

**Addresses
for
Morning and Evening Prayer**

**according to the
1943 Lectionary
of the
USA 1928 Book of Common Prayer**

**Intended for use
by Layreaders
in the absence of a priest**

**by Ed Pacht
Rochester NH**

Ash Wednesday

Morning Prayer

First Lesson: Isa 58:1-12

*Here beginneth the fifty-eighth chapter
of the Prophet Isaiah.*

1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?

This is what Lent is about.

This is what we signify by the ashes we wear.

This is the meaning of the fast we keep.

We know our sins.

Our sins are simply horrible,
but the Father waits.

His promise is sure,
and at the end there is joy.

Let us pray.

Grant, O Lord, that we who have this day begun the solemn fast of Lent, being cleansed of the darkness of sin, may walk in the light of thy presence, and may show forth the radiance of thy mercy in this world, that we, and those who shall see, may enter into the glory of the resurrection to life everlasting, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

as He that sits upon the throne stands up,
 and holy tears of love pour down,
 and saturate His holy snow-white beard.
 He, kneeling, reaches down His hands,
 His weathered, worn, and nail-scarred hands,
 to hold the sorrowing sinner close,
 and carry him before the silent crowd
 - to the throne
 - to the throne.
 And the holy hush of awe grows deeper,
 until it breaks into a shout of joy,
 until the angels fly in exultation,
 and saints, rejoicing, dance before Him,
 and cheers arise,
 and song sounds forth,
 and peals of joy-filled holy laughter
 from the everlasting throat of God
 ring through all the holy heavens,
 and the whole creation fill,
 and all that is or will be rocks
 in holy celebration.

<pause>

when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him;
 and that thou hide not thyself from thine own
 flesh?

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
 and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and
 thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of
 the LORD shall be thy reward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer;
 thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou
 take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the
 putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry,
 and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light
 rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon
 day:

11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually,
 and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy
 bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and
 like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old
 waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of
 many generations; and thou shalt be called, The
 repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to
 dwell in.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: Heb 12:1-14

*Here beginneth the twelfth chapter
of the Epistle to the Hebrews*

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

it was and will be just as Our Lord said:

*Likewise, I say unto you,
there is joy in the presence of the angels of God
over one sinner that repenteth.*

It's like this poem, :

Interruption in Heaven

by Ed Pacht

Solemn stand the singing saints
gathered 'round the crystal throne.
Clouds of incense veil the presence
as the awesome angels shout in praise.
The heavens are filled with rising sound,
with shouts and songs and ringing harps;
and trumpets blare and organs roar,
as hearts in heaven and earth now soar;
and, in splendor, everlasting adoration
fills the universe with glory from on high.
But all the sounds and splendors cease,
drowned and silenced by one small voice;
one small, hoarse, and tearful whisper comes,
and silence falls upon the throngs,
in sudden silence rooted where they stand.

Now a sorrowing sinner sobs before Him,
before the One his actions have despised,
the holy One whose holy will he has denied;
and now an overwhelming sadness fills him,
and for God's mercy here he cries;
and still eternity in silence stands,
and hears, and waits, and sees,

Ever feel like that?
 Ever get frustrated
 that you can't get people to change?
 Ever gloat, "Well, they'll get what they deserve"?
 Jonah did, and was looking forward to saying,
 "I told you so."
 But they heard him, really heard him.

*"So the people of Nineveh believed God,
 and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth,
 from the greatest of them
 even to the least of them."*

And what Jonah prophesied never came to be,
 because ...

*"...God saw their works,
 that they turned from their evil way;
 and God repented of the evil,
 that he had said that he would do unto them;
 and he did it not.*

Then there was the lad in Jesus' story,
 the one who took all his inheritance,
 and ran off on his own to live a wild life.
 He enjoyed himself until it all went sour,
 until he finally saw where his folly led.
 There, living with the pigs,
 He came to himself,
 and he knew what he needed to do,
 and returned home.
 He deserved to be punished,
 He expected to be punished,
 but for him, for the people of Nineveh,
 for you, and for me,

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after
 their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we
 might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to
 be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it
 yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto
 them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down,
 and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that
 which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it
 rather be healed.

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
 which no man shall see the Lord:

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily

What a blistering First Lesson!

We're beginning, as we do every year,
 a solemn spiritual quest in preparation for Easter.
 And, in doing so,
 we put ourselves through some things
 that are not all that easy to do.

When there is a priest available to administer them,
 we begin by being marked with a black spot of ashes.
 We fast. We give something up.
 We attend church more. We pray more.
 We do more religious reading and study,
 maybe we go to confession.

But, on top of that, do we need to hear this?

*"... lift up thy voice like a trumpet," he says,
"and shew my people their transgression, ..."*

We are used to being discrete.
Isn't quiet, private correction enough?
Not when it's all of us -- and it is.
When we all walk out of church into a busy world,
with dirty faces,
marked with a sign of mortality and shame,
we carry a message
that is not what they expect to hear.
What we say is not
quite what we seem always to be saying,
no longer are we looking out with condemnation,
we are saying this:

*"We, who call ourselves God's people, have sinned.
We mourn our own sins and seek forgiveness
and we declare that we need to change"*

*"Yet they seek me daily, he goes on,
and delight to know my ways, ...
and forsook not the ordinance of their God: ...
they take delight in approaching to God.*

That is true.
We are here because we want to be here.
We value the law of our God.
We want to be close to him.

*"Wherefore have we fasted, say they,
and thou seest not?
wherefore have we afflicted our soul,
and thou takest no knowledge?
Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure,
and exact all your labours.*

Homily

Lent has begun.
Lent is a time of deep sorrow and great hope,
a time when we examine our sins,
look them over closely,
meditate on how really terrible they are in God's
sight;
a time when, by long tradition,
we are marked with ashes,
a sign of mortality,
a sign of the ultimate emptiness of all our efforts,
and we mourn,
and fast in expression of that mourning,
but always God calls,
always God waits,
and we may come.

Jonah went to Nineveh.
He went knowing that it was a wicked city.
We know how much he wished not to go,
how much he wished to stay away
and let the wicked be condemned.
But God sent him, and finally he went.
He shouted from one end of the city to the other:
"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

Not a pleasant message, was it?
He expected, and probably hoped,
that they'd do like most people would,
that they'd want to keep their sinful lives,
and either ignore him,
or even laugh at the warning he brought from God.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Do we ever feel as though our prayer and our fasting is in vain?

Do our prayers seem to bounce off the ceiling unanswered? Sometimes we seem to do a great deal for God, and nothing seems to result. Why? Well listen ...

"...Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, ...

Here's something

we Continuing Anglicans need to hear and hear well:

It is a very easy thing when others err,

and we stay firm,

to measure our rightness by what we oppose.

That's wrong.

We are Christians because we follow Christ.

We are Catholics

because we follow the Faith once delivered.

We are traditionalists

because of what we have retained.

The errors others hold are theirs, not ours.

If we fast to criticize others for not fasting,

we sin. As simple as that. To continue:

*"...ye shall not fast as ye do this day,
to make your voice to be heard on high. ..."*

Does fasting earn us any credit with God?

Do any of our religious observances?

No, we simply can't do enough,

but we can use the tools our God has given us

to make us ready to approach Him when He calls.

Fasting doesn't get God's attention,

but it does get ours.

*"...Is it such a fast that I have chosen?
a day for a man to afflict his soul?
is it to bow down his head as a bulrush,
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
wilt thou call this a fast,
and an acceptable day to the LORD?..."*

What is all this fasting supposed to point at?
What is the purpose of all this extra devotion?

*"...Is not this the fast that I have chosen?
to loose the bands of wickedness,
to undo the heavy burdens,
and to let the oppressed go free,
and that ye break every yoke?
Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,
and that thou bring the poor that are cast out
to thy house?
when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him;
and that thou hide not thyself
from thine own flesh? ..."*

If our Lenten observance merely draws us inward,
merely makes us feel oh-so-religious,
and allows us to continue indifferent
to the needs around us,
it fails.

We are called to be a light in a dark world,
and, if we truly seek God,
and truly allow him to change us,
and fill us with His own light,
then, as the prophet said,

*"...Then shall thy light break forth
as the morning..."* ,

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

10 Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

11 And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: Luke 15:10-32

Here beginneth the tenth verse of the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

then, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, we can

*"...lift up the hands which hang down,
and the feeble knees;*

*And make straight paths for your feet,
lest that which is lame be turned out of the way;
but let it rather be healed.*

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness,
without which no man shall see the Lord:"*

Let us pray

Grant, O Lord, that we who have this day begun the solemn fast of Lent, being cleansed of the darkness of sin, may walk in the light of thy presence, and may show forth the radiance of thy mercy in this world, that we, and those who shall see, may enter into the glory of the resurrection to life everlasting, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening Prayer

First Lesson: Jonah 3 & 4

*Here beginneth the third chapter
of the Book of Jonah.*

3:1 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

4:1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

3 Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.

4 Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

5 So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.

6 And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.

7 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

9 And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.