

February 22, 2012
Ash Wednesday

Today is a special day in the life of the faithful.

So special that Saint Paul in the second reading proclaims:

*“Behold, NOW is an acceptable time!
NOW is the day of salvation!”*

And the first reading proclaims:

*“Call the assembly!
Proclaim a fast!
Notify the congregation!”*

And so we have....and so you are here.

Shortly we will mark your foreheads with holy dirt.

Let this blessing remind you of how earthy you are, for every fiber of your bodies originates from the holy dirt of Mother Earth.

Indeed before it was earth, every fiber of your body spun out from the stars.
You are made from star dust!

Your bodies came forth from the Creator’s hand!
How wonderfully made you all are!

Today when the dirt is placed on your forehead, realize it is a blessing, not a curse. Earth can be fertile and life giving.

Think of today’s smudging as holy dirt being given to you so that you can plant something new in it in this holy season of Lent.

This is indeed planting time, and what we plant in Lent can bloom and bear fruit at Easter.

And so this is a special time and a special season; you all know this, this truth is implanted deep in the hearts of believing Catholics.

I commend you all for being here. You are an example of devotion to each other.

I pray for you and me a Lent that is a planting time, a growing time, a loving time, a justice and peace seeking time. Plant these seeds and Easter will bloom!