

Wednesday, March 5, 2025



Day 01
Ash Wednesday

“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

—GENESIS 3:19 (NIV)

Reflect

It's such a relief to be able to say it: there is no cure for being human. We squish all the meaning and delight a day can hold into the jumble of our to-do lists and daily frustrations, yet so much remains beyond our control. Our lives are not a series of choices and endless options; sometimes, we come undone. On Ash Wednesday, we receive the symbol of our very fragility on our foreheads: the sign of the cross in ashes, gently traced on our foreheads. From dust we were made; to dust we will return. Within this is also the symbol of the love of God who sees us, knows us, and embraces us, in all our beloved, imperfectible humanity.

Respond

Even if you've never attended one before, maybe find an Ash Wednesday service near you. It's so low-stress, I promise. As the ashes are traced on your head, take a moment to reflect on what it means to be human today—even in all you cannot do or complete or perfect.

Blessing for Ash Wednesday

*These days of dust,
These days of despair.
Reality speaks to us clearly.
So we approach—carefully, hesitantly,
barely ready to hear the hard truths
we long to be told
about the beauty and terror of mortality.*

*How strange it feels,
so right and so good,
to move forward together,
wearing our finitude like a badge—
a mess of ash,
a reminder:
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.*

*How strange it feels,
so right and so good,
to stand at the edge of awareness—
the balance point
between being and nonbeing.
I catch my breath as I look
and see shining faces.*

*I see it all in an instant:
how precious,
how holy,
how fleeting and infinite
each imperfect life.
How beautiful,
how stubborn,
how unfinishable
each single existence.*

*We wear this truth,
moving forward together,
our dust shining like radiant hope¹*

¹ Kate Bowler. "A Blessing for Ash Wednesday" in *Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day: Daily Meditations for the Ups, Downs, and In-Betweens*. (New York: Convergent Books, 2024). 99.