

**GENERAL SYNOD 2003**

**BILL NO 7  
SCHEDULE**

**SERVICE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY  
THE BEGINNING OF LENT**

## SERVICE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY THE BEGINNING OF LENT

### THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.

**Lord, have mercy**

*Psalm 51:17*

*In these or other suitable words, the presiding minister explains the meaning of Lent and invites the people to observe it faithfully.*

Brothers and sisters in Christ: since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the Church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

At first this season of Lent was observed by those who were preparing for Baptism at Easter and by those who were to be restored to the Church's fellowship from which they had been separated through sin. In course of time the Church came to recognize that, by a careful keeping of these days, all Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Lord to observe a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

#### THE COLLECT

*Silence may be kept after which the presiding minister says*

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

**Almighty and everlasting God,  
you hate nothing that you have made  
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent.  
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,  
that we may be truly sorry for our sins  
and obtain from you, the God of all mercy,  
perfect remission and forgiveness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### PROCLAIMING AND RECEIVING THE WORD

*Either two or three readings from scripture follow. The First Reading and the Gospel are always read, but the Second Reading may be omitted.*

#### THE FIRST READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58: 1-12

*At the end the reader may say*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## THE PSALM

Psalm 51:1-17 (*page 000*) may be said or sung and this refrain may be used.

**Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned against you.**

## THE SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5: 20b - 6:10

*At the end the reader may say*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

CANTICLE *Saviour of the World (page 000)*  
or a hymn may be sung.

*Stand*

THE GOSPEL Matthew 6:1-6 and 16-21

*After it is introduced:*

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*At the conclusion the minister says*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## THE SERMON

### THE LITURGY OF PENITENCE

*The presiding minister says*

Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

*Kneel*

## THE COMMANDMENTS

are read (*page 000*). There should be two readers if possible, one reading the Old Testament statement and the second the New Testament interpretation.

Hear these commandments which God has given to his people, and take them to heart:

I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD: YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BUT ME.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength. *Matt. 22:37*

YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF ANY IDOL.

God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. *John 4:24*

YOU SHALL NOT DISHONOUR THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD.

You shall worship him with reverence and awe. *Heb. 12:28*

REMEMBER THE LORD'S DAY, AND KEEP IT HOLY.

Christ is risen from the dead: set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. *Col. 3:1,2*

**Lord, have mercy on us, and write these your laws in our hearts.**

HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.

Live as servants of God, honour all people, love your brothers and sisters in Christ. *1 Peter 2:16*

YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER.

Be reconciled to your brother and sister: overcome evil with good. *Matt. 5:24, Rom. 13:21*

YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

Know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. *1 Cor. 6:19*

YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.

Be honest in all that you do and care for those in need. *Eph. 4:28*

YOU SHALL NOT BE A FALSE WITNESS.

Let everyone speak the truth. *Eph. 4:25*

YOU SHALL NOT COVET ANYTHING WHICH BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus: It is more blessed to give than to receive. Love your neighbour as yourself, for love is the fulfilling of the law. *Acts 20:35, Rom. 13:9,10*

**Lord, have mercy on us, and write all these your laws in our hearts.**

THE LITANY

*Litany Two (page 000) follows.*

*SILENCE is kept for a time, after which is said*

Make our hearts clean, O God;

**And renew a right spirit within us.**

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,**

**we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,**

**in what we have thought, in what we have said and done,**

**through ignorance, through weakness,**

**through our own deliberate fault.**

**We have wounded your love, and marred your image in us.**

**We are sorry and ashamed, and repent of all our sins.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,**

**forgive us all that is past;**

**and lead us out from darkness to walk as children of light. Amen.**

*This prayer is said.*

God our Father,

the strength of all who put their trust in you,

mercifully accept our prayers;

and because, in our weakness,

we can do nothing good without you,

grant us the help of your grace,

that in keeping your commandments

we may please you, both in will and deed;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or the Priest pronounces the Absolution.*

Almighty God,

who forgives all who truly repent,

have mercy upon you,

pardon and deliver you from all your sins,

confirm and strengthen you in all goodness

and keep you in life eternal;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*If the Holy Communion is not to follow:*

*one of the forms of Intercession (pages 000–000), or the Weekday Intercession for Friday (page 000), is used.*

*The service concludes with THE LORD'S PRAYER, and the following prayer:.*

Lord our God,

grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart;

that so desiring, we may seek and find you;

and so finding, may love you;

and so loving, may hate those sins

from which you have delivered us;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### CELEBRATING AT GOD'S TABLE

*When Holy Communion One is used Holy Communion it begins with "Lift up your hearts. . . ." (page 000).*

*When Holy Communion Two is used Holy Communion begins with the PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS, (page 000), or the prayer below may be said. in place of that prayer.*

**Most merciful Lord,  
your love compels us to come in.  
Our hands were unclean, our hearts were unprepared;  
we were not fit even to eat the crumbs from under your table.  
But you, Lord, are the God of our salvation,  
and share your bread with sinners.  
So cleanse and feed us with the precious body and blood of your Son,  
that he may live in us and we in him;  
and that we, with the whole company of Christ,  
may sit and eat in your kingdom. Amen.**

*Any one of the three eucharistic prayers may be used with the appropriate season variations for Lent (page 000).*

### GOING OUT AS GOD'S PEOPLE

*The following prayer is said after which the service may conclude in silence, the congregation leaving the church quietly.*

Lord our God,  
grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart;  
that so desiring, we may seek and find you;  
and so finding, may love you;  
and so loving, may hate those sins  
from which you have delivered us;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Note: This service may be adapted to meet local custom.*