

**Ash Wednesday Liturgy**  
**“BE MORE”**  
**Wednesday 17 February 2021**

***Slide 1: Project Compassion 2021***

***Slide 2: Introduction***

**Reader 1:**

As we gather to celebrate the beginning of the Church’s season of Lent, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Wurunjeri people. We acknowledge and offer our respect to their continuing culture and the contribution they make in the life of this region.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Church’s season of Lent. The marking of the Ashes on this day is a public expression of our faith and repentance. It is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Through prayer we come closer to God so that we are better able to realise our baptismal promise to live justly as Jesus teaches us. Fasting joins us in solidarity with the poor who often have no choice but to go without basic essentials. Giving to the poor or ‘almsgiving’ is a sign of our commitment to justice and our thanks for all that God has given us.

Lent prepares us for the season of Easter, the most important time in the Church’s calendar. By praying, fasting and giving alms, we are reminded of Jesus’ death and Resurrection. Jesus brought the promise of hope to all people so that we may “Have life and have it to the full.” (John 10:10), so that with our neighbours, we can go further, together.

Please stand for our gathering song

***Slide 3: Opening Prayer***

**Leader:** Let us begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

God of hope and compassion,  
You remind us of the need to turn away from our own desires, and to care for our global family, particularly at a time that has seen great loss and suffering. We pray that during this time of Lent, we may grow in understanding of the challenges faced

by those who are marginalised and vulnerable in our world as we make a home for them in our hearts.

And as we see the challenges of others, may we too be challenged to 'Be More' as people who act when there is a need. Be with us as we walk in solidarity with our brothers and sisters.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**All: Amen**

## ***Slide 4: Gospel Reading***

**Reader 2:** A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be careful not to parade your good deeds before people to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win people's admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward.

But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and our God who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

'When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let people know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'

The Gospel of the Lord

## ***Slide 5: Reflection after the Gospel***

**Leader:** Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of our Lenten journey over forty days. We are called to accompany Jesus on his journey to Calvary. In His immense suffering, Jesus continued to show mercy and forgiveness to those who had sentenced him to death. This powerful moment highlights the importance of both asking for mercy of God and showing mercy to others within our own lives. As we

reflect on our lives during this Lenten season, let us consider the things in which we ask God for mercy, and recall moments in which we have not shown mercy to others.

Fasting, almsgiving and prayer are the cornerstones of Lent and Jesus tells us within today's Gospel reading, they should not be done merely for personal gain or status. Rather, when we take the time to pray, fast and give to others, it should be done in consideration of the good of others and in honouring God.

These blessed ashes are a reminder to us of the Lenten promises we will make in our own lives, and to encourage us to give ourselves to others, just as Jesus did for us.

This significant time in the liturgical season asks us to reflect on the needs of our brothers and sisters and be thankful to God for our many blessings. We are reminded of those who do not have access to the basic needs of human life, and to consider ways in which we can act to best serve them. Now more than ever, all communities, most especially vulnerable ones, are struggling from the effects of the global pandemic. As we prepare for the Paschal Mystery centred on the passion, death and Resurrection of Christ this Easter season, we must stand in solidarity as a global family, challenging ourselves to 'Be More' in reaching out to others.

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## ***Slide 6: Prayers of Intercession***

### **Prayers of Intercession**

**Leader:** Lord, we begin our Lenten journey being marked with the sign of the cross as a symbol of your love and sacrifice for us. We come together in prayer, asking for your blessing and guidance.

**Reader 3:** We pray for our Church leaders Pope Francis and Peter our Bishop that they may follow your lead and bring peace and strength to our Church. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

**Reader 4:** We pray for our brothers and sisters who experience poverty and injustice, that we may aspire to 'Be More', acting in solidarity to end injustices around the world. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

**Reader 5:** We pray for our school community, that we may be inspired by the life and message of Christ to act in love; reaching out to those on the fringes of society. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

**Reader 6:** We pray for the work of Caritas Australia, that through our support of Project Compassion, Caritas can work together with communities around the world, providing them with the skills needed to create a future they deserve. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** God of mercy and love, hear our prayers. May you walk with us this Lent and guide us as we come together as people called to make a difference in the lives of others.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

## ***Slide 7: Project Compassion 2021: BE MORE***

**Reader 7:**

This year, Caritas Australia's Project Compassion theme is 'Be More'.

It challenges us to venture into a new experience of compassion, and is taken from the invitation of St Oscar Romero, to "Aspire not to have more, but to BE more." For more than 50 years, Caritas Australia has been privileged to work together with our neighbours –our most vulnerable sisters and brothers around the world. Working with our partner agencies in those communities, we have developed the strength in our work to end poverty, promote justice and uphold the dignity of every person. Throughout Project Compassion 2021, inspiring stories from Bangladesh, Solomon Islands, Tanzania and Indonesia will be shared, highlighting the importance of working hand in hand with communities around the world.

Our challenge to 'BE More' takes us beyond ourselves. This Lent, we are encouraged to make simple lifestyle changes and act for social and environmental justice, so that we may 'Be More' in our own lives and in the lives of others.

## ***Slide 8: Closing Prayer***

**Leader:** God of peace,

As we begin our Lenten journey, guide us as we fast, pray and give to others. May we support the work of Caritas as they strive to enrich the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen**