

PRAYER- ALL

Father, we give you praise and thanks that your love for us is a jealous love. However much we turn from you, you always seek us out and welcome us back with joy. Even when we grow dull and weary you smile on us and fill us with the blessing of new life. Grant that we who have been raised far beyond ourselves in the likeness of your Son may be filled with the transforming power of your Holy Spirit this Lent, and that all we touch may come to life in our hands. Thus may we give you praise and thanks before all people, today and every day, forever and ever. Amen!

READING

We are ambassadors for Christ, God as it were appealing through us. We implore you, in Christ's name: be reconciled to God! For our sakes, God made him who did not know sin, to be sin, so that in him we might become the very holiness of God. As your fellow workers we beg you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, "in an acceptable time I have heard you; on a day of salvation I have helped you." Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation! (2 Cor 5:20-6:2)

RESPONSE- ALL

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.

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.

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.

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.

REFLECTION (De La Salle's Meditation for Ash Wednesday)

The Church, in placing ashes upon our heads, teaches us that today we should enter into a truly penitential spirit. . . In receiving these ashes, ask God to grant you that spirit of penance with which you should be animated, and which should accompany you and make you holy. Exterior penance serves little purpose if it does not effect a change of heart. Hence, the effect which the ceremony of the imposition of ashes ought to have on you is to introduce a change in your general conduct, making you repent, as it were, with the eyes, the tongue, and the heart. You will repent with the eyes by refraining from all that can distract you; with the tongue by allowing your life to be filled with silence in order to attach yourself to God; and with the heart by turning your thoughts to God during this holy season. . . To encourage us to repent during this season of Lent, the Church, through her ministers, while placing ashes upon our heads, reminds us that "you are dust and to dust you will return." The Church desires that we should bear this thought in mind during this holy season, that we may be inspired to perform acts of penance with great love and zeal.

CLOSING PRAYER- ALL

Lord, when I look at life
may I see through your eyes,
sensitively.

Lord, when I hear your people speak
may I listen with your ears,
attentively.

Lord, when I speak
may I use your words,
thoughtfully.

Lord, when I use my hands
may I give your hands,
carefully.

Lord, as I live each day during this season of Lent
may I walk with you, lovingly.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE. PRAY FOR US!
LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS. FOREVER!