

**ASH WEDNESDAY**  
**(Yr A-B-C)**

Reading 1

*Citation:* Joel, Chap. 2, Verses 12-18  
Joel 2: 12-18

Joel is practically pleading with the Israelites to change their ways. He is gently insistent until he comes to describing God's attitude. Then he assumes they do repent and instructs them on how to celebrate their change of heart with an appropriate nod to the role of the priests and leaders in the whole process. Can you be Joel? Is he needed today?

**A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel**

Even now,  
says the LORD,  
return to me with your whole heart, (very short pause)  
with fasting,  
and weeping,  
and mourning; (short pause)

Rend your hearts,  
not your garments, (very short pause)  
and return to the LORD, your God. (very short pause)

For gracious and merciful is he,  
slow to anger,  
rich in kindness,  
and relenting in punishment. (very short pause)

Perhaps he will again relent {doubt describes this sentence!}  
and leave behind him a blessing, (very short pause)

Offerings and libations for the LORD, your God. (Urgency! Confidence)  
Blow the trumpet in Zion! (A LIST!)  
proclaim a fast, { Vary pace, volume, tone from  
call an assembly; { line to line throughout the list  
Gather the people, {  
notify the congregation; {  
Assemble the elders, {  
gather the children and the infants at the breast; { (very short pause)

Let the bridegroom quit his room, (Somewhat continuing the List  
and the bride her chamber. (but different tone - serious)

Between the porch and the altar  
let the priests,  
the ministers of the LORD,

## Proclamation Format

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.

(very short pause)

(beseeching!)

(urgency)

(very short pause)

(very short pause)

(almost disbelief!)

(Narrator takes over)

(steadily slow down)

## The word of the Lord

## Ash Wednesday (Yr A-B-C)

Reading 2

*Citation:* 2 Corinthians, Chap. 5, Verse 20 -- Chap. 6, Verse 2  
2 Corinthians 5: 20 - 6:2

**St. Paul joins Joel but hundreds of years later. Corinth is a very "worldly" city. Paul recognizes this but reminds his fellow Jews in Corinth that Jesus has fulfilled God's promise to them. He strongly implies the similarity between the two times and insists that they respond accordingly.**

### A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters: (Get attention!)

We are ambassadors for Christ,  
as if God were appealing through us. (short pause)

We implore you (almost begging!)  
on behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God. (short pause)

For our sake (need to observe the  
he made him to be sin who did not know sin, (emphasized words  
so that we might become the righteousness of God (in this sentence  
in him. (very short pause)  
working together, then,  
we appeal to you  
not to receive the grace of God in vain. (slower) (very short pause)

For he says:

*In an acceptable time I heard you,* (change voice tone)  
*and on the day of salvation I helped you.* ( " " ) (short pause)

Behold,  
now is a very acceptable time; (matter-of-factly) (very short pause)  
behold,  
now is the day of salvation. (triumph!)

### The word of the Lord

**Ash Wednesday**  
**(Yr A-B-C)**

GOSPEL

*Citation: Matthew, Chap. 6, Verses 1-6, 16-18*

**"Vanity, everything is vanity!" Matthew relates Jesus' admonishment to act as doers of God's Will and not as merely followers of rules of "right" religious behavior. He has Jesus repeatedly insist that His Father knows what motivates people and gives us several examples of this. Jesus is arguing for a more mature and responsible approach to our relationship with God. Help your listeners see this.**

**A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew**

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. (very short pause)

When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. (parenthetical) " (very short pause)

Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. (very short pause)

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. (almost parenthetical)

And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. (almost parenthetical) (very short pause)

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, (disdain) who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them.

Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. (very short pause)

But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. (separate these phrases) " "

And your Father

## Proclamation Format

who sees in secret  
will repay you.

(almost parenthetical)  
(very short pause)

"When you fast,  
do not look gloomy  
like the hypocrites.

(parenthetical)

They neglect their appearance,  
so that they may appear to others to be fasting.

(almost parenthetical)

Amen,  
I say to you,  
they have received their reward.

(very short pause)

But when you fast,  
anoint your head and wash your face,  
so that you may not appear to be fasting,  
except to your Father  
who is hidden.  
And your Father  
who sees what is hidden  
will repay you."

(almost parenthetical)

"  
"

**The Gospel of the Lord.**