

ASH WEDNESDAY HOMILY 2017

1. Today, we get ashes on our foreheads and hear the words: Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return
 - a. We face the ultimate question
 - b. Is this life all that there is or do we dare hope for more
2. The words remind us that in the natural order, we do not have a right to expect more
 - a. In the realm of creation our bodies will one day return to dust
3. Our unique gift of faith is the hope given to us in the mystery of Jesus death and resurrection
 - a. Jesus, the Son of God, chose to become one of us, to take on a human body
 - b. By taking on this human body, God became one of us
 - c. He experienced the pains of every human body
 - d. He experienced the emotional traumas of wanting to love and be loved and being rejected
 - e. He was so committed to us that He even experience rejection by the authorities of his time, abandonment and betrayal by his friends
 - f. He was tortured and crucified, looking like a complete failure
4. Something happened, 3 days later, Jesus conquered death itself
 - a. He rose from the dead, His body was transformed, He entered a life that could never be destroyed
 - b. Even more wonderful for us, is that He offered us hope
 - c. He told us that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we too could receive this gift of resurrection, a life beyond resurrection
 - d. The road to receiving this gift is the road of faith
 - e. Faith is trusting, believing that God will keep the promises made to us through Jesus
5. One thing we must remember is that faith is a relationship with God
 - a. It is trusting, hoping believing
 - b. Faith is not a lock on God, thinking we can control God
6. We enter the season of Lent restore our humility before God
 - a. Routines of life have a way of making us presumptuous
 - b. We are tempted to think, God has to love us, after all we are such good people
 - c. God could not condemn us, could He
 - d. If we read the scriptures carefully, actually God would have every right to condemn us
 - e. We are so far from holiness, He does not have to give us life
7. Our only hope is the promise Jesus makes

- a. God wants to love us so badly, He is willing to forgive and transform us
 - b. He welcomes us through the sacraments
 - c. Most importantly He makes us His children in Baptism'
 - d. He nourishes our faith with His own Body and Blood in the Eucharist
 - e. But He also respects our freedom, we can say yes, I want to surrender myself into your hands
 - f. Or we can say not to God, I think I am more important than you or your will for me
 - g. More times than we like to admit that is exactly what we do, we ignore God and do our own thing
8. Ash Wednesday is our opportunity to accept that we do not deserve God's love
- a. None of us are holy enough to force God to love us and give us life
 - b. Lent is our chance to come to God and to thank Him for loving us despite our failures
 - c. It is our opportunity to ask God to help us to grow more holy
 - d. We ask God to make us more loving people, to become a people working at being able to say yes to God