

pray. fast. give.



Living Lent | Day 1

Dust to Dust

"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

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

In Genesis 2, God takes dust, shapes it into a person, breathes into it the breath of life, and what was dust a few moments before becomes a living, breathing human being. I've read the story of creation many times but seldom, if ever, paused to marvel at the making of all things. The combination of dust and breath, God's breath, created man. Amazing! By Genesis 3, following an act of disobedience, and at the start of each Lent Season, God reminds us, as He did Adam, that we were made of dust. And then He goes further, telling us that we will return to it. Dust to dust. Without breath.

Sometimes I think we all feel like that dust, like we've lost our breath. In 2020 many things took our breath – having COVID or the fear of it, for ourselves and those we love. We lost our breath around work – the loss of jobs, the closing of businesses, or the day to day crisis management sustained by many working to stay open for service. We lost our breath from the continual news stories of violence and taking of innocent lives. As we stepped into 2021, we felt the breath kicked out of us again by the rising political anger and division within our country. Over and over we have lost our breath in grief and weariness in so many areas of life, and in any number of things that dried up our energy or our faith.

And so, I come into this season of Lent feeling dusty and longing for God to breathe life into me; maybe you do as well. Lent is a season of self-reflection and repentance. It's a time to examine our lives, and in so doing, I believe, in addition to acknowledging the places where we need forgiveness, we can examine and discover the ways we feel drained or exhausted, the ways we feel poured out and where we need restoration and refreshment. Lent has room for all of this, and more.

Lent calls us to pray, fast, and give. These disciplines are not meant to take away our time and energy but to help reorient our life around God. They are meant to refresh us. I know well that what we focus on grows so for the next 40 days, let's focus first, through the disciplines of Lent, on the one who gives us breath. And just as God chose to create us, I believe, He will be very present with us, with our dust, molding us as needed, for the days and work ahead.

Challenge to Prayer and the Exercise of the Privilege of Generosity

As you pray and sacrifice throughout this Lenten Journey, will you take this opportunity to pay forward in generosity a gift of at least \$1 per day throughout the 40 days for the Children of Morningstar? It is a privilege and a blessing to give as we all look forward to Easter and the Resurrection.

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Contributor

Beth W. VanDerbeck, Brunswick, Georgia, is the Chief Executive Officer of Morningstar Children and Family Services, having served in that capacity for over three years. She enjoys seeing the development of the Morningstar campus to a place that the Children are honored to call home, but most of all, she loves on the Children at every opportunity. Seeing lives transformed is an energy to the Mission of Creating Home for the Children of Morningstar.

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