

Ash Wednesday 2023

Two 3rd graders were talking in their school. The little girl asked the boy what that smudge was on his forehead. He replied, "It's Ash Wednesday."

"What's Ash Wednesday?" She asked.

"Oh, it's when Christians begin their diet," he replied.

Kill the Cyclops in you:

The Cyclops is that strange monster of Greek mythology with one big eye in the middle of its forehead. We pretend to ignore the truth that, for 325 days of each year, we are all Cyclopes because there is **ONE GREAT BIG "I"** right in the middle of our heads! If we are skeptical about this assertion, we might watch our words for one day, from morning to night. What's the first thing we think about each morning? "What am **I** going to do today? How will **I** do it? What will happen to **me** today? How will **I** feel today?" **I, I, I.** And all day long, what do we say to people? We say things like, "**I** think this" and "**I** think that" and "**I** agree" and "**I** disagree" and "**I** like this" and "**I** don't like that" and "**I** just want to say..." **I, I, I.** And what's the last thing that we think about at night? "**I** wish that so-and-so would stop doing thus-and-such to **me**" and "**I** really did a good job today" and "**I** wonder what **I**'ll do tomorrow."

The problem with seeing with one eye is that we're half blind. Everything looks flat and two-dimensional because with only one eye, we have no depth-perception. Consequently, we go wrong in assessing people.

In Greek mythology, the Cyclops was killed when Odysseus and four of his men took a spare staff of the Cyclops, hardened its tip in the fire and used that to destroy the monster's one big eye. — It is precisely this that we must do on Ash Wednesday. With two strokes of his thumb smeared with ash on our forehead, the priest will cross that "**I**" out of our head. By this sacramental ritual we are asked to take that "**I**" at the front of our mind and cross it out by "self-denial" and "self-mortification."

Doing so will help us to see the beautiful creatures of God all around us and replace "**I**" with "**You**." (Condensed from Fr. J. K. Horn).

Lent is when I determine which addictions I may still have some control over.

An Irishman walks into a bar and orders three glasses of Guinness, drinking them one at a time. Noticing this odd ritual, the bartender explains that the beer goes flat when poured and informs the man his beer would be much fresher if he ordered one glass at a time. The Irishman explains he began this custom with his two brothers, who have moved to America and Australia, respectively. This is their way of remembering all the time they spent drinking together.

The man becomes a regular at the pub, well-known for always ordering three beers at once. One day he walks in and orders only two beers. Assuming the worst, a hush falls among other patrons.

When the Irishman returns to the bar to order his second round, the bartender quietly offers his condolences. The man looks confused for a moment, and then explains, "No, everyone's fine. I gave up beer for Lent."

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