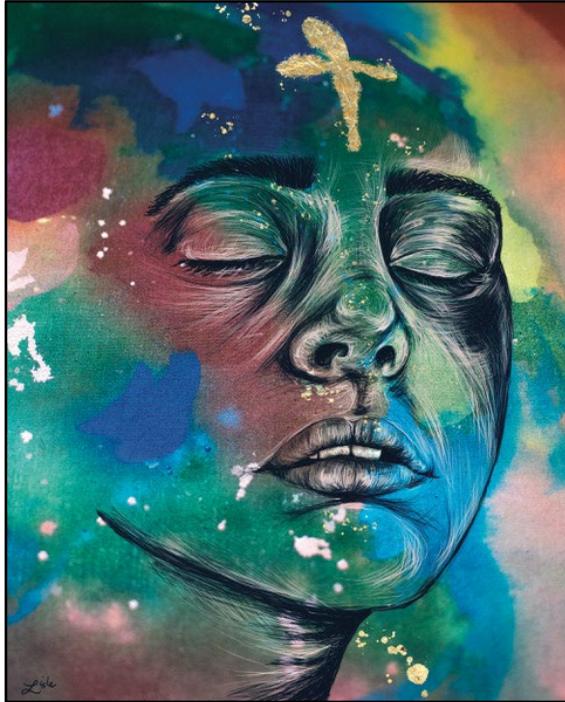

St. Paul's Episcopal Church



Stardust, Lisle Gwynn Garrity, A Sanctified Art LLC

Ash Wednesday
March 2, 2022

THE SEASON OF LENT

In preparation for the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, early Christians observed a season of reflection, reorientation, return, and renewal, which is now known as Lent (*from an Old English word meaning “spring,” the time of lengthening days*). Lasting 40 days (not including Sundays), the length recalls the 40 years God’s people wandered through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land and the 40 days Jesus spent in solitude in the desert before he began his ministry. Lent is a time to recommit to being the people we want to be in response to God’s endless love and to find rest in the simplicity of God’s love. While there is solemnity and sorrow, there is also humble joy at knowing that God awaits and longs for our return. For centuries, traditional iterations of Lent often emphasize restraint, confession, and piety. In essence, this was a practice of stepping away from the rat race, corrupt power, scarcity mentality, and empty rituals in order to live a more expansive and full life of faith. Accordingly, people often “gave up” something as an act of self-denial and repentance. While such practices can be transformative, Lent is also an invitation to explore a new practice or mindset.

Purple is the liturgical color of Lent as it is the color of humility, penance, and wisdom, which comes from our inward reflection. It’s also the color of royalty, specifically the humble royalty of our Christ, who was both servant and king.

FULL TO THE BRIM

Our Lenten theme this year, *Full to the Brim*, reflects the heart of our Scripture lessons, which are filled with parables and promises of God’s abundant and expansive grace: Jesus as a mother hen, a prodigal son welcomed home, a fig tree nurtured with care and hope, precious oil poured out lovingly and freely, stones shouting out with praise – these sacred texts are brimming with a gospel of grace. We’ve done nothing to deserve or earn this grace, and yet, like water, it spills over. *Full to the Brim* is an invitation—into a radically different Lent, into a full life. It’s an invitation to be authentically who you are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. It disrupts the scarcity mentality that capitalism, oppression, or hierarchy can plant inside of us. When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God’s lavish love, that love spills over and reaches beyond ourselves; like water, it rushes and flows, touching everything in its path.

Full to the Brim doesn’t ignore or deny sin and suffering. It doesn’t absolve accountability for wrongdoing. Instead it contextualizes our faith. If love is our beginning, how can we live our lives led by love’s promises? It reminds us to live fully—as we pursue justice and hope, or express grief and gratitude. And so, this Lent, let us trust—fully—that we belong to God. Let us increase our capacity to receive and give grace. Let us discover the expansive life God dreams for us.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT ON THE COVER ART

We begin Lent with ashen marks smudged against our foreheads, the oil glistening on our skin throughout the rest of the day. It's a mark that is holy because it tells the truth: we are formed from the dust, and to dust we shall one day return. We are not immortal. Death will one day find us all. However, though death will surely find me one day, inhaling me into that infinite abyss, the cross on my forehead only tells me part of the story. The empty tomb tells me a fuller, more expansive truth: death will not have the last word. There is more. God is more.

This expansive truth requires more of us. It invites us to abandon empty or showy practices of faith, and instead, draw inward to open ourselves to a deeper journey of transformation. It requires me to believe that I am truly worthy of love, belonging, and grace. It requires me to believe others are also.

In this Lenten season, we've reimagined this Ash Wednesday ritual. What if, instead of ashes, gold gleamed on our foreheads? What if, alongside the certainty of death, we are also reminded of God's expansive grace? What if on this day we said to one another, "From stardust you have come, and to stardust you shall one day return"?

~The Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

THE WORD OF GOD

PRELUDE (6:30 only)

Meditation

Blake

ENTRANCE

Once the bell has been rung, please stand as the ministers enter in silence.

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Celebrant “Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart.” (Joel 2:12)

Roll up your sleeves.

Let down your guard.

Come in from the storm.

Make yourself at home.

Pull up to the table.

Release the tension in your jaw.

Return to God with all your heart.

People **May it be so.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Celebrant God be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Mystery of Goodness,

we are called into being and held in life:

teach us the secrecy of prayer which seeks no reward;

the generosity of love which forgets itself;

the gift of a treasure uncountable and unconsumed;

through Jesus Christ, the Son of the Wilderness.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 58:1-12

The lesson from the Hebrew Bible is a denunciation of the injustices of those who only act at their religion. Fasts and many prayers are of no purpose and may be misused if they do not involve the liberation of the oppressed and help for the weak and afflicted. When there is justice and sharing, then the light of the Lord will rise out of the darkness and all the ruins will be rebuilt.

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion
to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;

your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;

you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

+THE HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

In our gospel, Jesus describes genuine charity, prayer and fasting. Praise and rewards for an outward show of religion all pass away. The real treasure is found in our relationship with God.

Deacon A reading from the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

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

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others.

Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.

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

THE HOMILY

The Rev. Dr. Maria A. Kane

INVITATION TO A HOLY LENT

Celebrant

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, an ancient sign, speaking of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marking the penitence of the community as a whole. I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and returning to God; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Please kneel. Silence is then kept for a time of reflection followed by a prayer.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Celebrant God our Loving Creator, you create us from the dust of the earth: grant that these ashes may be for us a sign of our penitence and a symbol of our mortality; for it is by your grace alone that we receive eternal life in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

People **Amen.**

The ashes are imposed with the following words

Celebrant Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

THE LITANY OF PENITENCE *(kneeling or standing)*

Celebrant Let us pray.

All **Most holy and merciful God: 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.**

Celebrant We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength.

People **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

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,

We confess to you, Lord.

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

We confess to you, Lord.

Our anger at our own frustration,
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,

We confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship,
and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,

We confess to you, Lord.

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,

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors,
and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation,
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,

Accept our repentance, 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,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Celebrant Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires not the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their failures and live, has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to God's beloved people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. God pardons and absolves all those who turn away from their misdirection and with sincere hearts trust in God's holy Gospel.

Therefore we intreat God to grant us true repentance and the power of the Holy Spirit, that those things may honor God which we do on this day, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to God's eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

Celebrant Jesus will not command legions of angels nor ride the machine of holy war; he will become a slave, take our hate into his heart, and win us with forgiveness, for he is God's unexpected peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

THE HOLY COMMUNION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant

We thank you, desert Mother, for in the valley of dry bones you create hearts of flesh quickened by the Spirit's breath.

We thank you, wise Sister, that you walk in cloud and fire with your lost and faithless people.

We thank you, Son of Heaven, that you empty yourself of might and glory and set your face towards the fickle crowd, the cruel empire, the faithful despisers.

We welcome you as God's own fool whose cross brings to nothing the violence of the world and reveals another wisdom outside the city walls.

Therefore, with all who follow your way: with the traders and tax collectors, the soldiers and the abused women of the streets, and all who caught a glimpse of glory in the humanity you shared, we worship God's own holiness revealed in sweat and tears:

**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 ask that your Holy Spirit will fall upon us and upon these gifts that these fragile, earthly things may be to us the body and blood of our lord and brother, Jesus Christ; who, on the night that he was betrayed, gathered with his faltering friends for a meal that tasted of freedom. Calling them to his table, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said: "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me."

In the same way after supper, he took the cup, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, to remember me." As on that night, so here and now he offers himself in touch and taste beyond all words can hold.

Great is the mystery of faith

Christ has died

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

Therefore, in our eating and drinking we are filled with the life-giving presence of Christ; we proclaim him as creation's host, transforming poverty into plenty in the reckless generosity of love.

Inspire us with hope that one day death and greed will be no more and people without number will come from east and west, north and south to share the kingdom meal. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom and with whom and in whom in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory be years, Mother of blessings, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

People

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, and the power, and the glory, for
ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

As an act of adoration, a moment of reverent silence is kept as the bread is broken. This symbolizes the breaking of Jesus' own body.

12:00 p.m.

Celebrant

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People

Therefore let us keep the feast.

6:30 p.m.

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world:

give us your peace, give us your peace.

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Celebrant Jesus has always been one to invite....

Upon the presentation of the consecrated elements,

Celebrant Behold who you are.

People **May we become what we receive.**

THE COMMUNION

All are welcome to feast here. You need not be an Episcopalian. If you prefer to receive a blessing instead of communion, cross your arms over your chest, and the priest will give you a blessing.

COMMUNION HYMNS (6:30 only)

Come to the Table of Grace

PSB 20

Father, we thank Thee

Hymnal 302

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER (kneeling)

Celebrant Let us pray.

People **Lord of this feast beyond measure and price;
we thank you for meeting us in our brokenness so that none might be lost;
liberate us now to share bread with our neighbor, each receiving from the
other what we need to be ourselves. Amen.**

THE BLESSING

CLOSING HYMN (6:30 only)

Forgive our sins as we forgive

Hymnal 674

THE DISMISSAL

Deacon Go in peace and know that God goes with you.

People **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Chorale

Peeters

KEEPING A HOLY LENT

- Rather than giving something up, take on a practice that will nurture a deeper connection with God and God's creation (e.g. 15 daily walking prayer; journaling; praying in color, reading, etc.)
- Read the "Full to the Brim" daily devotional found in the Midweek News.
- Pray the daily devotion Lent Cards.
- Download the *Pray as You Go* app and pray along with its daily 10-minute devotion and musical reflection
- Pray Morning Prayer on Friday Mornings or join Mother Maria for a Midweek Meditation and Pause on Wednesdays at 8:00. Each week we will explore the perspective of someone present at the crucifixion. This is open to people of all ages.
- Engage in the rite of confession and reconciliation. This can be a powerful, comforting, and freeing experience. Email Mother Maria or call the church to set up an appointment. All appointments are confidential and what is shared is never brought up again unless you chose to do so.
- Pray through the church prayer list each day. Send a note to someone on the list each week.
- Bake a loaf of bread each week to share with a neighbor or friend. Offer prayers as you make the bread.



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PERMISSIONS

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