

ASSUMPTION CHURCH, MORRISTOWN, NJ

Mass Intentions

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21
 8:00 a.m. Adlyn Maurello
 5:30 p.m. The Botsakos Family

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22
 7:00 a.m. People of the Parish
 8:30 a.m. Grace McGee
 10:00 a.m. Liz Allison
 12:15 p.m. Alice DeRosa
 5:30 p.m. Bob Raymond

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23
 7:00 a.m. Gretta Maloney
 12:05 p.m. Harry Sheehan

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24
 7:00 a.m. Elmer Brennan
 12:05 p.m. Grace McGee

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25 Ash Wednesday
 7:00 a.m. Edward, Jr., Edward III,
 and Pauline Beston
 12:05 p.m. Consolacion Garcia
 5:30 p.m. Angelito Ding
 7:30 p.m. Arthur Falgione

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26
 7:00 a.m. Albina Palkowetz
 12:05 p.m. Connie Garcia

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27
 7:00 a.m. James, Elizabeth, and
 Mary Bernadette Beston
 12:05 p.m. Peter Cavallero

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28
 8:00 a.m. Geraldine Flynn
 5:30 p.m. Claire M. Dunlap

SUNDAY, MARCH 1
 7:00 a.m. People of the Parish
 8:30 a.m. Irene Lonergan
 10:00 a.m. Rosina Milelli
 12:15 p.m. J. Briody
 5:30 p.m. Mary Jane Shearer

**ASH
 WEDNESDAY
 MASS
 SCHEDULE**

**7:00 a.m.
 12:05,
 4:00 Family
 Prayer
 Service**

**5:30, and
 7:30 p.m.**

The Rosary is prayed every weekday 15 minutes before the 12:05 Mass.

Eucharistic Adoration is held every Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel, Cedar Knolls.

The Perpetual Novena in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal is prayed every Monday immediately following the 12:05 p.m. Mass.

Perpetual Adoration is observed seven days-a-week, 24 hours daily at St. Margaret of Scotland in Morristown.



MASS INTENTION BOOK FOR 2010

The book for Mass Intentions for the year 2010 will be opening on Tuesday, March 10 after the noon Mass. If you will be requesting more than three Masses, please call the Parish Office at 973-539-2141 to make an appointment.

First Reading – Isaiah 43: 18-19, 21-22, 24-25

The prophet Isaiah of the Exile had to persuade the disheartened Jewish refugees in Babylon to trust that God would rescue them. This message permeates today's first reading.

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 1: 18-22

Faithfulness is also the theme of this excerpt from Paul's letters. The Apostle teaches that the Christ was supremely faithful to God, and, through Christ, God is supremely faithful to the Church.

Gospel – Mark 2: 1-12

In the past few weeks, Mark's Gospel has portrayed a gradually building popular frenzy over the cures performed by Jesus. The furor persists in today's reading, but the blasphemy accusation probably dates from the time of the evangelist when the divine status of Jesus was being debated by the Church and the Synagogue. In its original setting, the passage reveals a prime element of Jesus' preaching: the dawning reign of God brings *both* physical *and* moral healing.

We invite you to prayerfully reflect on the readings for next Sunday, March 1, **First Sunday in Lent**
First Reading: Genesis 9: 8-15
Second Reading: 1 Peter 3: 18-22
Gospel: Mark 1: 12-15

COLLECTION FOR THE CHURCH IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE THIS WEEKEND

Catholics in Central and Eastern Europe need your help to continue to revitalize the Church and to foster the Spirit of Love in their parishes and communities. In 28 countries throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the Collection funds vital pastoral and social projects and contributes to programs that promote Catholic life. Please be generous in today's Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. Believe in the power of the Spirit of Love.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR LENT

As we begin our Lenten journey, participation in Stations of the Cross is a wonderful way to help deepen our awareness of his suffering and lead us to a better understanding of Christ's passion and death. Please join us each Friday evening during Lent at 5:30 p.m. in the church for this beautiful and moving liturgy. In addition to our regular Friday evening Stations, there will be two special Stations of the Cross for children at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, March 6 and 27.



Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time



PLEASE REMEMBER AND PRAY FOR THE RECOVERY OF:

Annette Cattano, Pat and Bob Seely, Noelle Talarico, Lorraine McMahon, John Dingman, Judy Lynch, Romaine Rea, Agnes Hogan, Kathleen McCarthy Brennan, Tony Bersani, Mary Ascher, Irene Schreiber, Rita Ventre, Helen Bitondo, Gladys Mageau, Victoria Vega, Cindy Hogan, Becca Wishbow, Michael Garde, Joseph McGovern, Elsa McGlynn, Doris Lemieux, Patricia Barter-Varrichio, William Galligan, Doris Laurenti, Heidi Hertsgaard, Mary O'Connell, Janet Cloninger, Jerry Kwilos, Kathy Farrand, Robert Carduner, Sherry Rickely, Manuel and Delicia Calderon, Ariel Donnelly, Julie Ann Barlotta, Elaine Brady, Christy Lee Ascolese, Sabrina Sanchez, Miriam Frias, Jim Cavanaugh, Gabrielle Murtha, Bea Scagnelli, Jody Hartley, Doris Laurenti, Guy J. Palazzolo, Jane A. Mullins, Tony Cannilla, Andy Scrone, Landa Martin, Mary Breen, Shirley Konicke, Elizabeth Gibson, Theresa O'Connell, Maria Svaglinac, Christopher Scully, Siena Broesler, Malcolm Sutherland Foggio, Charles Lieb McCloskey, Marie Valvano, Rita Luby, Conrad Geraghty, Kathy Woodhull, Charlotte Rez, Sue Cloninger, and John Maurello.

You are invited to call the Parish Office with the names of any loved ones who you would like included in the prayers for the good health of the sick and homebound.

Please notify us when our prayers for recovery have been answered, so we may remove the person from the list.

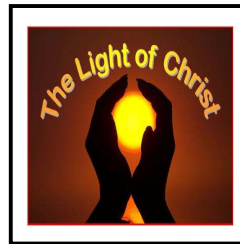
ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THESE, O LORD



Victoria Blanch
Mother of
Krystel VanMeter
and Jared Blanch

Mass Attendance for February 14 & 15

5:30 p.m.	339
7:00 a.m.	94
8:30 a.m.	192
10:00 a.m.	566
12:15 p.m.	353
5:30 p.m.	162
TOTAL	1,706



SHINES AT ASSUMPTION

We believe that Jesus Christ breathes His Spirit on us so that we can strive to become a more perfect expression of the Good News in all aspects of everyday life.

GOOD SAMARITAN MINISTRY

Assumption's Good Samaritan Ministry will begin this Spring. Our mission will be to embrace the sick and homebound of the parish and provide them with simple everyday acts of love so that:

- ✠ The healing process of all can be strengthened by the love, care, and prayers of the Assumption Parish community.
- ✠ The family members and care-givers of those with chronic or sudden illness are supported while helping with their loved-one's recovery and the challenges of daily living.
- ✠ The elderly and those with chronic illness can live independently, knowing that they are surrounded by the love and care of others.

A meeting will be held on February 26 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Parish Center for prospective volunteers. Please call Carole Hires at 973-539-2141, extension 17 with your questions.

We welcome into the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism



Michael Shawn Delaney, Jr.
Son of Michael and Melissa

Keira Kelly McGowan
Daughter of Owen and Deborah

Charlotte Ellen Riehl
Daughter of Scott and Anna

Jada and Joshua Sefah
Children of Jack and Melissa

Luke Joseph Simon
Son of Chad and Elizabeth

Brady Ryan Mulligan
Son of Brian and Denise

Micaela Grace Leon
Daughter of Patricio and Alanna

Financial Blessings

The collection for February 15 totaled \$14,663. Last year's collection totaled \$15,093. Thank you for your continued generosity and support!

February 22, 2009

LENTEN PENANCE, PRAYER, AND ALMSGIVING

The three pillars of Lent are Penance, Prayer and Almsgiving. Every parish throughout the Diocese of Paterson will make available the opportunity for **Welcome Home to Healing** confessions every Monday evening from 7:00 – 8:30 between March 2 and April 6. A written guide about how to go to confession, as well as an examination of conscience, can be found on later pages of this bulletin and will also be provided by the confessional. These confession times are in addition to our regular weekly time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturday evening from 4:15 to 5:00 p.m.

The second Pillar of Lent is prayer. This Lenten season, you will be provided with a “Little Black Book” for meditation, the Lenten material for children and adults, opportunity to pray the Stations of the Cross, and a workshop on Centering Prayer on Saturday, February 28 in the parish center Library. Check our bulletin for more details.

For almsgiving this Lenten season, we will focus on the Rice Bowl. **Operation Rice Bowl** is the Lenten solidarity program of Catholic Relief Services. C.R.S. was established in 1943 to be the official International and National Humanitarian Agency of the U.S. Catholic Community. The motivating force of Catholic Relief Services is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We want to alleviate human suffering faster by providing justice and charity in the world, in our country, and in our diocese. Let's make it work for the good of the poor. Be generous.

– Father Martin



OPERATION RICE BOWL

As part of our faith community's Lenten observance, we will participate in Catholic Relief Services' Lenten program, Operation Rice Bowl. Since 1975, Operation Rice Bowl has inspired Catholics in the U.S. to pray, fast, learn and give as we increase our understanding of our global community. We will connect this understanding with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching throughout our Lenten journey. We encourage you to participate in Operation Rice Bowl at home with your family and loved ones.



FROM THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

CONVERSION

A foundational image of *conversion* is the paschal mystery, namely, our entering the dying/rising of Jesus. This image is grounded in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). There the church offers a vision of conversion for new members. The RCIA states that this also holds true for all members since conversion is an ongoing journey. The whole initiation must bear a markedly paschal character, since the initiation of Christians is the first sacramental sharing in Christ's dying and rising. Once again, the Catholic Christian version of conversion is sacramental. Initiation is the first sharing in Christ's dying/rising; but every sacrament, especially the Eucharist, celebrates our deepening experience of the death and Resurrection of our Savior.

We need to move beyond the jargon of paschal mystery, however, and connect that dying/rising with concrete events in our lives. Our biblical tradition does precisely that. Unlike the writings of some other religions, the writings of Jews and Christians are rooted in historical events and stories — stories of real people to whom God gives life even when they are dead, powerless or enslaved: to Abraham and Sarah when they are old and barren, to Rachel and Rebecca when they are barren, to Moses when he is fearful and timid, to Hebrews in slavery, to David when he is too weak, to Israel in exile, to Jeremiah when he is too young, to Isaiah when he sees himself as too sinful, to Mary who is a virgin, to Mary Magdalene who pulls herself out of anxiety and depression, to Martha and Mary who despair of their brother's death, to the Samaritan woman rejected because she was a woman and a Samaritan, to workers in the vineyard who are late, sons and daughters who are prodigal, sheep who are lost, tax collectors who are traitorous, women whom “perfect gentlemen” want to stone, sinners who know their sin, Jesus tempted in the desert, sweating blood in the garden, nailed to the cross. In each story there is death—powerlessness, barrenness, rejection, crucifixion. In each story God gives life—power, birth, acceptance, Resurrection.

Love Fr. Dennis

MEN'S WEEKEND RETREAT AT LOYOLA RETREAT HOUSE – MARCH 20 THROUGH 22

A retreat renews our faith; updates us on Catholic Doctrine; leave us better informed to answer those who are questioning Catholic Doctrine today. It helps us gain a new perspective on life, an inner peace to tackle problems with courage...after your quiet hours in the company of Christ, there is time for relaxation, for quiet pondering, and for consultation with a member of the staff, if one desires.

Come join your fellow parishioners and the members of the Morristown Knights of Columbus for a weekend retreat at Loyola on James Street in Morristown. There are 85 comfortable private rooms and a cuisine that is tasty and nutritious. A well-stocked library provides books for reflective reading – everything needed for a quiet time with the Lord. The retreat begins on Friday evening with dinner at 7:30 p.m. and will end on Sunday after lunch. For information and reservations, please call Frank Tozzi at 973-543-6865.

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

TO BE A CHOSEN, TREASURED PEOPLE Beginnings 4

During a talk that I once gave a man asked " Why are they a chosen people (the Israelites)?" His tone was indignant. As a first response I offered that God chooses whom God chooses and does not need to offer reasons. We are mortals of limited vision who live a really short time on this earth. Our minds cannot wholly encompass God's purposes. God chose the Israelites for a mission. In Exodus 33:16 **Moses** says to God, "*And by what then will it be known that I've found favor in your eyes, I and your people? Is it not by your going with us? And we'll be distinguished, I and your people, from every people that is on the face of the earth.*" What makes this people special is that God is with them in a unique way.

They also are bearers of the message of God's universal love for humankind. **Noah** in Genesis 9 hears God's covenant with all people when God resolves: "*I won't strike all the living again as I have done. All the rest of the earth's days, seed and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night.*" Gen 9:21-22 The Noahide covenant is with all humankind. There is as yet no Israel. Abraham and Noah are forebears from whom a people will take its inspiration. Gen 12:3 God tells Abraham "*And all of the families of the earth will be blessed through you.*"

The story of salvation winds through history and the Ancient Near East. God takes time to build and develop a people. **Jesus**, called Son of David, comes out of this history, dies and rises for the redemption of all people of all times. God is faithful and has not revoked his covenant with his people. It is a mystery what God's plans are for his chosen people and for us.

– **Sr. Patricia Marks**

GOSPEL QUESTIONS: Most of Jesus' healings take place because of the faith of the sick person. Today's Gospel is different. Here the healing takes place because of the faith of the friends of the paralyzed man. Jesus saw their faith and healed the man.

Adults: What might I do to carry a friend or family member closer to Christ?

Children: How do my actions of love show God's love to others?

A Family Perspective: As you gather as family, recall times when family members have been ill. Talk about the concrete ways in which we care for a family member who is sick. Notice that when someone is sick, we care for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD: Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's word this week.

In the home: Identify someone in your family who you need to forgive. Take a step toward reconciliation.

In the workplace or in school: Determine a way in which you can be a peacemaker in a dispute among your peers.

In our community: Offer your time to a project which could build trust between people.

A TEEN WHO GAVE THE SHIRT OFF HIS BACK: St. Martin of Tours (316-396), forced into the military as a boy of just 15, was stationed at Amiens when he met a poor man, hardly clothed, trembling in the cold and begging at the city gate. Martin had nothing but his weapons and clothes. He drew his sword, cut his cloak in two, gave one half to the beggar and wrapped himself in the other half. In his sleep that night, Martin saw Christ dressed in the half of the garment he had given away. As a result, Martin soon approached the church to be baptized.
~Annemarie Scobey



IN CELEBRATION OF THE YEAR OF SAINT PAUL

MORE NEWS FROM SAINT PAUL

PRAYER FOR THE YEAR OF SAINT PAUL

God our Father, source of mercy and truth,
through the preaching of Saint Paul the Apostle,
You teach us and deepen our faith.

Grant that we may follow Saint Paul's example
and grow in holiness.

Strengthen us to continually convert
our hearts and minds to You.

Enliven us to live by the Spirit
in faith, hope, and charity.

Inspire us to hand on to others
what we have received from You.

Fortify us to pour out ourselves
and serve You with humility and compassion.

Move us to unify ourselves
to the sufferings of Christ that we may
die with Him in order to rise with Him.

Help us to trust that nothing
can separate us from Your love.

Direct us to seek only the things of Heaven
so that after running the race
and fighting the good fight,
we might share the crown of Glory
promised to those who love You.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Saint Paul the Apostle, pray for us.

February 22, 2009

WELCOME HOME TO HEALING

We have scheduled a "Welcome Home" penitential program where we will be celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation every Monday evening during Lent from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. This program will be in addition to our regular time for Confessions on Saturday afternoon from 4:15 to 5:00 p.m.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON IN PREPARATION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

- Where is my life really going?
- Am I taking proper responsibility for my direction or do I just allow myself to be swept along by external circumstances?
- Is my hope of the eternal life God has given me through Jesus the source of my peace?
- Have I tried to grow in the life of the Holy Spirit dwelling within me through prayer, participation in the Sacraments, reading the Scriptures and meditating on them?
- Do I look for ways to practice restraint of my self-centeredness?
- Have I tried to control my excesses and mean-spirited inclinations, for example, envy, overeating or substance abuse, and gossip?
- Have I been overly proud and boastful, looking down upon others as inferior to myself?
- Have I imposed my will on others, without respecting their freedom and rights?
- What productive use have I made of my time and talents, my health and strength, all gifts from God given to me to be used like the talents in the Gospel?
- Do I use these gifts to become more aware of having been created in the image and likeness of God?
- What does it mean to be created in the image and likeness of God?
- Have I procrastinated and wasted time in ways to distract me from my other responsibilities?
- Have I been patient and trusting in accepting the sorrows and disappointments of life?
- How consistently do I engage in acts of self-denial so as to be able to help meet the needs of others?

- How frequently do I embrace the long-valued disciplines of fasting and abstinence?
- How faithful have I been in keeping my body balanced, pure and chaste as a temple of God's Holy Spirit, consecrated for Resurrection and glory?
- Have I found ways to embrace my sexuality as the wonderful gift from God that it is?
- Do I freely engage in mean-spirited conversations or unfair and judgmental thoughts about others?
- Have I given up on controlling an unchecked interaction with pornography?
- Do I go against my conscience out of fear or hypocrisy?
- Do I band together with others to form "cliques" that engage in exclusion of others who are different because of race, gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation?

SACRAMENT of RECONCILIATION



1. Greeting: Enter the Reconciliation Room and either kneel behind screen or sit across from Priest. You may begin by saying something like: *"Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been _____ weeks since my last confession, and these are my sins"* **OR** The priest may begin by saying something like: *"What kinds of things do you want to tell God you are sorry for?"*
2. Discuss your concerns with the priest.
3. Priest will give you spiritual advice in response to the kinds of things you are concerned about.
4. The priest will then tell you: *"For your penance, talk to God in your own words and tell God how grateful you are for his presence/forgiveness in your life."* **OR** *"For your penance, say _____ Our Fathers and _____ Hail Mary's."* **OR** *"For your penance, I want you to do some kind deed for someone."* Then the priest will tell you: *"Now, make an Act of Contrition."* A good Act of Contrition, that is easy to remember because it is so short is: *God, I'm sorry, and with your help I will do better.*
5. Priest will pray your absolution:

ASSUMPTION CHURCH, MORRISTOWN, NJ

PARENT EDUCATION: "TEEN TALK" Sunday, March 1 – 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Assumption Community Room

Is communication with your teenager a challenge?

Looking for ways to help build their self-esteem?

Not sure how to be their parent; not their friend?

Asking yourself how to handle unacceptable behaviors?

Come and hear presenter, Dari Olsen, author of 7 Secrets for Girls and Teen Talk. Dari is also owner of Express Yourself Today, LLC, a Counseling Resource Center. Visit her at www.expressyourselftoday.com.

ASSUMPTION VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Presents
SonRock Kids Camp
August 10-14, 2009
9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon

Open to children entering into Pre-K through 3rd Grade in September 2009. Registration begins on April 26 and 27. Adult and teen volunteers needed! To volunteer please contact Gale Grennan at VBS@assumptionparish.org or 973-984-7774

VBS ROCKS!!

ATTENTION ASSUMPTION VOLUNTEERS

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 28!!

Fr. Martin and Father Dennis will be honoring our volunteers by inviting them to an organ concert presented by John Peragallo. Following the concert a reception will be held in the Community Room where all can meet and greet!!! Look for more information in the near future!!!

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

On Monday, February 23, there will be an evening of enrichment for married couples, featuring *The Five Love Languages* by Dr. Gary Chapman. *The Five Love Languages* works to help increase communication in marriage by aiding individuals in recognizing just how it is and why they and their spouses communicate the way that they do. Join us in the Community Room here at Assumption at 7:30 p.m. for this presentation. There is no cost for this event. For information, contact Carol Bourland at 973-455-1944.

A DAY OF RECOLLECTION FOR WOMEN

Please join us for a Lenten Morning of Recollection on Monday, February 23 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon in the Vincent House at Delbarton. The morning will be centered around the Blessed Mother with guest speakers Katy Soulas speaking on "A Mother's Journey" and Barbara Lorenzo speaking on her "Journey of the Heart – A Miracle Mission to Medjugorje." Please RSVP to Virginia (Cookie) Dolan at Cook2u@aol.com to reserve your seat.

WEDDING MUSIC WORKSHOP

All couples who are being married here at Assumption, are invited to attend a Wedding Music Workshop on Sunday, March 8 at 2:00 until 3:30 p.m. Please set aside this date. If you have not yet planned or completed your wedding music selections with our Music Director, Claudia Nardi, then this is your opportunity to hear a variety of vocal and instrumental selections for Wedding Ceremonies and Nuptial Masses. This will be an entertaining as well as informative workshop for the bride-to-be, her family and friends (grooms too). Please RSVP to Claudia at 973-539-2141, extension 19.



FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

We begin our Lenten observance with the celebration of Ash Wednesday on February 25th this year. It has always been an important custom of our tradition to fast and abstain. These are valuable and important activities that are meant to include our bodies with our spiritual and motivational goals. Note well, it says "activities" and "include our bodies" because fasting and abstaining cannot be merely in our thoughts or intentions.



Lent is a period where we are trying to empty ourselves, in order to be prepared to **fill** ourselves with the awesome "Resurrected" power of Christ in our bodies and in our souls. We empty ourselves—we fast and abstain—so we might be blessed with the experience of hunger and longing for the fulfillment that is eternal—our salvation. We empty ourselves so that we might see more clearly some of the more hollow and superficial tendencies of our lives. We fast, to allow ourselves, especially in our more or less affluent first world environment, to experience a small sense of solidarity with our sisters and brothers worldwide, who daily go to bed—if they have a bed—hungry.

Here is the schedule of Fast and Abstinence days during Lent. Every Friday is a day of **Abstinence**, which means **we do not eat any meat**. This is done to acknowledge that Christ died for us on a Friday. Every Baptized Catholic over the age of 14 years is to **Abstain** from meat on all Fridays of Lent. The two days of **Fast and Abstinence** in Lent are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Mark your calendars, this year those dates are February 25th and April 10th. On these days of **Fast**, we not only **Abstain** from meat, but we also **Fast**, that is: **we eat only one full meal**. You may have two other light snacks or meals, but they are not to equal another full meal. All adult Baptized Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 must **Fast** and **Abstain** on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

February 22, 2009

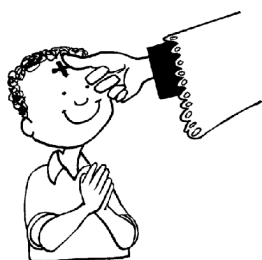


Poems from the Pew, From a Child's View



*For everyone who lifts himself up will be brought down,
and he who is brought down will be lifted up.*

Luke 18: 14



Ashes

My mom woke me early one late winter's day,
and taxied me off to the church right away.
And when Mass was over I watched with some dread,
as the priest's blackened thumb came to rest on my head.

As I left the church and was headed for school,
I looked in the mirror and felt like a fool.
"Can I wipe them off?" I said with a plea.
"I'm so afraid kids will make fun of me!"

My Mom answered, "Son, you can't wipe them away!
They're there for a reason; they simply must stay!
Ashes remind us we're not flawless or great,
and we need God's blessings to set ourselves straight."

So I slunk to the classroom, and sat in my place,
when my friend said, "Hey Joe, something black's on your face!"
And my teacher said to me later that day,
"There's ink on your forehead, please wipe it away."

And all through the day, though I combed down my hair,
each person I passed saw the ashes right there.
My neighbor, my tutor, the funny lunch lady,
all told me my forehead was dirty and shady!

So later that night when got in the tub,
I grabbed that old washcloth and gave them a scrub,
and muttered, "Thank God" as I washed them away,
then realized just what I'd been doing all day.

I had spent the whole day feeling just like mom said,
and it all boiled down to the spot on my head.
I'd felt less-than-perfect – so humble and lowly –
and yet, with God's help, I somehow felt holy!

– Liz Wilkey
© February, 2006