

Ash Wednesday      Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Matthew 6:1 “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father.”

2: “When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your almsgiving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”

16: “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.”

The Lenten season is a time to deepen our relationship with Christ. Although often associated with the widespread practice of giving something up, this contradicts the teaching of Christ and can minimize the focus to inwardly reflect on our daily relationship with God. Today’s Gospel reminds us that Lent is an invitation to re-center on love and acceptance, thus “learning Christ”. Rather than be self-concerned with individual trials, the Gospel encourages us to come to God with an open heart, and to understand His concern for us.

As we enter this season of Lent as members of the University of the Incarnate Word, we are encouraged to connect our hearts and minds to an inclusive education that is centered on compassion and mutual understanding. During this season of Lent, we establish the importance of acceptance and gratitude that transfers into the classroom. Let us pray to understand the teachings of Christ and allow Him to accompany us in life. Let us form habits that transcend our hearts and minds to a way of life that seeks to improve the lives of other people.

*“Learning Christ”*

*Teach me, my Lord to be sweet and gentle.*

*In all the events of life—in the disappointments, in the thoughtlessness of others, in the insecurity of those I trusted, in the unfaithfulness of those on whom I relied.*

*Let me put myself aside, to think of the happiness of others, to hide my little pains and heartaches, so that I may be the only one to suffer from them.*

*Teach me to profit by the suffering that comes across my path.*

*Let me so use it that it may mellow me, not harden nor embitter me; that it may make me patient, not irritable, that it may make me broad in my forgiveness, not narrow, haughty and overbearing.*

*May no one be less good for having come within my influence. No one less pure, less true, less kind, less noble for having been a fellow-traveler in our journey toward ETERNAL LIFE.*

*As I go my rounds from one distraction to another, let me whisper from time to time, a word of love to Thee. May my life be lived in the supernatural, full of power for good, and strong in its purpose of sanctity.*