



February 14, 2024

## Saint Stephen the Martyr Parish of the PNCC

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### ASH WEDNESDAY

#### A Thought for this Day

Now is the time of our salvation. We take up Christ's cross because it will lead us to new life. Today's ashes speak to us of conversion. Our journey through Lent will transform the world's darkness and pain into Easter joy and life.

#### About Today's Bible Readings

##### JOEL 2:12-18

The prophet makes one thing very clear about Lent: in order to change our lives, we must first change our hearts.

##### Responsorial Psalm: 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14, 17

**R. Be merciful, O Lord,  
for we have sinned.**

##### 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20 – 6:2

Now is the time for conversion. If we accept God's gracious gift, then Christ will live in us.

##### MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-18

Why do we do what we do? Only when our motivation springs from good hearts will we fulfill the duties of righteousness.

#### ENTRANCE RITE – Wisdom 11:23

*V. You Lord have mercy on all, because You can do all things; and You overlook the sins of men that they may repent.*

**R. For You love all things that are and loathe nothing that You have made; for what You hated, You would not have fashioned.**

*V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,*

**R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

#### TRACT – Psalm 79:8-9 (Recited in place of the Alleluia)

*V. Remember not against us the iniquities of the past; may Your compassion quickly come to us, for we are brought very low.*

**R. Help us, O God, our Savior, because of the glory of Your name; deliver us and pardon our sins for Your name's sake.**

#### THE GOSPEL – Matthew 6:1-6; 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples: "Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. "When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you."

**This is the Gospel of the Lord!**