

Ash Wednesday

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[0 : 0 0] May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

When we hear the word repentance, what do we think? What often comes to mind? Well, I can tell you what comes to my mind. Remember that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return. In our culture, we don't often think about death, or at least we're not encouraged to think about death. We're encouraged to think about the ways that we prolong our life. And caring for others and their health is a good thing. It's something that we should seek after.

But oftentimes, we don't think about death because we forget that we are actually creatures, and we are not creators. So what is repentance, and what does it do for us?

Firstly, repentance reminds us of who we are. Remember that thou art dust. We are brought out from the dust, we are brought out from the ground, and eventually we will all pass away.

[1 : 0 3] And it is because the mighty act of God, who has brought us forth from the very ground that we even exist, He is the one who brought us into existence, and He is the one that can take us back into the ground.

Repentance, as we learn today in the book of Joel, and also in the Gospel of St. Matthew, fasting is one of those embodiments of repentance. But it's a specific kind of fasting.

It's not merely the outward actions that we perform, but rather what we do with our heart. In the book of Joel, it talks about rending our hearts, and not just rending our garments. And our Lord says in the Gospel of St. Matthew, that when you fast, you should put oil on your head, you should wash your face, and you should not strangle your face in a way that makes it look like you're struggling, or make it look like you're suffering.

Because fasting is not about putting on a show for others, but rather is actually about putting our treasures in heaven, so that one day we can receive our eternal reward. So what does this kind of repentance do?

This kind of repentance that reminds us who we are in the eyes of our Creator. It teaches us to put our treasure in heaven. Acceptance of our mortality allows us to be brought up to the throne of God, and to receive the immortality from Him.

[2 : 2 2] So when we come to the Eucharist today, let us humble ourselves in the presence of our Creator, in repentance and in fasting, so that we may receive the immortality of Christ.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.