

Ash Wednesday



17th February 2010
12:20pm

Call to Worship:

E te whanau a te Karaiti, every year at Easter, we celebrate the triumph of Love through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to practice with discipline daily turning to God, listening and waiting upon the source and power of our living. We begin this season by acknowledging our mortality, our ultimate powerlessness, and our ultimate reliance upon the ever-potent Love called God.

Psalm: The Heart of Stone

Liturgist:

There are times when I've cried out,
"God, give me back my heart of stone
and a ladder so that I can climb
up to my head and live there
with doors and windows shut on feeling.
God, God, I'm tired of all the hurt.
For a little while, let me live
a second-hand life. Let me tread
the safe path of other people's ideas.
Just let me drop this awesome responsibility you
have given me,
to grow through love and pain."

Congregation:

**Then I remember what it's like
to exist with a heart of stone.
How cold and dead I felt inside,
and how divided the world was
when viewed without love in my heart.**

Liturgist:

Remembering, I pour myself before God
and whisper into His waiting,
"My God, there is no going back.
It has to be a soft heart,
one that is always vulnerable
to the love and wounding
which is life,
which is growth,
which is You."

Congregation:

**Keep within me, my God,
the heart of flesh.**

By Joy Cowley

Penitential Prayer:

"I call heaven and earth to witness that I have set
before you life and death... choose life"

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine."

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison

"As you, God, are in me and I am in you, may they
also be in us that the world may believe that you
sent me. The glory that you have given me I have
given them, so that they may be one, as we are
one."

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison

May the God of mercy, justice, and compassion
pardon you and set you free.

Know that you are forgiven and be at peace.

The Blessing And Imposition of Ashes

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of
ashes. This ancient sign speaks of the frailty and
uncertainty of human life, calls us to turn to God,
and place our hope in Love alone.

Gracious God, you have created us out of the dust
of the earth. May these ashes remind us of our
mortality and need, and remind us of your precious
gifts of life and hope. **Amen.**

*The congregation are invited to come forward to
receive the imposition of ashes. The priest will
mark the forehead of each person with ashes, using
the following words:*

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

Collect:

Together we pray

**Source of all love and mercy,
you hate nothing you have made.
Challenge us to forgive ourselves for those
actions unworthy of the divine within us:
Create a new and contrite heart within us,
that forsakes condemning ourselves and others.
Open us to your spirit
that we may be a beacon of your love. *Amen.***

Gospel Reading:

The Holy Gospel According to St Matthew, chapter
6, beginning at 1st verse.

Praise and glory to God.

Matthew 6:1-8

This is the Gospel of Christ.
Praise to Christ the Word.

The Homily

The Peace

We commit ourselves to live in peace
as we work for it

To kindle peace within, between and beyond us

For the peace of Jesus is an active peace
Building, bridging and always dreaming

We share a sign of peace

The Great Thanksgiving

Hope is among us.

We are God's light

Shine then with freedom

Into all the corners of the world

Lest fear overcome the brilliance

Of life and light and liberty

From the beginning life has been shaped by despair, struggle, and triumph. Oppressive forces have time and again tried to destroy the hope of the marginalized and vulnerable. The forces of wealth and privilege, armies and theology, have beaten down upon the poor. Yet hope has never been extinguished. When all seems lost the embers stir back into life, and the light of justice ignites again. For this we give deep and heartfelt thanks.

Shortly before Jesus died he gathered around him his closest friends... women and men who had shared in his despair, struggles, and triumphs. They met in a small upstairs room. The forces of power and self-interest were closing in. All their excitement, anticipation, and hopes were about to be put to death on a cross. In this moment Jesus took bread and wine, and likened it to his own life, broken and poured out for others.

In doing so he invited them and us to share in the brokenness of our world, and to share too in the healing of our world through self-giving love. In bread broken and wine poured out he initiated a new community. An upside-down community which believes that loving is more important than winning, doing what is right is more important than doing what is safe, and setting people free is more important than trying to control their lives. It is a community marked by justice and hope.

Therefore with all who have struggled, dreamed, and triumphed we say:

**Holy, holy, holy is the Love called God,
the sparks of hope.**

Blaze Justice blace.

**Blest is Jesus who lit up our world,
who lit up our world.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna
to the lowest and the least.**

And so we remember on the night before he died
Jesus took bread; when he had given thanks he
broke it, gave it to his friends and said:
*Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do
this to remember me.*

After supper he took the cup; when he had given
thanks he gave it to them and said:
*Drink this, all of you, for this is my blood which
brings new life; do this as often as you drink it, to
remember me*

With this bread and wine we remember the dream
of God, and the call of God.

**We offer bread to eat with eyes and hands held
open. We pass this cup to share. We take,
break, bless and give kindling hope ev'ry where.**

Recalling the promise of tomorrow we wait out the
long night of struggle, Remembering our brother
Jesus, our sister Mary, and all our spiritual forbears,
Rejoicing in the bonds of solidarity and the
unquenchable Divine Energy, we take, eat and
drink, knowing that the Spirit of God is here, within
and among us, in simple food, in simple grace,
calling us to freedom's banquet.

O Candle of calm and peace, lending your beauty to
our darkened corners:

**Come and share your halo of light with us, to
comfort and to guide.**

O Star of the darkened sky, you lead us if we
choose to follow,

**By night and by day, seeing and not seeing, we
journey towards the truth.**

O Sudden Flare, you explode like a burst of match
flame in the darkness:

**Come and illumine our plans, protests, and
petitions for justice.**

The Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the hope of Christ.
**We who are many are one body, for we all share
the one bread.**

The Invitation

Come, bringing your varied faiths and backgrounds,
for all are welcome to share in this grace.

Communion

Prayer after Communion

I believe that God is in me as the sun is in the colour and fragrance of a flower – the Light in my darkness, the Voice in my silence. *Helen Keller*

I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more. *Anne Frank*

May the blessing of light be on us, light without and light within. *Celtic*

The Lord's Prayer

As Christ teaches us we pray

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins**

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours

now and for ever. Amen.

Blessing

May Divine Wisdom hold us in the palm of Her hand

And breathe into us gently Her life-giving Spirit.

May the light of the new dawn break over us

Bringing insight, fresh courage and hope.

And may the fierce passion of the Love that is God

Send us out like sparks to set the world on fire.

Dismissal

Let us dream together, pray together, work together, to build one world of peace and justice for all.

Amen. We go in the light and hope of Jesus. The Blessing

The Holy Gospel according to St Matthew, chapter 6, beginning at the 1st verse.

“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. “When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This is the gospel of Christ

All: Praise to Christ the Word.