

# Ash Wednesday

## Gospel – Adapted from Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not do good deeds just so other people may see them; otherwise, you will have no reward from your heavenly Father. When you give to the poor, do not blow a trumpet, like the hypocrites do so they can be praised by others. Truly, they have already received their reward. But when you give to the poor, do so privately so your generosity may be secret, and your Father, who sees what is secret, will reward you.



“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners, so everyone can see that they are praying. Truly, they have already received their reward. But when you pray, go to your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father, who sees what is secret, will reward you.

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They make themselves look weak, so everyone can see they are fasting. Truly, they have already received their reward. But when you fast, brush your hair and wash your face, so others can not tell that you are fasting, except your Father who is hidden. And your Father, who sees what is hidden, will reward you.”

## Reflection

Today is Ash Wednesday, the first day of the season of Lent. Lent is a penitential season. It is a season of prayer, fasting, and good works. But these are things we can and should be doing throughout the year.

The season of Lent challenges us to ask: “Why do I pray? Why do I fast? Why do I do good works?” Do I pray only because my parents make me, or is there something more? Do I really want to give God my time and attention when I pray? When I sacrifice, do I make sure everyone else knows it, or is it an act of love that I don’t feel the need to advertise? When I do a good deed, do I expect recognition and a reward, or can I do good works simply for the love of those who benefit from those works, and for love of God? As we begin this holy season, let us pray that God will help us to do the right things for the right reasons.



## Discussion Questions

What are the right reasons to pray, fast, and do good works?

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Is there someone you can do something kind for, secretly?

Do it.

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## Vocabulary

- **Ash Wednesday** – The first day of the season of Lent. Blessed ashes are put on our foreheads to remind us that life on earth is temporary, and we must order our lives toward everlasting life in Heaven.
- **Fasting** – Giving up things, mainly food, as an offering to God. Jesus went into the wilderness to fast and pray for forty days. Lent is a season of fasting for the Church.
- **Hypocrite** – Someone who is fake, or who says one thing, but does another. Jesus tells us that our spiritual works must be done for spiritual reasons. If we do them to gain praise or earthly rewards, we are being hypocrites.
- **Lent** – The forty-day season before Easter. It is a season of prayer, fasting, and good works, in which we commit to turning away from sin, and growing closer to God.

## Fill in the blanks

- 1 The season of Lent begins on \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ is an important practice during Lent, and can be done other times, as well.

3 \_\_\_\_\_ is a penitential season.

4 Jesus teaches us not to be \_\_\_\_\_, but to do things for love of God and our neighbor.

## Quiz

- 1 What did Jesus call people who do good deeds only so others can see them?
- A Liars  
B Generous  
C Hypocrites  
D Hypnotists
- 2 Why should we brush our hair and wash our face when we are fasting?
- A So we do not smell  
B So we will not be hungry  
C So others will not know that we are fasting  
D So others will admire our haircut
- 3 If we do good works privately, who will repay us?
- A God, our Father  
B The government  
C The poor  
D Our family

## Ash Wednesday

E Z U P F T K F I S G K R F U  
X K Z E U L N V A E W Y X A M  
P T Y B L G P E N T I B D S N  
W Q U N N S B E L Y H D J T Q  
N E T I M F R T L P A E R I Z  
S V A U J O J L X B L D R N U  
Q K N N S X W P N Y Z W A G H  
N M W I J M Z L U L U B B D E  
Y C T N D H E C I A H R G W L  
R Y C Q S N E T T N A L G B M  
W A S H W E D N E S D A Y V D  
E J Y V E T I R C O P Y H N Z  
H D M B Y Q W K J D F U H L T  
G J D C S G S W U O T C M I E  
C N N J B F K G O U F E M O J

ASH WEDNESDAY

FATHER

FASTING

GENEROSITY

HYPOCRITE

LENT

Answers:

Fill in the blanks

- 1 Ash Wednesday  
2 Fasting  
3 Lent  
4 Hypocrites

Quiz

- 1 C – Hypocrites  
2 C – So others will not know that we are fasting  
3 A – God, our Father



