



ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

We have not loved you with our
whole heart, and mind, and strength.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

—*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 267

Loving our neighbor can look like ensuring her ability to feed herself and her family. Jesus fed people, and that feeding is still central to how we remember and become his body in the world today. Poor women—in his day and our own—often depend on male relatives for their livelihoods. Microfinance, growing food more effectively and developing agricultural and market cooperatives are important tools that help the poor increase their ability to feed themselves and their children. That kind of development also brings dignity, as women find agency and become more effective partners in decision-making. Agency is an image of God’s presence and action in the world.

Lent invites us to reflect on loving God and neighbor and to examine our own actions and inactions. Prayer, study, fasting and giving alms are traditional ways to observe this season—and all are avenues to loving more fully—with heart, mind, strength and substance. How will I live and love differently this Lent? How will I become God’s agent and help others to do the same?

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

—Psalm 51:11

—**The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori**