



COMING SOON – ASH WEDNESDAY

LITURGY BYTES *by Michele Hall*



As we plowed through February, we awaken to a new month – March – and the dawning of the season of Lent which begins this Wednesday, March 5th. Every year on Ash Wednesday, we are amazed by the number of people coming to be reminded to turn away from sin and to be faithful to the Gospel as the ashes are placed on their foreheads.

Because we are engaged in a Jubilee Year, began by Pope Francis right after Christmas, our Lenten prayer will be focusing on hope. Our hope has always been that God's presence in our world would restore justice to a broken world. It is God's desire for justice, a more just society in which all households could not only survive but thrive together in peace and wellbeing. Granted, this is our wish for ourselves and for our neighbors, but sometimes it is most difficult to see that in today's world or even in our own families. Lent gives us the opportunity to renew our hope and open our hearts to God's love.

How will you address being a "pilgrim of hope" this Lent? Will it be through additional prayers, giving to the poor, or giving up something you enjoy? As you are marked with a sign of faith on your forehead, just like at your Baptism, think about that cross that is visible to others. Our ashes remind us that we are ambassadors for Christ, serving as His witnesses. Would others recognize Christ within us even when the ashes are no longer there? Together we begin this journey preparing for Easter, working towards being a light to the nations. May we reawaken our hope this Lent.

Have a healthy, prayerful, and blessed week ahead!