

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE
Deacon George Collins

Hear us, O Lord, for boundless is your kindness; in your great mercy turn toward us, O Lord. Save us O God from the waters of chaos that threaten our lives.

The Lord be with you and with your spirit. Let us pray:

Oh, almighty and everlasting God, spare those who are penitent, be merciful to those who implore you. Send your holy angel from heaven to bless and sanctify these ashes, that they may be a wholesome remedy to all who in humility, implore your Holy Name and who accuse themselves, conscious of their sins, implore your divine mercy and humbly beseech your blessing. We pray that whoever shall be signed with these ashes for the remission of their sins, may receive both health of body and safety for their souls through Christ our Lord.

Lord you desire not the death, but the repentance of sinners; look down most graciously upon our frail human nature, and in your goodness give purpose and meaning to the ashes we put upon our head in token of our lowliness, and to obtain forgiveness, before we return to dust from whence we came.

Almighty and everlasting God, you granted your healing pardon upon the Ninivites doing penance in sackcloth and ashes; mercifully grant that we may so imitate them in behavior as to follow them in obtaining forgiveness, through Christ Our Lord, AMEN.

BLESS THE ASHES WITH HOLY WATER. 3X

Reading: Jonah, 3, Gospel: Matthew 6: 16-21

Homily: humility & joy

Let us pray: O Lord, deal with us not according to our sins, nor condemn us according to our neglects of the past. Come to us

quickly with your compassion for we are brought very low. We bow down our heads to receive the ashes of sorrow and repentance.

[come forth to receive ashes]

Let us pray together in the words our Lord gave us.. [Our Father]

Help us amend our way for the better in those things in which we have sinned through ignorance, lest suddenly, we are overtaken by the day of death, and at that moment we may seek time for repentance and not be able to find it. Lord, deliver us for the glory of your name. For if we fall, who but you, can pick us up? LORD, send the Holy Spirit to us to open our hearts and minds that we may use this time wisely, as you are merciful to us, so may we also be merciful to all others, as our Lenten commitment.

Our sins are a rebellion against you. The sinner dies a little each time he sins and will ultimately destroy himself. God gives us the next forty days of Lent to seek reconciliation with Him, as He gave the citizens of Nivinah forty days to repent. When we open ourselves to the Lord, marvelous things can happen! Joy is brought to our souls and peace can reign in our hearts as we prepare for our future. Lent is not just about sackcloth and ashes; it is also about prayer. Just as Jonah prayed for deliverance from the whale, we make a resolve to pray more often, daily in fact; for prayer is uplifting in spirit, just as the ashes are an uplifting sign of our humility, not our pride. We always pray that God's will be done, not ours.

Today GOD our Father has brought us to the beginning of Lent. We pray that at this time of salvation He will fill us with the Holy Spirit, purify our hearts and strengthen us in love as we go forth to face our life's trials with forbearance and in great expectation of His goodness and forgiveness. AMEN

May the peace of the Lord be with you as you go forth from this service! [make the sign of the cross]