

ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST

We were first brought into a spiritual existence by God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in heaven. That's why our true home is heaven because it's where we were chosen before the world was ever made (Eph1:3-14). This is our time and for us to return home we have to listen to Jesus and learn. Jesus sent the disciples out to the peoples in pairs, to preach repentance for sins committed against God and each other. The symbolism of going in pairs was to promote the principle rule of charity, which is twofold. Love and Mercy (Mk 6:7-13). Whatever Jesus tells His disciples also applies to us today. He is instructing us that our ministry requires focus. He is warning us to live this life in anticipation of our own resurrection and the life of the world to come. We are to live by the rule of charity. We are to focus on our own vocation set out by God. Jesus told them to carry a 'staff' on their missionary journey. This is the instrument used by a shepherd to guide and catch lost sheep. It also prefigures the Cross, which gathers us into one flock, destined for the sheepfolds of heaven. Other than that, the disciples are to take nothing else, except the grace to trust in Him and His providence. This means that Jesus will provide everything for them in their mission as He will for us today. We must trust Him. Our hearts are like a purse that should be full with the richness of love for Him, and to spend that love on others. We are all 'summoned' by Jesus to promote and transmit the faith in our families, parishes and beyond. Many people will reject us, but we are not to lose hope, as our reward beyond this life will be great.

DEATH IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN. LET US FEAR SIN.

Jesus told the disciples to shake off the dust from under their feet as they walked away from those who reject Him. This action is to remind the unfaithful that humanity is formed from dust and to dust everyone will return (Gen 3:19). However, for those who trust in Christ, then the curse of death will be conquered (Eph 2:1-10). The faithful will have victory over death while the unfaithful will sadly be overcome by eternal death. Rather than fear death, believers have the promise of eternity that fuels the way we live on earth. The certainty that 'to dust we shall return' should humble us to seek and follow Christ. Our time on earth is very short compared to eternity. We should not be too engrossed in the affairs of the world that we miss out on what matters eternally. Jesus is warning us today that sin should have no place in our hearts as it only leads to eternal death. However, because Jesus knows our weaknesses, He leaves Himself available in the sacrament of confession for us to repent. We cannot enter through the doors of heaven without first entering through the doors of His divine mercy in confession now. The purpose of Christ's presence in the world (Eph1:3-14) is to save us from going to hell, so we can avoid ending up as ashes in the eternal fire. 'God chose us in Christ before the world was made'. It's up to us to choose Christ our Saviour now and be guided by the Holy Spirit, who will breathe divine life into the faithful believers beyond the grave. God bless, Fr. Brendan.