

Facing Reality

Scripture Reading — Romans 5:12-21

*Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all ...
Romans 5:12 —*

In his book *Tortured Wonders* Rodney Clapp tells the story of an impeccably dressed young woman who comes to church on Ash Wednesday to receive ashes on her forehead and to hear the solemn words "Dust you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). As she kneels and the priest leans forward to trace an ashen cross on her forehead, she whispers, "Father, I am a model. I know I only have a few years; then I will be too old for this work. My body is aging, and I can hardly admit it to myself. I do it once a year at this service. So rub the ashes on. Rub them hard."

During the season of Lent we've admitted, again and again, that sin is in our hearts and death is in our bones. We make our home in the valley of the shadow of death. We are dying. Like the Israelites in exile, we lament: "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off" (Ezekiel 37:11). We have no future.

Jesus Christ, the one greater than Adam, has entered the "valley of dry bones" to get us out of the mess Adam got us into, to undo what Adam did, to succeed where Adam failed.

During these final days of holy week, as the battle grows fierce, may we "fix our eyes on Jesus ... who for the joy set before him [the joy of bringing us to glory], endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2). Let us be astonished!

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are our only hope. You alone can rescue us from death and bring us into eternal life. Thank you for setting this joy before us. In your name we pray. Amen.

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