

“Memories ... light the corners of my mind ...”

Thus begins the song by Barbara Streisand titled *“The Way We Were.”*

It was four and a half years ago that I was the deacon at this parish; and while it may seem like ages ago, hopefully what we remember are the good things. And if there were any not-so-good things, well as Barbara Streisand would have it:

“We simply choose to forget.”

The word “memory” for us in our digital modern age can mean kilobytes, megabytes, gigabytes, or even terabytes. If we need more memory, we can always add more - or if we’re at the limit of our hardware’s capacity, we can always upgrade the system.

When our computers forget, we usually call that a “crash,” and it’s a crisis of varying magnitude. Did we back things up? Do we have it on a flash drive or a disk? Forgetting, at least for a computer, is hardly a “simple” thing.

In the Second Reading, we hear Saint Paul giving the Corinthians a simple formula of the Faith - a brief Creed - or statement of belief:

*Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
that he was buried;
that he was raised on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures*

In a few minutes, we’re going to say something that sounds an awful lot like that. Our Creed is called the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed ... sometimes shortened to the Nicene Creed - which came out of the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, and the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD. You can look up the details of what’s different online - I found it on Wikipedia.

But what St. Paul is doing is reminding the Corinthians of what the core of the Faith is all about. And on Sundays and Solemnities, we also pray the Creed at Mass as a way to remember and reinforce within ourselves the basics of our Faith.

This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday - the first day of Lent. Fasting holds for Ash Wednesday and Good Friday - three meals, no snacking, two meals can’t be any bigger than the third meal. Water is allowed between meals. And for those who don’t remember, in the old days, people used to have to fast on all the Fridays of Lent. We’ve got it easy now. Only on Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent) and Good Friday (the last day of Lent.) So remember that. And for Ash Wednesday and all of the Fridays of Lent, Abstinence from meat holds. Fish, Macaroni and

Cheese, Seafood. And for those who don't remember - in the old days Abstinence was for every day in Lent. No meat except on Sundays and Solemnities. Life was a lot fishier in the old days.

And on Ash Wednesday, we get ashes on our foreheads. And one of the prayers that accompanies the imposition of ashes is: *"Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return."*

In the First Reading, the prophet Isaiah has a vision of God's majesty and glory in heaven. And Isaiah is blown away by this. It's an awful lot to take in. He cries out: *"Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips."*

And in the Gospel, after Jesus performs a miracle allowing Simon Peter to catch a ridiculously large amount of fish, we hear Simon Peter exclaim: *"Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."*

When confronted by God's majesty ... or when confronted by a miracle of God performed by His Son Jesus Christ - both the prophet and Peter have a sudden realization that they are out of their league. In a sense, in the presence of God's might and power - they remember how small they are in relation to the infinite magnitude of God. And their professions reflect that mathematical observation.

But in both cases, the Prophet Isaiah and Simon Peter - God doesn't just agree with them. Rather, God's power and God's might are able to work through a human being. God calls the Prophet Isaiah saying: *"Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?"* and in the Gospel Jesus tells Peter: *"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be [fishing for] men."*

So in the same way, on Wednesday, when we hear those words: *"Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return;"* remembering that that isn't the end of it. The realization of our smallness in the face of God is not where we stop - rather, it is where we begin. Because when we realize that we *"are dust,"* what comes next is the answer to *"Whom shall I send?"* ... which is *"Here I am! Send me!"* We cannot simply forget that we are called and sent to spread the Gospel.

And so, on our last Sunday before Lent, as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray to remember who we are before God. Small, yes, in comparison to His Divinity - but powerful in His grace, and through our Salvation in Jesus Christ - we are configured and transformed to be sent ... to be fishers of men [and women] ... as the sons and daughters of God ... called through Baptism and Confirmation to be a Light for the World ... the hands and feet and mouthpieces of Jesus Christ ... in our daily lives ... out and about ... today, tomorrow, and always.