

Lenten Reflection

We are grateful to The Rev. Cathy Venkatesh for her words of invitation and insight as we enter Lent.

Cathy is an Episcopal Priest and one of the Bethany Facilitators of our Contemplative Prayer Ministry.

Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and he became a living being. – Genesis 2:7

God shaped Adam, the first man, from the dust of the ground, which in Hebrew is *adamah*. Adam's name means dust. So too, the Latin root of our word *human* is *humus*, which means "of the earth." Our words humor and humility share this same earthy root. Our invitation in Lent, which begins with the mark of ashes on our foreheads and the words "Remember that you are dust" is to return to our basic humanity, remembering that we are human and God is God. We are dust and mortal, yes, but dust shaped by the hands of a loving God and filled with God's very breath. When we think either too well or too poorly of ourselves, we lose our genuine humanity and humility. Our sense of humor often goes missing, too. In many ways, Lent feels to me like a season of spring cleaning for the soul – not to remove the essential dust, but to sort through the accumulated clutter of assumptions, hurts, grudges, and habits that build up over time and impede my relationships with God and others. Just as I long to cast off winter's protective layers with the arrival of spring, Lent gives me a space to shed those things that hinder my longing to be simply human.

--Reflection by The Rev. Cathy Venkatesh, Episcopal Priest and one of the Bethany Facilitators for our Thursday Morning Contemplative Prayer Gathering.

Thursday Morning Contemplative Prayer meets from 10:00 -11:30am in the Chapel of St. Anne on Claremont Ave in Arlington, we welcome your presence with us.