

March, 2022 Scriptures: Joel 2:12-13, Matthew 6:1-6,16-21
Title: Ash Wednesday: A day of confession and forgiveness.

Introduction:

1. What exactly is “Ash Wednesday”?

In the Bible, ashes were always associated with humility and mortality, fasting and remorse. If you had sinned against God, and you felt remorse about that sin, and you were repenting of that sin, then sometimes, in the Bible, you would sprinkle ashes on your head as a sign of sorrow and repentance.

2. Why 40 days?

Right after Jesus was baptized, the Bible tells us that Jesus went out into the desert to fast and to be tempted by the Devil for 40 days. For Jesus, those 40 days were a time of introspection, a time when he battled the temptations of the Devil and emerged stronger than he had been before. For us, Lent is a time when we make those 40 days journey with Christ.

3. It is journey of CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS:

“Return to me, says the Lord, with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.” (Joel 2:12-13)

How do we practice our piety in a way that honors our Father God who sees in secret without being overly worried whether or not we are doing it for show?

How should you respond when somebody ask you the following questions?

“What are you doing this Lent?”

“What are you giving up?”

“What discipline are you embracing?”

How about we change the question this year?

Changing from, “What are you ...” to, “Why are you ...” moves the answer from the purely impersonal to the deeply personal.

CONCLUSION: The whole purpose of giving something up or beginning something new is to be drawn closer to God for God to create in us new hearts. A Lenten practice is not about our work for God, but instead about God’s work in us.