

*Christ became dust that we might become divine:* words we used yesterday at a funeral when we also heard these words of commendation from the Coptic liturgy: *our action is among your mysteries, a mystery of our returning to dust* and these words of committal:

*we commend to Almighty God our sister Terry and we commit her body to be cremated earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.*

All very earthy language: there's no evasion going on here. This is not the language of metaphor but of fact. And we 'll hear them again today.

*Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return.*

This is language that puts us in our place. We are mortal, after all, but there is hope in Christ, in God. God becomes one with us in this created dust; a creative dust that in Christ will endure our sufferings, our mortal state, our sin so that he may become a way back for us to God. The mystery of humanity taken up into the mystery of God. But it's not automatic: it's something we must want: it's a person we have to follow.

*For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness (the righteousness) of God.*

And goodness or righteousness implies an ethical conduct, a right way of living, a turning away from sin. So that what we are asking for today is that God may come into our lives so that this may be possible; we are asking for the possibility of resurrection. And we begin where we are, we can't begin anywhere else, with dust, with the ashes of mortality.

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