

Ash Wednesday Homily

Fr. Nick Smith

O God of grace, behold the face
thou lovingly hast made,
which bears thy form through wind and storm;
thy image cannot fade.

In mirror clear year after year
can I discern thy spark;
creations clues, which I can use
to recognize thy mark.

O God of grace, behold my face
with means to see and hear,
and gift of voice to speak my choice,
to smile or shed a tear.

And means to breathe thou dost bequeath
to me and all my kin,
to make alive that we might thrive
and take your Spirit in.

O God of grace, behold my face
which I have worn for thee
not as a mask or heavy task,
but as a gift for me.

Through every test I try my best
to wear it faithfully,
and when I fail in some detail
I bring my fault to thee.

O God of grace, behold the face
of one who would be true;
one who intends to make amends
and partnerships renew.

With those whose care we ought to share
and practice what we preach,
that we might all be what they call
repairers of the breach.

O God of grace, behold this face
whose voice is often coarse,
and rudely hurts and insult blurts,
gains nothing but remorse,

whose ears are closed to pains disclosed
by those who live in fear,
whose lives are tossed, whose hope is lost,
and seek assistance here

O God of grace, behold this face
whose eyes refuse to see
the truth of need for which they plead
who cherished are by thee.

This countenance, which thou didst once
intend to bring such cheer,
too oft is sad and sometimes mad
for thy grace to appear

O God of grace upon this face
today I ashes bear
as witness clear, as word sincere,
that with thee I would share,

about regret for that great debt
I feel I should repay,
yet set aside ungratified
as day leads on to day.

So, God of grace today I trace
your sign upon my brow
with penitence and with reverence,
as if it were a vow

to see and hear those you hold dear
as thou wouldst me implore,
and love them too as thou wouldst do,
and none such to ignore.

O God of grace, now in this place
I pass thy welcome peace,
and shake the hand as thou hast planned,
that love may never cease.

So now today, these ashes say
forgive these flaws of mine,
and live with me in harmony,
Friend, I forgive thee thine.