

The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice of

St Saviour
Mortimer West End

St Mary and St John
Stratfield Mortimer

St John the Baptist
Padworth

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



The Parish Eucharist

for

Ash Wednesday

2nd March 2022 at 7.30 p.m. at

St John's, Mortimer

and online at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

Prayer Thoughts: *On Ash Wednesday Christians throughout the world are signed with ash in the sign of Christian faith - the cross - to signify a commitment to undertake Lent - lengthening of days/Springtime - as a time of 'prayer and penitence' in order to overcome the wastes of self-centredness and alienation and so as to bring us alive to others and to the joy we should have in the stewards of creation. It's a reminder too that the followers of Jesus Christ are called upon, like him, to pick up and carry their crosses and to help others to carry theirs. It's also a reminder that we are all mortal human beings - humus/'dust and ashes' - but that we all carry immortal souls.*

Ash Wednesday is the Christian Church's 'Yom Kippur' or 'Day of Atonement' - or 'at - one - ment.' Its name - 'ash' - comes from the Jewish practice of wearing 'sackcloth and ashes' as a sign of doing penance. Some of the first Christians continued to wear sackcloth and ashes as a sign that they were doing penance and this practice seems to have then evolved to the point where, certainly by the 11th century, receiving ashes on the first day of Lent had become a widely recognised Christian practice.

The OT lesson set for Ash Wednesday - from the prophet Joel - reminds us that penance should lead to a real conversion of heart and transformation of behaviour and not leave us simply sorrowful for our sins. And the NT lesson is a call from St Paul 'to be reconciled.' The Gospel reading too calls upon us to embrace the true spirit of fasting and prayer, which is that repentance, or change of heart, which brings renewal.

We see, of course, that the scriptural understanding of fasting goes beyond reducing food intake - it means 'breaking unjust fetters, freeing the oppressed, sharing one's bread with the hungry, clothing with the naked and home with the homeless, and not turning away from the needy' (Isaiah 58:6-7). This was the 'penance' which Jesus Christ modelled and taught: 'If any one wishes to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.' The simple scripture message is a wake-up call to rid ourselves of the 'sin' which weakens and disfigures us as individuals, as communities, as nations - our whole world - and, instead, grow our hearts - 'courage' - to the point where we are eager for forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, renewal and wholeness.

In receiving the ashes we acknowledge that we are, all of us, broken 'sinners' in need of healing/mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation and renewal and commit ourselves, by grace, to try to make Lent 2022 a springtime for our life together in the goodness of Christ.

God bless, Paul

THE NINE-FOLD KYRIE

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

All + Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to everlasting life.
Amen.

THE COLLECT

Priest Let us pray.

Together we spend a few moments in silence, realising, and giving thanks, that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The prayer 'collects' our thoughts.

Priest 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, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
All **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from the scriptures; a sermon/homily, which expounds the readings; the Profession of Faith, which is the Creed of God's people; and the Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions in which the people of God intercede for all humankind and all creation.

In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us of redemption and salvation and nourishes us with his 'word.' We are not only listening to past history. The God who speaks to Israel and to the early Church speaks to us today through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us as we listen to him and as he reveals the pattern for our lives. 'The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double edged sword but more finely...it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts' (The Letter to the Hebrews 4:12).

THE FIRST READING – 2 Corinthians 5: 20 - 6: 2. - Read by Roger Jones.

Reader A reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

We are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God. As his fellow workers, we beg you once again not to neglect the grace of God that you have received. For he says: *At the favourable time, I have listened to you; on the day of salvation I came to your help.* Well, now is the favourable time; this is the day of salvation.

At the end of the reading:

Reader This is the word of the Lord.
All **Thanks be to God.**

Now we hear the Gospel (the Good News) and acknowledge that we are his people and called to be part of his mission to the world inasmuch as we share his message and his life with faith, hope and love.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

All **Praise to you O Christ, King of eternal glory!**
Harden not your hearts today,
but listen to the voice of the Lord.
All **Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory!**

THE GOSPEL READING - ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL 6: 1 - 6, 16 - 18.

All The Lord be with you.
And also with you .
Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men’s admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

‘And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them; I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

‘When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.’

At the end of the Gospel

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON

We are a Eucharistic community in word and sacrament. Through the readings God has spoken to his people of his redeeming and healing love and of the nourishment which his Spirit gives. Our priest now reflects with us on the readings of the day relating them to our Eucharistic celebration and to our ordinary life.

After the sermon there is a short period of silent reflection.

THE BLESSING AND GIVING OF ASHES

The ashes of the Palm Crosses are blessed.

Dear friends in Christ, let us ask our Father to bless these ashes which we will use as the mark of our repentance.

After praying silently for a short time, the priest continues

Lord, bless the sinner who asks for your forgiveness and bless + all those who receive these ashes.

May they keep this Lenten season in preparation for the joy of Easter.

All Amen.

The priest sprinkles the ashes with water in silence and then places ashes on those who come forward, saying to each:

Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

The Creed is not said.

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL OR GENERAL INTERCESSION

We are invited to pray for all people and for all creation and for the needs of the Church’s mission in bringing Christ’s Gospel to the world. Through baptism we have been made one with Christ, our great high priest, and we share in his prayer before the Father for the needs of the Church’s mission to the world and for of people. Our prayer flows from our listening to the Gospel and sermon by which we have been made more aware of our Christian commitment.

This Prayer of the Faithful, or General Intercession, is announced and consists of a series of intercessions; we pray for the universal Church and its mission and for our bishop and for our benefice - our parishes and our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities, families and friends; for the sick and suffering and for all in pain; and we remember those who have died. And in communion with Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people and all creation to God’s saving love.

Priest: In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

The deacon or minister continues:

For the one holy catholic and apostolic Church; for Justin our Archbishop; for Steven our bishop; for Olivia our area bishop; for our benefice, our Church schools of St Mary’s and St John’s...

let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

in your mercy hear us.

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth...

let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

in your mercy hear us.

For Elizabeth our Queen, our Government, our District and Village Councils and all in authority that they may direct us in the ways of justice and peace...,

let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy hear us.

For those preparing for baptism and confirmation and for their teachers and sponsors,

let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy hear us.

For peace in the world that a spirit of respect and reconciliation may grow among nations and peoples...,

let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy hear us.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer, for refugees, prisoners, and all in danger; that they may be relieved and protected... ,

let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy hear us.

For those whom we have injured or offended,

let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy hear us.

For grace to amend our lives and to further the reign of God,

let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy hear us.

For those who have died recently...,

let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy hear us.

In communion with all those who have walked in the way of holiness, Mary, John the Evangelist, John the Baptist and all the saints,

let us pray to the Father.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy hear us.

Priest Heavenly Father, in your love and goodness you have taught us to come close to you in prayer, fasting and generosity; accept our Lenten discipline, and when we fall by our weakness, raise us up by your unfailing mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper Christ 'took some bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body which will be given for you; do this in remembrance of me". He did the same with the cup...' (Luke 22:19-20). The Church, joyfully obedient to the Lord's command, celebrates the Eucharist taking care that our 'liturgy' corresponds to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine - we take our own gifts to the Altar, such as our time and talents and our money for the poor and for ministry. 2) Giving thanks (the meaning of the word Eucharist) - in the Eucharistic Prayer the priest, in the name of us all, says the great hymn of our thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation, in which the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful - a sign of the unity which comes through sharing in Christ. 4) And in Holy Communion we receive Christ. In this way, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, the Church tries to carry out what the Lord asked his disciples to do in remembrance of him.

THE PEACE

We acknowledge and give thanks for our unity with one another in Jesus Christ our Lord, which his death and resurrection have brought to us. He is the peace between us. The sign of peace echoes Christ's own resurrection greeting to his disciples. Before we share in the same bread we express our love for one another in Christ and pray for peace and unity (cf Luke 1.78,79).

Priest Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace. *Romans 5.1,2*

All The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

The peoples' gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. The offerings of money is made and promised to support the wider ministry and work of the Church. Taking the Gifts: We give thanks to God for the gifts in the following words.

BREAD

Priest Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.
All **Blessed be God for ever.**

WINE

Priest Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the cup of salvation.
All **Blessed be God for ever.**

OUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE/MONEY

Priest Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have the gifts of our time, talents and money to offer. May our offerings of our gifts be a sincere sign of our gratitude and our dedication to your service.
All **Blessed be God for ever.**

The priest prays quietly: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble, contrite and thankful hearts. The priest washes hands as an expression of the desire for inward purification, praying quietly: Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Priest Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Priest Amen.

Gracious Father, may the light of your eternal Word, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, lead us in holiness and guide us to glory; we ask this in his name.

All **Amen.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and high point of the whole Christian celebration. This great prayer of praise and thanksgiving proclaims the wonderful works of God and through it we join ourselves with Christ in praise and thanksgiving to God the Father and in offering ourselves to him in union with Christ's self-offering on the cross. We express our share in the prayer, which is said by the priest on behalf of all the people, by listening inwardly and joining in the acclamations (joyful shouts or songs) and the Sanctus (the Holy, Holy, Holy which concludes the preface), the memorial acclamation and the great 'Amen' which concludes our Eucharistic Prayer.

Priest The Lord be with you.
All **And also with you.**

 Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**

 Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

In the Preface we praise God for his mighty acts:

And now we give you thanks because you give us the spirit of discipline, that we may triumph over evil and grow in grace, as we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed.

Therefore in our joy we sing to your glory with all the choirs of angels:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We pray to the Father for the sending down of the Holy Spirit and recall the Lord's Supper.

Priest We thank you, loving Father, because when we turned away you sent to us your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

He gave his life for us upon the cross. He shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

‘This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.’

After they had eaten he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

‘This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this to remember me.’

So, Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.

As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit upon us and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

And now with Mary, the Blessed Mother of our Lord, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist, and all your saints, we give you glory, through Jesus Christ and in the strength of your Holy Spirit, today and for ever.

All **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

The communion rite lays strong emphasis on peace, unity and our prayer for forgiveness. We come together to the Lord's table in accordance with the Lord's command, 'Take, eat... take, drink', as a community bound together by the love of God manifest in Christ. We can all be confident in Christ's mercy as we respond to his call to come to his table. Our communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer - the prayer he taught us - prepares us for Holy Communion with our Lord.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Priest As our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The priest takes the host and breaks it over the cup, praying quietly: 'May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.' 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Corinthians 10:17)

Christ's gesture of breaking bread with his disciples at the Last Supper gave the Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread.'. This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. The breaking of the Eucharistic bread becomes a sign of unity and charity as the one bread is distributed to the family of God's people.

Priest We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.**

The priest prepares quietly for Holy Communion. We may all join quietly in this prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you. Amen.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. *cf. John 1: 29*

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The sign of communion is more complete when given under both 'kinds' since then the sign of the eucharistic meal appears more clearly. However, we live in exceptional times when communion can only be given in one 'kind.'

The priest takes the host, raises it a little and shows it saying: The Body of Christ. And the same with the cup saying: The Blood of Christ. When receiving Holy Communion the response and assent to Christ is:

+ Amen.

DURING HOLY COMMUNION

The Choir sings Psalm 51

...

**God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his love as he told me to.**

He said:

**'Freely, freely you have received;
freely, freely give.**

**Go in my name and because you believe,
others will know that I live.'**

**All power is given in Jesus' name,
in earth and heaven in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his power as he told me to.**

After Holy Communion we may keep a further period of silence.

PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Let us pray

The priest invites us all to pray that the Holy Eucharist will have its effect in transforming our lives and bring us all to God's kingdom. We pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.

Priest Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us
both a sacrifice for sin and also an example of godly life:
give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive these his inestimable gifts,
and also daily endeavour to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

The Lord be with you.

All and also with you.

THE BLESSING

Priest Christ give us grace to grow in holiness,
to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him;

+ and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN

**Be thou my guardian and my guide,
and hear me when I call;
let not my slippery footsteps slide,
and hold me lest I fall.**

**And if I tempted am to sin,
and outward things are strong,
do thou, O Lord, keep watch within,
and save my soul from wrong.**

**Still let me ever watch and pray,
and feel that I am frail;
that if the tempter cross my way,
yet he may not prevail.**

Please donate regularly to support the Church's mission and work. *The church here needs your help in order to serve our villages, our diocese, our nation and our world in the future. Our doors have been closed due to Covid 19 and with no regular Government or Church of England funding we have lost significant income. Please see the website to see how to give efficiently.*

