



Spiritual Life Development Department

The Salvation Army - USA East

440 West Nyack Rd.

West Nyack, NY 10994

A large, dark, textured graphic resembling a pile of ash or charcoal, with some lighter, speckled areas, positioned in the upper right corner of the page.

ASHES ON MY HEAD

A resource for TSA National Day of Prayer and Fasting

A large, dark, textured splash of ash or charcoal dust at the top of the page, partially obscuring the header area.

ASHES ON MY HEAD

A resource for TSA National Day of Prayer and Fasting

This day of prayer and fasting allows us to prepare our minds, hearts, and souls for the journey of transformation and renewal Lenten season brings. Prayer is our lifeline to God. Fasting allows us to focus on Him and not on the things around us... Ash Wednesday gives us a framework to reflect on our mortality and sinfulness as we examine ourselves and let the Spirit prompts us with the right conviction for our repentance and renewal as we acknowledge what Jesus did on our behalf at Calvary and celebrate His resurrection.

To help us prepare on this day's reflection, consider the following verses from Psalm 51 to guide you in asking God to cleanse your heart from all inequities and to create in you a steadfast spirit:

Intentional to **REMEMBER**

Psalm 51:1 *"Have mercy on me, oh God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions."*

In his book *Lenten Awakening*, Commissioner Phil Needham talks about the importance of remembering and repenting as part of the spiritual exercise we must do in preparation for Lent. He says, "Just because some of our memories are repressed, we cannot claim they have been removed...What if the painful memories relate to sins we have committed ... the important thing to keep in our minds and treasure in our hearts is that we are not alone in any of this. It all happens in the presence of God... all sins are sins against God; they are violations of who he intended us to be." (p.7-8)

Take this time to examine yourself honestly and confess what you must before our merciful God.

Willing to **REPENT**

Psalm 51:7 *"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow."*

In the Bible, ashes symbolize repentance. Repentance is the change in the mind of the believer that leads to turning away from sin and change course to good, to God's way/s. That conscious decision goes beyond sorrow. It involves confession and action to follow the right path. Commissioner Needham says, "As we reflect on the story of Jesus this Lenten season, we must not only bring with us a willingness to seek forgiveness from the one we may have wronged, but we must also confess those sins to God, fall to our knees before him, and ask for his forgiveness." (p.8)

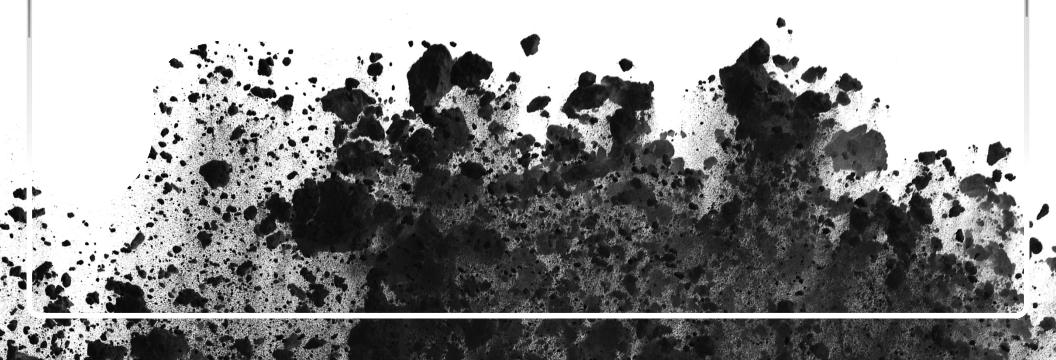
Take this time to surrender your 'ashes' before God, asking for His forgiveness and restoration in you.

Inspired to **RENEW**

Psalm 51:10 *"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

When we receive God's forgiveness, we are not only free of the weight of sin/guilt, but also equipped to move forward and closer to God in all aspects of our lives. Commissioner Needham says, "Lent calls us to have the courage to claim the ashes of our repentance, receive God's forgiveness through the crucified Jesus, and move our lives closer to Christlikeness." (p.9)

Take this time to open your heart before God so that the Spirit replenishes your soul with His holy presence and renew hope in you for the present and the future to come.

A large, dark, textured splash of ash or charcoal dust at the bottom of the page, mirroring the design at the top.