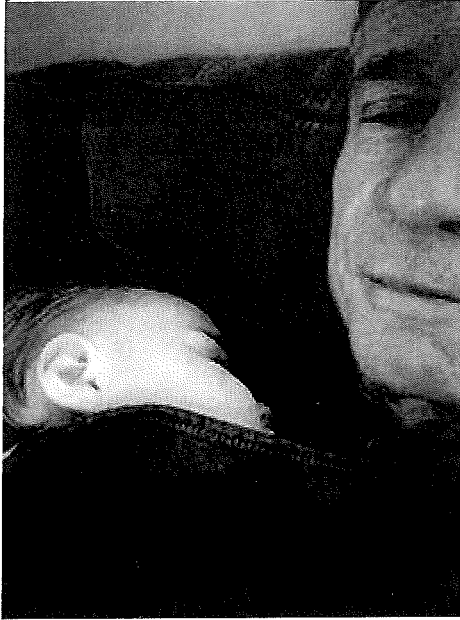


Ash Wednesday

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2020 AT 12:13AM

In 34 years of ministry and 62 years of life, this is the first Ash Wednesday I can remember not receiving black ashes on my forehead in the shape of a cross with either the words, "from dust you came; from dust you shall return" or "receive the sign of the cross a sign of cleansing and forgiveness."



But tonight, this Ash Wednesday, I had to stay home or better yet, got to stay home, in order to babysit our sick 9-month-old little miracle granddaughter.

None of the 3 doctors who helped our son and daughter-in-law in this birthing process thought that they had even the slightest chance of having a baby.

As I held this little 9-month miracle soothingly as she was gently, but vibrantly, snoring in my ear, I began to weep... a flow of joy-filled tears for this unspeakable gift. Tears of joy... for knowing that my love for her is, but a minuscule reflection in a mirror dimly, compared to our heavenly Father's love for her.

On Ash Wednesday we honestly confess in our singing the song, "O Father we have wandered..."

And so we have...

Wandered from remembering Our Father's amazing love;

Wandered from knowing that Our Father's grasp of perfect love that casts out and frees us from all the fears that grip us;

Wandered from resting and trusting in His arms as we run after and away in other pursuits.

In tears, I prayed, and wondered how different would this world be if each one of us, children of God, simply claimed our inheritance? Is there anything that could change the world more than if everyone knew how much their Father loves them and would do anything to bring them Home?

So today we say...

Father forgive us for missing what is right before our eyes;

Help us to see and feel your embrace of love;

To truly "see what love the Father has given us that we might be called children of God ... and so we are."

And this day, perhaps more than any other, with a black cross smudged on our heads, we remember, as we claim our inheritance that we are His, "...and so we are."