

Ash Wednesday at the Congregation Office

from Liz Orupold
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Clothe Yourself in...

Along with Christians all over the world, staff of the Congregation Office gathered together on Ash Wednesday to begin our Lenten journey. Following on from the richness of Shrove Tuesday and the indulgence of pancakes we were given a brief snapshot of history, origins and meanings of Ash Wednesday and Lent across cultures and time.

We explored the experiences of childhood and what Lent meant to us then. Many remembered the focus of sacrifice and giving up something for Lent. Lollies and chocolates seemed to have been the most popular. Some also remembered the celebration of Easter Sunday when you could open that big jar of lollies you had collected during Lent.

We also explored the notion that sometimes it is very easy to give something up but it is much harder to **take something on**. It is much more of a challenge to extend your hand and heart to others, to be inclusive of others and honest in relationships, to drop the masks and disguises we wear.

We were invited to stop, listen and reflect on who we are and on who God has called us to become. We were each invited to take something on for Lent. To clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience.

To assist us we were each given a beautiful pale blue organza bag containing a random series of cards, enough for each day of Lent. We have been invited to take a card each day and take on what is written on the card. There was much banter and good humour as we each ruffled through our cards, but deep down we all knew there was a challenge there for us to step out of our comfort zone. To be comfortable in our uncomfortableness. Today my card asks me to “*Offer a prayer for those not as fortunate as yourself*”. We are going to check back in with each other during the Lenten journey and see how we have been going.

I’m looking forward to the journey and to sharing the experiences with my colleagues in the Congregation Office and to celebrating the joys of Easter together.

Thank you to everyone in the office who put this together and for sharing in the reflection.

