

AT-HOME LITURGY
Sapphire Coast Uniting Church
Ash Wednesday

Preparing

Find a quiet place.

You may like to light a candle, or hold a small stone, shell or leaf.

Take a slow breath.



Opening

PRAYER

*Prayer takes many forms.
Prayer is paying attention to the Holy One—
to the Mystery of Goodness—
and responding with honesty.*

In the name of God—
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver.
Amen.

Today, with Christians around the world,
I begin the season of Lent.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*"Country ... teaches us who we are, to whom we belong,
and what our responsibility or vocation in the world might be,"
says Garry Worete Deverell.*

I acknowledge these lands and waters of the Yuin Nation,
and I pay my respects to Elders past and present.

Help me, God, to turn from the voice of empire
and to listen to those harmed and pushed aside.

Teach me to honour the earth,
and to live my part in preserving its life.
In this may I find joy. Amen.

COLLECT

Mystery of Goodness,
by whose gaze I am called into being
and held in life:
teach me
the secrecy of prayer that seeks no reward;
the generosity of love that forgets itself;

the gift of a treasure that cannot be used up;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Word

FIRST READING

Book of Tobit 4:15–16, 18–19a (selected)

Do nothing to anyone that you would not want done to you.
Give food to the hungry and clothes to those who need them.
Share what you have in surplus—give gladly.
Seek counsel from the wise, and do not reject sensible advice.
Seize every opportunity to praise the Name of God.

PSALM 51

Enfold me in your love, dear God,
yet pierce my heart with your mercy.

The truths to which I am blind
are hidden so deep, so secretly:
bring the light of your wisdom
to the depths of my heart.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and steadfast spirit within me.

GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18 (selected)

When you give, do not perform it for praise.
When you pray, go to a quiet place and pray to God.
When you fast, do not advertise it.
Your Loving God who sees in secret will meet you.

REFLECTION

At the start of Lent, we receive ashes:
a sign of repentance and reorientation.

Not shame. Not self-loathing.
A turning—back to God, back to truth, back to love.

The reading from Tobit is practical:
Do no harm. Share what you have. Give gladly. Seek wise counsel.

Repentance, then, is not mainly a feeling.
It is a change of practice.

The psalm gives the prayer beneath the practice:
Create in me a clean heart, O God;
put within me a new and steadfast spirit.

A clean heart is not a spotless record.
It is a heart made whole again—steady enough to do good,
and humble enough to begin.

And in Matthew 6, Jesus corrects our instinct to perform:
Give without applause.
Pray without display.
Fast without impressing anyone.

God meets us in the hidden place—
where I stop managing my image
and start telling the truth.

So Lent is not about curating a “better self”.
It is about receiving a truer self—
and learning truer relationships.

I repent of two temptations:

- The fantasy of limitless “progress”—always faster, always more—
as if the world were only a storehouse for my desires.
- The fantasy of fearful withdrawal—tightening identity into suspicion,
closed to strangers, unwilling to share.

Ashes refuse both fantasies.

Ashes remind me:
I am not God.

The world is not mine to consume or to guard as property.
I belong to God, and I belong to others.

As Garry Worete Deverell teaches:

“Remember that you are of Country, and to Country you shall return.”

Today I hold before God:

- one local concern:
- one grief or worry I carry:
- one hope for this place and its people:

Give me steadiness, not panic;
courage, not denial;
tenderness, not blame.

Teach me a truer kind of progress—
measured by compassion, justice and repair:
food shared, debts relieved, people protected, creation tended.

Lent gives me three simple practices, straight from the gospel:

Give—quietly, concretely.

Pray—in the hidden place.

Fast—not to look holy, but to make space for love.

One practice I will try this Lent is:

Let me keep a holy Lent. Amen.

PRAYERS

When we lose confidence in ourselves, and in you,
give us the gift of faith.

Silence.

When we are tempted to despair,
give us hope.

Silence.

When our hearts fill with anger or resentment,
give us compassion.

Silence.

On this Coast, where sea and forest meet,
teach us to live as guests—grateful, careful and brave.

Silence.

In a season of pressure—on families, on housing, on the earth itself—
give us a steady spirit and a generous practice.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pray the Lord's Prayer in the words you know best.

Closing

BLESSING

God,
through this Lenten season,
help me to understand the meaning
of Christ's death and resurrection,
and teach me to reflect it in my life.
Amen.

Acknowledgements: draws from Jesuit Institute South Africa resources;
Acknowledgement of Country from Garry Worete Deverell; Collect by Steven
Shakespeare; psalm paraphrase by Patricia Stevenson RSJ; homily shaped by
Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia*. Artwork by Jan Richardson (used with permission).

Andrew Collis
andrew@christologia.net