TO: The Gonzaga Community  
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SUBJ: Moment for Mission  
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Ash Wednesday and Lent

The ashes of Ash Wednesday carry a rich and complex symbolism with a variety of possible meanings. Interestingly the annual distribution of ashes on this day draws as many worshipers to Mass as Thanksgiving and, maybe, Easter.

For me, the ashes, and the priest’s invocation that reminds us of our origin and our destiny, help me to remember that I am not my own master, that I am not alone. While I know I am responsible for my own spiritual growth, I cannot do this alone. I need the Lord’s grace and the love and support of other people. And even the beauty and diversity of creation make their contribution.

We are immersed in a vast and wonderful web of life, a life that flows from God and eventually finds its fullest meaning in God. We are all related in this web to the created world around us, to one another, and to our Creator. And the relationships go in all directions in this web. We are related to others as they are to us, and God is related to all of us and we to God. Likewise with the created world. It relates to God and to us, and God and we to it.

Lent is a time of reconciliation. The Jesuits’ 35th General Congregation’s decree, Challenges to our Mission Today, charges us Jesuits, “As servants of Christ’s mission we are invited to assist him as he sets right our relationships with God, with other human beings, and with creation.” (GC35, n. 62) Lent is a good time to look at how I fit and contribute. I find this examination of my life a far more meaningful Lenten resolution than giving up chocolates, which I don’t much like anyway!

As an invitation and a reminder to those who may have missed our earlier email about the Jesuits’ Lenten prayer experience, Moved to Greater Love, those who would like to join us can find the link through this website, Jesuits.org.