

### **Ash Wednesday Comes and, Lord, We Hear**

Ash Wednesday comes, and Lord, we hear  
The word for which our spirits yearn;  
Amid this world's distress and fear,  
We hear your loving call: "Return!"

"Return to me with all your heart"  
With fasting, weeping, mourning, too.  
O God, we seek a brand new start,  
A new beginning here with you.

You call to us — the old, the young;  
You summon nations strong and weak.  
When we have drifted toward the wrong,  
You call us back, your way to seek.

O God most merciful and kind,  
Your love is not a prize we earn;  
Yet in our life with you we find  
The joy that comes when we return.

### **O God, As We Pause**

O God, as we pause from our usual ways,  
as millions stay home, as we count passing days,  
may we learn what matters — what really has worth.  
May we seek your reign as we live here on earth.

May we find your blessings in small, common things;  
may we learn the joy that community brings.  
In loving our neighbors, in stopping to pray,  
may we know your presence in each passing day.

God, may we reflect on a world that has changed —  
a world where our values have been rearranged.  
For those who once thought they could stand by themselves  
now value the workers who restock the shelves.

As greed and injustice are being laid bare,  
may we build a nation that's loving and fair.  
God, give us the courage to change what we can,  
to work for the justice that's part of your plan.

So, turn us around, Lord, to make your world new;  
May we seek, in all things, to first follow you.  
In change and in sorrow may we seek your reign.  
O God, in our pausing, restore us again!