

LENT: A SEASON TO RESTORE AND RECONNECT

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In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens...then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:4, 7)

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. (Book of Common Prayer, p. 265)

Now, as the days begin to lengthen, we enter the season of Lent wherein we remember our mortality. God created humankind from the dust and dirt of the Earth. At our death, we will return to that point of creation. It is a good spiritual discipline to keep in mind our connection to the Earth and the dirt from which we were fashioned.

Normally, Lent is a time when we “give up” something. Often Lenten disciplines ask us to give up something meaningful in order to remind us of our dependence on God. But we have had more than enough of “giving up,” haven’t we? Over the past year we have given up so much – our church buildings, our familiar forms of worship, our frequent face-to-face contact with each other. Perhaps now, as we enter our second Lent during this pandemic, it seems exhausting to contemplate giving up anything else. In this state of exhaustion, we are mindful of our own deep need and longing to be restored and reconnected.

And perhaps that’s what this Lent should be – a season of restoration and reconnection. As we contemplate our origin from and ultimate return to the Earth, perhaps we might be best served to use the 40 days of Lent as a time consciously to reconnect us with that Earth. Why not spend this Lent looking for ways to connect with creation and for ways to steward and care for it? Become mindful of all of the living things God created – all creatures (animals and insects, plants and trees) as well as that gorgeous creation of our brothers and sisters. Connect with them by

caring for them – by caring for the Earth and by caring for each other. Research ways to care for the Earth – to be a good steward of Creation. (Incidentally, if you google “40 Lenten observances for care of creation, you will find some suggested Lenten disciplines along those lines).

Continue in your prayers and in your diligent study of Scripture. Let your chapel be the outdoors as you wonder in God’s creation. Look for safe ways to stay connected with your brothers and sisters in Christ, caring for them in ways that you would enjoy receiving care. This pandemic is not going to last forever. We WILL return from this exile. Even now, we are seeing hopeful signs of its abatement. Hear the prophet, Jeremiah, who reminds us, *For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)*

Yes, let us indeed remember that we are dust. People of the dust are beloved people, connected people – beloved of God and connected to Him and to each other. Let us use this Lent to celebrate and restore ourselves to that connection.