

Marked by Ashes

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Ruler of the Night, Guarantor of the Day...

This day—a gift from you.

This day—like none other you have ever given,
or we have ever received.

This Wednesday dazzles us with gift and newness and possibility.

This Wednesday burdens us with the tasks of the day,

for we are already halfway home

halfway back to committees and memos,

halfway back to calls and appointments,

halfway on to next Sunday,

halfway back, half frazzled, half expectant,

half turned toward you, half rather not.

This Wednesday is a long way from Ash Wednesday,

but all our Wednesdays are marked by ashes—

we begin this day with that taste of ash in our mouth:

of failed hope and broken promises,

of forgotten children and frightened women,

of more war casualties, more violence, more cynicism;

we ourselves are ashes to ashes,

dust to dust;

we can taste our mortality as we roll the ash around

on our tongues.

We are able to ponder our ashness with

some confidence, only because our every Wednesday of ashes

anticipates your Easter victory over that dry, flaky taste

of death.

On this Wednesday, we submit our ashen way to you—

you Easter parade of newness.

Before the sun sets, take our Wednesday and Easter us,

Easter us to joy and energy and courage and freedom;

Easter us that we may be fearless for your truth.

Come here and Easter our Wednesday with

mercy and justice and peace and generosity.

We pray as we wait for the Risen One who comes soon.

Used by permission: *Prayers for a Privileged People*, Walter Brueggemann, Abingdon Press, 2008.