

ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY AT HOME

1. *Gather together and start with the Sign of the Cross:*

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

2. *Read the Gospel for Ash Wednesday:*

The Gospel according to St. 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.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

R: Thanks be to God.

3. *Say the following prayer:*

Lord God, with all our hearts we beseech you:
have mercy on your people;
spare your people;
strengthen all people in the struggle against the havoc of this pandemic.
Lord our God, without you we are so weak and our courage so limited.
Give us your strength;
give us your love;
give us wisdom and skill to continue this fight.
Spare your people, O Lord we pray.
Comfort those who mourn and
gather into your kingdom all who have died.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord,
who died and rose to life,
who lives and reigns with you,
for ever and ever. Amen.

4. *Dipping the thumb into the ash/soil mixed with some drops of water, make a Sign of the Cross on each other’s forehead (or your own, if alone), with the words:*

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

5. *Pray together the Our Father and Hail Mary, remembering your personal intentions or the people you would like to pray for*

6. *Conclude with the Glory Be prayer:*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever
shall be, a world without end. Amen.

7. *Give each other a sign of peace*

So we begin Lent...!