

*Liturgy of the Hours*  
LITURGY OF THE HOURS

OFFICE OF READINGS

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February 18, 2026

{ Ash Wednesday }



*Stand and make sign of cross*

God, come to my assistance.

— Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and will be for ever. Amen.

#### HYMN

Behold, the accepted time has come:  
a holy gift from God shines forth  
to cure the sick and weary world  
with healing balm of abstinence.

The day of our salvation dawns  
resplendent with the light of Christ,  
as wounded hearts are freed from sin,  
restored by fasting and restraint.

O God, perfect our firm resolve  
to fast with body, mind, and heart,  
that filled with longing we may seek  
and safely reach the eternal Pasch.

Let all your works adore you, Lord,  
O merciful and Triune God.  
Renewed by pardon, let us sing  
a new song to your holy name. Amen.

*Metrical hymn, melody: ERHALT UNS, HERR, 8 8 8 8; later form of melody from  
Joseph Klug's Gestliche Lieder, Wittenberg, 1535*

*Plainsong, mode I, melody 28; Liber Hymnarius, Solesmes, 1983\*, Text: Nunc tempus  
acceptabile, ca. 10th c.*

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*Sit or stand*

## PSALMODY

### *Antiphon 1*

Bless the Lord, my soul; never forget all he has done for you.

*Psalm 103*

*Praise for God's tender compassion*

*In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us (see Luke 1:78).*

*I*

My sóul, give thánks to the Lórd, \*  
all my béisng, bléss his holy náme.  
My sóul, give thánks to the Lórd \*  
and néver forgét all his bléssings.

It is hé who forgíves all your guílt, \*  
who héals every óne of your ílls,  
who redéems your lífe from the gráve, \*  
who crówns you with lóve and compássion,  
who fills your lífe with good thíngs, \*  
renéwing your yóuth like an éagle's.

The Lórd does déeds of jústice, \*  
gives júdgment for áll who are oppréssed.  
He made knówn his wáys to Móses \*  
and his déeds to Ísrael's sóns.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

### *Antiphon*

Bless the Lord, my soul; never forget all he has done for you.

### *Antiphon 2*

As a father is gentle with his children, so is the Lord with those

who revere him.

*II*

The Lórd is compássion and lóve,\*  
slow to ánger and rích in mércy.

His wráth will cóme to an énd; \*  
he will nót be ángry for éver.

He does not tréat us accórding to our síns \*  
nor repáy us accórding to our fáults.

For as the héavens are hígh above the éarth \*  
so stróng is his lóve for those who fíear him.  
As fár as the éast is from the wést \*  
so fár does he remóve our síns.

As a fáther has compássion on his sóns, \*  
the Lord has pity on thóse who fíear him;  
for he knóws of whát we are máde, \*  
he remémbres that wé are dúst.

As for mán, his dáys are like gráss; \*  
he flówers like the flówer of the field;  
the wind blóws and hé is góne \*  
and his pláce never sées him agáin.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

*Antiphon*

As a father is gentle with his children, so is the Lord with those  
who revere him.

*Antiphon 3*

Bless the Lord, all you his works!

*III*

But the lóve of the Lórd is everlásting \*  
upon thóse who hóld him in fíear;  
his jústice reaches óut to children's chíldren †

when they keep his covenant in truth,<sup>\*</sup>  
when they keep his will in their mind.

The Lord has set his sway in heaven<sup>\*</sup>  
and his kingdom is ruling over all.  
Give thanks to the Lord, all his angels,<sup>†</sup>  
mighty in power, fulfilling his word,<sup>\*</sup>  
who heard the voice of his word.

Give thanks to the Lord, all his hosts,<sup>\*</sup>  
his servants who do his will.  
Give thanks to the Lord, all his works,<sup>†</sup>  
in every place where he rules.<sup>\*</sup>  
My soul, give thanks to the Lord!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,<sup>\*</sup>  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now,<sup>\*</sup>  
and will be for ever. Amen.

*Antiphon*

Bless the Lord, all you his works!

VERSE

Turn back to the Lord and do penance.

— Be renewed in heart and spirit.

*Sit*

READINGS

*First reading*

From the book of the prophet Isaiah

*58:1-12*

*Concerning fasting that pleases God*

Thus says the Lord God:  
Cry out full-throated and unsparingly,  
lift up your voice like a trumpet blast;  
Tell my people their wickedness,  
and the house of Jacob their sins.

They seek me day after day,  
and desire to know my ways,  
Like a nation that has done what is just  
and not abandoned the law of their God;  
They ask me to declare what is due them,  
pleased to gain access to God.  
"Why do we fast, and you do not see it?  
afflict ourselves, and you take no note of it?"

Lo, on your fast day you carry out your own pursuits,  
and drive all your laborers.  
Yes, your fast ends in quarreling and fighting,  
striking with wicked claw.  
Would that today you might fast  
so as to make your voice heard on high!  
Is this the manner of fasting I wish,  
of keeping a day of penance:  
That a man bow his head like a reed,  
and lie in sackcloth and ashes?  
Do you call this a fast,  
a day acceptable to the Lord?

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish:  
releasing those bound unjustly,  
untying the thongs of the yoke;  
Setting free the oppressed,  
breaking every yoke;  
Sharing your bread with the hungry,  
sheltering the oppressed and the homeless;  
Clothing the naked when you see them,  
and not turning your back on your own.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your wound shall quickly be healed;  
Your vindication shall go before you,  
and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.  
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer,  
you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!

If you remove from your midst oppression,

false accusation and malicious speech;  
If you bestow your bread on the hungry  
and satisfy the afflicted;  
Then light shall rise for you in the darkness,  
and the gloom shall become for you like midday;  
Then the Lord will guide you always  
and give you plenty even on the parched land.  
He will renew your strength,  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring whose water never fails.  
The ancient ruins shall be rebuilt for your sake,  
and the foundations from ages past you shall raise up;  
“Repairer of the breach,” they shall call you,  
“Restorer of ruined homesteads.”

*Responsory*

*Isaiah 58:6, 7, 9; Matthew 25:31, 34, 35*

The Lord says: The kind of fast that pleases me is sharing your food with the hungry and sheltering the poor and homeless.

— Do this and I will listen to your prayers; when you call on me I will say: I am here.

When the Son of Man comes in glory, he will say to those on his right: Come, inherit the kingdom, for I was hungry and you gave me food.

— Do this and I will listen to your prayers; when you call on me I will say: I am here.

*Second reading*

From a letter to the Corinthians by Saint Clement, pope

*(Cap. 7, 4—8, 3; 8, 5—9, 1; 13, 1—4; 19, 2: Funk 1, 71—73. 77—78. 87)*

*Repent*

Let us fix our attention on the blood of Christ and recognize how precious it is to God his Father, since it was shed for our salvation and brought the grace of repentance to all the world.

If we review the various ages of history, we will see that in every

generation the Lord has *offered the opportunity of repentance* to any who were willing to turn to him. When Noah preached God's message of repentance, all who listened to him were saved. Jonah told the Ninevites they were going to be destroyed, but when they repented, their prayers gained God's forgiveness for their sins, and they were saved, even though they were not of God's people.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the ministers of God's grace have spoken of repentance; indeed, the Master of the whole universe himself spoke of repentance with an oath: *As I live, says the Lord, I do not wish the death of the sinner but his repentance.* He added this evidence of his goodness: *House of Israel, repent of your wickedness. Tell the sons of my people: If their sins should reach from earth to heaven, if they are brighter than scarlet and blacker than sack-cloth, you need only turn to me with your whole heart and say, "Father," and I will listen to you as a holy people.*

In other words, God wanted all his beloved ones to have the opportunity to repent and he confirmed this desire by his own almighty will. That is why we should obey his sovereign and glorious will and prayerfully entreat his mercy and kindness. We should be suppliant before him and turn to his compassion, rejecting empty works and quarrelling and jealousy which only lead to death.

Brothers, we should be humble in mind, putting aside all arrogance, pride and foolish anger. Rather, we should act in accordance with the Scriptures, as the Holy Spirit says: *The wise man must not glory in his wisdom nor the strong man in his strength nor the rich man in his riches. Rather, let him who glories glory in the Lord by seeking him and doing what is right and just.* Recall especially what the Lord Jesus said when he taught gentleness and forbearance. *Be merciful, he said, so that you may have mercy shown to you. Forgive, so that you may be forgiven. As you treat others, so you will be treated. As you give, so you will receive. As you judge, so you will be judged. As you are kind to others, so you will be treated kindly. The measure of your giving will be the measure of your receiving.*

Let these commandments and precepts strengthen us to live in humble obedience to his sacred words. As Scripture asks: *Whom shall I look upon with favor except the humble, peaceful man who*

*trembles at my words?*

Sharing then in the heritage of so many vast and glorious achievements, let us hasten toward the goal of peace, set before us from the beginning. Let us keep our eyes firmly fixed on the Father and Creator of the whole universe, and hold fast to his splendid and transcendent gifts of peace and all his blessings.

*Responsory*

*Isaiah 55:7; Joel 2:13; see Ezekiel 33:11*

Let the evil man give up his way of life, and the sinful man his thoughts. Let him turn back to the Lord, and the Lord will have mercy on him.

— Our God is kind and compassionate, always ready to forgive.

The Lord does not wish the sinner to die, but to turn back to him and live.

— Our God is kind and compassionate, always ready to forgive.

*Stand*

### CONCLUDING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord,  
protect us in our struggle against evil.  
As we begin the discipline of Lent,  
make this day holy by our self-denial.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

— Amen.

*Acclamation*

Let us praise the Lord.

— And give him thanks.

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