

## **Friends of the Eco-Justice Program,**

Today begins the season of Lent – a time for us to journey with Christ to the Cross of Good Friday and empty tomb of Easter morning. This year, we invite you to include as part of your Lenten practices to consider your impact upon God’s Creation – and what steps you can take in your own life to bring yourself back into relationship with it. Each Sunday, we will send an email including the lectionary text for that week, a brief reflection, some study questions, and then daily actions.

Henry Nouwen writes, “In the midst of a turbulent, often chaotic, life we are called to reach out with courageous honesty to our innermost self, with restless care to our fellow human beings, and with increasing prayer to our God. To do that, however, we must face and explore our inner restlessness, our mixed feelings toward others, and our deep-seated suspicions about the absence of God.” It is this journey that Lent is all about, and this year, we invite you to join us in it.

[Click here to download this reflection in PDF form.](#)

### **Lectionary Text: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (NRSV)**

**1-6:** ‘Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

‘So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

‘And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

**16-21:** ‘And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**Other Lectionary Readings:** Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51:1-17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

## Reflection

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season on the Christian calendar – the beginning of our journey with Christ to death on the Cross and the empty tomb three days later. The text for Ash Wednesday begins with a reminder of the need for personal piety – and a need to be faithful in action even when no one is paying attention. This is especially important when looking at eco-justice, where truly the tiniest of personal actions can make a world's worth of difference. Often the call put out by this office is to transform entire congregations, and to transform governmental policy regarding environmental issues. But equally, and perhaps more important, is the transformation of our faithful individual lives. If we are all living in harmony with the rest of God's Creation, especially when no one is looking, our governmental policies and churches will transform themselves.

## Guiding Questions

1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians reading says, “we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.” If we lived our lives reflecting this reality, what would be different?
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians passage also reminds us that we are ambassadors of Christ – how do we balance being ambassadors with practicing in secret, as our Matthew passage calls us to?

## Daily Actions

**Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>** – Spend some time in reflection with the passages above, and the reflections. Center yourself for the Lenten journey.

**Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>** – Remove one light bulb from your home and live without it for the next 40 days. This will decrease your energy use, but also act as a reminder of what you are doing during Lent.

**Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>** – Join our individual Carbon Reduction Campaign – and keep track of what you are doing! [http://www.ncecojustice.org/crc\\_individuals.php](http://www.ncecojustice.org/crc_individuals.php)

**Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>** – Now take your individual action and become an ambassador for Christ, and God's Creation. Click [here](#) to download our 2009 Earth Day Resource and get your congregation involved.