

## Archbishop's Ash Wednesday Message

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Season of Lent in the Christian Church year.

For those of us who will gather in churches around North America and receive the imposition of ashes as a sign of our repentance and mortality, we will be challenged to follow Jesus in our lives, examine ourselves for the sins of which we need to repent, and be encouraged to take on spiritual disciplines which draw us into holiness by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This year as you prayerfully examine your own life during Lent, I want to encourage you to look for your sins of neglect. What are your sins of omission? "What is God asking me to do which I am refusing to do?"

Am I neglecting my time alone with God?  
Am I neglecting feeding the poor?  
Am I neglecting speaking out against evil?  
Am I neglecting teaching my children about my faith in Jesus?  
Am I neglecting taking care of my body?  
Am I neglecting praying for and loving my enemies?  
Am I neglecting returning to the Lord His portion of my earnings?  
Am I neglecting caring for those in pain around me?  
Am I neglecting time with my spouse?

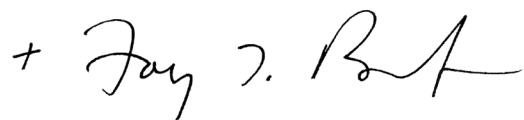
The list could go on and on. You get the point: What are my sins of neglect of which I need to repent?

In trying to deal with my sins of neglect, I have noticed two issues which seem to arise. Firstly, to repent of these sins costs me time. They usually take time to accomplish, which means that if I am going to follow God's leading and repent, then I am going to have to stop doing something that I am currently doing in order to make time for it. To minister to the needy means I have to give up time doing something else. To spend more time studying the Scriptures means I am going to have to give up time doing something else.

Secondly, I have noticed that, more often than not, I am blinded to my sins of neglect. It takes someone else, a sermon, the Scriptures, a book, or a friend to point them out to me. I am afraid this is a pattern for most of us. We don't think we have an issue, and then the Holy Spirit convicts us and brings it to our attention. Because they are usually blind spots, this means we are used to living with them; they are comfortable in our lives. To repent will make us uneasy and it is often difficult! We have to be intentional, and oftentimes, we need someone to hold us accountable.

Jesus wants us to repent so we can experience the Kingdom of Heaven in our lives on earth. We often pray in the Lord's Prayer: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Our sins of neglect truly get in the way of this.

As you walk through the Season of Lent this year, prayerfully look for your sins of neglect. When the Lord reveals them to you, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.



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