

Lifting our souls, Trusting in God

LENT AND EASTER COURSE FROM THE
DIOCESE OF ABERDEEN AND ORKNEY



Joel 2:1-2,12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near--
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains
a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
nor will be again after them
in ages to come.
Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the Lord, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.
Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the Lord, your God?
Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.
Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.
Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations
Why should it be said among the peoples,
`Where is their God?'"

COLLECT

Almighty and
everlasting God, you
despise nothing you
have made and forgive
the sins of all who are
penitent. Create and
make in us new and
contrite hearts, that we,
worthily lamenting our
sins and acknowledging
our brokenness, may
obtain of you, the God of
all mercy, perfect
remission and
forgiveness; through
Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever
and ever.
Amen.



Praying Fasting Almsgiving

"...the liturgical traditions of the Church, all its cycles and services, exist, first of all, in order to help us recover the vision and the taste of that new life which we so easily lose and betray, so that we may repent and return to it. ... It is through her liturgical life that the Church reveals to us something of that which "the ear has not heard, the eye has not seen, and what has not yet entered the heart of man, but which God has prepared for those who love Him." And in the center of that liturgical life, as its heart and climax, as the sun whose rays penetrate everywhere, stands Pascha."

*— Alexander Schmemmann,
Great Lent: Journey to
Pascha*

What does returning to God mean to you?

The prophet Joel tells the people to fast, weep, gather the people - old and young, stopping everything even getting married as they are called to return to God. Joel tells the people (and us) that God is 'is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love'. Words similar to those we say after the Eucharist - Give thanks to the Lord - whose mercy endures forever.

Returning to God is not because God moved, but because of us, of our human condition, of our hearts, minds and actions. However, in contrast to us God is Holy, God is Immortal and God is Merciful.

To Listen:

Come, Let Us Return to the Lord by Marty Haugen

A playlist of music suggestions for the course can be found at <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3pJcG5xA1xzhl2Aolau0Q4?si=582cd1f921ae4fb1>

"We suffer these things and they fade from memory. But daily, hourly, to give up our own possessions and especially to subordinate our own impulses and wishes to others - these are hard, hard things; and I don't think they ever get any easier. You can strip yourself, you can be stripped, but still you will reach out like an octopus to seek your own comfort, your untroubled time, your ease, your refreshment. It may mean books or music - the gratification of the inner sense - or it may mean food and drink, coffee and cigarettes. The one kind of giving up is no easier than the other."

— Dorothy Day