this solemn fast’—CWBII 285, G 487
- ‘Be still and know that I am God’—GA 401
- ‘Grant to us O Lord, a heart renewed’—CWBII 291, GA 303
- ‘Praise to you, O Christ, our Saviour’—AOV1 28, CWBII 587, G 596, GA 407

#### **Introduction**

**Liturgy leader** Today, we gather as we begin the journey of Lent.

**Reader** As a (school) community, we join with Christians throughout the world to remember and recall the events of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.

**Reader** On Ash Wednesday, many Christians receive a cross of ashes on their foreheads. This powerful sign reminds us that we are fragile people and that we are not perfect. It reminds us that we are called to be people of kindness, care and compassion—towards our land, with each other and with our God.

**Reader** We have the opportunity to tell God and each other that we are sorry for the times we have been hurtful. This is a time for us to think deeply about our lives and about God.

#### **Collect**

**Liturgy leader** + In the name of the Father,  
the Son and the Holy Spirit.

God of kindness and mercy,  
we pray that through our actions of living prayerfully, simply  
and generously we will come closer to you.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord,  
Amen.

## Liturgy of the Word

### *First reading*

**Reader**

A reading from the prophet Joel:

‘Now, now—it is the Lord who speaks—  
come back to me with all your heart,  
fasting, weeping, mourning.’

Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn,  
turn to the Lord your God again,  
for he is all tenderness and compassion,  
slow to anger, rich in graciousness,  
and ready to relent.

Who knows if he will not turn again, will not relent,  
will not leave a blessing as he passes,  
oblation and libation  
for the Lord your God?

Sound the trumpet in Zion!  
Order a fast,  
proclaim a solemn assembly,  
call the people together,  
summon the community,  
assemble the elders,  
gather the children,  
even the infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his bedroom  
and the bride her alcove.

Between vestibule and altar let the priests,  
the ministers of the Lord, lament.

Let them say,

‘Spare your people, Lord!

Do not make your heritage a thing of shame,  
a byword for the nations.

Why should it be said among the nations,  
“Where is their God?”

Then the Lord, jealous on behalf of his land,  
took pity on his people.

*(Joel 2:12–18)*

The word of the Lord.

**All**

Thanks be to God.

### *Responsorial psalm (Psalm 50)*

*(If sung, use GA 40 or 41.)*

**All**

Create a clean heart in us, O God.

**Reader**

Have mercy on us, God, in your kindness.  
In your compassion blot out our offences.

O wash us more and more from our guilt  
and cleanse us from our sin.

**All** Create a clean heart in us, O God.

**Reader** A pure heart create for us, O God,  
put a steadfast spirit within us.  
Do not cast us away from your presence,  
nor deprive us of your holy spirit.

**All** Create a clean heart in us, O God.

**Reader** Give us again the joy of your help;  
with a spirit of fervour sustain us,  
that we may teach each other your ways  
and sinners may return to you.

**All** Create a clean heart in us, O God.

*(Psalm 50:3–6, 12–14, 17)*

### *Gospel acclamation*

**All** Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.  
If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.  
Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*(see Psalm 94:8)*

### *Gospel*

**Reader** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men’s admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

‘And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

‘When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will

know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.’

*(Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18)*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All**

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*(Allow some time of silence after the gospel.)*

### **Distribution of ashes**

**Liturgy leader:** God of our lives and our Lenten journey. You guide us and share our lives. In times of struggle and in times of joy, you are with us. We ask for your spirit to be with us during these forty days of Lent.

*(As ashes are distributed)*

Be hopeful and turn your life toward God.

*or*

Repent, and believe in the Gospel.

*or*

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

Suggested music for during the distribution of ashes:

- ‘From ashes to the living font’—CWBII 289, G 474
- ‘Healer of my soul’—John Michael Talbot
- ‘Return to God’—CWBII 298, G 478, GA 304
- ‘Servant Song’—AOV2 169, CWBII 461, G 751, GA 487

### **Prayer of commitment for Lent**

**All**

Today, we commit ourselves to taking a Lenten journey.

We commit ourselves to being more prayerful.

We commit ourselves to living simpler lives.

We commit ourselves to sharing with those who are in need.

As a community, we make a special promise to work for peace and to support Project Compassion as a sign of bringing hope to people in need.

### **Prayer of the faithful**

**Liturgy leader**

Gracious God,

We come before you bringing our own needs and the needs of the world.

**Reader**

Let us pray for our community:

That we will come to a deeper understanding of how to live peacefully and to learn gratefully.

God of kindness and mercy, hear us.

**All**

God of kindness and mercy, hear our prayer.

**Reader** Let us pray for all those who suffer:  
That all who are distressed receive comfort.  
God of kindness and mercy, hear us.

**All** God of kindness and mercy, hear our prayer.

**Reader** Let us pray for those who are caring for the injured and the heartbroken:  
That they be given strength for their work.  
God of kindness and mercy, hear us.

**All** God of kindness and mercy, hear our prayer.

**Reader** Let us pray for generous hearts:  
That we will grow in sensitivity to those in need.  
God of kindness and mercy, hear us.

**All** God of kindness and mercy, hear our prayer.

**Reader** Let us take a moment to think about our hope for Lent. (*Silence*)  
God of kindness and mercy, hear my prayer for Lent.

**All** God of kindness and mercy, hear our prayers.

### Final blessing

**Liturgy leader** May God go before us to show the right way.  
May God be beside us to protect us.  
May God be behind us to keep us safe.  
May God be beneath us to catch us when we fall.  
May God be within us to comfort us when we are sad.  
May God surround us.  
May God bless us.

**All** Blessed be the God of goodness and mercy.

### Final song

Choose one of the following:

- ‘A new heart for a new world’ (‘Create a new heart’)—AOV1 158, CWBII 477, GA 438
- ‘May this Lenten discipline’—CWB 746, CWBII 295
- ‘Praise to you, O Christ, our Saviour’—AOV1 28, CWBII 587, G 596, GA 407
- ‘We are called’—AOV2 60, CWBII 476, G 807, GA 514



For more Lent resources, please visit [www.cam.org.au/evangelisation](http://www.cam.org.au/evangelisation)