



A Window on Lent – Devotional Activity

Ash Wednesday to Lent 1

18 Feb 2021

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.”

We have now begun our Lenten journey, the season that Christians traditionally set aside as a time for reflection, prayer, and fasting, to prepare our hearts and minds for Jesus’ journey to the cross and resurrection at Easter. The path we walk this year is different than it has been in years past, yet the message is a familiar one.

As gathered community we took the first step with online worship on Ash Wednesday. Foregoing the traditional imposition of ashes, we faced our own reflections in a window of our homes, making the sign of the cross on that window with a drop of dish soap. Silently or aloud, we were invited to name the regrets we carry, the fears that hold us bound, the wounds that do not seem to heal. In the dark stillness, we recalled our own human frailty and mortality with the words, “ashes to ashes... dust to dust... in death and in life... we



belong to God.” The dim light of a candle gave witness to the presence of God with us even in the darkest of times. We were reminded that, even if we do not comprehend the darkness and the hardships, even then God does not leave us on our own. We prayed the Holy Spirit’s presence to wash over us and in us, so that whatever we see ahead is seen through the promise that we belong to God.

“Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain in me a willing spirit.”

As part of the Lenten journey, many of us are accustomed to taking on a specific practice of fasting or prayer or service. With the distinctiveness of this year, our invitation is to “reframe” how we fast, how we pray, and how we prepare to recall the events of Jesus’ sacrifice, death, and resurrection.

The windows in our homes become for us this season a reminder to pray – outward for the world, and inward for ourselves and our families – to see with a fresh perspective the reality of God’s presence with us. Along the way, we will be looking for windows of grace, hope, and promise through the words of scripture and in our worship. Although we remain dispersed and in our homes, we remain as a community, together paying attention to signs of God’s promise.

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face...”

Devotional Activity: Clean your window! Make this a family affair 😊

The task is simple. The window left with smudges needs to be prepared and cleaned for Sunday. You are invited, however, to treat this activity – not as some mundane chore – but rather as an opportunity for prayer.

As you wipe clean the smudges of soap, what prayer needs do they represent? Offer them up with thanks that God hears the pleas of our hearts.

Clean any remaining panes or perhaps a nearby window, paying attention to what and whom you might see outside. Pray for your neighbors, your community, the environment, for those whose needs may be known, and for those whose needs are hidden from view.

We are invited to share this journey of Lent from a different perspective this year. With grace and hope, may we see God's presence with us in new ways.

Let us pray:

God of death and life, you have put your mark on us, as if we were a window, revealing where your love is found. Shine on us the light that leads us, with Jesus, to the cross, and to our rising. Shine through us the light that refracts the goodness and joy of knowing we belong to you. Shine from us, however imperfectly, the wonder of giving ourselves away to honor the name above every name, Jesus Christ, who reconciles us to you. Amen.