

Pastor Randy's short devotion for February 22nd:

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:17-18)

Today is Mardi Gras and tomorrow is Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of our Lenten journey of focusing on the suffering of our Lord Jesus. Ash Wednesday is a day of repentance, so we receive a mark of a cross on our foreheads made with ashes proclaiming, “Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.” It is a reminder that we are not permanent citizens of earth and earthly kingdoms, but are citizens of the kingdom of God for all eternity. Thus, Ash Wednesday is a call to live out our citizenship of heaven, that is a call to be ambassadors of the good news of God's love through our words and deeds. One of the spiritual tools for Lent is fasting. A tradition that developed around fasting for Lent, was giving up meat for the season of Lent. So on the day before, there was a neighborhood party using up all the meat so it wouldn't spoil. The day became known as “Mardi Gras”, which is French for Fat Tuesday. Now most of us don't take up the spiritual tool of fasting much anymore. The idea was the time you spent cooking, eating, and cleaning up would be time spent in prayer instead. Maybe you are not into fasting. But maybe you could set some more time aside in conversation with your Lord, a time of prayer. You will always grow in love after more intimate time in prayer with your Lord.