

renew  
WITH  
+ ANNA GREENWOOD-LEE



February 17, 2021  
Ash Wednesday

Today, Ash Wednesday, Christians throughout the world begin the holy season of Lent. In non-COVID times we mark one another's foreheads with ashes saying, *"remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

Lent is a time for self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and meditating on the words of scripture. In short, Lent is a season for getting real. For getting real with ourselves about what in our lives is good and what in our lives we might need to get rid of. In Lent we acknowledge that life is fleeting and beautiful. Life is long and full of suffering. Life is a burden too heavy to carry alone. Life is a gift too precious to hoard.

In Lent I invite you to do what I would call both an external and an internal audit. What about your life is really good? Is life-giving for yourself and others? What do you need more of in your life? What gift do you have to offer the world? And I invite you also to look at your shadow side and to say, "What might I need to let go of? What about my life is destructive to myself and others, to God's beautiful creation?"

The great poet, Mary Oliver, asks, "what then are you going to do with your one wild and precious life?" And that is the question of these forty days of Lent. That is the question of the other side of "remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." We all have but one wild and precious life and we are all called to live it, as best we can. Amen.