

Ash Wednesday

The church can be pushy sometimes, and sometimes downright rude.

Take today for example.

Here we are, barely 6 weeks into the new year, most of us still have a resolution or two in our sack, we are most of us fully focused on living life, getting the job done, raising our families, caring for the grandkids, making sure the refrigerator is stocked, and into all of this activity and vitality, when here comes the church saying: "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Without a doubt life in 21st century America is all about youth, staying young, looking young, feeling young.

"Sixty is the new forty," guys of my generation like to say.

We baby boomers especially refuse to grow old; refuse to act our age.

"My dad was so much older than me, when he was my age," I often think.

And here comes the church today, nose-to-nose, eyeball-to-eyeball, saying: "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

We've got bills to pay, deadlines to meet, schedules to keep; all at the frantic pace that is accelerated by cell phones and the inter-net and email.

Yet standing in the midst of all that activity is the church:

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

How do you live when you come face to face with dying?

What's different about that which makes you happy or angry or impatient or joyful when life suddenly has a sure and certain end?

These are the questions Holy Church invites us to ask for the next 40 days.

It's the reason for the giving up of this or that.

It's the reason for the reaching out to someone new or different.

How do I live if today is my last day?

To whom do I say: "I love you?"

To whom do I say: "I'm sorry?"

To whom do I say: "Thank you?"

And with whom do I just sit and listen?

These are only some of the questions we are asked to ponder today; only six weeks into the new year; for while we are too often frantically busy or preoccupied or restless, today we are also one day closer to the day when it shall be said of you, said of me: "ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

Welcome to the season of Lent.

May your meditations bear much fruit.

+amen