



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 11, 2024

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

“Ash Wednesday on Valentine’s Day”

Greetings of peace, love, and joy!

The Season of Lent is upon us. This Wednesday is the beginning of this grace-filled season, journeying with the Lord for forty days of prayer, sacrifice through fasting and abstinence, and doing acts of charity. The reception of ashes with the mark of the cross of Christ on our foreheads this coming Wednesday reminds us of the great love He did for us through His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. What a day to begin this, as it falls on Valentine’s Day. A day to celebrate love geared towards holiness and grace. A day that is fitting to reflect on the goodness of the Lord in His unconditional love for us.

We heard from last Sunday’s Gospel how people who were ill searched for Jesus. In all circumstances of their lives, they needed the Lord so that they would be healed. Jesus did not hesitate to heal them, for that is who He is: filled with love, compassion, and mercy. Once again, we hear another healing story of a man inflicted with leprosy. He approached Jesus and asked, “If you wish, you can make me clean.” Jesus moved with pity, stretched out His hand, and said, “I do will it be made clean.”

Such goodness and love of the Lord. As much as there are physical ailments each one of us gets, our spiritual healing does matter more. Let us approach the Lord to be healed from our spiritual sickness brought about by sin. Only in Jesus can we receive such healing with firmness of faith and trust in His power. We need to realize our faults and transgressions. We need to look deeply into our soul on what we need to be cleansed from.

Often or most times, it is difficult to admit our sinfulness. It is so hard to humble ourselves and face the reality of who we are. We hide and wear our masks, pretending that we are upright and just. We tend to be righteous in many ways, but deep inside us, we are like the man needing God’s grace and forgiveness. Jesus readily extends His love and mercy to those who seek it. He restores us and gives us more opportunities to enrich our lives through His powerful grace.

With the Lenten Season at hand, this would be a grace-filled opportunity to reflect, pray, and be renewed. It is a moment of self-realization that we cannot do without God’s love and mercy. It is a precious time given to deepen our faith and trust in His goodness. And when we experience His love, mercy, and forgiveness, we cannot but rejoice and share the good news with all around us. Like the man who was healed, although Jesus told him not to tell anyone about what happened except to the priest, he instead started to share such goodness that had come upon him.

On this Valentine’s Day, we remind ourselves that God’s love is unconditional. His love invites us to live a life of grace, and we start doing this by reminding ourselves that through His cross, love pours upon all.

Your friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual