

Virginia Council of Churches
Lenten Reflection Series
Ash Wednesday - Lent, February 14, 2024 Text: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (NIV)
Reflection Title: Love's Holiday

As we embark on yet another Ash Wednesday and Lenten Season, it is not lost on me that the beginning of this journey to Jerusalem this season begins on what is known as the "International Day of Love", Valentine's Day. This season should propel every believer to have a true moment of reflection and introspection. And what better time to reflect on God's love for us in this season and our quest to mimic that love towards each other, than on Ash Wednesday.

Jesus, in this continuation to the Sermon on the Mount, offers us a practical advice on worshipping God through our love for Him, and not because we will be seen as righteous. And beloved, as we consider this in relation to the Lenten season, our quest during this Ash Wednesday should be one that focuses our hearts and minds on spreading love to the unloved and striving, through personal devotion and fasting, to imitate the love of God. It should be our aim to allow this Lenten Season to be a love holiday; one where we take on the love of God through our personal devotion, but also give that same love to others who have never experienced it.

Most people equate Lent with "giving something up". Yet, I would contend that Christ, in this text, is not calling on us to give something up, but rather to take something on. We must take on the Love of Christ so that His love shines in and through our lives. So, allow this Ash Wednesday to be the intersection where faith and love meet, taking on the character of God's love through devotion and applying God's love through how we display it and give it to others. In this way, this Lenten Season will truly become "Love's Holiday".

"Gracious God our Father, as we begin this Lenten Season, allow your love to fill our lives. Help us to understand the true meaning of the sacrifice given to us as we journey, with Christ, to the cross. Helps us to be reflections of love of God in a way that causes others to experience love like they have never known before. And we will be all the more grateful of truest sacrifice of love that was experienced on Calvary's cross. In the name of He is who love, Jesus the Christ, Amen."



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