



The following Prayer Service can be used at home, with those who live together, as a way to connect the parish family to those who cannot come to church. This includes Scripture, prayers and the distribution of ashes. As a celebration of the “domestic church,” this prayer service maintains the intrinsic communal aspect of the season of Lent, and the communal nature of the distribution of ashes. We don’t receive ashes in isolation, but always as a member of the community which journeys together to the renewal of Easter.

## DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES AT HOME

### INTRODUCTORY RITES

*If possible, a suitable song may be sung as the Service begins. After the singing, the Leader begins:*

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

*All make the sign of the cross and reply: Amen*

**Leader:** Let us remember that the hour of God’s favor draws near, the day of his mercy and of our salvation approaches, when death was destroyed and eternal life began. As we begin this season of Lent, we remember that we are sinners. As we express our sorrow and repentance, may God be merciful to us and restore us to his friendship.

### OPENING PRAYER

**Leader:** Let us pray.

God our Father, the light of your truth bestows sight to the darkness of sinful eyes. May this season of repentance bring us the blessing of your forgiveness and the gift of your light.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

### READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

A reading from the book of the prophet Joel:

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the LORD, your God. For



gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment. Perhaps he will again relent and leave behind him a blessing, Offerings and libations for the LORD, your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion! proclaim a fast, call an assembly; Gather the people, notify the congregation; Assemble the elders, gather the children and the infants at the breast; Let the bridegroom quit his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the porch and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep, And say, "Spare, O LORD, your people, and make not your heritage a reproach, with the nations ruling over them! Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Then the LORD was stirred to concern for his land and took pity on his people.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 51

**Response:** Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense. Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me.

**Response:** Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

For I acknowledge my offense, and my sin is before me always: Against you only have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight-- That you may be justified in your sentence, vindicated when you condemn.

**Response:** Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me. Cast me not out from your presence, and your holy spirit take not from me.

**Response:** Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Give me back the joy of your salvation, and a willing spirit sustain in me. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

**Response:** Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.



## DISTRIBUTION OF THE ASHES

The leader says once: Repent and believe in the gospel.

*Or:* Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return.

*The Leader then sprinkles the ashes on the head of those present, in silence.*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Leader:** Now let us join in prayer to the Father, asking him to forgive us as we forgive others.

**All:** Our Father . . .

## CONCLUDING RITE

**Leader:** God, our source of life, you know our weakness. May we reach out with joy to grasp your hand and to walk more readily in your ways. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.