

The Collect

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

< > This Collect is to be said every day in Lent, after the Collect appointed for the day, until Palm Sunday.

The Epistle

Joel ii. 12.

TURN ye even to me, saith the LORD, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat-offering and a drink-offering unto the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

The Gospel

St. Matthew vi. 16.

WHEN ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Ash Wednesday 2017

Today, Lent begins: as we prepare for the Great Easter Celebration through prayer, repentance of sins, almsgiving, and self-denial.

On Ash Wednesday, we acknowledge our mortality through the imposition of Ashes...from dust...to dust.

In the Collect today we ask for forgiveness of sins, and we ask God to give us new and contrite hearts that we might obtain mercy, through Jesus Christ.

In the reading from Joel we hear of how we are to turn to God, as we rend our hearts unto Him, for He is gracious and merciful.

And in Matthew we are told to fast and to do it as anointed and clean as we are not to seek the things of the "earth" (and the world,) but we are to seek the things..., **the treasures...**, of heaven.

My brothers and sisters, we as true believers in Christ, are not to do as did "Lot's wife" when she looked back in disobedience to what she had been told,

as God was trying to lead them all of them to Him...

and thus, she was turn into a pillar of salt.

This is a season in which we are to confess our sins of the past,
We are not to look to the left or right,
but are to look straight ahead to our heavenly home.

A home which we know is so glorious, because our Lord has told us that
prepares a place for us

and as important – that He will be with us.

You will never receive a greater offer – do not let this pass by.

The things of heaven are things eternal.

They are not things of a **“happiness”** that is for a day, week, month, or
even year...

but a Joy that does not end.

A Peace that is beyond our ability to understand,

For it is a Peace that is not obtainable within this fallen world in which
we live.

It is for this reason, if we understand our faith as flowing from God’s
Grace, which is received and accepted through Faith in His Son,

that our Lenten Season can be a season of great Joy and Satisfaction
as we move closer and closer to our Lord

as we move forward through a process of Sanctification hopefully for
the rest of our lives.

As we move closer to Christ during this Lenten Period,
our suffering does not have to be “**suffering**” –
as this period can be an action of “**great Joy.**”

As each day passes we can have satisfaction in the accomplishment of
our Lenten goal or goals;

Indeed it can be a day of celebration in doing well.

However, if we fail that day in our attempt,

we then can come to the foot of His Cross and confess our failures.

We are to seek His blessings,

that He may strengthened us in our desire to follow Him

and to seek His help in winning our battle with sin –

whatever sin it may be.

So let this Lenten Period be of an inward “joy” as you seek to make His
Will, your Will.

Use His Church

to assist you in obtaining this precious crown of salvation which is
offered through His Incarnate Son.

Let the Church become part of your daily life through Her prayers
and by participating in her Sacraments.

Christ's Church is here for you, St. Michaels is here for one reason –
to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and to administer His Sacraments.
That is why her doors are opened every day during the week.

Knock and the door will open,
listen that you may hear a truth that is above all truths,
open your eyes to His Creation and His Love which surrounds you each
day.

Seek Him above all things, because He is above things.

He has come to you – within your hearts and souls –
now He awaits you –
turn to Him and make Jesus the first Love of your life.

He can do no more than He has done –
it is now up to each one of us.

Come to Him smiling
and proclaiming His name
and make Him Truly Your God above all else.