Yesterday, I proudly wore the ashes on my forehead, proclaiming that I had taken the time to reflect on my mortality and upon my imperfections as a human being. I am proud to be a Catholic. I am secure in my religious beliefs, while at the same I know it is not my place to judge the beliefs of others. I feel comforted when others express pride in their religious beliefs. I take note when a ball player crosses himself before stepping to the plate or points to the sky to acknowledge that there is someone greater than him. When I see the Jewish children in the neighborhood dressed in their traditional clothing, I acknowledge that they are also proud to profess their faith.

In our country, we are living in times when connections with organized religions are dwindling. While, again, I place no judgement on others and their beliefs, I am concerned that adherence to values that have been grounded in religion may be diminishing.

As a Catholic, the season of Lent has always been special for me. I remember my mom piling the nine of us into the station wagon every Saturday and dropping us at the church for confession. I remember that at 3 p.m. on Good Friday, my mom would call us all into the house where we would silently reflect upon the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. I remember giving up candy (even though there was not much candy available in my household).

The season of Lent is all about reflection, from which we could all benefit. Our lives are busy, but during Lent, I purposely carve out a few extra minutes each day to access how my actions measure up to the beliefs I espouse. I must accept myself for who I am with the fervent desire to make changes for the better. I know that God made me and that the God I believe in is an artist who creates beauty. I know that I must be humble and I must be proud.

And so, how do we reconcile the two seemingly contrary values of humility and pride? I remind myself of my imperfections. I accept the fact that I am by no means perfect. I try my hardest to forgive what I believe are transgressions against me. When working with students, teachers and parents who have also discovered that they and the people around them are not perfect, I ask them to forgive one another. While Lent is about self-examination and repentance, I know that Easter is about new possibilities and new beginnings. The world can only grow better if we are willing to open our minds and hearts to all around us, even to those who harm us. We must understand that in so doing, we open up the possibility for the other to learn and grow.

Sincerely,

Dr. William Gartside
Head of School
STCPS' youngest students observe Ash Wednesday

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UPCOMING OPEN HOUSES

Please spread the word about our upcoming open house events:

- **Tuesday, March 10** from 8:30-10 a.m. for all grades
- **Wednesday, April 8** from 6:30-8 p.m. for Loyola Academy (grades 6-8)

Looking for information from the Weekly Reminders email sent out on Fridays?

CLICK HERE

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