ASH WEDNESDAY

O Christ, we come into thy presence, and how beautiful it is! There is no place so beautiful as the place where thou art. *(Anon, India).*

CONFESSION Heal me, Lord, and I shall be healed. Save me, Lord, and I shall be saved. O good Jesus, I confess my sins are great, but your merits are much greater. My wounds are many and grievous; but you are the good Samaritan, full of pity and compassion, able to heal my wounds, even if they were ten thousand times greater….. You are called the Alpha and Omega- that is, the beginning and end of all goodness; therefore, begin a good life in me, and finish it to the glory of your blessed name. So shall I, receiving these benefits at your merciful hand, praise and magnify your blessed name for evermore. *(Thomas Becon (c1512-1567), quoted in "An ocean of grace" by Tim Chester).*

COLLECT. Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and 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 receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

READINGS. Joel 2.1-2, 12-17, Psalm 51.1-18, 2Corinthians 5.20b-6.10, John 8.1-11.

Lord, who hast formed me out of mud,
And hast redeemed me through thy blood,
And sanctified me to do good,
Purge all my sins done heretofore;
For I confess my heavy score,
And I will strive to sin no more.
Enrich my heart, mouth, hands in me,
With faith, with hope, with charity;
That I may run, rise, rest with thee.
("Trinity Sunday"; George Herbert).

PRAYERS. Lord God, heavenly Father,
as the result of his rebellion, you told father Adam, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." We have followed Adam in his rebellion, and have earned the same reward.
Lift us up from this dust of death
by the rising of your Son Jesus Christ.
Restore us to life with you by forgiveness through his blood. Empower us to walk with him in newness of life, and in the obedience that leads to righteousness.
Finally, on the Last Day, raise us from the dust of death to live in the joy of your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.
(Paul C. Stratman © 2017).

God our Father, you want us to become new creatures in Christ. We pray to you.
Lord, you promise us new heavens and a new earth. Renew our hope.
You have freed us from our slavery by giving us your only Son; you open for us the way of freedom.
Enable us to listen to your Word and to welcome it with hearts filled with love.
We were dead and you brought us to life through the Spirit. We were sinners and you continually restore us to purity of heart. *(Taizé)*

Lord, we pray for all who are weighed down with the mystery of suffering. Reveal yourself to them as the God of love, who yourself bear all our suffering. *(George Appleton)*
We pray for all who suffer, especially…….

Lord come to me, my door is open
(Michel Quoist).
We say the **LORD'S PRAYER**.
We share **THE GRACE**.

Have mercy upon our efforts, that we
Before you, in love and in faith,
Righteousness and humility,
May follow you with self-denial,
Steadfastness and courage,
And meet you in the silence.
Give us a pure heart that we may see you,
A humble heart that we may hear you,
A heart of love that we may serve you,
A heart of faith that we may love you.
Dag Hammarskjöld.