

**HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN
CHURCH
METCALFE, ON.**

MARCH 2, 2022

Ash Wednesday

**Reverend Michael
Fleming**



Fr. Michael: As we gather this night in our sacred space of Holy Trinity, we acknowledge that the land upon which we live and have meaning is on the unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin peoples.

People: May we live together in harmony, reconciliation and hope for a future of light and peace.

Fr. Michael: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: In his wonderfilled book, With Open Hands, Henri Nouwen speaks of the human condition. At the moment of our birthing. We enter a world which is alien, frightening and filled with uncertainty and we enter with our little fists tightly clenched against our eyes. The human journey is the unleashing of the fists and the opening of them to embrace the world and others. Henri speaks of the danger inherent in living “with open hands” - as we move our hands farther and farther from our bodies and seek to embrace others, we stand vulnerable before others -

we invite them in, in to our private space and do not know how the invitation will be received. We will either fall into the warm embrace of a sister or a brother, or we will get a poke in the jaw! That is the human journey of risk from darkness to light.

Tonight, we begin once again the seeking of light in the midst of the darkness that is called Lent.

Fr. Michael: Holy, holy, holy God, we place ourselves in your presence, we rest in the promise of your love and grace. Our minds and spirits are cluttered with many thoughts and feelings that threaten to pull our attention away from you. Let us unclench our fists and release these things: we release all that we need to do tomorrow; we release our fear, our anxiety, our impatience, our pride. We release all the thoughts, all the feelings that separate us from you, O God. We release..... Fill us now with the joy and peace of your abiding presence and we offer our all to you our One God Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Amen

Fr. Michael: Almighty and everliving God, you despise nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting of sins and acknowledging our brokenness, may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen

People: O God who makes all things new, new stars, new dust, new life; take my heart, every hardened edge and measured beat. I need your newness, Lord, the rough parts of me made smooth, the stagnant stirred, the stuck freed, the unkind forgiven. And then, by the power of your Spirit, I need to be turned towards Love again.

(from Pamela C. Hawkins, Prayers and Creeds website 2021)

Reader: A reading from the prophet Joel ((Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17)
Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near - a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

PSALM 103

Fr. Michael: El Shaddai, with all of my soul and with all that is within me, I bless your holy name. I remember with joy all of your blessings. You forgive all my sins and forgive all my diseases. You save my life from ruin and crown me with loving-kindness. You surround me with tender mercy and satisfy my desires with good. As long as I live, you will renew my strength like an eagle's.

People: You always act with justice and always vindicate the oppressed. You made yourself known to Miriam and Moses, and revealed yourself through your saving acts to all your people. You are merciful and gracious, slow to anger and steadfast in love. You seldom chasten and seldom remain angry.

Fr. Michael: You do not deal with us as our sin deserves; You do not return what our bad behaviour merits. Your love is as high as the heavens are above the earth. You remove our sinfulness from as far as the east is from the west! As a mother's heart embraces all her children, so Your great womb-love extends to all the faithful.

People: You know how fragile our bodies are Lord. They so quickly return to the dust! Our days are like fast – fading grass; we flourish for a little while like wildflowers in the field,. When the wind blows over them, they wither and die.

Fr. Michael: But your steadfast love, El Shaddai, lasts forever. You pour out your generosity on your children – on all who revere You and on all the generations of those who keep covenant with You.

People: Heaven and earth are your home and your reign extends over all. With all the angels and all the powers of heaven and earth, we bless you Lord and hasten to listen to the Voice of Your Word.

Fr. Michael: O my soul, bless El Sahddai.

(from *Swallow's Nest: A Feminist Reading of the Psalms* by Marchienne Vroon Rienstra)

Holy Gospel

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the blessed St. Matthew (St. Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21)

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others.

Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever 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 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.

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 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. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Fr. Michael: The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Homily



Celebrant: Sisters and Brothers in Christ, every year at the time of the Christian Passover, we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of your Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is the time to prepare for that celebration and to renew our life in the Paschal mystery. Let us begin this holy season by remembering our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, an ancient sign speaking of the frailty and uncertainty of human life and marking the penitence of the community as a whole. I invite you therefore, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination and penitence, prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the Word of the Lord. Let us kneel before our Creator and Redeemer

Fr. Michael: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion, blot out my offences. Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from of my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you only have I sinned.

People: **Create in me a clean heart, O God.**

Fr. Michael: And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgement. Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner in my mother's womb.

Fr. Michael: For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me and I shall be clean indeed.

People: **Create in me a clean heart, O God.**

Fr. Michael: Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body which you have broken may rejoice; hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

People: **Create in me a clean heart, O God.**

Fr. Michael: Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. I shall teach your ways to the wicked and sinners shall return to you. Deliver me from death, O God and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation. Open my lips, O God and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, but you take no delight in burnt offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

People: Create in me a clean heart, O God. Selah!
Fr. Michael: Let our hearts speak to the heart of God.
People: In the blazing light of your love, our failings are illuminated: our failure to give, our failure to love; our failure to follow; our failure to serve, our failure to be the people you would have us to be. Forgive us and renew us. You know our nature, you know our failings. Enfold us in your arms that we might daily know your forgiveness and your healing love.
(from Faith and Worship website 2021)

People: Most holy and merciful God, we confess to you and to one another and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

Fr. Michael: We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength; we have not loved our neighbours as our selves; we have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven. We have been deaf to your call to serve others as Christ has served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ and we have grieved your Holy Spirit.

People: Have mercy on us Lord.

Fr. Michael: We confess to you Lord all our past unfaithfulness; the pride, the hypocrisy and the impatience of our lives. We confess our self-indulgent appetites and ways and our exploitation of other people.

People: **We confess to you, Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Our anger at our own frustrations and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves; our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, our dishonesty in our daily life and work; our negligence in prayer and worship and our failure to share the faith that is with in us.

People: **We confess to you, Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Accept our repentance Lord for all the wrongs we have done; for our blindness to human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty; for all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbours and for our prejudices and contempt towards those who differ from us.

People: **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

Fr. Michael: For our waste and pollution of all your creation and our lack of concern for those who come after us.

People: **Accept our repentance, Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Return to the Lord your God, for God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Turn towards your God in the confidence that, through Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Amen

(from Spacious Faith website 2020)

Fr. Michael: Almighty God, from the dust of the earth you have created us. May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and penitence, and a reminder that only by your gracious will are we given eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

THOSE WHO WISH TO SHARE IN THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES ARE ASKED TO COME BEFORE THE ALTAR AND KNEEL WITH THE COMMUNITY GATHERED.

Fr. Michael: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation.

People: That we may show forth your glory in the world.

Fr. Michael: In the Cross and Passion of your Son our Lord

People: bring us with all your saints into the joy of his resurrection.

Fr. Michael: Almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us all in eternal life. Amen

Fr. Michael: Lord, grant us a simplicity of faith and a generosity of service that gives without counting costs; a life overflowing with Grace poured out from the One who gave everything so that we might show the power of love to a broken world and share the Truth from a Living Word. Lord, grant us a simplicity of faith and a yearning to share it.

And may we know the love of the heavenly Father deep in our hearts; may we understand our significance in the heart of His family; may we feel the bonds that hold us close as sisters and brothers. May we understand the lengths to which he was prepared to go for humankind and freely respond in the today which he has given us to cherish, honour and serve. Amen. So, let us now bless the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

EVERYONE LEAVES IN SILENCE GOING INTO THIS
GOOD NIGHT

Worship follows the Holy Eucharist in the Book of Alternative Services.

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