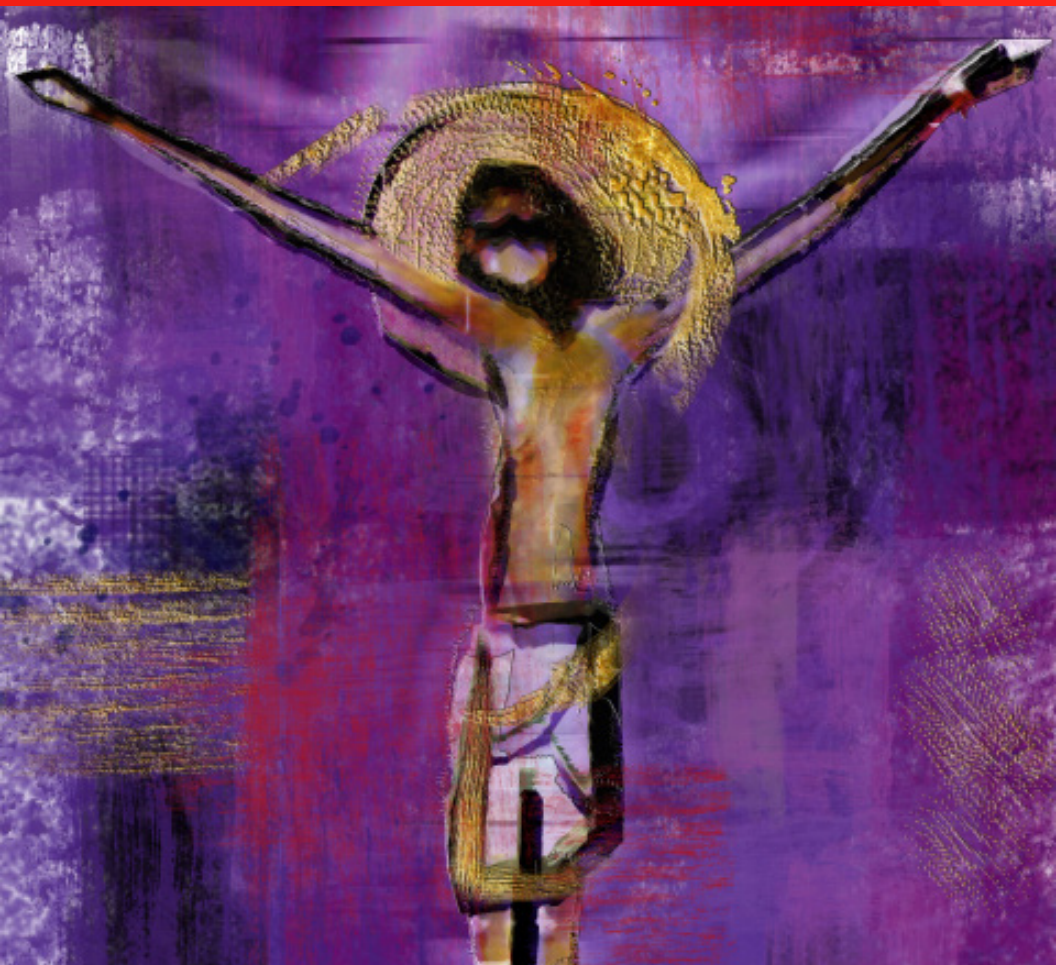




Children's National.

Chaplaincy Services
Office of InterFaith Pastoral and Spiritual Care



Lenten Reflections 2018

Stories, Poems, Reflections from many traditions
Original reflections by staff and friends of CNHS

ASH WEDNESDAY February 14

Touch the ashes...let our hands get dirty.

Ashes! In recent times we have seen the ashes of devastation from forest fires in the northwest and in California. Communities turned to ashes... totally turned to ashes. Gritty and dirty and a visible image of destruction.

Have we felt sometimes that our lives, or the lives of others', have turned to ashes?

There are some days like that, too, when we feel our time has turned to ashes.

There are even sometimes when we think that our country has turned to ashes.

We call them days or times when we have reached rock bottom...not a glimpse of hope. I know, it sounds terrible and it may be hard to continue reading. And this is what sometimes happens in our lives. We hesitate to continue reading that marvelous story of our lives, that marvelous novel with its mysteries and intricacies.

But, what happens next? We have to draw strength from above; we pray without even knowing we are praying. Someone comes to help us, a kind presence of someone we love or of someone we just have met, a big hug. It transforms like magic.

This is what the Lenten Season means to us: a YES to the possibility of transformation ...a YES response to the Lord who will teach us the transforming power of prayer as when He prays in the desert. The transforming power of asking for forgiveness; the transforming power of suffering. Walking in the way of the cross to reach the glorious transformation of Resurrection.

How can I transform my life? How can I help others transform theirs? Who, in our lives, is asking for that help? It is worth taking the time to think about it.

Chaplain Margarita Roque, CNHS

February 15

Truth: Lent's 20 Carat Diamond

In current times, some may agree that truth is often buried in misconception and cultural rhetoric. Truth, some argue is what you decide it is for yourself within the context of your individual reality. Some philosophers state that the only road to happiness and success is through living our own defined truths. With so many living their self-defined truths, why then do so many experience life mired in anxiety, worry, and hopelessness at the very core of our existence?

The period of spiritual preparation during Lent provides us opportunity to rediscover truths; veracities that promise us a solid foundation of core principles and values. As God's truths are revealed to us during the Lenten period through our commitment to deliberate self-sacrifice, alms giving and prayer, we find that previous deceptions are replaced; and a profound renewal and hopefulness is experienced.

As we sacrifice comforts and fast, we are reminded that it is only God whom we can truly rely for spiritual and physical sustenance. In this truth we discern that God will always provide us our needs. In giving of alms to protect people's dignity in times of crisis, we experience the importance of giving to humanity through compassion and sympathy. In this truth we deeply realize God's willingness to give to us, as we must give to others. Dedicated prayer time allows us to hear our Father's voice; through His counsel, forgiveness and hope. In this truth we know that every prayer is heard and answered in God's time and will.

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