

## Meditation Passion Sunday

Five weeks ago, we conducted our Ash Wednesday evening service and during that evening I walked around with the ash cross on my forehead. Having been told by Maggie 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return, turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.'

I know that Lent isn't over until the great triumphant shout of Easter Sunday joy. Today, though, before the events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday take us on their strange pilgrimage, from the bittersweet table-fellowship tinged with betrayal, the unexpected intimacy of Jesus' foot-washing and the tenderness of the 'mandatum novum' (new commandment) from which Maundy Thursday gets its name, to the jeers and spit and blood and desolation and sheer agony of Good Friday.

I found myself thinking about the dust of Ash Wednesday, and what is 'made out of it'. Obviously, not literally; the ash crosses were wiped away by that night. But that very sober reality that we are dust, and to dust we shall return; what is 'made out of that?'

That might seem strange, but I don't think it is. Genesis 2 narrates how God creates Adam out of the dust of the earth, and into this dust breathes his own breath of life so that Adam becomes a living being. The dust takes on a life of its own, and starts to create things of its own, things that also live and grow and thrive in the beauty of God's garden. All this from dust. Carl Sagan, the agnostic astronomer, and science communicator, described the earth as 'a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.'

Remember that you are dust. For people of faith, dust isn't the end; it's just the beginning.

**'Dust', a poem by Elizabeth Jennings which shows how frail we are and how amazing we are too.**

We are made of dust,  
We are flying on every wind,  
Blown to the back of the earth, stormed at, broken, defiled,  
We are people of dust, but dust with a living mind. Dust with a spirit,  
Grace goes to the end of the earth. Follows the dark act,  
The thought, lying, wounding, distraught,  
We are dust from our birth, but in that dust is wrought a place for visions,  
A hope that reaches beyond the stars conjures and pauses the seas,  
Dust discovers our own proud torn destinies,  
Yes, we are dust to the bone.

Dear Lord, you hold us in your hands as small as specks of dust and we know that we are dust Lord, you formed us from it and to it we will return.

The last year Lord has been like a dust storm and we want to be released from it but that is not where we are and what life has for us right now. We are standing in the cloud while naming the gifts and holding the questions. We are not alone though and although unable to see clearly, we feel the infinite presence of God holding us steady.

We remember Lord all of those who are unwell and looking for your love and support, we think of and thank the NHS and their amazing work.

We remember those who have gone before and who have returned to dust.

Remember that I am dust, Lord. You formed me from it. And to it I will return. (Ecclesiastes 3:20)

I am but dust. In need of the potter. The potter who gives living water. (Jeremiah 18:6, John 4:10)

Living water and dust formed into clay. Clay moulded, massaged, and formed into a vessel.

A vessel of the potter's making. A vessel of the potter's choosing. A vessel of the potter's design. A vessel for the potter.

But right now, I am dust. Ready to be blown away. Ready to soak in living water.

I need living water. Pour out your living water and come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.