

This week's Lenten Lesson is from The Rev. Dr. John Mccard

A few years back, as people were leaving Ash Wednesday services, I found myself in a spiritual quandary. How should I greet folks on this Holy Day? Happy Ash Wednesday doesn't seem quite right. Merry Ash Wednesday isn't much better. As I struggled to find the right phrase, someone walked up to me and wished me a Humble Ash Wednesday and Lenten Season. Perfect I thought... this captures exactly the way that we should approach this forty-day season. Generally Episcopalians don't spend a lot of time beating their breasts, wearing sackcloth, or bewailing their manifold sins (and wickedness). But when we approach Lent with a true sense of humility, we are reminded that God is not done working on these feelings of self-satisfaction.

My friend, Gil Meilaender wrote in a collection of letters, that he always has thought it better if we try and give something up for Lent. He writes, to give up something---even something perfect and good in itself—is a lesson in how eagerly I tied my heart to passing goods, how easily I forget that every good thing comes from God and should lead me back to the one from whom it comes. We are fragile beings, easily enslaved. Giving up something reminds me that the grace of God actually can do something *in* me and *to* me. It doesn't, I find, tempt me to suppose that I'm doing pretty well as is.

Lent calls us to a time of prayer and reflection. It reminds us in hymns, prayers, and scripture that we are not a finished product. In fact, we all too often content ourselves with passing goods. We miss what God offers us and are surprised when those temporal things fail to satisfy our longing for God. Having a humble Lent reminds us that we are not doing pretty well. Lent instead calls us to make time for God. We are called to be present for worship on Sundays, to give something up, and to start a journey to Jerusalem with our Lord.

May you have a humble Lent and may God richly bless your lives as we live toward the glories of the coming Easter season.