

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Weekday Mass – Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021
Cycle B

Man is created with infused gifts of the mind, memory, and the will. These are faculties that make him uniquely human.

The mind facilitates the thinking, analyzing, and decision-making process. The memory remembers, recalls, and reminisces the past experiences and events. The will executes, moves, and actuates what has been processed.

Today is Ash Wednesday. The Church invites us to deepen and intensify our faculties as we enter the Lenten season. The Church requires every person, fourteen years or older, to abstain from meat today, on Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent. Those who are between the age of eighteen and fifty-nine must also fast today and on Good Friday.

Why do we have to do abstinence and fasting? These gestures are not forcefully required on the people of God. Its intention is never to control or deny the individual of something. It is, rather, to facilitate the desire to intensify and deepen our Christian life through these three devotions of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, respectively, corresponding to the three faculties.

When you are intense in prayer, your mind is one with the mind of God. The more you pray, the deeper your relationship with God grows. When you fast, you deny your memory with the things that provoke pleasure and comfort. You let go of past vanities, present amenities, and future anxieties. Thus, you have more space for God. Lastly, when you give alms, the will is being purified so as not to be preoccupied with the self but to discern the will of God. Consequently, it is manifested in the way you treat others.

Ash Wednesday is not primarily a display of how big those crosses are on our foreheads or in our case now of how much of the ashes are being put on our heads. It is a silent, secret, hidden gesture of deepening and intensifying our faculties of the mind, memory, and will through our prayer, fasting and almsgiving, respectively.

As we begin the season of Lent today, may its spirit continue to nurture all of us, so that we can achieve a profound relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen