

ASH WEDNESDAY LITANY

By: Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield

LITURGIST: Ash Wednesday is the beginning of a journey not a destination.

CONGREGANTS: *We confess that we need to return to God.*

LITURGIST: This is a season of seeing ashes all around us.

CONGREGANTS: *We cannot ignore the ashes even we try; overwhelmed, we cry out.*

LITURGIST: 500,000 ashes from COVID-19 deaths; 19,000 ashes from gun violence, and countless other ashes from the homeless, suicides, and other sicknesses.

CONGREGANTS: *We have seen our own mortality as we have been exposed to the Virus and to other sufferings and deaths. Today, with these ashes, we cry out to God.*

LITURGIST: The insurrection on January 6, 2021 with other random deaths and murders intensified our mortality; and the callous treatment of all of them strengthens a lack of confidence in humanity.

CONGREGANTS: *So, to God we cry out with our anger, mistrust, frustrations, depression, tiredness and latent hope.*

LITURGIST: Cry out my people and know this Wednesday is not another day, this is Ash Wednesday: A beginning of individual and communal remembrance that there is life after death, and repentance when we acknowledge our sin and mortality.

CONGREGANTS: *We cry out aloud that through these ashes we place ourselves in your presence and know through your promises, we will re-meet Christ who will rebuild the soil of our souls, recreate life out of dust, and forgive, restore and heal.*