

The Lenten Spring:

from Ash Wednesday



to Resurrection Sunday



ASH WEDNESDAY



Today, the Church takes us back to the first Ash Wednesday in the history of men and women when God passed sentence upon our fallen humanity. “In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, out of which you were taken, for you are dust, and into dust you shall return. — Gen 3:17-19.

Even now, says the Lord, return to me with you whole heart, with fasting and weeping, and mourning. Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God. — Joel 2:13-13.



St. Valentine's Day: There were two St. Valentines martyred in the third century. Neither is linked to this secular celebration of love. February 14th marks the beginning of the mating season of birds.

*Nothing is more practical than finding **God**, that is,
than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way.
What seizes your imagination will affect everything.
It will decide everything.
It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekends,*

*what you read,
whom you know,
what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.*

Pedro Arrupe, S.J.



"I have loved you with an everlasting love." Jer. 31:3

"You are the apple of my eye." Ps. 17:8

"I knit you in your mother's womb." Ps. 139:13

"I have called you by your name; you are mine." Is. 43:1

"See, upon the palms of my hands, I have inscribed your name."

Is. 49:16

"Trust wholeheartedly in me, put no faith in your own perception:

I will see that your paths are smooth." Prov. 3: 5-6

"You were exceedingly beautiful with the dignity of a queen. You were renowned among the nations for your beauty, perfect as it was because of my splendor, which I had bestowed on you." Ez. 16:14

"You are my work of art" Eph. 2:10.

"I have loved you with an everlasting love." Jer. 31:3



THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

We must habitually pray over our thoughts, speech and opinions, aspirations, desires, decisions; over our physical, spiritual, material and mental needs; over our vows and our state of calling to better discern the will of God, respect our neighbor, in the spirit of charity. (Walter Ciszek, S.J.)

When I cried to the Lord, he heard my voice; he rescued me from those who attack me. Cast your care upon the Lord, and he will sustain you. — Ps 55:17.



FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Nobility of nature carries its own obligation—*noblesse oblige*. Raised as he is to an order of living infinitely superior to the natural, endowed with a life that is supernatural, participating in the intimate life of God Himself—it all signifies that the Christian is expected to live after a manner quite different indeed from the manner of the pagan unequipped with such prerogatives. — Norbert Robichaud: *Holiness for All*.

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Men and women, alas, are above all frightened of God. They are afraid of being burned at his touch, like the Israelites who touched the Ark. That adds subtlety to their denials, cunning to their attempted escapes, and makes the pious inventive in devotional tricks to deaden the shock. . . . Whether incredulous, indifferent, or believers, we compete with one another in ingeniously guarding ourselves against God. —Henri de Lubac: *The Discovery of God*.



FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Sin is spiritual ugliness; a lack of sweetness; a souring. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. –Rom 5:20

By their fruits you will know them. – Mt 7:16.

The victory is Christ's. Be gone, Satan.—Early Christian Prayer

God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. –1 Cor 1:25



MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK IN LENT

We fast because we fasted not from the tree of knowledge. Having been overcome thereby: for fasting was an old command. It is the pedagogy of the soul, and the moderation of sensible delight. –St. Gregory Nazianzen

Saying no to a created reality frees us from that object: food, liquor, gossip, e-mails, texting, the need for approval from another person. Fasting removes the loneliness that comes from having too much. Physical hunger symbolizes hunger for God.



TUESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK IN LENT

Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine. Should you pass through the waters, I shall be with you; or through rivers, they shall not swallow you up. Should you walk through fire you will not suffer, and the flame will not burn you. For I am Yahweh, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. —Is 43:1b-3

Late have I loved, Thee, O Beauty, ever ancient, ever new. Late have I loved Thee. —
St Augustine of Hippo: *Confessions*

WEDNESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK IN LENT

Let us make humankind in our own image, according to our likeness. —Gen 1:26

Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. —
Ps 8:5.

The glory of God is man and woman fully alive, and the life of man and woman is the vision of God. —St. Irenaeus of Lyons



THURSDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK IN LENT

The Word of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, . . . because of his immeasurable love became what we are in order to make us what he is. —St. Irenaeus of Lyons

Let your life speak to us even as the rose needs no speech but simply spreads its perfume. Even the blind who do not see the rose perceive its fragrance. That is the secret of the rose. But the Gospel that Jesus preached is much more subtle and fragrant than the Gospel of the rose. If the rose needs no agent, much less does the Gospel of Christ need any agent. — Mahatma Gandhi

FRIDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK IN LENT

Have only one desire: to be and to become the person God wills you to be in nature, grace, and glory for time and for eternity. ~ Jean -Pierre Médaille, S.J.: Maxims of Perfection

Desire little in this world and be not overeager for what you may desire. Jean-Pierre Médaille, S.J.: Maxims of Perfection

Let nothing trouble you.

Let nothing frighten you.

All things pass away

God never changes.

Patience obtains all.

Whoever has God wants for nothing

God alone is enough. -Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila



SATURDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK IN LENT

Often when I was struggling against obstacles of all kinds, often when strength of mind and body failed me, and it was difficult to persevere in the course on which I had set myself, an inner feeling whispered to me, 'There are so few happy and contented people here below. Everywhere men are burdened with sorrow. Perhaps your work may be a source from which those oppressed by cares may draw a moment of relief and relaxation.' Here was a powerful reason for going on! – Franz Joseph Haydn

