

**Your Father, who sees in secret, will repay you.**

***Matthew 6:6***

As children, how we loved a treasure hunt—hidden jellybeans and pennies, turned to gems and galleons in our young imaginations! Even as adults, perhaps on an antiques adventure, we thrill at the thought of a secret only we can know, at the challenges and possibilities of an undiscovered trove.

On Ash Wednesday, we begin the most extreme of treasure hunts. It is one in which we examine our lives in the Light of Jesus. We do this to unearth the Infinite Mystery about to be revealed at a fractured tomb on Easter morning. The key to that mystery is hidden somewhere within us, and Lent is the pilgrimage to find it.

As the journey begins, Paul tells us, “Behold, *now* is the acceptable time!” Joel impels us, “Even *now*, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart.” They encourage us to set out on the journey immediately and resolutely.

Matthew takes us where God alone sees and rewards our intentions, assuring us that any darkness we meet is not empty, but filled with the presence of God. He leads us to the inner room where we must close the door and pray. He suggests that a quiet intimacy with God is the essential clue to a successful quest.

From the shadows where we pray, fast and give alms, an urgent question rises in our hearts. What might the treasure look like when we find it? When the stone is finally rolled away, might I meet Jesus anew in my life? Might I truly see the Mercy of God in human flesh? Now, in this acceptable time, we take our first steps toward God’s answer.