

OUR LENTEN THEME: “CLEANING HOUSE”

“Place in me, O God, a clean heart.”

(Psalm 51:10)

Throughout our season of Lent, which began on Ash Wednesday and continues until Easter, we will be using the image of ‘cleaning house’.

This probably isn’t the most popular of images at the best of times. But when we know someone is coming to our house... indeed, if someone very special is coming, we always seem to have more strength, energy and willingness to tackle this work.

This Lent, we are looking to have the house of our soul cleaned but we need to acknowledge that we don’t have the ability to do it. Instead, we will be asking to have our hearts cleansed by the Holy Spirit. Our Lenten symbol is a ‘dust bunny’ and while we may know about dust bunnies in our homes, we might not usually think of them as something residing in hearts but dust can grow there, too.

It’s why people throughout time have cried out to God, “Wash me, O God, so I will be whiter than snow.” “Purge me, and I will be clean.” They have always known God is the One who can cleanse our hearts.

This cleansing action is what we will be seeking for ourselves, God’s cleansing action within our hearts. And we will be uniting our voices with those of old, as we ask God to sweep our dust bunnies away.

Every Sunday in Lent, each of us will be invited to write on our own dust bunny something we would like God to remove from our heart.

It could be anger or bitterness, a resentment or harsh thought. It could be fatigue or loneliness. It might be pride or arrogance. Whatever it is, we know that God has the power to remove it and cleanse us of it.

At the end of each service, we will be invited to place our dust bunny in the recycling container as a symbol of our desire to let it go. These will be considered private and immediately composted.

Reflecting on Scripture through Lent

“Lectio divina” comes from the Latin for “holy reading”.

It’s a way of coming to scripture that deepens our understanding. During each day of Lent (all days except Sundays from Ash Wednesday to Easter), take your Bible with a pen & some paper.

Turning to the Gospel of Luke and beginning at chapter 9, verse 44, choose the number of verses which seem full and right for you. Mark these down on your paper so you

know which verses you chose. Then, on the next day, you can choose a continuing number of verses.

Find a quiet place. Seek to quiet yourself. Take on a spirit and attitude of devotion. Breathe deeply and be at peace. Then, invite God's Spirit to join and lead you in this time of reading.

Read the passage silently and slowly. Reflect in your mind on the scene happening in the reading.

- what sights do you see in the background?
- what sounds, beyond what is told in words?
- where do you see yourself in this story/passage?

Read the passage again, silently and slowly. Notice words or phrases that stand out for you. Record these on your paper.

Consider what you wrote. Why do you think these words caught your attention? What is it about them that speaks to your journey this Lent?

Allow yourself time to listen and reflect on God's Word for you.

When you are done,
give thanks to God for this special time together.