

From the Vicar . . .

Dear Family of God at St. Thomas,

The season of Lent is upon us and with us. It began on February 17th with our Ash Wednesday service when we were reminded of our mortality by having a cross signed on our foreheads with ashes made from burnt Palm Sunday crosses.

Now, the Church sets aside this penitential season each year so that we might make the spiritual pilgrimage with Jesus to the cross and along the way examine our lives to see how my or your life is being lived before a holy God. It is a time to individually confess specific sins to God and seek forgiveness as well as make any needed changes.

Below, I share an Ash Wednesday prayer that speaks to the Lenten journey in the wilderness on the way to the tomb and beyond to the glorious oasis of Easter and Resurrection. May each of us be willing and have the courage to make the journey with Jesus for the joy of Resurrection and eternal life set before us:

*The darkness asks us questions.
You are out there and we do not see.
You invite us into the night, the stillness, the loneliness, the desert place.
We cannot see our shadow;
The cold damp of unknowing rises up from beneath our feet.
We tread cautiously, tentatively.
We are afraid, afraid of ghosts haunting us with specters of guilt and shame.
We would like to run back, reach the river bank, swim the Jordan,
Sit in the sun by the sea, mending our nets.
But you have brought us here---with no bread.
When we look we can see only ourselves, our darkness.
When we read, it is invisible words which cannot be grasped,
Thoughts we cannot clutch, hope we cannot capture.
Yet the wild honey remains a taste in our mouth, a memory for a new day.
Why have you brought us here?
What miracle will you perform for us?
The darkness sighs around us,
Dense with your unseen presence,
Close to our breathing,
Close to our breathing.
O darkness, enlighten us, embrace us with your invisible love.
Let us see your glory in the ashes.
Take us by the hand that we may trust the darkness.
Minister to us by your Spirit that we may not be afraid.
Jesus, keep the beasts away*

(William Loader quoted in a church bulletin.)

On the Way with Jesus, (Rev) Shirley +