

our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

JESUS SAID, “Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

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ASH WEDNESDAY

Revised Common Lectionary

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

COLLECT

Traditional

ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING GOD, who hatest nothing that thou hast made and dost forgive the sins of all those 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 thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Contemporary

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.*

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

BLOW THE TRUMPET in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, “Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

or Isaiah 58:1-12

SHOUT OUT, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Refrain

The Lord remembers that we are but dust.

Psalm 103 (or Psalm 103:8-14) *from the Book of Common Prayer*

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| 1 | Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
and all that is within me, bless
his holy Name. | 3 | He forgives all your sins * and
heals all your infirmities; |
| 2 | Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
and forget not all his benefits. | 4 | He redeems your life from the
grave * and crowns you with
mercy and loving-kindness; |

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| 5 | He satisfies you with good
things, * and your youth is
renewed like an eagle's. | 14 | For he himself knows whereof
we are made; * he remembers
that we are but dust.] |
| 6 | The LORD executes righteous-
ness * and judgment for all
who are oppressed. | 15 | Our days are like the
grass; * we flourish like a
flower of the field; |
| 7 | He made his ways known to
Moses * and his works to the
children of Israel. | 16 | When the wind goes over it,
it is gone, * and its place
shall know it no more. |
| [8 | The LORD is full of compassion
and mercy, * slow to anger and
of great kindness. | 17 | But the merciful goodness of
the LORD endures for ever on
those who fear him, * and his
righteousness on children's
children; |
| 9 | He will not always accuse us, *
nor will he keep his anger for
ever. | 18 | On those who keep his cov-
enant * and remember his
commandments and do them. |
| 10 | He has not dealt with us ac-
cording to our sins, * nor
rewarded us according
to our wickedness. | 19 | The LORD has set his throne in
heaven, * and his kingship has
dominion over all. |
| 11 | For as the heavens are high
above the earth, * so is his
mercy great upon those
who fear him. | 20 | Bless the LORD, you angels of
his, you mighty ones who do
his bidding, * and hearken to
the voice of his word. |
| 12 | As far as the east is from the
west, * so far has he removed
our sins from us. | 21 | Bless the LORD, all you his
hosts, * you ministers of his
who do his will. |
| 13 | As a father cares for his chil-
dren, * so does the LORD
care for those who fear him. | 22 | Bless the LORD, all you works
of his, in all places of his do-
minion; * bless the LORD, O my
soul. |

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

WE ENTREAT YOU on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with