

**Opening Salutation** (*The people stand*)

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

**People:** *And also with you.*

**The Collect**

Celebrant: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**The First Reading:** Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come. “Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God. Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

**People:** *Thanks be to God.*

**Psalm 103:8-14**

8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

**9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;**

10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

**11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;**

12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

**13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;**

14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

**The Second Reading:** Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting.

Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

**People:** *Thanks be to God.*

**The Sermon:** The Reverend Ronnie Short

**Hymn #488:** “Be Thou My Vision”

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
all else be nought to me, save that thou art--  
thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
thou my great Father; thine own may I be;  
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

3 High King of heaven, when victory is won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, bright heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my heart, whatever befall,  
still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

*After the Hymn, all stand, and the Celebrant or Minister appointed invites the people to the observance of a holy Lent, saying*

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

*Silence is then kept for a time, all kneeling*

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth: Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we may remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

*The ashes are imposed with the following words*

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

Psalm 51

***1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.***

***2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.***

***3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.***

***4 Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.***

***5 And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment***

***6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb.***

***7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.***

***8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.***

***9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice.***

***10 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.***

***11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.***

***12 Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me.***

***13 Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.***

***14 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, and sinners shall return to you.***

***15 Deliver me from death, O God, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.***

***16 Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.***

***17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice; but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.***

***18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.***

**Litany of Penitence** *(The Celebrant and People together, all kneeling)*

Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

*The Celebrant continues*

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

***Have mercy on us, Lord.***

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

***Have mercy on us, Lord.***

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,  
***We confess to you, Lord.***

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,  
***We confess to you, Lord.***

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,  
*We confess to you, Lord.*

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,  
*We confess to you, Lord.*

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,  
*We confess to you, Lord.*

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,  
*Accept our repentance, Lord.*

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,  
*Accept our repentance, Lord.*

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,  
*Accept our repentance, Lord.*

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;  
*Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.*

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,  
*That we may show forth your glory in the world.*

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,  
*Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.*

*A deacon or lay reader leading the service remains kneeling and substitutes the prayer for forgiveness appointed at Morning Prayer.*

Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. *Amen.*

**The Peace:** *(The people stand)*

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

***People:*** *And also with you*

**Hymn #150:** “Forty Days and Forty Nights”

1. Forty days and forty nights  
thou wast fasting in the wild;  
forty days and forty nights  
tempted, and yet undefiled.

2. Should not we thy sorrow share  
and from worldly joys abstain,  
fasting with unceasing prayer,  
strong with thee to suffer pain?

3. Then if Satan on us press,  
Jesus, Savior, hear our call!  
Victor in the wilderness,  
grant we may not faint or fall!

4. So shall we have peace divine:  
holier gladness ours shall be;  
round us, too, shall angels shine,  
such as ministered to thee.

5. Keep, O keep us, Savior dear,  
ever constant by thy side;  
that with thee we may appear  
at the eternal Eastertide.