

ASH WEDNESDAY



For the Journey

Loving Father,
during this Lenten journey,
inspire me to meditate on your sacrifice
as I seek to deepen my relationship
with you.

May the ashes on my forehead,
remind me from where I came.

Give me strength,
give me hope.

You who are all-loving,
grant that I may be in communion
with you.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday, February 14, 2024
Forever Ambassadors of Christ



Today's readings: Joel 2:12–18; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14 and 17; 2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18. Has anyone ever asked you, “What is that on your forehead?” Each year on Ash Wednesday, we Catholics display a sign telling the world that we are followers of Christ, that we are sinful but hopeful in our redemption through the paschal mystery. The ashes remind us that we are in relationship with God, who sent his only Son to redeem humanity through the sacrifice on the cross.

Throughout the Lenten season, as a community, we ask God for his guidance and mercy as we journey together to repentance and prepare to renew our faith at Easter. The

season invites us to return to God with our whole hearts so that we may be not only one with him but also ambassadors for Christ in the world.

The Lenten ethos is one of sacrifice, primarily God's sacrifice of Jesus for the salvation of humankind. Through our meager Lenten practices, we join in the sacrifice of Christ in the hope of sharing also in his resurrection. Jesus goes into the desert before he begins his public ministry to be alone with God as he readies himself for what is to come. Jesus put his complete trust in God. This season calls for a pause in our lives through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving so that we too may grow closer to God.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, February 12 Always by Our Side

Lent gives us the opportunity to deepen our relationship with God. James teaches us what unwavering faith can accomplish, while the Pharisees demonstrate how people of little or no faith live. James shows us how faith can overcome challenges that many of us know wholeheartedly and firsthand. We may know people who have no relationship with God. These people need assurance, “a sign” to believe. Let us be that sign. *Today’s readings: James 1:1–11; Psalm 119:67, 71, 72, 75, 76; Mark 8:11–13.*

Tuesday, February 13 A Spiritual Journey

Have you ever been on a family trip when one member’s sudden exclamation of “I forgot to pack!” is followed by another’s reassuring response, “Don’t stress, we’ll figure something out”? Something similar can happen along our faith journey. In this scenario, God is that voice telling us not to worry, that he will help us prevail. God will give us the fortitude for a spiritual Lenten journey. *Today’s readings: James 1:12–18; Psalm 94:12–13a, 14–15, 18–19; Mark 8:14–21.*

Wednesday, February 14 Symbol of Life

Today the ashes on our foreheads announce to the world that we acknowledge our sin and have faith in the saving cross of Christ. Despite the visibility of the ashes, they are meant to be a sign of conversion rather than an emblem of pride. Matthew encourages us to go about our lives without flaunting our good deeds. It is enough that we know what we have done for the love of neighbor. *Today’s readings: Joel 2:12–18; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14 and 17; 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18.*

Thursday, February 15 Perfect Role Model

Who are your role models? As children, we may name a professional athlete or our parents. As we age and our faith grows along with us, we may begin to be inspired by saints. Today’s Gospel reminds us of our greatest role model, Jesus Christ. Jesus gives us the template for a holy life. He also warns us that his path is not easy and that we must help one another along the journey. Our goal is to continue Jesus’ mission. *Today’s readings: Deuteronomy 30:15–20; Psalm 1:1–2; 3, 4, 6; Luke 9:22–25.*

Friday, February 16 Caring for Others

Look within and discern whether your external actions reflect your internal thoughts. Do you see a relationship between the way you observe the rules of fasting and abstinence and the way you treat others? Is God pleased that a Church law has been observed when you have been unkind to someone you find annoying? When experiencing a problem with another, ask God to fill you with love toward your neighbor. Strive to live a holy life not for recognition by others but for your love for God. *Today’s readings: Isaiah 58:1–9a; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6a, 18–19; Matthew 9:14–15.*

Saturday, February 17 Saying Yes

Many of us have heard the saying “God doesn’t call the qualified, he qualifies the called.” In today’s Gospel, Jesus called Levi, and Levi followed without hesitation. The other apostles followed the same pattern. Each of them left everything behind to join Jesus’ ministry. How can you act as a missionary disciple, inspiring others to do what is needed to follow Jesus? *Today’s readings: Isaiah 58:9b–14; Psalm 86:1–2, 3–4, 5–6; Luke 5:27–32.*

