

# THE CHURCH’S LAW GOVERNING FASTING

## A TABLE OF FASTS

Ash Wednesday

Good Friday

OTHER DAYS OF FASTING, ON WHICH THE CHURCH REQUIRES SUCH A MEASURE OF ABSTINENCE AS IS MORE ESPECIALLY SUITED TO EXTRAORDINARY ACTS AND EXERCISES OF DEVOTION.

- I. The Forty Days of Lent.
- II. The Ember Days at the Four Seasons, being the Wednesday, Friday. and Saturday after the First Sunday in Lent, the Feast of Pentecost, September 14, and December 13.
- III. All the Fridays in the Year, except Christmas Day, and The Epiphany, or any Friday which may intervene between these Feasts.

-Book of Common Prayer, li

## RULES OF FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Fasting is a Christian duty. In modern times it is customary to distinguish between abstinence (in which the quality of food is lowered, usually by not eating meat) and fasting (in which the quantity of food is reduced as well) although these terms are sometimes used interchangeably. The discipline "which the Church requires" is widely recognized to be the following:

- 1. Abstinence from flesh meat on Fridays throughout the year (except those falling on Christmas or Epiphany or between those feasts).
- 2. Fasting, usually meaning not more than a light breakfast, one full meal, and one half meal, on the forty days of Lent.
- 3. Fasting with abstinence on Ember Days, on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, and on Easter Even up to noon, at which time Lent is commonly held to end and Eastertide to begin.

Those who cannot choose their food (soldiers, certain employees, etc.) should eat what is set before them, although they should welcome the opportunity to observe abstinence. Illness, old age, extreme youth, and heavy manual work excuse from fasting, but the major Fast Days of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, as the American Prayer-Book indicates, are stricter in obligation, though not in observance, than the other Fast Days, and therefore should not be neglected except in cases of serious illness or other necessity of an absolute character.

The desire to imitate the stricter fasts of previous ages, or of saintly ascetics such as the Tractarians, may be a moving of divine love, or sometimes it may be a love of singularity. But since the practice may be unwise, it should never be undertaken without consultation with a competent spiritual guide.

-St. Augustine’s Prayer Book, pg. 4



Ash Wednesday

17 FEBRUARY 2021  
6:30 PM



**Welcome to St. Luke Church, especially if you are a newcomer or visitor. Children of all ages are fully welcome in each liturgy. Please refer to the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Hymnal* throughout the Mass. We ask that you please keep prayerful silence in the church both before and after the liturgy tonight. Silence is golden, but especially in church!**

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In Genesis 3:19 we hear God tell us "for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," but nowadays, when someone dies, they are rushed from deathbed to funeral home to be embalmed and to be worked over by a make-up artist so that that "dusty reality" is hidden from us. Their deaths are spoken of as almost an embarrassment; "he passed," they say, or "he is no longer with us." These comforting but sterile luxuries weren't an option in the past when plagues felled so many people that there weren't enough survivors to bury them, when bodies had to be stored all winter until the ground was soft enough to dig, when most of the children a woman bore died before they were able to grow up. In our culture, with our medicines and "funeral sciences," we are afraid to look at death, and we are a poorer people because of it. No matter how long science can prolong life, no matter how much embalming fluid is pumped into a corpse, nature will have her way. This is Truth. And when nature has her way, we can either rest in the knowledge that the ultimate Victor is Christ, Our Lord, Who walked out of His tomb 2,000 years ago and offers resurrection to us, or we can believe that decay is all that is left. This is the meaning of Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is the day for being reminded of and contemplating our mortality, of which Ecclesiasticus 1 reminds us: "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh..."

When a new Pope processes to St. Peter's Basilica to offer his first Mass as Pope, the procession stops three times and, at each stop, a piece of flax mounted on a reed is burned. As the flames die, the Pope hears the words, "*Pater sancte, sic transit gloria mundi*" ("Holy Father, thus passes the glory of the world"), to remind him not only that he is a mere man, but as a man, a mere mortal whose end is like the end of all other men. The things of this world are transient, and Christians must always keep one eye on the world to come. Recalling this Truth is one of the principles behind the use of ashes on the forehead this day: to remind us that we are mortal, subject to the rot and decay our Western culture now desperately tries to euphemize away, and that we are radically dependent on -- solely dependent on -- Jesus Christ to overcome this fate.

They are like a yearly contemplation of the tombstone inscribed with:

**Remember friends as you pass by, as you are now so once was I.  
As I am now so you must be. Prepare for death and follow me.**

While death should, of course, be avoided as the evil it is, we should accept the reality of it with the attitude behind the words attributed to the great Sioux warrior, Crazy Horse: "It is a good day to die". Death should not be feared in itself; what should be approached with trepidation is the judgment that follows -- not because God is a malicious Father who wants to inflict pain, but because He is as just as He is merciful. We need to repent, accept the reality of death, and not only consider our judgment, but be ready for it.

## A MEDITATION BY LANCELOT ANDREWES

We begin our Lenten Pilgrimage with the words of Lancelot Andrewes. Andrewes was a 17th-century poet, theologian, and Bishop of Winchester. He did not live to endure the horrific regicide of His Sovereign Lord, King Charles I. But on his own spiritual journey he culled gifts of Grace that have helped many a Christian in the modern age to understand the important place of enduring all manner of spiritual suffering as the soul moves from repentance and death and into virtue and new life. He had a special influence on T. S. Eliot. Perhaps these words that he writes can form a kind of introduction for us as we begin this Holy Season of Lent.

Lord I have sinned

But I am ashamed,

And I turn from my wicked ways,

And I return unto my heart,

And with all my heart I return unto Thee,

And seek thy face

And pray unto Thee saying,

I have sinned, I have done amiss, I have dealt wickedly,

I know, O Lord, the plague of my heart:

And behold I turn unto Thee

With all my heart

And with all my strength.

And now, O Lord, from thy dwelling place

And from the throne of the glory of thy kingdom in heaven,

Hear therefore the prayer and supplication of thy servant,

And forgive thy servant

And heal his soul.


Our Holy Season of Lent must begin with honesty. There is no point to keeping Lent if it will not be made holy through an honest recognition of our sins, negligences, and the evil that characterizes the nature of our hearts. Have we sinned? Have we gone astray? Can we admit it? Or are we only interested in judging other men's sins, other men's failures, and other men's weaknesses? Pharisees judge others and gossip about them. Pharisees are cold and cruel critics full of their own contamination. Today we are called to recall our sins, yes our sins and our rebellion against the Most High God. The knowledge of sin breeds shame over it. Shame over sin yields yet again the experience of sin's effects on others and on one's own soul. Sin itself is all the more sinful as the habit of its unholiness is experienced as a plague that has corrupted others and the self. The heart is full of plague and pestilence. The true affections of the heart have been choked and suffocated by the sins of the flesh and the devil.

With what little affection and strength remain, the penitent soul turns wholly to God. And yet that little bit of love and that slender thread of power is sufficient to turn again back to God for succor and salvation. His strength is nearly dried up like a potsherd. His affection is small and feeble, having been exhausted on a host of lesser but larger loves. But God loves small beginnings and simple honesty. God loves pure humility and honest self-denial. God loves those who reveal themselves fully to Him. Their sins may be great, but His love and mercy are greater.

The Pax Domini

℣. The Peace of the Lord be alway with you.

℟:



And with thy — spi - rit.

Prayer of Humble Access

Agnus Dei

BCP 82

Hymnal #706

Ecce Agnus Dei

℣. Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him that taketh away the sins of the world.

℟: *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my soul shall be healed.* (Said thrice)

The Holy Communion

¶ **Any baptized Christian who is a regular communicant in the Anglican, Orthodox, or Roman Catholic traditions is invited to receive the Blessed Sacrament. If you are unable or do not wish to receive the Holy Communion, please approach with your arms crossed over your chest, and the priest will extend you a blessing. Whilst in your pew, please remain in quiet prayer.**

Communion Sentence

He who doth meditate on the law of the Lord day and night will bring forth his fruit in due season.

¶ **Please kneel in quiet prayer during Holy Communion.**

Communion Thanksgiving

Post-Communion Collect

Prayer over the People

Dismissal and Blessing

BCP 83

BCP 84

¶ **Please stand for the Hymn.**

Hymn at the Retiring Procession

Hymn Board

¶ **During Lent, there will be no Organ Voluntaries after Mass. Please make your Communion thanksgiving and depart the church quietly.**

THE PENITENTIAL OFFICE

AND BLESSING OF ASHES

¶ **Please kneel as the bells are rung.**

The Penitential Office

The Blessing and Imposition of Ashes

BCP 60

Missal

¶ **After the Blessing, as the Priest approaches the rail, please come forward and kneel at the rail if you wish to receive the imposition of ashes.**

SUNG MASS

¶ **The order for the Holy Communion begins on page 67 of the *Book of Common Prayer*.**

¶ **Please kneel during the Introit.**

Introit

Thou hast mercy upon all, O Lord, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made, and winkest at the sins of men, because they should amend, and sparest them: for thou art the Lord our God. *Ps.* Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Collect for Purity

Summary of the Law

Kyrie eleison (***Each verse sung thrice***)

Collect of the Day

BCP 67

BCP 69

Hymnal #702

BCP 124

¶ **Please be seated.**

The Epistle

Gradual and Tract

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproof of him that would eat

BCP 124

¶ **Please stand for the Gradual and Tract.**

me up. O Lord, deal not with us after our sins; nor reward us according to wickednesses. Lord, remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon: for we are come to great misery. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy Name, O Lord: O deliver us and be merciful unto our sins, for thy Name's sake.

The Gospel BCP 125

**¶ Please be seated.**

Sermon

**¶ Please stand for the Offertory Sentence and Hymn.**

Offertory Sentence

I will magnify thee, O Lord, for thou hast set me up, and not made my foes to triumph over me: O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

Offertory Hymn Hymn Board

Orate Fratres

℣. Pray, brethren, that this my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Father almighty.

℟. *May the Lord receive the sacrifice at thy hands for the praise and glory of his name, both to our benefit, and that of all his holy Church.*

**¶ Please kneel.**

Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church BCP 74  
General Confession & Comfortable Words BCP 75  
Sursum Corda and Preface BCP 77

Celebrant

People

The Lord be with you. And with thy spi - rit.

Celebrant

People

Lift up your hearts. We lift them up un - to the Lord.

Celebrant

Let us give thanks un - to our Lord God.

People

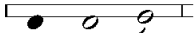
It is meet and right so to do.

Sanctus et Benedictus Hymnal #796  
The Canon of the Mass BCP 80

**¶ At the elevation of the Host and Chalice, you are invited to make the Sign of the Cross and say silently, “My Lord and my God,” in adoration of our Lord’s Eucharistic presence.**

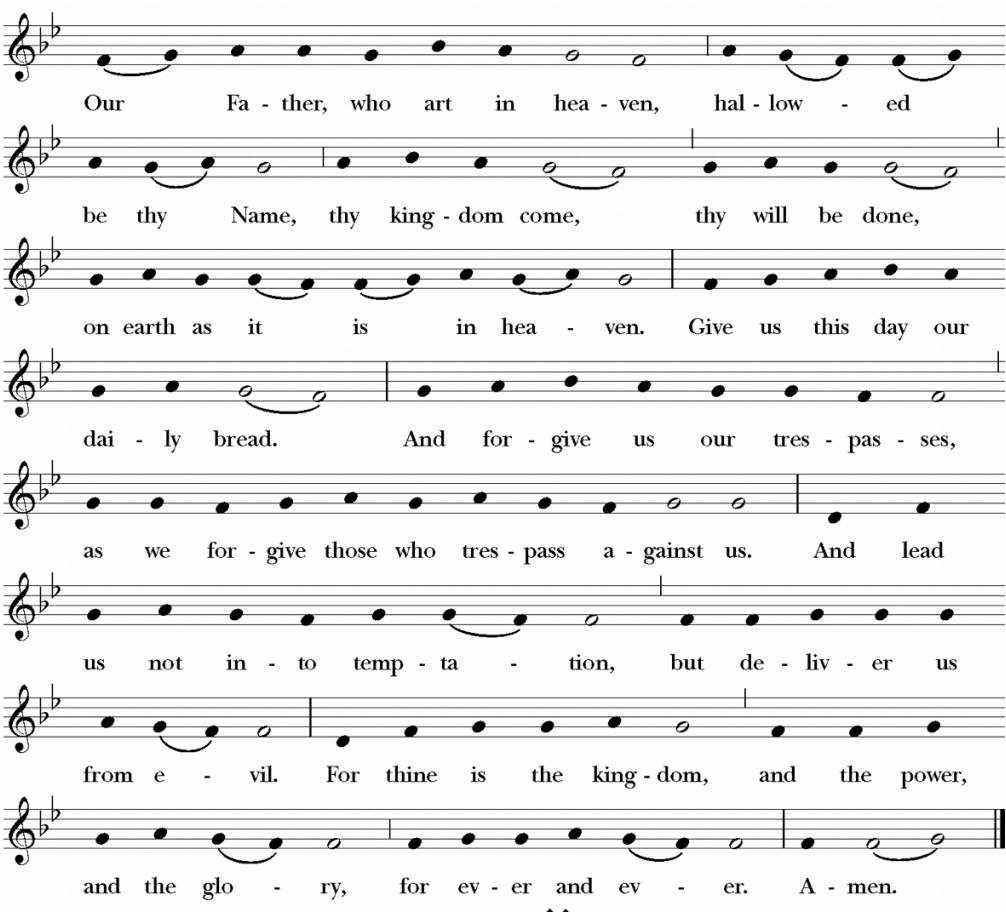
℣. O Father almighty, world without end.

℟.



A - men.

The Lord's Prayer



Our Fa - ther, who art in hea - ven, hal - low - ed  
be thy Name, thy king - dom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in hea - ven. Give us this day our  
dai - ly bread. And for - give us our tres - pas - ses,  
as we for - give those who tres - pass a - gainst us. And lead  
us not in - to temp - ta - tion, but de - liv - er us  
from e - vil. For thine is the king - dom, and the power,  
and the glo - ry, for ev - er and ev - er. A - men.