



Ash Wednesday

Today the Church celebrates Ash Wednesday, the official start of the penitential season of Lent. As we begin our Lenten journey, we are invited to fast, pray, and give. These actions are not simply about depriving ourselves of enjoyment. Nor are they about trying to show we are good Christians. No; we do these things so that we may be reconciled with God and the poorest of our sisters and brothers. The ashes which are traced on our heads today remind us of our closeness to Christ. They also remind us of what we are made of – dust from God’s earth. We remember our loved ones who have gone before us and who have now returned to God. Let us make the most of these next 40 days. Through our Lenten promises, let us try to grow in the goodness of God.

This Lenten season, what are you going to do? Will you pray more? Give something up? Share what you have with others? We don’t have to announce how much we donate, or what we are giving up, but we are called to make a change. Today’s gospel (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18) warns us against trumpeting our good intentions. For God sees all that we do, and we don’t need to seek glory from others. It is time to give ourselves to God in prayer, to go without to remind ourselves of what is truly important, and to share with others who are in need. It is time to remind ourselves of how much God loves us, how much God forgives. And to remember that no one is beyond the reach of God’s love. In this way, we renew our relationships, with God and with each other – especially with our brothers and sisters who are living in poverty.

+ God of compassion, you call us to come back to you in love. Cleanse our hearts, so that through our Lenten prayer, fasting, and giving, we might grow in love for you and our neighbours. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Fr Anthony Casamento csma
Vice President

2019

Lenten Reflections



First Sunday of Lent

Luke 4:1-13

In Luke's proclamation of the Temptation we are told that Jesus is 'filled with the Spirit' and 'led by the Spirit to the Wilderness' for 40 days – this is a familiar biblical motif, it is a reminder and recreation of the space and the time that Israel spent on their journey from enslavement to freedom.

The scene is set for a similar journey into freedom. The temptations are promises of power, never needing to want for anything, being able to manipulate the world, to direct and determine how things will occur. To be a master not a servant. To each temptation Jesus responds with humility and recognition of his place.

In the Incarnation God promised that salvation can only come from within human reality not through dramatic divine intervention. The temptations of Jesus are questions seeking to get him to repudiate the promise of God. Jesus uses the Word of God to define the parameters of the contest with evil one. In the next section of Luke Jesus proclaims, again with scripture, the mission of God that he will embrace: one of humility, siding not with the powerful but with the vulnerable. This is the freedom that God has promised – to be fully human, fully free and fully alive.

+ Lord, lead us to the freedom of the vulnerable.

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