



Lent / Carême / Cuaresma 2021

Ash Wednesday

17 February

*“If today you hear his voice,
harden not your hearts.”* Psalm 95:8

It is more than a year now since the Coronavirus began ravaging the world and turning our lives upside down. At the same time, many “events” in our local contexts, in various parts of the world, and in the different ambits of our lives are happening, unmasking realities, and perhaps revealing some glimmer of hope.

MOVEMENT 1: THE CONTEXT

This 40-day season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, is an invitation to “**rend our hearts**” (Joel 2:12-18), to allow our hearts to break open, to be touched both by grace and the realities around us.

Look around you.

*From wherever you may be, or however you may be sheltering,
or working within the limits posed by the current pandemic,
ponder in your heart the situations that disturb you.*

*(These could be personal experiences, or experiences of those you know,
or events that call your attention.)*

*Listen to what speaks to your heart
through the events around you, the news, the accounts on social media.*

MOVEMENT 2: REFLECTION

If helpful, you may want to allow your experience to dialogue with these texts:

1. From *‘The Hill We Climb’* by Amanda Gorman

When day comes, we ask ourselves where can we find light in this never-ending shade?

If we merge mercy with might, and might with right, then love becomes our legacy...

When day comes, we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid.

The new dawn blooms as we free it.

For there is always light,

if only we’re brave enough to see it.

If only we’re brave enough to be it.

2. From *'Dark Clouds Over a Closed World'* – Fratelli Tutti

A worldwide tragedy like the Covid-19 pandemic momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all. #32

The pain, uncertainty and fear and the realization of our own limitations, brought on by the pandemic have only made it all the more urgent that we rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organisation of our societies and above all, the meaning of our existence. #33

3. From *'Being Artisans of Hope in our Blessed and Broken World'*

Transformation through an ethic of caring implies our participation in personal, local and global transformation. At its foundation our conviction is that JPIC is rooted in the experience of God's compassion, which evokes a caring response at all levels, always guided by the Spirit. (p. 12)

MOVEMENT 3: PRAYER / COMMITMENT / ACTION

Many of us may not be able to participate in-person at the Ash Wednesday liturgy. In addition to the online celebration, we may wish to do this prayer-ritual (alone or in community).



The offering to be burnt:

Bring before the Lord that which you would like to offer as a your burnt offering. These could be the events or experiences that rent your heart, the insights drawn from your reflection, or however way you may be inspired to make this offering.

Putting on the sign:

When you are ready, make the sign of the Cross, being fully aware of what it means to bear this sign.

Going off to proclaim the Gospel:

Within the constraints of the current situation, how are you called to proclaim the Gospel now? What concrete act of "caring" and of "transforming and being transformed" are you invited to do during this period of Lent?

Have a grace-filled Lenten journey!
The JPIC International Team

