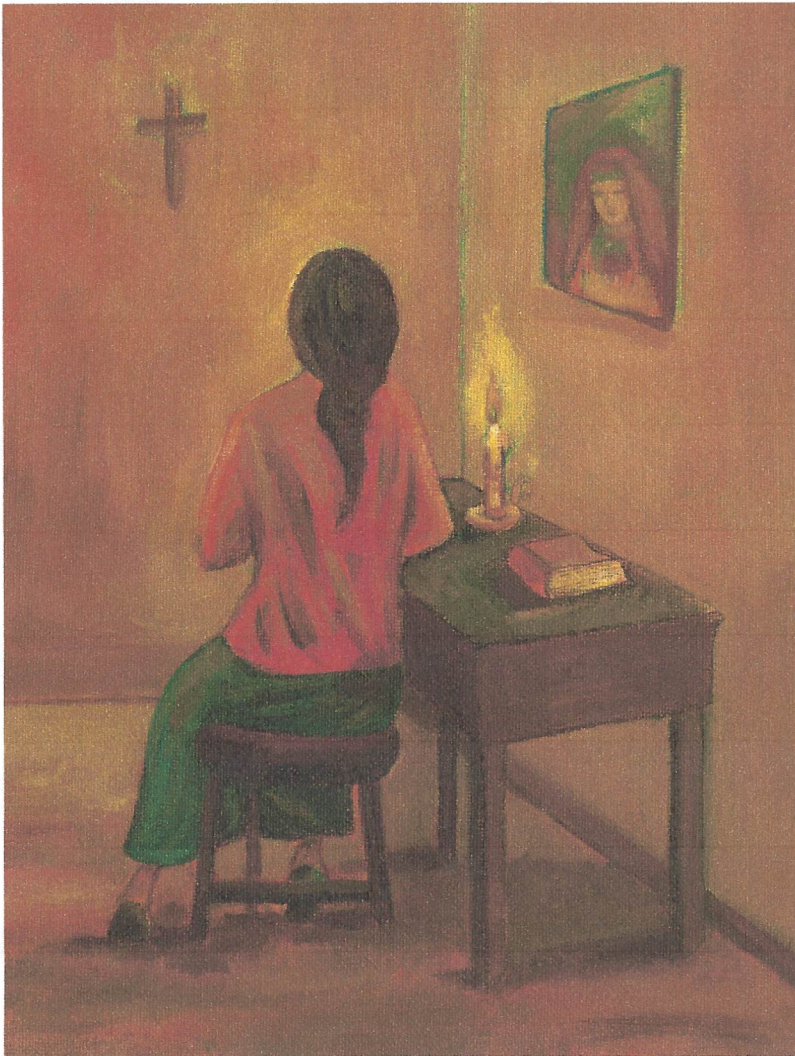


ASH WEDNESDAY



In this Time

O God of mercy,
who is slow to anger and rich
in kindness,
grant us, as we begin our Lenten journey,
contrite hearts that long
for reconciliation
and steadfast spirits that proclaim
your love.

In this acceptable time,
soften our calloused hearts,
watch over us, and keep us from all sin.
In this season of repentance,
help us turn toward the light of your
Son, Jesus Christ,
and away from selfish ambition.
In this period of renewal,
open our ears to hear your voice,
which calls us out of darkness,
so that with clean hearts we can forever
proclaim your praise.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Sin Is Tricky



Today's Readings: Joel 2:12–18; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14 and 17; 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18. The Lenten season calls us to slow down and consider the areas in our life that need healing and transformation. This retreat-like time is an intense period for prayer and cleaning the “garbage” from our hearts. With the elect, those who are preparing for the sacraments of initiation, we take this time to discern what is sinful in our lives and name the good God is working within us. Sin is tricky and tends to grab hold of us and become habit. Sin begins to blind us from God’s love.

In this season, we must examine each area of our life to uncover the darkness of sin. Take heed of the prophet Joel’s words. He calls us to repent and return to the Lord.

Repentance leads to conversion, which requires discipline, perseverance, and practice. The three disciplines of the Lenten season—prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—help us open ourselves to God’s goodness and strengthen us for a mission united to Christ. During these forty days, allow these disciplines to become habits that replace sin, move you to reflect on your life in Christ, and immerse you in the Paschal Mystery.

In the Gospel, Jesus instructs us not to publicly flaunt how we pray, fast, or give alms. As you meditate on the words of the psalm, think about what you might give up (fast), how you might pray, and where or to what you might give alms as a way of deeply entering the season of Lent and purifying your heart.