

Ash Wednesday (Year A)

First Reading - Isaiah 1.11-18

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Trample through my temple no more,
says the Lord.
I take no pleasure
in your endless sacrifices.
Your offerings are futile.
I despise your incense,
your festivals,
and your solemn assemblies,
while iniquity remains.
When you reach out your hands in prayer,
I will not listen.
I will cover my eyes,
for your hands are red with blood, says the Lord.
But this
is how to wash yourselves,
and make yourselves clean:
cease to do evil,
and learn to do good;
work for justice;
rescue the oppressed;
defend the orphan,
and plead for the widow.
Then, says the Lord,
all that was
stained
blood-red
with sin
will be made pure,
like lamb's-wool,
or freshly-fallen snow.
This is the word of the Lord.

Second Reading - 2 Corinthians 5.14-15,17

A reading from the second letter of Paul
to the Corinthians.

We declare, with confidence,
that Christ died
for all;
so
all have died.
Therefore, let us live
no longer
for ourselves,
but for Christ, who died for us -
and rose again.
For anyone who is in Christ
is a new creation.
The old
has passed away,
and everything
is new.
This is the word of the Lord.

Gospel - Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Take care
not to do
your good deeds
to be seen by others;
for if that is your purpose,
you will have no reward
from your Father in heaven.
When you give
to those in need,
do not announce it
with a fanfare,
in the synagogues,
and in the streets,
as the hypocrites do,
seeking praise.
I tell you,
they have received their reward.
But when you give, do not let
your left hand know
what your right hand
is doing.
Do your giving in secret,
and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.
In the same way, when you pray,
do not be like the hypocrites, who love
to stand and pray in the synagogues,
and at the street corners, to be seen by others.
I tell you, they have received their reward.
But when 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 when you fast, do not look miserable,
like the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces
to show others
they are fasting.
I tell you,
they have received
their reward.
But when you fast,
clean your hair, and wash your face,
so that your fasting is seen
not by others,
but by your Father;
and your Father, who knows all things,
will reward you.
And do not put your heart
into storing up treasure on earth,
where everything decays,
and thieves break in and steal.
But put your heart, instead,
into storing up
everlasting treasures
in heaven,
that no thief
can take away.'
This is the Gospel of the Lord.