

By human weakness we have disfigured the holiness of the Church: pardon all our sins and restore us to full communion with our brothers and sisters. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Grant the forgiveness of sins and the gift of new life to those who will be baptized this Easter. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Your mercy is our hope: welcome us to the sacrament of reconciliation. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Give us the will to change our lives, and the lives of others by charity, good example, and prayers. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Make us a living sign of your love for all to see: people reconciled with you and each other. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Now in obedience to Christ himself, let us join in prayer to the Father, asking him to forgive us as we forgive others.
Our Father...

Father, our source of life, you know our weakness. May we reach out with joy to grasp your hand and to walk more readily in your ways. We ask this through Christ our Lord. *R.* Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

Blessing

May the Father bless us, for he adopted us as his children.

R. Amen.

May the Son come to help us, for he has received us as brothers and sisters. *R.* Amen.

May the Spirit be with us, for he has made us his dwelling place.

R. Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES OUTSIDE MASS BY A LAY MINISTER

Ashes blessed by a Priest or Deacon are placed in a vessel and given to the Lay Minister. Remaining ashes are discarded in the ground.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Sign of the Cross and Greeting

In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Praised be the God of grace, mercy, and peace. Blessed be God forever. *R.* Blessed be God forever.

Instruction

My friend(s), the hour of God's favor draws near, the day of his mercy and of our salvation approaches, when death was destroyed and eternal life began. As we begin the season of Lent, we gather today to acknowledge that we are sinners. As we express our sorrow, may God be merciful to us and restore us to his friendship.

Collect

Let us pray.

Period of silence.

Father in heaven,
the light of your truth bestows sight to the darkness of sinful eyes.

May this season of repentance bring us the blessing
of your forgiveness and the gift of your light.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel,

Even now, says the LORD, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the LORD, your God. For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment. Perhaps he will again relent and leave behind him a blessing, offerings and libations for the LORD, your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion! proclaim a fast, call an assembly; Gather the people, notify the congregation; Assemble the elders, gather the children and the infants at the breast; Let the bridegroom quit his room and the bride her chamber. Between the porch and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep, and say, "Spare, O LORD, your people, and make not your heritage a reproach, with the nations ruling over them! Why should they say among the peoples, "Where is their God?"

Then the LORD was stirred to concern for his land and took pity on his people.

The Word of the Lord.

℟. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

℟. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.

Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me.

℟. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

For I acknowledge my offense,
and my sin is before me always:
"Against you only have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight."

℟. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

℟. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Give me back the joy of your salvation,
and a willing spirit sustain in me.
O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

℟. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Period of Silent Reflection

Distribution of the Ashes

The Minister traces ashes on the forehead or sprinkles them on the head and says:

"Repent and believe in the Gospel" or

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

Universal Prayer

Our merciful Father does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they should turn from their sins and have life. Let us pray that we who are sorry for our sins may fear no future evil and sin no more.