

Excerpts from the Readings: Ash Wednesday - Saturday

Joel 2:12-13

"Even now" says the Lord,
"return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping and
with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your
clothing.

"Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in
steadfast love,
and relents from punishing."

Matthew 6:5-6

Whenever you pray,
do not be like the hypocrites;
for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues
and at the street corners,
so that they may be seen by others.
Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.
But whenever you pray,
go into your room and shut the door
and pray to your Father who is in secret;
and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:2-4

Whenever you give alms,
do not sound a trumpet before you,
as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the
streets,
so that they may be praised by others.
Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.
But when you give alms,
do not let your left hand know what your right
hand is doing,
so that your alms may be done in secret;
and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:16-18

Whenever you fast,
do not look dismal like the
hypocrites,
for they disfigure their faces
so as to show others that they are
fasting.
Truly I tell you, they have received
their reward.
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.

Isaiah 58:6-7, 9

Is this not the fast that I choose;
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread
with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor
into your house;
when you see the naked, to
cover them,
and not to hide yourself from
your own kin?
Then you shall call and the Lord
will answer;
you shall cry for help and he
will say,
"Here I am".

Isaiah 58:9-10, 13-14

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the
needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the
darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.
If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath,
from pursuing your own interests on my holy day;
if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the
Lord honourable;
if you honour it, not going your own ways, serving your
own interests, or pursuing your own affairs;
then you shall take delight in the Lord,
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth.

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