

**July 23, 2020**

**"The Way of Jesus is the Way of Life and the Way of Life can change the world."** Bishop Curry

*Grant that I may daily serve you more faithfully, so that in doing your will I may find my peace.*

Whenever my Dad (who was an Episcopal priest) dismissed Church, he would say to the congregation "teach us to care and not to care." This phrase is from "Ash Wednesday," a poem written by T.S. Eliot. When I ask people what my Dad meant, their answers vary dramatically. That would probably make my Dad smile because he had hoped that different people would experience different meanings.

The theme of Ash-Wednesday is the turning away from the world and towards God. Eliot had become increasingly dissatisfied with the "real world." Through religion, Eliot found a way to restore that meaning to his life by turning from the world and towards God, from the "real" towards the spiritual.

When I would hear that phrase on Sunday mornings, what I heard was for us to care for the things that were important in life and to let go of those things that were important to us for the wrong reasons.

Care for my neighbor. Don't care for the overindulgences in my own life.

Take the time to slow down and listen to someone's story. Don't be so self-centered that you believe yours is the only story that matters.

Praise and give thanks for the sacrificial works of others. Don't pridefully proclaim your accomplishments.

One of the most humbling days of my life was when I began to wonder whether or not I was a "success" in life. Based upon my definition, I decided that I was a success. When I applied my definition of success to the people in my life that I very much admired and respected, I realized that most of them were "real" world failures. Clearly something was wrong with my definition of success. The people that were deemed failures were anything but failures. I realized that the "real" world was not the materialistic world in which I was thriving but actually God's world. I asked God to teach me to care about what God cared about and not what the world told me I should care about. My life was transformed.

Teach us to care and not to care. What do you hear when you hear this phrase?

A life lived awakened by turning to God is so much more joy-filled than living in a world with constantly changing “real” expectations.