



Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney's Lent Course 2024

# THE WAY TO THE CROSS

THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY



## REPENTANCE & REFLECTION

Themes in the readings for Ash Wednesday are repentance and reflection.

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus gives instructions on how we should consider our approach to prayers, almsgiving and fasting - traditional Lenten practices. We are told to not boast about our practices but to practice them to give glory to God, not to show off to people about our own piety. We are told we should give alms in secret, not blowing our own trumpet and to focus on being open to God for God knows all things (Matthew 6.1-4).

When it comes to prayer, Jesus speaks of the value of finding God in the secret space along with praying together in public. (Matthew 6.5-6).

The reading appointed for Ash Wednesday omits Jesus' teaching of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6.7-14).

Concerning fasting, Jesus speaks of how we should not be miserable in fasting and tell people what we are doing all the time. Fasting is often undertaken to reinforce prayer or to create space for prayer - therefore it is no surprise that Jesus' instructions for prayer and fasting are similar (Matthew 6.16-18) and we are called to reflect on how we perform these practices and why we give alms, fast and pray.

In Matthew 6.19-21 Jesus speaks of the difference between heaven and earth and how treasures in both places are very different. These verses challenge us on what we consider is important, what our goals are and to reflect on how this determines our activities, those things we devote time and attention to and what we commit to.

### *Collect for Ash Wednesday*

O Lord, grant that your faithful people may enter this season of penitence with faithfulness, and complete it with steadfast devotion; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.  
Amen.



## QUESTIONS TO REFLECT

- How do Jesus' teachings on how we are to give alms, pray and fast impact on how you may practice these spiritual disciplines this Lent?
- Do you find these teachings in conflict with our Ash Wednesday services? If so, why and if not, why not?
- What do you treasure - how does this determine what you commit to and how you walk through life?
- What do you treasure in your faith life?



Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

### Ash Wednesday Liturgy

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### *Usual Weekly Pattern*

Sunday  
RCL Eucharist  
Readings and Collect

Monday  
Delving Deeper into the Readings

Tuesday  
Words from Others (sacred & secular)

Wednesday  
Resources from the Arts

Thursday  
Contemplative Acts

Friday  
Personal Reflection - what this means to me

Saturday  
Acts & Deeds