

## **Homily – The Questions We Ask**

**Rob Keim**

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Twenty years ago, I was attending a more conservative church, and one of the pastors kids came out as gay. This put the pastor in a difficult position, and she continued to insist on the party line that being gay was bad. She softened the position a little bit by condemning homosexuality but in the same breath she always said, “and when I get to heaven the first question I am going to ask God is about all of this gay stuff.” That softening didn't sit well with me for it allowed her to still maintain a party line that was just wrong. But, on Ash Wednesday it does beg the question “after you die, what is the first question you are going to ask God?”

Ash Wednesday is one of three occasions in our annual church calendar in which we focus on death. The other two are Good Friday, with the death of Jesus, and All Saint/All Souls Sunday in November, when we remember all those who have gone before. Today though we remember our own death. Each of us will die. We will each stop breathing and these mortal bodies will decay away. “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” And after death each and every one of us will continue to be in the embrace of God, just in a different way than we are used to. Two thousand years ago, Jesus changed the universe forever so that we are all assured of eternal life with God.

Throughout the centuries wise ones have learned that when we embrace our mortality we finally begin to live life to its fullest. Some achieve this lesson earlier in life, and some never do. I hope you have lots of role models in your life of those who have achieved the acceptance of death. I imagine some of your role models have gone before. May they never be forgotten.

So, after you die, what questions are you going to ask God?

God, why did my child die?

God, could I have done more to achieve world peace, or overcome global climate change?

God, why did you allow that bad person to have so much money?

God, why is your church so mean and unloving? What should I have done about that?

Or there is that eternal question, God are you a Dodgers fan or a Giants fan?

There are obviously a lot of question that we have, and I have just listed a few of them. What are your questions? What would you ask God? And are these questions you are already asking God? And, might you know the answers already, but refused to listen to the still small voice of God in your heart?

Now, there is something else that could also happen after we die. Instead of getting our questions answer, it may be that we no longer care about the questions. Could it be that our questions no longer seem relevant or important? None of us really knows the answer, but it can be useful to reflect. After I die, will my all-important questions cease to perplex me.

I don't really have the answer today, but I hope I have caused you to think, and ponder. God has created us so that we all die. We will all continue to be with God. Do you hope to learn answers or do you hope to let go of the questions?