



A PRAYER for LENT
Create in me a clean heart, O Lord.
Psalm 51



**Yet 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.
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 and say,
"Spare, O Lord, your people."
Joel 2: 12-17**

Leader:

By reflecting on our unity with all that is, by remembering that each of us is part of an immense and continuous creation, a creation that entails the entire universe. Although we humans are a vital part of this creation, we are by no means the center. Yet we know that all too often we imagine and act as if we were the center - as if everything were here for us, for us to use for our own purposes, even to use up.

And yet in our hearts we know that we live in and through a complex set of relationships, and that it is our responsibility, as it has been the responsibility of each generation that preceded ours, to bequeath a healthy, fruitful, and beautiful world to all who shall follow.

What does this understanding of connection and responsibility have to do with Lent?

- + If we are open to allowing God to expose the places in our hearts that suffer and separate us from Him and others.**
- + If we are willing to allow God to bring into the light those places where change is needed.**

Then this is the real work of Lent.

The real work of Lent is not about generating false guilt or shame.

The real work of Lent is not meant to beat us down or turn us against our selves.

The real work of Lent is to renew our sense of connection, thus restoring our dignity and calling us back to our selves, to a place where we acknowledge the invitation to choose life, to act justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

**TURN AWAY FROM SIN
AND BE FAITHFUL TO THE GOSPEL.**

Psalm 51

Leader: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness;
All: in Your great compassion blot out my offenses.
Leader: Wash me through and through from my wickedness
All: and cleanse me from my sin.
Leader: For I know my transgressions,
All: and my sin is ever before me.
Leader: Against You only have I sinned
All: and done what is evil in Your sight.
Leader: Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;
All: wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
Leader: Make me hear of joy and gladness,
People: that the body you have broken may rejoice.
Leader: Hide Your face from my sins
All: and blot out all my iniquities.
Leader: Create in me a clean heart, O God,
ALL: and renew a right spirit within me.
Leader: Cast me not away from Your presence
All: and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.
Leader: Give me the joy of Your saving help again
All: and sustain me with Your bountiful Spirit.

Scripture 1 Samuel 3: 3-10, 19

Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was.
The LORD called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am."
Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me."
"I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to sleep."
So he went back to sleep.
Again the LORD called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli.
"Here I am," he said. "You called me."
But Eli answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep."
At that time Samuel was not familiar with the LORD, because the LORD had not revealed anything to him as yet.
The LORD called Samuel again, for the third time.
Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me."
Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth.
So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."
When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the LORD came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!"
Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Reflection

Lent is that special time of the year when we remember and ponder the life and death of Jesus our Messiah.

It is a time when we listen for God's call to return to Him.

It is a time of quiet and a time of prayerfulness.

It is a time of listening and it is a time of cleansing.

It is a time to turn away from our sinful and selfishness ways and a time to put on the Lord Jesus the Christ.

It is a time of stepping outside of our life and being more aware of the needs of others.

Lent is a time of growth and a time to listen to the Lord speaking to us. Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening.

Hymn: Ashes

**We rise again from ashes,
From the good we've failed to do.**

**We rise again from ashes,
To let you make us new.**

**If all our world is ashes,
Then must our lives be true,
An offering of ashes,
An offering to You.**

**We offer you our failures,
We offer you attempts,
The gifts not fully given,
The dreams not fully dreamt,
Give our stumblings direction,
Give our visions wider view,
An offering of ashes,
An offering to You.**

**Then rise again from ashes,
Let healing come to pain,
Though spring has turned to winter,
And sunshine turned to rain,
The rain we'll use for growing,
And create the world anew,
From an offering of ashes,
An offering to You.**

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Litany of Penitence

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**

**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,
Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,**

Have mercy on us, Lord.

**We confess to you, Lord, our anger at our own frustration,
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,
Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts,
and our dishonesty in daily life and work**

Have mercy on us, Lord.

**We confess to you, Lord, our negligence in prayer and worship,
and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,
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,
For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors,
and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us.**

Have mercy on us, Lord.

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

Have mercy on us, 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 Jesus,
Bring us with all Your saints to the joy of His Resurrection.**

Amen.

Scripture: Ezekiel 36: 25-27

**I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse
you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart,
and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your
bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put My spirit in you, and
make you keep My laws and sincerely respect My observances.**

Hymn: Hosea

**Come back to Me with all your heart
Don't let fear keep us apart
Trees do bend though straight and tall
So must we to others call**

**Long have I waited for
Your coming home to Me
And living deeply our new life**

**The wilderness will lead you
To the place where I will speak
Integrity and justice
With tenderness
You shall know.**



ASH
WEDNESDAY

Lent is a period of self-examination and penance.

**We need to stop and look at our lives; remember what we are made of,
remember where we are going and let go of all those things that don't really
matter, all those things that get in the way of loving God,
loving others, and being loved by God and by others.**

**Remember, you are nothing but dust: Precious dust, molded and formed in
the womb by a loving God, precious, precious and beloved are you.**

**Remember, you are nothing but dust, and to dust shall you return:
unique and precious, you are created for eternity.**

**Remember, you are nothing but dust: And that makes you free - free from
human ambition, free from prideful denial, free from fear-free; free at last!**

Remember, dust you are, and as dust you are loved and redeemed.

Hymn: Grant To Us, O Lord

**Grant to us, O Lord, a heart renewed.
Re-create in us Your own Spirit, Lord.**