

SECONDARY: LITURGY, STORIES AND WORKSHEETS



ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY

Liturgy Leader: We are gathered here today to mark the beginning of the church's great season of Lent. As a community, we acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we gather, the _____ people.

INTRODUCTION

The theme for Project Compassion 2007 is *Fair Play Today*. The four themes of Lent: repentance, almsgiving, prayer and fasting, (when done as conscious acts of solidarity with the marginalised majority), all have their place in breaking open this theme, and making it meaningful for our time and our place today.

Lent must be more than a brief period of self-denial. Let this Ash Wednesday be a conscious expression of solidarity with the poor and oppressed. Let each individual participating in this liturgy commit themselves to the concrete task of building a better world where all can experience *Fair Play*.

Opening Hymn: *We Are Called* (David Haas: [Gather Australia](#), NLMC Publications, 1995) or *Send Down the Fire* (Marty Haugen: [Gather Australia](#))

OPENING PRAYER

Leader:

Let us pray,
God of Justice,
Walk with us as we begin our Lenten journey.
Support us as we try to change to be better people
and build peace in our world.
Help us to fulfil our responsibility to work for the good of our global family
whom we have a responsibility to help.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lived and died for us and rose again,

All: Amen.

Reading: Gospel of Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18

BLESSING

We ask God to bless these ashes which are a sign that we are sorry for the things that we have done wrong. Bless all who receive these ashes today. These ashes mark us as people prepared to seek forgiveness, prepared to change ourselves in order to change our world, people committed to a world where all may know the joy of Easter.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ASHES

Ashes are distributed. The traditional words said are:
"Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel." OR
"Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return."

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Leader:

Lord, with these ashes we mark ourselves as people committed to the creation of a more just and compassionate world. In our own worlds and through our support of Project Compassion we express our solidarity with the entire human family. We pray that we can truly live the message of *Fair Play Today*.

Student:

God of justice,
During Lent we are reminded that we need to live simply so others can simply live. This is more than an expression of solidarity with the poor and oppressed, it is a realisation of the need to challenge the way the world's resources are distributed. Grant us the courage and strength to live out this message in our daily lives.
Lord hear us.

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

Student:

God of justice,
Pope Paul VI reminds us that "it is not only a question of eliminating hunger and reducing poverty but also building a human community free from discrimination." Give us the courage to challenge discrimination whenever and wherever we see it in our lives.
Lord hear us.

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

Student:

God of justice,
We pray for lasting peace in our world – peace founded on truth and justice; peace that frees people from poverty and a sense of despair. Peace that brings hope. Help us to be peacemakers in all that we do.
Lord hear us.

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

Let us now join together in the prayer Our Lord taught us.

All: Our Father

REFLECTION

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio – On the Development of Peoples*. This was an extraordinary document for its time and is just as relevant today as it was in 1967 when it was first published.

The overarching message of *Populorum Progressio* is that we all have a role to play in empowering people to help themselves break free from poverty and be "architects of their own progress." However, this can only happen if we act justly and "play fairly".

Download a powerpoint reflection about *Populorum Progressio* and the work of Caritas Australia at: www.caritas.org.au

SENDING FORTH

We believe in a world where resources are justly distributed.
We believe in a world free from poverty and discrimination.
We believe that peace is possible and that peace will bring hope.
Let us commit ourselves this Lent and beyond to live out these principles of *Fair Play* – today and always.
Amen.

Final Song:

Bring Forth the Kingdom (Marty Haugen, [Gather Australia](#)) or
We Are All in this Together (Ben Lee, [Awake is the New Sleep](#), 2005)