

March 5, 2025

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

ASHES

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Reflection

Ash Wednesday provides the time and context for each of us to assess how our relationship with God is going. How much time do we spend on this cornerstone relationship that is foundational to who we are and who we are becoming as men and women of faith?

The symbolic ritual of receiving ashes on this day is a reminder and invitation to repent. What might this mean to us in 2025? It is the same for us as it was for Jesus' first followers – turn our focus and gaze upon the Beloved. The cross we receive on our foreheads when ashes are distributed has an inward and outward meaning.

Outwardly, we are saying to ourselves and others that we desire to repent and seek forgiveness from God. In humility we join all others in lining up to receive our ashes. Inwardly, the ashes signify our deep desire to turn to God and away from all that leads to sin and distancing from our Creator.

For most of us, the Lenten journey is one of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is taking stock of our lives. We seek more time for prayer, service to those most in need, and being more available to others who desire and need our attention. It is a time to be creative and discover countless other ways we can give of ourselves in generosity and without pretention.

We join in the long line of Christians who for centuries have gone to Mass on Ash Wednesday to receive our ashes, publicly acknowledging we are Catholics. It is our work to make this public display become a reality in our inmost being during the next six and a half weeks.

There are some helpful questions to consider during this time of Lent. What first comes to mind is, “What needs reconciling in my life? How will I fast?” This can be literally fasting from food, and it can be fasting from other distractions like TV time and time on our electronics. This added time can be used for prayer and for service to others. It can be a time to seek reconciliation with others and ourselves. It is turning to God in all aspects of our lives and praying for the grace we need as this new season of Lent begins.

Ashes

Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return (Genesis 3:19). As the ashes are etched upon my forehead, may I calm my breathing and take in the fullness of both this symbolic ritual and the deep meaning of the words being spoken.

Upon receiving the ashes, I feel some of them falling gently upon my cheek and nose, a gentle reminder of the touch of God who created me in my mother’s womb and sends the graces I need to live life fully.

Returning to my seat, I accept the fullness of what these ashes mean for me this day. I pray silently for the gift to repent for sins of omission and commission. May my heart remain open and receptive to all that will unfold during these next six and a half weeks of Lent.



Ash Wednesday

Thays Orrico

For Pondering

- What do you desire as you begin these weeks of Lent? Open your heart to God and await God's response.
- What are some of the actions you might undertake during these weeks of Lent? More time in prayer? More service to the dear neighbor? What surfaces within you as you ponder this question?
- What graces do you ask from God as Lent begins?

For Prayer

*As our journey of Lent begins,
we pray for the grace of perseverance and courage*

*as we seek to look deep within ourselves
for what needs to be reconciled in our lives.
May we be open to all that you have to reveal to us
as this sacred journey begins.
Amen.*

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