

Scripture Prayer For The Week

"Once...
when Jesus...
was praying alone..." (Luke 9:18)



Artwork Dorothy Woodward

Ash Wednesday Year A

We Gather: In the prayer space, have the bible opened at the Gospel reading. The stand or table is draped with Lenten purple. A bowl of ashes (with small dishes for distribution if needed by the numbers). As we go forth, invite the community to be signed with the ashes.

Leader: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.
All: Wash us more and more from our guilt.

Leader: Create for us, a pure heart, O God.
All: Do not cast us away from your presence.

We Listen: The Gospel. Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
Read the gospel passage reflectively. After a time of silent reflection, the line from scripture below could be repeated and the short commentary read.

"And your Father who see all that is done in secret will reward you." 6:18

Commentary:

Three times in this Ash Wednesday gospel, is the assurance that *we will be rewarded* by the God *who see all things*. What is seen and what is the reward though? This is not God checking up on us, but a God who knows us intimately right into the very unconscious realm of our hearts and minds...and finds us to be good. This is not the God of success and benefits and heavenly entrance, but the God who in total love and presence with us every day is the only reward we will ever need to dream of, desire, surrender to and enjoy.

We Respond: *"All that is done in secret...."*

In silence, reflect on the questions below? You may wish to have a time of brief sharing.

- God puts away our sin: therefore guilt is to be a thing of our past. ??
- How wonderful is it to know that God knows our secrets and understands fully?
- Have we the authenticity and integrity to share our good deeds with God alone, just as we share our sins?

Song: (T Conroy-AOV2) or **Grant to Us, O Lord, A Heart Renewed** (Lucien Deiss-GA)

We Go Forth:

God, you call us to come back to you with all our hearts. In this time of Lent, fill us with an awareness of your understanding and tender love. May we act in humble service of your Word, in generous care for your poor, and with total trust in your forgiveness. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: Repent now, and believe in the Gospel!

All: Yes, So may it be!