

# Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



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Ash Wednesday 2022

## Ash Wednesday

*1st Reading: Joel 2:12-18*

*2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2*

*Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18*

### “Even Now”

Each year I am struck by the first two words of today’s reading from the Prophet Joel – **Even now**. Even now, in the midst of disease, division, and despair. Even now, in the midst of escalating violence, racism, and ecological crises. Even now when we feel most weary, lost, and vulnerable. The prophet reminds us that yes, even now, *especially* now, God longs for us to return “with our whole hearts.” And Pope Francis says something very similar: “Lent is a journey that involves our whole life, our entire body” [2021 Ash Wednesday Homily].

What all of this says to me is that no matter the present condition of our world, our society, family and our very selves, *even now* it’s not too late to rend our hearts and allow our God who is “gracious and merciful” to guide us through these weeks of Lent to the transformation of Easter. Let us find consolation in knowing that we walk this Lenten journey together.

How is my heart as I begin this Lenten journey?

—Jean Hopman, OSU  
St. Louis, MO

