

Today is Ash Wednesday.

When, in a little while, we will receive ashes on our foreheads ... we'll do so as a sign that we're sorry for our sins. But even more than that, we do it as a sign that we're sorry we put God in the number two or number three position.

When we receive ashes, the priest or minister says one of two things: (1) Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel; or (2) Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.

The second one is a very old prayer ... and wants to make us think about our ultimate end - where we're going to end up when everything else is done.

Where's that? Heaven ... eternal life with God.

So during Lent, we put aside certain things in order to make more room for God in our lives. When we give up something, and realize that we want it - we should put in a little prayer ... something like this: "O God, help me to want You ... and to want Heaven as much as I want ..." and then whatever it is that you gave up.

Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.

Did you know that a large component of regular house dust - what's on top of picture frames, and on unused things in the house, and under the bed ... is old skin and hair cells? There's some truth to that. We *\*ARE\** dust ... and we *\*ARE\** turning into dust.

Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.

Since Lent and our lenten practices are supposed to point us to God, I found a poem that can help us to remember that our ultimate end - where we're going to end up in the end - is with God.

This is the poem, by Rose Milligan of Lancaster, Lancashire, England.

*Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better  
To paint a picture, or write a letter,  
Bake a cake, or plant a seed;  
Ponder the difference between want and need?*

*Dust if you must, but there's not much time,  
With rivers to swim, and mountains to climb;  
Music to hear, and books to read;  
Friends to cherish, and life to lead.*

*Dust if you must, but the world's out there  
With the sun in your eyes, and the wind in your hair;  
A flutter of snow, a shower of rain,  
This day will not come around again.*

*Dust if you must, but bear in mind,  
Old age will come and it's not kind.  
And when you go (and go you must)  
You, yourself, will make more dust.*

*Remember,  
a house becomes a home  
when you can write  
"I love you" on the furniture.*

So, despite giving up candy, or TV, or video games, or computer time ... or whatever it is we've chosen to sacrifice for Lent ... the ultimate end of EVERYTHING is God. And God is LOVE. So, in all of our lenten activities - make sure that you make space for God ... and making space for God make space for LOVE.