



## Wednesday Prayer

Ash Wednesday – A quiet, holy space to pray

**“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”**

**Matthew 6:5-6**

Dear dedicated Cherish All Children prayer partners, you have been faithfully praying for the safety of children and youth week after week, year after year, in your own homes, offices or wherever your email is opened. I trust you've found quiet, holy spaces to reflect on the ways you are a supportive and healthy adult for children.

On Ash Wednesday, we are accustomed to gathering in our faith communities to receive ashes on our foreheads, with the words “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” This year, most of us will stay in our own homes, maybe gathering via Zoom worship to hear these words and mark the sign of the cross on our own forehead or a family member's forehead. And just as we are recognizing from where we came, and to where we will return, we are promised a reward. Our reward does not come in the form of a showy medal, accolades about the good we do, or even “winning” the vaccine lottery. Our reward may come in the deepening of our relationship with God and the deepening of our connection with those who need us most in our communities.

Our prayers are needed for all who may be suffering in silence, and for all who encounter children and youth, that we may be open, caring and supportive adults. Each of the coming Sundays, I will be posting a [Cherish All Children Lenten Prayer](#) to prevent child sexual exploitation. In addition to coming together in prayer each Wednesday, join us in your quiet, holy space on Sundays. Follow us on Facebook to join in prayer together in this way and share the prayers with others, connecting them with our shared mission of protecting children.

We pray together our prayer for the first week of Lent:

**Gracious God, we pray for children who suffer in the silence and secrecy of sexual abuse. Help them find a safe adult who will listen and act on their behalf to end the abuse and support their healing. May all people watch for signs of sexual abuse and work to set up protective barriers in their church and community. Keep all children safe from sexual predators. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

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Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director, and community advocate for racial justice.