

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Dust

BY STEPHANIE

Many years ago we had a Student Development retreat at Dean John Eccles' house where we all brought our favorite quotes. I remember it being a very energizing exercise, and I wish I could find my notebook from the day to share some of the collective wisdom.

I took an Anaïs Nin quote from a painting I have in my bedroom hallway:

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.”

I sometimes need the reminder that there is a cost to remaining static...a cost to resisting change.

This week in preparing for Ash Wednesday I encountered the rest of the quote. Paired with the familiar verse for Ash Wednesday, “You are dust and to dust you shall return.”

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. Life is a process of becoming, a combination of states we have to go through. Where people fail is that they wish to elect a state and remain in it. This is a kind of death. Living never wore one out so much as the effort not to live. Life is truly known only to those who suffer, lose, endure adversity and stumble from defeat to defeat. Perfection is static, and I am in full progress. Abnormal pleasures kill the taste for normal ones.”

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Dust (cont'd)

The pandemic has drawn us closer to our own mortality. The virus is a threat to all of us. The sheer number of deaths is astounding, not only deaths directly linked to COVID, but the deaths of so many who died more quickly because of isolation, fear of seeking health care, and poverty. My heart continues to break for the families in our campus community who have lost so many, many friends and relatives. Isn't it amazing that the mighty human being at the top of the pyramid can be shaken by a microscopic virus.

Ash Wednesday is about humility - realizing that the daily effort and drama, our gifts and our weaknesses, our piety and our wealth - are so little in the breadth of history. We will begin and end as dust, the raw material for creation. We start and end our journey as part of the planet. Perhaps that very ending is where we start our next journey.

No matter who you are, where you are, or what you do, birth and death are the great equalizers. The journey in between is up to each of us. We all start out with different resources. We will all have different experiences, different genetics, different loves and different losses, but we end up as dust. It is the journey that defines our living.

This Lent I will focus on being less static and open to change. I will try to live with less fear and more joy. I will try to live more simply and with more humility. I will try to help others in their journeys and be more open to help with my own. I will be in full progress.

May your journey be well.

ASH WEDNESDAY MEDITATION EXPERIENCE

FEBRUARY 17
10:15 A.M. - 1:15 P.M. AND
6 - 8 P.M.
SNIDOW CHAPEL

Ash Wednesday is the start of Lent and the Christian journey towards Easter. This year the Spiritual Life Center is offering a multi-sensory experience as a way to start Lent with intentionality and observe the tradition of the imposition of ashes in a socially distant way. You are invited to come to Snidow Chapel for self-guided meditation during the times above. Artwork, poetry, and music will guide you through a series of reflections and self-imposition of ashes. All are welcome, and you may spend as much or as little time as you wish in reflection.

Sympathies, Concerns, and Congrats

Our sympathies are extended to:

- **Jackie Almond** (ITR) and her husband, David, on the death of David's mother, Norma Almond, on February 11, 2021. [Link](#) to obituary.
- **Emily Woody** (Counseling Center) and her family on the death of her grandmother, Barbara Turner Rakes, who died on February 11, 2021. [Link](#) to obituary.

The Chaplain's Corner is a newsletter published by the Spiritual Life Center (SLC) at the University of Lynchburg. We share campus concerns and updates, spiritual life events and activities, and words for the journey.

If you have a joy or concern you'd like to share, reply to this message, email the SLC office - spirituallife@lynchburg.edu, or call 434.544.8348. We only share with your permission. Current and previous issues are on the SLC page of the University website - www.lynchburg.edu/spiritual-life.

For a list of regularly scheduled fellowship group meetings, go to the [Spiritual Life webpage](#) and click on "Spiritual Organizations on Campus."

Like us on Facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/LynchburgSLC>

Helpful Links on LinkTree at - [SpiritualLifeCenter](#)

Date to Remember

Thursday, February 18
5:15 p.m.

The Humanist
Community

will hold a Virtual Interest
Meeting. [Link](#)

Did you know?

Purim in 2021 is on February 25-26, beginning at Sundown on Thursday. During Purim, Jewish people remember Esther's heroic act of saving Jewish lives in Persia about 2000 years ago. A popular tradition is baking and eating hamantaschen.



SPIRITUAL LIFE SERVICES
are live-streamed via our
YouTube Channel