

## Ash Wednesday - Recalling the 'Penitential Psalms' (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 & 143)

### The Lent Prose

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

### Introduction

### Hymn - Forty days and forty nights

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

- 1 Forty days and forty nights  
thou wast fasting in the wild;  
forty days and forty nights  
tempted, and yet undefiled.
- 2 Sunbeams scorching all the day;  
chilly dew-drops nightly shed;  
prowling beasts about thy way;  
stones thy pillow, earth thy bed.
- 3 Let us thine endurance share,  
and awhile from joys abstain,  
with thee watching unto prayer,  
strong with thee to suffer pain?
- 4 And if Satan, vexing sore,  
flesh or spirit should assail,  
thou, his vanquisher before  
grant we may not faint nor fail.
- 5 So shall we have peace divine;  
holier gladness ours shall be;  
round us too shall angels shine,  
such as ministered to thee.
- 6 Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,  
ever constant by thy side;  
that with thee we may appear  
at the eternal Eastertide.

*George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870), Francis Pott (1832-1909)*

### Psalm 6

- 1 O Lord, rebuke me not in your wrath;  
neither chasten me in your fierce anger.
- 2 **Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am weak;**  
**Lord, heal me, for my bones are racked.**
- 4 Turn again, O Lord, and deliver my soul;  
save me for your loving mercy's sake.
- 9 **The Lord has heard my supplication;**  
**the Lord will receive my prayer.**

### Reflection - 'I am weak'

## Psalm 32

- 1 Happy the one whose transgression is forgiven,  
and whose sin is covered.
- 2 **Happy the one to whom the Lord imputes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there is no guile.**
- 5 Then **I acknowledged** my sin to you  
and my iniquity I did not hide.
- 6 **I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,'  
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.**
- 8 You are a place for me to hide in;  
you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with songs of deliverance.
- 12 **Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord;  
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.**

### Reflection - 'I acknowledge'

## Psalm 38

- 1 Rebuke me not, O Lord, in your anger,  
neither chasten me in your heavy displeasure.
- 6 **I am utterly bowed down and brought very low;  
I go about mourning all the day long.**
- 10 My heart is pounding, my strength has failed me;  
the light of my eyes is gone from me.
- 15 **For in you, Lord, have I put my trust;  
you will answer me, O Lord my God.**
- 18 I will confess my iniquity  
and be sorry for my sin.
- 21 **Forsake me not, O Lord;  
be not far from me, O my God.**
- 22 Make haste to help me,  
O Lord of my salvation.

### Reflection - 'I put my trust'

## Psalm 51

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness;  
according to the abundance of your compassion  
blot out my offences.
- 2 **Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness  
and cleanse me from my sin.**
- 3 For I acknowledge my faults  
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 **Against you only have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,**
- 5 So that you are justified in your sentence  
and righteous in your judgement.
- 6 **I have been wicked even from my birth,  
a sinner when my mother conceived me.**

- 7 Behold, you desire truth deep within me  
and shall make me understand wisdom  
in the depths of my heart.
- 8 **Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean;  
wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.**
- 9 Make me hear of joy and gladness,  
that the bones you have broken may rejoice.
- 10 **Turn your face from my sins  
and blot out all my misdeeds.**
- 11 Make me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 12 **Cast me not away from your presence  
and take not your holy spirit from me.**
- 13 Give me again the joy of your salvation  
and sustain me with your gracious spirit;
- 14 **Then shall I teach your ways to the wicked  
and sinners shall return to you.**
- 15 Deliver me from my guilt, O God,  
the God of my salvation,  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.
- 16 **O Lord, open my lips  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**
- 17 For you desire no sacrifice, else I would give it;  
you take no delight in burnt offerings.
- 18 **The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**
- 19 O be favourable and gracious to Zion;  
build up the walls of Jerusalem.
- 20 **Then you will accept sacrifices offered in righteousness,  
the burnt offerings and oblations;  
then shall they offer up bulls on your altar.**

### Reflection - 'I shall be whiter than snow'

#### Psalm 102

- 1 O Lord, hear my prayer  
and let my crying come before you.
- 2 **Hide not your face from me  
in the day of my distress.**
- 3 Incline your ear to me;  
when I call, make haste to answer me,
- 10 **I have eaten ashes for bread  
and mingled my drink with weeping,**
- 11 Because of your indignation and wrath,  
for you have taken me up and cast me down.
- 18 **When he has turned to the prayer of the destitute  
and has not despised their plea.**
- 21 That he might hear the sighings of the prisoner  
and set free those condemned to die;

### Reflection - 'I have eaten ashes for bread'

## Psalm 130

- 1 Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord;  
Lord, hear my voice;  
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
- 3 **But there is forgiveness with you,  
so that you shall be feared.**
- 4 **I wait for the Lord**; my soul waits for him;  
in his word is my hope.
- 5 **My soul waits for the Lord,  
more than the night watch for the morning,  
more than the night watch for the morning.**
- 6 O Israel, wait for the Lord,  
for with the Lord there is mercy;
- 7 **With him is plenteous redemption  
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.**

### Reflection - 'Out of the depths have I cried to you O Lord'

## Matthew 6:16-21

*New Revised Standard Version*

<sup>16</sup> "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. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>[a]</sup> Concerning Treasures <sup>19</sup> "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust<sup>[b]</sup> consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust<sup>[c]</sup> consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

## Prayer

Let us pray for the grace to keep Lent faithfully. Almighty God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent. Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from you the God of all mercy, perfect forgiveness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is love and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. Amen.

## Psalm 143

- 1 Hear my prayer, O Lord,  
and in your faithfulness give ear to my supplications;  
answer me in your righteousness.
- 2 **Enter not into judgement with your servant,  
for in your sight shall no one living be justified.**
- 6 **I stretch out my hands** to you;  
my soul gasps for you like a thirsty land.
- 7 **O Lord, make haste to answer me; my spirit fails me;  
hide not your face from me  
lest I be like those who go down to the Pit.**

### Reflection - 'I stretch out my hands'

## **The Sign of the Cross**

As a sign of penitence, normally on Ash Wednesday I would invite you to receive the sign of the cross in ash on your forehead. This year with your right hand, I invite you to make the sign of the cross in the palm of your left hand and with your left hand to make the sign of the cross in the palm of your right hand. Symbols of our penitential journey through this season of Lent.

Remember, we are dust and to dust we shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

May Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.**

## **Anthem - Lord for thy tender mercies sake**

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

## **The Blessing**

### **Lent Course - Beginners with the Psalms**

2.00 – 4.00pm by Zoom

Wednesdays 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March.

All are welcome