



# Daily Reflections

## February 14, 2018

---

### Scripture

#### **Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18**

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Take care not to perform righteous deeds  
in order that people may see them;  
otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father.

When you give alms,  
do not blow a trumpet before you,  
as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets  
to win the praise of others.

Amen, I say to you,  
they have received their reward.

But when you give alms,  
do not let your left hand know what your right is doing,  
so that your almsgiving may be secret.

And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

"When you pray,  
do not be like the hypocrites,  
who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners  
so that others may see them.

Amen, I say to you,  
they have received their reward.

But when you pray, go to your inner room,  
close the door, and pray to your Father in secret.  
And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

"When you fast,  
do not look gloomy like the hypocrites.  
They neglect their appearance,  
so that they may appear to others to be fasting.  
Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.  
But when you fast,  
anoint your head and wash your face,  
so that you may not appear to be fasting,  
except to your Father who is hidden.  
And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you."

---

## **Our Scripture Reflection**

Today is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Holy season of Lent. In today's Gospel text, Jesus while addressing the hypocrisy of the religious leaders and teachers of the day, gives us the best direction possible for walking through Lent: Be Real! Today, as ashes are placed on my forehead I am reminded that my life on earth will come to an end one day. Lent is not only about becoming a better person in this life but it is also about preparing my soul for the life that will never end.

---

## **Food for your Journey**

Did you know that one of the most beautiful and cherished items in all the world, a diamond, is nothing more than carbon dust — ashes, in other words — that has been exposed to pressure?

Some of us remember learning this fun fact as kids, while watching the old black-and-white Superman TV series, the one starring George Reeves. There's a scene, in one of those episodes, in which Superman takes a lump of coal in his hand and squeezes it very hard. He grunts. He grimaces. Smoke comes out of his clenched fist. Yet, when he opens his hand, the lump of coal is there no longer. A glittering diamond has taken its place.

In God's hand, the ashes of a human life are more than mere refuse, to be carted away. By the amazing power we call grace, we can be transformed from our natural state of sin into something strong and beautiful.

And how do we know this is true? Because of another journey from dust to diamonds, a journey taken 2,000 years ago by a man named Jesus. He went

to a cross and died. They laid him in a borrowed tomb. Three days later, he stood upon his feet and lived again.

This same Jesus lives still — he lives forever and ever. Dust to diamonds!

---

## **A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, Help me to walk through these forty days of Lent in imitation of the way You walked through the wilderness long ago. When I am tested, may I turn to You and receive Your Grace so that I will emerge from this Holy season victorious over the effects of sin. Thank You, Lord, for Your love and protection. Amen