

Ash Wednesday

The year 2020 taught us just how much our space matters. Many of us realized just how holy our sanctuaries are for us when it was a challenge to physically gather within them. However, this season has also reminded us that God does not reside in any one place, for God is everywhere—and God promises to draw near to us wherever we may be. And so, we offer this reflection on Ash Wednesday.

To mark your sacred space, perhaps light a candle. Take a few deep breaths in and out. Repeat to yourself:

I am here. God is here.

This space is holy ground.

Music - “Bless the Lord” from the Taize community, France. @1991.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=t4Svh-9ohg4>

Opening Prayer

Creator God, There is a rumbling in us that won't let go. It stirs in us like the wind stirs leaves—inviting us to move, drawing us forth.

When we're quiet, we know that rumble is the Holy Spirit, love awake in us. So we're here. And we're still. And we're quiet.

And on this first day of Lent, we're asking you to draw near.

As we hear your scripture read aloud, open the door for us to move.

Invite us in. Rumble us awake.

Gratefully we pray, Amen.

Read and Reflect

Genesis 3:19B

“From dust you came, and to dust you shall return.”

This verse—spoken to us when we normally receive the imposition of ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday—reminds us of our humanity.

So in full honesty, make a list of 5 challenges you are struggling with, recognizing that life is messy and life is complicated. Name anything that is

hard or heavy in this moment. Write them down. Challenge yourself to think of the core emotion underlying each challenge. For example, instead of simply saying, "I'm too busy," perhaps you might confess: "I overcommit myself because I worry that others will think I'm selfish if I say no." Name your challenges and your confessions, offering them all to God.

*Liturgy adapted from Rev. Sarah Are/A Sanctified Art LLC/sanctifiedart.org