

# REFLECTION FOR ASH WEDNESDAY 2022

Together with all Christians, we start the road to Easter. It is a journey that invites us to refocus our attention on what is important and essential in life. This pilgrimage towards Easter wants to offer us a journey where we let ourselves be recreated by Jesus Christ.

On Ash Wednesday, a simple exercise can help us get started:

Please take two pieces of paper. Write on one "BECAUSE OF YOU, THE WORLD WAS CREATED!" and on the other "YOU ARE DUST AND ASH!". Then put them in your pockets, one on the left, one on the right. During the day, take and read them. Pray with these inscriptions. (*inspired by hasidic wisdom*)

We live somewhere in a great paradox: Dust and ashes are part of our origin and destiny, and at the same time we are the image of God. On the one hand, we are matter composed of many elements, and on the other hand, also life-giving spirit, a gift from the Creator. Here, finitude and there, the unquenchable longing for eternity and plenitude.\*

The time of fasting and conversion allows us to open our minds: to let ourselves be recreated and freed from superficiality; to go deeper into ourselves; to move from multiple distractions to a more authentic life.

Let Christ live in us! (Gal 2:20) Yes, let us offer him this time so that he may act deeply in us! May the hand of God touch us and raise us from the dust, for we are called to beauty and creative life. May we marvel unceasingly at the beauty of creation and the presence of the Creator!

May this Lenten season be a fruitful time in Christ!

Here are two suggestions to help us focus our attention in this precious time:

## Attention to the encounter with nature, creation and creatures: "PLASTIC FASTING".

The 40 days are a time to awaken and marvel at all creation of which we are part and through which we live and survive. Let us appreciate it as creatures and co-creators, not as a masters, bosses or chiefs! Let us be more attentive, more sensitive to discover the mirror of God's love, the manifestation and the space of his presence. God is in everything!

Let us also be mindful of the suffering of creation through the practice of plastic fasting: reducing the use of plastic; raising awareness of the environmental degradation caused by the "plastification" of land and sea; learning about the impact of micro and nano plastics in the food chain; ...

## Attention to the inner dialogue: "DIGITAL FASTING".

The 40 days are also a period of interiorisation: creating moments to go deeper; hearing the inner voice; putting thoughts and emotions in order and clarifying them; developing the mind; discerning and being guided by the Spirit.

*"Because of mental fragmentation and cognitive constipation, we are both a little bit everywhere, but not really anywhere anymore. Today, everyone is stealing our attention." \*\**

*"Where you direct your attention determines who you become. If you do not decide for yourself what thoughts and images fill your head, others will do it for you." (Epictetus 50-138 AD)*

Consciously setting aside OFF-LINE moments is one way of fasting: without smartphones, tablets and computers; without constantly flipping, looking, checking, replying and writing (WhatsApp, e-mail, twitter, YouTube, TikTok, ...); without being relentlessly absorbed, pushed and sprinkled by outside influences

*"Only a calm pond reflects the light of the stars" says a Chinese proverb.*

### GOOD PRACTICE

**Avoid plastic bags and use a multiuse bag!**



Inspired by: \*Tomáš Halík "Die Zeit der leeren Kirchen" (The time of the empty churches), 2020.

\*\* Volker Busch "Kopf frei - Wie Sie Klarheit, Konzentration und Kreativität gewinnen" (Head free - How to gain clarity, concentration and creativity), 2021.