

Christ Our Hope Catholic Church

Ash & Lent Reflection



In Ash

Ash Wednesday, March 06, 2019

As a person who made their home outside of the American culture it is very interesting to see the onset of Lent; as I am far away from the Fat Tuesday, Las Lap or Carnival crowds, noise, music and food of my island homeland. Ash Wednesday, begins as an ordinary day in this American region. Yet, it is not quite so in other places, as Lent belies a stark contrast to the feverous, sunburned and colorful activities of the weeks before and we realize suddenly the times have changed. It is now Lent. What does Lent tell us or should tell us? All fun is over!! It is time to wear sober colors and appear to be holy and solemn?

Of course not. It is the time to take stock; but in a mindful manner, conscious of what it means to be in a *Lenten spirit*. Why ashes?? I can recall the first time I was asked to create the ashes for use.... Yes, one takes the old palm branches from the previous year and burn these.... I thought it was all under control until the wide metal container encountered a gust of wind; ashes went everywhere. It was caused to reflect on the various aspects of ashes.

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Ash have various colors- white, light grey, dark grey and some black. Ash is gritty and messy... but so is our lives. Ash is hard to clean... so is our hearts. Ash is easily blown away.... so is our thoughts able to drift from God.... Despite the other colors, black dominates.... so do our dark thoughts against each other. Yes, ash is what our lives are really like right now; but it could change.

Yet, ash has other features..... It is one of the main ingredients for making a solid abrasive for sparkling pots and pans... Lent is to help us sparkle. Ash has value..... so does each one of us We may appear unreliable, but God created our place!! Charcoal from ash is used as a water filter... yes, it removes impurities... that is what the Sacrament of Reconciliation is all about- for us to remove our sins. Charcoal is used to whiten teeth, our souls can be whitened through the mercy and love of God. Sitting in ashes is a humbling experience.... Those who are humbled shall be exalted.

You see ashes is not so bad after all. Collect your dose of blessed ashes as a reminder of our frailty and sinfulness, with the knowledge that the Holy One who died on the Cross gave us a path to holiness and eternal salvation.

Blessed Lenten Season!!

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