

LENT 2023

A Parish Resource Guide for Your Lenten Journey



This Lent, we invite you to join us for spiritual opportunities to rekindle your relationship with our Lord. All are welcome!

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*The Catholic Community of
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Plano, Texas*

LENTEN RECONCILIATION

Fridays, except April 7 see Holy Week

Schedule

9:15 a.m.—10:00 a.m. Parish Activity Center

12:30 p.m. — 1:30 p.m. Parish Activity Center

Saturdays, except April 8 see Holy Week

Schedule

9:00 a.m. — 10:00 a.m. Parish Activity Center

Parish Reconciliation Service

Monday, March 20 at 7:00 p.m. in parish hall



Reconciliation

Wednesday, April 5

Noon—2:00 p.m. in Parish Activity Center*

"A Light is on for You"

All churches in the Diocese of Dallas will have Reconciliation these nights at the same time.

Wednesday, March 29 and April 5

from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

in Parish Activity Center*

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

7:00 a.m. Monday

8:30 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday

6:00 p.m. Wednesday

Noon Friday

**All Daily Masses are in the parish hall in Parish Activity Center, unless noted otherwise.*

Rosary is prayed every Tuesday after the 8:30 a.m. Mass. During Lent the Rosary will also be prayed every Friday starting Feb. 24 after the 8:30 a.m. Mass in the parish hall.



HOLY WEEK



SCHEDULE 2023

Holy Thursday, April 6

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer in parish hall*

(No Morning Mass)

7:30 p.m. Mass of the Lord's Last Supper (SFFC Gym)*

Good Friday, April 7

7:00 a.m. Stations of the Cross in parish hall*

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer in parish hall* (No Masses)

9:00 a.m.—10:00 a.m. Reconciliation (Parish Activity Center)*

12:30 p.m.—1:30 p.m. Reconciliation (Parish Activity Center)*

3:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross (SFFC Gym)*

7:30 p.m. Liturgy of Our Lord's Passion (SFFC Gym))

Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil), April 8

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer in parish hall*

(No Morning Mass)

9:00 a.m.—10:00 a.m. Reconciliation (Parish Activity Center)*

11:30 a.m. Blessing of Easter Food Baskets in parish hall*

No 5:00 p.m. Mass

7:30 p.m. -10:00 p.m. Easter Vigil Mass in SFFC Gym*

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 9

Mass Time and Place

8:00 a.m. in SFFC Gym and Room 130*

8:00 a.m. in Parish Hall and Seton Room*

10:00 a.m. in SFFC Gym and Room 130*

10:00 a.m. in Parish Hall and Seton Room*

12:00 p.m. in SFFC Gym and Room 130*

12:00 p.m. in Parish Hall and Seton Room*

No 5:00pm Mass

*SFFC (Seton Faith Formation Center) is located at 3100 W. Spring Creek Pkwy., Plano TX 75023

*Parish Hall is in Parish Activity Center at located at 2700 W. Spring Creek Pkwy., Plano, TX 75023



PREPARING FOR LENT

The Gospel for Ash Wednesday speaks about prayer, fasting, and works of mercy. These three activities are seen as the way to curb the three traditional sources of temptation, which are: the World, the Flesh and the Devil. Christians should be busy in doing good things. These good works should form positive habits that strengthen our spiritual lives.

Some of our time each day should be dedicated to prayer, reflection and the study of religion. Traditionally prayer is defined as the turning of the mind and heart to God. We need to communicate with our God, and in our conscience allow God to communicate with us.

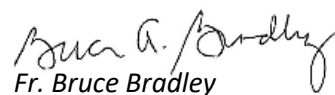
During Lent, retreats and spiritual exercises are recommended, such as attending daily Mass, utilizing the Sacrament of Reconciliation, attending the Stations of the Cross, studying Scripture, meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, or making a Holy Hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and in general spending time with God.

Fasting is an ancient custom recommended in the Bible. Our Lord himself fasted for forty days preparing for His public ministry. Traditionally, fasting means to do without food or drink for specified amounts of time. The benefits of fasting are often seen as teaching compassion for the hungry and needs of others. Fasting helps us to be self-controlled. Fasting can be a penance or reparation for sin. Fasting causes us to set aside material things to focus on spiritual things. Fasting reminds us of our weakness and limitations before an almighty God.

In our church life moderate fasting for mature adults is defined as one regular meal and two half meals per day. The Church also asks us to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and currently during all the Fridays of Lent. We need to use discretion and prudence in actual fasting, understanding that everyone is different, and some people have medical or physical needs that override the usual prescribed fasting. In our own time other forms of fasting can also be practiced. I have heard of people “fasting from social media”! There are many opportunities to practice self-control.

Works of mercy express our concern for the needs of others. Being patient with others, assisting the needs of others, feeding the hungry, and caring for the sick or elderly, are all works of mercy. Look for ways to be of service to others. Our practice of Lent should be one that includes prayer, self discipline and concern for others. Do not wait until the last minute and give up chocolate! Think of ways to deepen your spiritual life before Ash Wednesday. Hopefully when Lent is over we will continue to deepen our spiritual lives with good practices. The spirit of Lent should be practiced during the entire year!

Your Pastor,


Fr. Bruce Bradley



LENT

SENSE OF THE SEASON

The word Lent means springtime. This word comes from the same root as lengthen. Daytime lengthens during Lent. The northern hemisphere turns toward the sun, the source of life, and winter turns into spring. In Hebrew, the word for repentance is the same as the word that means to turn, like the turning of the earth to the sun, like the turning of the soil before planting.

“Even now, says the Lord, turn to me.” (Joel 2:12) The word sin means separation. We are called to turn from our separate selves, from our sin, to come together in community. Self-denial is the way we express our repentance. In the lengthening brightness from Ash Wednesday until Holy Thursday afternoon, our holy Lent, we turn to God as our source of life.

Self-denial is threefold, advises Matthew’s gospel. We pray: “Go to your room, close your door, and pray to your Father in private.” We fast: “No one must see you are fasting but your Father.” We give alms: “Keep your deeds of mercy secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.” Through the Lenten exercise of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we spring-clean our lives, sharpen our senses, put tomorrow in its place and treasure the day at hand.

Why are there forty days in Lent? It took forty days for sinfulness to drown in the flood before a new creation could inherit the earth. It took forty years for the generation of slaves to die before the freeborn could enter the promised land. For forty days Moses and Elijah and Jesus fasted and prayed to prepare themselves for a life’s work.

At the beginning of Lent, the bishop calls out the names of the catechumens who seek to be baptized at Easter. Their names are written in the book of the elect, the chosen. God has chosen them, and they have chosen to turn to God. Lent is the forty days before the baptism of the catechumens. The already baptized can share the excitement and the struggles of the elect and rediscover the meaning of baptism in their own lives. During the forty days, both catechumens and the faithful journey together to the holy font.

We keep Lent together. We put aside our business-as-usual to support each other in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We turn to God to enlighten us and purify us throughout the lengthening brightness of our holy season of Lent.

“For now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!”

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Text by Peter Mazar. Art by Rita Corbin.

The Worship Environment

Lenten tradition dictates austerity, simplification and stripping of the worship environment. The simplified worship environment allows us to focus on what is most important: the assembly, the penitents, the Elect and the Candidates.

- ◆ **NO FLOWERS:** The Roman rite is specific about flowers this season--none are allowed. The only exception this year are March 19, Laetare Sunday, March 20, Solemnity of St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, March 25, The Annunciation of the Lord.
- ◆ **MUSIC:** Music should reflect the more somber mood of Lent and thus provide a contrast with the festive music of the Easter season which follows. The *Gloria* is not used as the opening rite at Mass and the *Alleluia* is replaced by other gospel acclamations.
- ◆ **BOOK OF THE ELECT:** The book containing the names of individuals preparing for baptismal initiation at the approaching Easter Vigil is placed in the baptismal area.
- ◆ **PRAYER BASKETS:** Names of the RCIA Candidates and Catechumens and our youth preparing for Eucharist and Confirmation are in baskets in the narthex of the church. Please take a name and pray for that person during Lent.

U.S. guidelines for abstaining and fasting

Abstinence - NO Meat...over 14 years.

Fast and Abstinence - 1 full meal (18 through 59) no meat (over 14 years) and two smaller meals with nothing in-between during the course of the day.

Days of Abstinence - Ash Wednesday, all Fridays of Lent, and Good Friday for all who have reached their 14th birthday, no meat can be taken.

Days of Fast - Ash Wednesday and Good Friday for all who have celebrated their 18th birthday and have not reached their 60th birthday, a limit of one full meatless meal.

Weekdays of Lent - No obligation to fast, however, voluntary acts of self-denial are recommended.

TRIDUUM

THE THREE DAYS

What is the Triduum?

The Triduum means "three days." The Paschal Triduum is the three days, counted from sunset to sunset, from Holy Thursday night through Easter Sunday evening. During these days we keep one festival, our Passover, our Easter. We come together with all the people of the parish with all Christians in every time and place to fast, pray and keep watch for the Passover of the Lord.

Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday constitute one liturgical celebration in which the services of prayer and the elements of our daily lives are woven together as one continuous action of praise and sanctification. We experience and meditate upon the marvelous deed done by God in Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer and our brother. The liturgical actions provide quiet moments and rituals by which we can integrate the service, love, self-giving and life-restoring work of Jesus into our busy daily lives making each of our actions holy.

We Begin as Holy Thursday Ends

Thursday evening we enter into this Triduum together. After listening to the scriptures, we do something strange: We wash feet. The Priest goes down on his knees with pitchers of water, basin and towels. Jesus gave us this image of what the church is supposed to look like, feel like, and act like. This is a rehearsal for our Christian lives.

Later we celebrate the Eucharist, reflecting upon its action, as the one sacrifice/meal of Jesus and Christ permanently present in the Eucharist reserved. The evening liturgy has no ending: Whether we stay to pray awhile or leave, we are now in the quiet and peace and glory of the Triduum.

And We Continue through Good Friday and Holy Saturday

During the day we reflect in song and word with our Christian brothers and sisters upon the mystery of the cross where death is turned into life.

In the evening we gather quietly on Friday and listen to scripture. We pray at length for all the world's needs. Then there is another once-a-year event: The holy cross is held in our midst and we come forward one-by-one to do reverence with a kiss or a bow or a genuflection. The Eucharist we receive brings Christ's death and resurrection into our lives and brings us to the foot of the cross on Calvary. Still the liturgy does not end, but leads us to Holy Saturday.

We continue in fasting and prayer and vigil, in rest and quiet through Saturday. This Saturday for us is like God's rest at the end of creation. It is Christ's repose in the tomb, upon which we reflect.

Until the Night between Saturday and Sunday

After sunset, hungry now and excited, the church gathers in the darkness and lights a new fire and a great candle that will make this night bright for us. We listen to some of the most powerful scriptures in the Bible, then we pray to all our saints to stand with us as we go to the font and bless the waters. There the catechumens are baptized and anointed. These are the moments when death and life meet, when we reject evil and give our promises to God. Together we go to the table and celebrate the Easter Eucharist. We gather to enjoy the company of new members of our community at the reception which follows the liturgy: to show that celebration and joy are a part of faith and new life in Christ. Easter Sunday begins and we are ready for fifty days of rejoicing.

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 6

7:30 p.m. - Mass of the Lord's Last Supper

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 7

7:30 p.m. - Liturgy of Our Lord's Passion

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 8

No 5:00 p.m. Mass

7:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.—Easter Vigil Mass

All Masses in the Gym at Seton Faith Formation Center



PRAYER, FASTING, ALMSGIVING

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving, like three legs of a tripod, make up the traditional practices of Lent. Prayer nourishes our spirits. Fasting disciplines our bodies, helps us seek the Lord with greater intensity and puts us in solidarity with those who suffer. And works of charity enlarge our hearts as we commit ourselves to the good of others.

PRAYER

All of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) tell us that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert where he fasted and prayed for 40 days. As disciples, we seek to follow St. Paul's call to "pray always." Lent is a time when we concentrate our prayer on the double meaning of this season: conversion from our sinful ways and renewal of our baptismal promises.

Participating in the Eucharist and praying over the Scripture readings, on a weekly or even a daily basis, are helpful ways of prayerfully entering into the season. Private prayer, family prayer and communal prayer all work together to deepen our prayer life, not only during this season, but also all year long.

Suggestions for Prayer

- ◆ Participate in **daily Mass**.
- ◆ Participate in our **Friday Lenten Series: Stations of the Cross and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Evening Prayer**.
- ◆ **Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** every Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
- ◆ **Pray** for one of our RCIA candidates and students preparing for the sacraments of initiation.
- ◆ **Pray** as a family; start meals with prayers or pray the rosary.
- ◆ **Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation**.
- ◆ **Pray the Stations of the Cross**

FASTING

Fasting is an integral part of Lent. Traditionally it has included reducing the amount of food we eat and abstaining from meat.

But why do we fast? Not because our bodies and appetites are something evil that need to be punished, but to allow our physical hunger to remind us of our spiritual hunger, our need for God. Our Lenten fasting is modeled on Jesus' 40-day fast in the desert. Just as he fasted in preparation for his baptism in the Jordan and his public ministry, we fast to remind ourselves of our baptismal commitment and need for renewal.

Fasting can take many forms. While we usually fast by eating less, we can also fast from other things, whether they are enjoyable activities or bad habits.

Although fasting can have many beneficial physical effects, it's not the same thing as dieting. The purpose of dieting is to improve the health and beauty of our bodies. The purpose of fasting is to turn our attention to both God and others. Fasting reminds us not only of our dependence on God, but also of the needs of the hungry and the poor. By fasting, we place ourselves in solidarity with suffering people everywhere.

Suggestions for Fasting

- ◆ Watch less television and spend the time as a family, write a letter to someone or visit a sick person.
- ◆ Lent is a good time to think about our addictions and dependencies, whether to eating, smoking, alcohol, coffee or shopping. What can you do to break your dependency on any of these substances or actions?
- ◆ Focus on a bad habit you have such as being overly critical, gossiping or harboring resentments. Place yourself in God's care and try to give it up for Lent.
- ◆ Feed the hungry.

- ◆ Decide as a family or group on some food or beverage that you will all give up together for Lent.

ALMSGIVING

Both in our own country and around the world, the gulf between rich and poor seems ever to be widening. As it gets tougher to make ends meet, we sometimes feel resentful or jealous of others who have more. At the same time, we feel guilty about what we have.

This cycle of envy and guilt is useless. Lent is a good time to break out of it by cultivating a spirit of gratitude for what we have. Our most precious commodities—health, friendship, love and the beauty of creation—are pure gifts from God. Without these our material possessions are worthless. Gratitude for what we have prompts us to do something for those in need, not out of guilt, but out of compassion. Compassion and generosity towards others involve giving not only from our surplus, but also from our substance.

Suggestions for Almsgiving and Works of Service

- ◆ **Donate to the St. Vincent de Paul** for parishioner emergencies.
- ◆ Bring food or money saved by fasting to the **Love Truck**.



JOURNEY TO THE FOOT OF THE CROSS:

BISHOP RICKEN OFFERS 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER FOR LENT

Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin, chairman of the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), offers “10 Things to Remember for Lent”:

1. **Remember the formula.** The Church does a good job capturing certain truths with easy-to-remember lists and formulas: 10 Commandments, 7 sacraments, 3 persons in the Trinity. For Lent, the Church gives us almost a slogan—Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving—as the three things we need to work on during the season.
2. **It’s a time of prayer.** Lent is essentially an act of prayer spread out over 40 days. As we pray, we go on a journey, one that hopefully brings us closer to Christ and leaves us changed by the encounter with Him.
3. **It’s a time to fast.** With the fasts of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, meatless Fridays, and our personal disciplines interspersed, Lent is the only time many Catholics these days actually fast. And maybe that’s why it gets all the attention. “What are you giving up for Lent? Hotdogs? Beer? Jelly beans?” It’s almost a game for some of us, but fasting is actually a form of penance, which helps us turn away from sin and toward Christ.
4. **It’s a time to work on discipline.** The 40 days of Lent are also a good, set time to work on personal discipline in general. Instead of giving something up, it can be doing something positive. “I’m going to exercise more. I’m going to pray more. I’m going to be nicer to my family, friends and coworkers.”
5. **It’s about dying to yourself.** The more serious side of Lenten discipline is that it’s about more than self-control – it’s about finding aspects of yourself that are less than Christ-like and letting them die. The suffering and death of Christ are foremost on our minds during Lent, and we join in these mysteries by suffering, dying with Christ and being resurrected in a purified form.
6. **Don’t do too much.** It’s tempting to make Lent some ambitious period of personal reinvention, but it’s best to keep it simple and focused. There’s a reason the Church works on these mysteries year after year. We spend our entire lives growing closer to God. Don’t try to cram it all in one Lent. That’s a recipe for failure.
7. **Lent reminds us of our weakness.** Of course, even when we set simple goals for ourselves during Lent, we still have trouble keeping them. When we fast, we realize we’re all just one meal away from hunger. In both cases, Lent shows us our weakness. This can be painful, but recognizing how helpless we are makes us seek God’s help with renewed urgency and sincerity.
8. **Be patient with yourself.** When we’re confronted with our own weakness during Lent, the temptation is to get angry and frustrated. “What a bad person I am!” But that’s the wrong lesson. God is calling us to be patient and to see ourselves as he does, with unconditional love.
9. **Reach out in charity.** As we experience weakness and suffering during Lent, we should be renewed in our compassion for those who are hungry, suffering or otherwise in need. The third part of the Lenten formula is almsgiving. It’s about more than throwing a few extra dollars in the collection plate; it’s about reaching out to others and helping them without question as a way of sharing the experience of God’s unconditional love.
10. **Learn to love like Christ.** Giving of ourselves in the midst of our suffering and self-denial brings us closer to loving like Christ, who suffered and poured himself out unconditionally on the cross for all of us. Lent is a journey through the desert to the foot of the cross on Good Friday, as we seek him out, ask his help, join in his suffering, and learn to love like him.

FRIDAY LENTEN SERIES

5:15pm Children’s Stations of the Cross

7:00pm Stations of the Cross

February 24 Everyone’s Way of the Cross

March 3 Traditional Way of the Cross

March 10 Marian Way of the Cross

March 17 Everyone’s Way of the Cross

March 24 Marian Way of the Cross

March 31 Everyone’s Way of the Cross

Stations of the Cross are held in parish hall of the Parish Activity Center.

After Stations of the Cross - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Evening Prayer





ACTIVITIES AT SETON

TO ASSIST YOU ON YOUR LENTEN JOURNEY

Please join us for one of these special activities to Learn and Pray this Lent and watch your faith grow!

Make a difference this Lent



Pick up your Rice Bowl in the St. JPII room

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22. Each year during Lent Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl program provides us an opportunity to enhance our Lenten experience. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is the official international relief and development agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. CRS works with organizations around the world to help poor and vulnerable people overcome emergencies, earn a living through agriculture, and access affordable health care. CRS also provides assistance to people who are migrating from war-torn areas to "safe" countries other than the U.S. CRS works with local representatives in over 100 countries serving over 130 million people.

During Lent we are called to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. CRS Rice Bowl helps us do that during our Lenten journey. Through CRS Rice Bowl we journey with members of our human family around the world. It's more than just dropping some money in the little cardboard box. Each box comes with a Lenten calendar with daily prayers. There are meatless recipes to use for Fridays during Lent.

Rice Bowl is designed to guide us through Lent with:

Prayer through the daily suggestions

Fasting (eating less) by using the suggested recipes or having simple meatless meals on Fridays or another day of your choosing

Almsgiving by dropping money in the box. Lenten alms donated through CRS Rice Bowl support the work of CRS in roughly 45 countries each year. 25% of all donations to CRS Rice Bowl stay in our diocese, supporting hunger and poverty alleviation efforts.

Rice bowls will be available in the at the entrances to the gym in the Faith Formation Center. More information about CRS Rice Bowl can be found at crsricebowl.org.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS Council 7850

FISH FRY FEAST

Friday, March 31st 5:00 - 7:00 PM

FFC Gym

Fish Fillets

Kids: \$8

French Fries

(under 10)

Coleslaw

Adults: \$11

Cornbread

Cash

Muffins

Check

Dessert

Credit

Beverage



Seating Begins at 5:00 pm NO Pre-sales



Sign up for the new and expanded
Best Lent Ever 2.0
at DynamicCatholic.com!

FREE—SIMPLE—INSPIRATIONAL

EMMAUS HOLY HOUR

With Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Parish Activity Center at 2700 W. Spring Creek Pkwy.

EVERYONE IS INVITED



Do You Remember When You Last Went to Reconciliation?

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right
spirit within me.
Psalm 51:10.*

The Lenten Season is the perfect time to renew our Baptismal vows and reconcile with God through the sacrament of reconciliation. The heart of this sacrament is the mercy and grace of God, manifested through the priest who hears our confessions and absolves our sins. Our baptismal holiness is then restored through Christ. By participating in confession, we are striving to live a more holy life. Afterwards, we go in joyfulness, free from our sins and separation from God.

The Parish Reconciliation Service is a perfect time to participate in this sacrament. We gather with our parish community and examine our conscience quietly during the service. Several priests are available after the service to hear our confessions.

See page 2 or church bulletin for dates for the Parish Reconciliation Service or individual Reconciliation times.

Examination of Conscience

Set aside a time each day to use this examination of conscience.

1. Sit in a comfortable place. Remember that God is with you.
2. Spend some time thinking about the day.
3. Answer these questions:
 - a. How have I shown or not shown love and respect for God?
 - b. How have I shown or not shown love and respect for myself?
 - c. How have I shown or not shown love and respect for other people?
 - d. How have I used or misused the gift of God's creation?

Act of Contrition

My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.
In His name, my God, have mercy.



Disciple's Compass: Navigating Life Through Faith

No Greater Love: A Biblical Walk Through Christ's Passion

February 23rd - March 30th, 2023

Thursday nights 7:00-9:00 pm in room 107/109 FFC

No Greater Love is a biblical pilgrimage that reveals Christ's amazing love for us. Best-selling author Dr. Edward Sri guides you through the last hours of Christ's life. Every step of the way, Old Testament prophecies, messianic expectations, biblical symbolism, and historical context shed light on the mystery of Christ's suffering and death. Experience a deeper understanding and appreciation of God's immeasurable and unconditional love for you—grow closer to Jesus than you ever have before.

For more information and the link to purchase study materials please email Anna Godbold actx912@yahoo.com



During Lent the Rosary will be prayed after the 8:30 a.m. Mass on Tuesday and Friday, starting February 24 in the parish hall worship space.



Sponsored by
Knights of Columbus
#7850

Join the Knights of Columbus every Monday night at 7:00 p.m. as they pray the Rosary via Zoom.

Visit the website for the Zoom link:

www.setonparish.org/kc7850

LENT ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN

HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Spend extra time in Prayer

- Attend the Stations of the Cross at 7:00 p.m. and Solemn Exposition/ Evening Prayer on Fridays at 7:45 p.m. in the Church
- Go to Reconciliation
- Attend Daily Mass
- Attend **C.R.E.W.—Praise & Worship and more to grow in your faith!**

Practice Acts of Charity. Raise money through acts of denial... Do you really need those French fries or another pair of shoes? Instead of a movie and popcorn try just hanging out with friends and watching Netflix. Give what you save to others in need—maybe Operation Rice Bowl. Or actively **seek ways to serve through YM and C.R.E.W. Service Opportunities!** Volunteer around the church, at your school or in your community.

YOUNGER CHILDREN

ATTEND...Children's Stations of the Cross: Fridays 5:15 pm in the parish hall in Parish Activity Center at 2700 W. Spring Creek Pkwy.

Attend Children's Breaking Open the Word on Sunday at the 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. Mass.
No dismissal on Easter Sunday

FAST ... Give up complaining, frowns and negative thoughts.

PRAY ... Pray a Hail Mary each time you get in the car.

SERVE ... Each day place a non perishable food item in a bag. Donate it to food pantry at the end of Lent.

ALL AGES

♦ Practice the art of doing **Random Acts of Kindness**—some examples:

- Bring up a neighbor's trash cans after the garbage man comes by.
- Pick up trash that you see in the parking lot, school, or on your walk home from school.
- Help someone with their homework. Be nice to someone who seems lonely or sad.

♦ **Pray Daily...**

- Say Grace before every meal.
- Add a prayer of thanks for something you are grateful for.
- Pray for a sick friend.
- Read the Sunday Gospel and discuss each week and attend Sunday Mass together as a family
- Write a family prayer together and pray it each night

♦ **Make soup for your family.**

Observe the Lenten Friday fast by making a hearty meatless soup. Make one from scratch or open a can. Serve it with bread and butter and maybe a salad. Or try one of the meatless meal recipes from around the world available on the Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl website: <https://www.csricebowl.org/recipe>



"Call to me, and I will answer you; I will tell to you things great beyond reach of your knowledge."

Sundays from 6:15-8:00 pm in the JPPII Room



STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR ALL AGES

THE FRIDAY LENTEN SERIES STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN THE PARISH HALL SEE PAGE 7 FOR MORE DETAILS. Whenever we are open you are welcome to come and pray as you walk station to station. We have stations along the walls of the parish hall. We also have a set in the SFFC chapel and another in the SFFC Courtyard. Here are links to more information and some other versions you might like to check out.

♦ THE WAY OF THE CROSS: *TRADITIONAL AND MODERN MEDITATIONS* P

Download this booklet published by the Knights of Columbus' Catholic Information Service. It contains two complete sets of prayers: the traditional version composed by St. Alphonsus Ligouri and a set of modern meditations written by Fr. Stefano Penna, a Canadian priest. <https://www.kofc.org/en/resources/cis/cis363.pdf>

♦ STATIONS OF THE CROSS (CATHOLIC) - BY ST ALPHONSUS LIGUORI V

A modern version of the traditional **Stations of the Cross** on the CatholicMinute YouTube channel <https://youtu.be/iElvGC1WsbM> has beautiful images. The presenters are exceptional. Gentle and meditative.

♦ STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR THE ELDERLY BY SIMPLY CATHOLIC P

Reflections ask for strength to accept gracefully the limits and trials of aging at <https://simplycatholic.com/stations-of-the-cross-for-the-elderly/>

♦ PRAY THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS WITH FR. MARK TOUPS - PRAYING THE PSALMS WITH JESUS A V P

Jesus, as an observant Jewish man, would have prayed the Psalms throughout the day, and drawn strength and peace from them. Step closer to Christ and pray beside him. This version is found at <https://youtu.be/aJF9XjG4Wko>. Also available as a free audio download at <https://ascensionpress.com/pages/the-way-of-the-cross-free-audio> (Also available in print and e-book)

♦ STATIONS OF THE CROSS FROM LOYOLA PRESS P

This site has some great articles on praying the Stations of the Cross and a couple of short versions that would be great for the whole family including children <https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/lent/stations-of-the-cross>

♦ LENTEN STATIONS OF THE CROSS A P S

This resource found on USCCB website gives you a short history of the practice of praying the Stations of the Cross and includes an audio version and 5 printable pdf versions, two of which are also available in Spanish. <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/stations-of-the-cross/>

♦ MARY'S WAY OF THE CROSS P

http://littlesistersofthepoor.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mary_Way_of_the_Cross_e.pdf

♦ STATIONS OF THE CROSS BY SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI ON FORMED V

The Augustine Institute presents a beautiful audio meditation on the Stations of the Cross by Saint Alphonsus Liguori, narrated by Dr. Christopher Blum. This prayerful reflection is accompanied by the Schola Cantorum of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Littleton, CO, chanting the traditional Catholic hymn Stabat Mater, in Latin. <https://watch.formed.org/stations-of-the-cross-by-saint-alphonsus-liguori>

♦ WAY OF THE CROSS ON FORMED V

Enter into our Lord's Passion and Death with the Stations of the Cross by St. Alphonsus Liguori. The meditative tone and pace of this devotional video featuring Catholic artistic masterpieces allows for true accompaniment with Jesus along the Way of the Cross. <https://watch.formed.org/videos/way-of-the-cross>

♦ STATIONS OF THE CROSS HD-TV VERSION BY CATHOLIC.ORG V

Found at <https://youtu.be/wW1t7M8HKT8> is a good version for families. This is a nicely done version with reflections that are presented in both a child's version and an adult version. It is presented with views not only of Catholic art, but scenes of the Way of Sorrows in present day Jerusalem and reenactments of the stations.

♦ Stations of the Cross for Children V P S

Loyola Press offers this version adapted for children by Catherine Odell. Text from *Loyola Kids Book of Everyday Prayers* as a pdf and as a video—also offered in Spanish. <https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/lent/stations-of-the-cross/multimedia-stations-of-the-cross-for-children/>

♦ STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR CHILDREN—A SIMPLE PRESENTATION FOR KIDS TEN AND UNDER BY THERESA DIFATO P

This version is found on The Word Among Us website. This version has nice reflections that relate to a child's life https://wau.org/resources/article/re_stations_cross_kids

**Guide to Type
of Presentation**

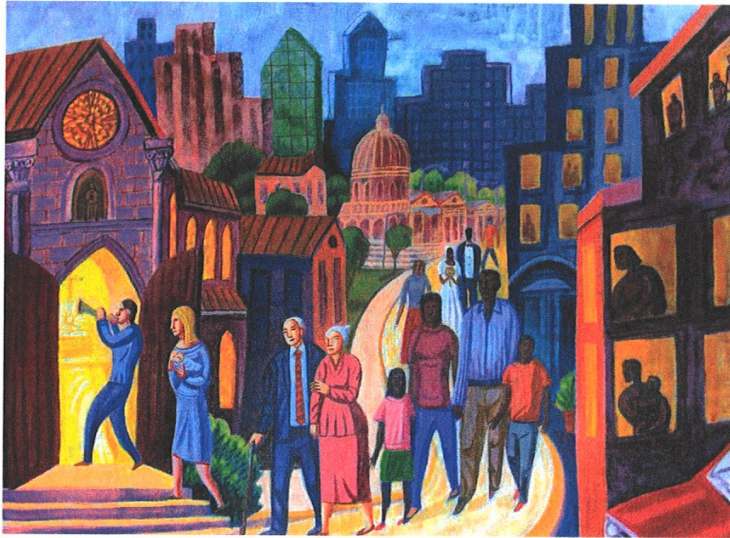


Audio Recording
Video or Slide Presentation



Printable pdf or print version available
Available in Spanish

ASH WEDNESDAY



Turn Our Hearts

God of Love,
you shower us with kindness,
offer us limitless mercy,
and summon us unceasingly.
As we enter the season of Lent,
help us respond to your invitation

to turn our hearts toward you
and walk the journey ahead
in a spirit of humility and gratitude.
Grant us the grace we need to grow in love
these forty days of Lent.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday, February 22, 2023 Lent: A Great Love Letter from God



Today's readings: Joel 2:12–18; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14 and 17; 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18. The season of Lent (from the Latin meaning “lengthen”) is a gift of time to focus on spiritual preparation for the celebration of Easter. The season will conclude at sundown on Holy Thursday, the beginning of the Sacred Paschal Triduum.

As daylight in the Northern Hemisphere incrementally lengthens, so does our spiritual focus. Read the season of Lent as a great love letter from God. Look for the invitations in the Scriptures to turn your heart toward God and receive the gifts of mercy and love offered. God summons us unceasingly.

The scriptural invitations move from gentle calls to fervent supplications. The opening lines from our Ash Wednesday Scriptures set the theme for the entire season: “Return to me with your whole heart” (Joel 2:12). Lent offers us proven pathways to respond to God’s invitation to love. When Lenten traditions are lived and understood, they bring us closer to God and transform our hearts along the way. Today’s Gospel shows us the humble stance to assume as we practice prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. This week, as you prepare for your journey through the next forty days, seek to live spiritual practices such as prayer, devotion, fasting, reconciliation, and generosity as gestures of adoration for our beloved.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, February 20

The Gift of Wisdom

The first reading attributes wisdom to our Lord. The Lord pours wisdom upon all his works, upon every living thing, upon his friends. What a gift for each of us! Lent invites us to a time of intentionality, a time of turning our hearts and minds toward this gift of wisdom. These days leading up to Ash Wednesday offer us the opportunity to till the soil of our hearts for the seeds of the Lord's wisdom. Make plans to participate in Ash Wednesday services this week. *Today's readings: Sirach 1:1–10; Psalm 93:1a, 1cd–2, 5; Mark 9:14–29.*

Tuesday, February 21

Trust God

The invitation in the reading from Sirach is clear: turn to God with trust. God will help each of us make straight our pathways. Filled with compassion and mercy, the Lord saves us in times of trouble and forgives us with love and mercy. Our Lenten prayer, fasting, and almsgiving help us open our hearts with trust. How will you commit to the spiritual practices of Lent? Take time today to reflect and decide. *Today's readings: Sirach 2:1–11; Psalm 37:3–4, 18–19, 27–28, 39–40; Mark 9:30–37.*

Wednesday, February 22

Ash Wednesday

The Scriptures of Ash Wednesday invite us to turn to God with humility and awareness. Only we know the personal work needed in our relationship with the Lord. Today's Lenten practices of receiving ashes, abstaining from meat, and fasting help us assume this humble stance of awareness. Make some private notes to yourself about where growth is needed and how you plan to personally embrace Lent as time for transformation. *Today's readings: Joel 2:12–18; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14 and 17; 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18.*

Thursday, February 23

Put God First

Jesus instructs, "Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." Essentially, Jesus commands us to put God first. These early days of Lent encourage us to set our spiritual priorities for the journey ahead. The opportunity to join others in praying the Stations of the Cross is available at many parishes during Lent. Through the stations, we prayerfully remember the dramatic moments our Lord experienced in the final hours of his life. Resolve to participate in this devotion sometime in the next forty days. *Today's readings: Deuteronomy 30:15–20; Psalm 1:1–2, 3, 4 and 6; Luke 9:22–25.*

Friday, February 24

Fast Mercifully

The Church asks us to abstain from meat and to fast on the Fridays of Lent. Our Scriptures today help us understand the spiritual practice of fasting. The prophet Isaiah describes fasting as setting the oppressed free, sharing our bread with the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, and not turning our backs on our own. Fasting is active participation in the corporal works of mercy. How can we commit ourselves even more to caring for those in need in our community this Lent? *Today's readings: Isaiah 58:1–9a; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 18–19; Matthew 9:14–15.*

Saturday, February 25

Keep the Sabbath Sacred

The Scriptures continue to coach us in planning our Lenten practices. Isaiah reminds us of the command to keep the Sabbath as a holy day. This is hard to do in our modern world. But Lent offers us an opportunity to renew our resolve to make Sunday a day to rest in God. Plan a special Sunday meal for each week of Lent. Set aside time for holy rest. Take a long walk, visit a neighbor, pick up some spiritual reading, or try a new craft. *Today's readings: Isaiah 58:9b–14; Psalm 86:1–2, 3–4, 5–6; Luke 5:27–32.*

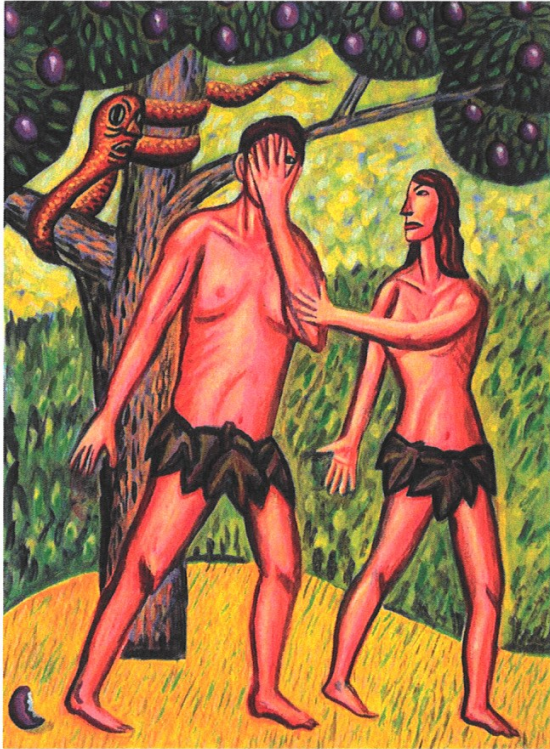


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KEEPING THE SEASONS
LENT AND EASTER 2023

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



The Lord Alone

Faithful God,
from the very beginning
you have called your people
to worship you
with single-minded focus.
You are the one true God,
source of all goodness and mercy.
Grant us the strength
to resist earthly temptations,
the will to turn from distractions,
and the desire to orient our lives
toward loving you first.
We ask for your patience
as we seek to grow in holiness
this Lent
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, February 26, 2023
God First

Today's readings: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17; Romans 5:12-19 or 5:12, 17-19; Matthew 4:1-11. Jesus gets the last word when the devil tries to lure him with earthly temptations. He quotes the Shema from Deuteronomy, chapter 6: "Hear O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength" (6:4-5). This most fundamental expression of faith orients our spiritual focus for the season of Lent. It is a clear invitation from the Scriptures to turn our hearts toward God.

A simple pie chart of how the majority of our time is spent during any week will reveal the priorities around

which our lives are ordered and what or whom we worship. Do we seek the accumulation of possessions or power; do we worship celebrities or ideologies; do we serve egocentric goals or addictions? Lent offers us the opportunity for *metanoia*, the profound transformation of mind and heart. Now is the time to take a self-inventory and make deliberate choices that place God first in our heart and mind. These choices are expressed in the activities and gestures of our daily living. Sketch out your pie chart and take an honest look at it. Then write a love letter back to God, telling him your plan for how you intend to place God at the center of your life this Lent.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, February 27

Mercy Works

How shall we grow in holiness this Lent? We don't have to guess. Today's Scriptures lay out the blueprint. The instructions from Leviticus give clear direction for avoiding sin. Equally important, the Gospel passage from Matthew calls us to active engagement in the corporal works of mercy. We have six weeks before Easter. Pick one work of mercy to focus on each week of Lent; resolve to try the works of mercy you find most challenging first. *Today's readings: Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 15; Matthew 25:31-46.*

Tuesday, February 28

Our Father

Each Lent we are invited to deepen our prayer life. In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us exactly how to do just that through giving us the words of the Lord's Prayer. How can we magnify our prayer life? A possible start could be by praying the Lord's Prayer more intentionally. Write or type the prayer line by line on a sheet of white paper. Cut into strips. Reflect on each line of the prayer. Make the practice part of your daily prayer routine this Lent. *Today's readings: Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19; Matthew 6:7-15.*

Wednesday, March 1

Create in Me A Clean Heart

Responsorial Psalm 51 is prayed repeatedly through the season of Lent because it expresses the humble stance we are called to assume: "A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn." Catholics celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation each Lent as an essential step of spiritual preparation for Easter. Seek reconciliation early in Lent as a way to turn over the soil of your heart and make room for the new seeds of faith to grow in the coming weeks. *Today's readings: Jonah 3:1-10; Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19; Luke 11:29-32.*

Thursday, March 2

Ask, Seek, Knock

Today's Scriptures are deeply reassuring. The psalmist glorifies God, "on the day I asked for help, you answered me." Jesus promises, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." What do you need to ask God for today? Write a letter to God and lay out all the burdens you carry. Ask for what you need with confidence in God's faithfulness. *Today's readings: Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Psalm 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8; Matthew 7:7-12.*

Friday, March 3

Time to Heal

Jesus reminds the disciples, and us, of how broken relationships harm the soul. Lent is the time for reconciliation with God and with the people in our lives. Do you have an estranged relationship? What steps can you take toward healing? For starters, name a relationship that seems to hold you in bondage. Ask God to guide you in seeking freedom from anger, judgment, frustration, and resentment. Attend to the ways God provides opportunities to take repairing steps in the coming days. *Today's readings: Ezekiel 18:21-28; Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8; Matthew 5:20-26.*

Saturday, March 4

Lifting Up a Relationship

The call to pay attention to difficult relationships in our lives continues in today's Scripture readings. Jesus tells us the first steps toward healing: pray for that person daily as part of your Lenten sacrifice. This can be challenging. Praying for those who cause us distress requires humility. Heed the advice of our Lord and take note of the movement of your heart as you do so in the coming weeks. *Today's readings: Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8; Matthew 5:43-48.*



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KEEPING THE SEASONS
LENT AND EASTER 2023

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



Help Us Hear

God of wisdom,
you offer words of loving guidance
to all ready to listen.
Help us follow the example of our Lord
and create time and space in our lives
for quiet prayer in your loving presence.
Speak your words of wisdom
to our hearts,
offer us the guidance
we need for our lives
and help us hear your voice today.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Sunday, March 5, 2023

Listen to Him

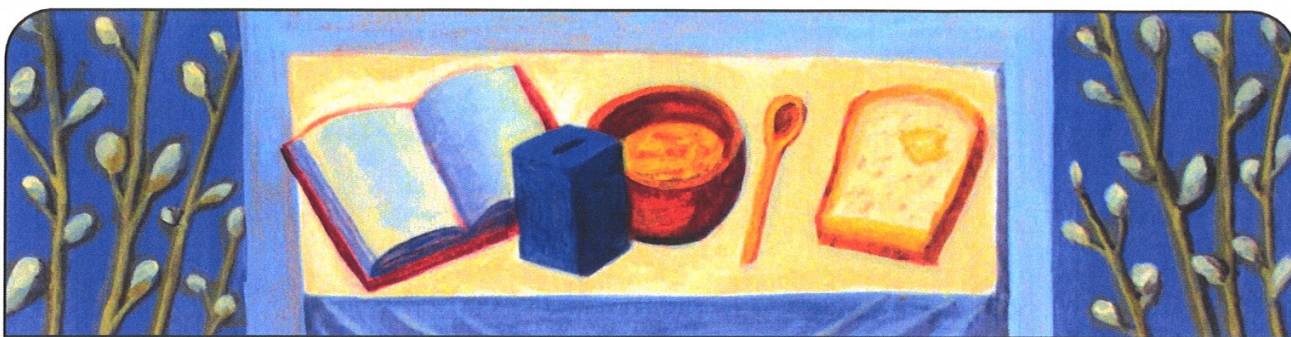


Today's readings: Genesis 12:1–4a; Psalm 33:4–5, 18–19, 20, 22; 2 Timothy 1:8b–10; Matthew 17:1–9. Every year on the Second Sunday of Lent we remember the transfiguration of Jesus. Placing ourselves in the narrative on that high mountain, new details might be noticed that draw us into deeper layers of meaning.

The readings leave three details for contemplation this week. First, whenever Jesus retreats to a mountain or quiet place in the Scriptures, he seeks prayer time with his Father. Second, this particular time of prayer between Jesus and his Father results in a *theophany*, an intense manifestation of God in visible form recognizable to the human eye. Jesus reveals his full divinity to Peter, James, and John, and subsequently to all of us through the written account.

Finally, God boldly breaks into the encounter and speaks words of confirmation to the disciples and to us, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (Matthew 17:5).

During Lent the Church invites us to be even more intentional about stepping away from our normal activities to meet God in prayer. Our response to this invitation will not disappoint because prayer never leaves us unchanged. When we follow the example of Jesus, make time and space for prayer, and quiet ourselves into a listening posture, we give God the opportunity to speak the words we most need to hear. How does God speak with love to you today through Matthew’s portrayal of this pinnacle moment in Jesus’ life?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 6

Follow the Signposts

Consider the directions from Jesus in Luke's Gospel today signposts. They are so pivotal that our Church built the entire Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2016 on their foundation. Be compassionate. Avoid judgment. Shun condemnation. Offer pardon. Give generously. Write these directions on note cards and place them around your home where you will see them as daily signposts from Jesus. *Today's readings: Daniel 9:4b–10; Psalm 79:8, 9, 11 and 13; Luke 6:36–38.*

Tuesday, March 7

Live with Integrity

At the heart of today's Gospel is the call to live discipleship with integrity. To be a person of integrity means there is congruence between who we say we are and what we do. Speak with transparency. Act with authenticity. Strive for sincerity. Embrace the virtue of integrity as the doorway to holiness. *Today's readings: Isaiah 1:10, 16–20; Psalm 50:8–9, 16bc–17, 21, and 23; Matthew 23:1–12.*

Wednesday, March 8

Seek to Serve

Contending to be the first to be noticed, the first to be served, the first in line is a familiar human condition. Jesus reminds his apostles, and all of us, to vigorously resist this temptation. Instead he instructs us to cultivate humility through privileging service over prestige. Commit to practicing one act of humble service anonymously today. *Today's readings: Jeremiah 18:18–20; Psalm 31:5–6, 14, 15–16; Matthew 20:17–28.*

Thursday, March 9

Who Sits at Our Doorway?

Today's Scriptures provide a striking reminder to keep our eyes fixed on the Lord. The contrasting images between

those like the rich man who trust in human beings and those who trust in the Lord reveal the consequences of our choices. Take a careful look around to see who sits at our "doorway." Perhaps there is a neighbor who goes regularly without food or feels invisible to our local community. How might we raise the visibility of those at our doorways and reach out with hope in the Lord? *Today's readings: Jeremiah 17:5–10; Psalm 1:1–2, 3, 4 and 6; Luke 16:19–31.*

Friday, March 10

The Voices We Listen To

The quickest way to veer off the path of holiness is to bury our conscience. In tuning out the guiding voice of the Holy Spirit we can be easily led to destructive choices. The people around us may influence and even form us in some ways. Think about the primary people in your life and how they impact you. Today's Scriptures invite us to examine our conscience and do a check-in on the primary voices we are listening to in daily life. *Today's readings: Genesis 37:3–4, 12–13a, 17b–28a; Psalm 105:16–17, 18–19, 20–21; Matthew 21:33–43, 45–46.*

Saturday, March 11

Lead with Compassion

Jesus uses parables to show how much our merciful God desires to be close to us. Today's parable about the forgiving father reminds us that God steadfastly stands waiting for us with open arms and infinite forgiveness. Be alert to the lost in your family and community: a child who feigns disinterest, a teen suffering with mental illness, a troubled, lonely neighbor. Through our warm smiles, kind gestures, and hospitable spirit we can communicate the invitation to return to our compassionate God and reconcile with the community of faith. *Today's readings: Micah 7:14–15, 18–20; Psalm 103:1–2, 3–4, 9–10, 11–12; Luke 15:1–3, 11–32.*



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KEEPING THE SEASONS
LENT AND EASTER 2023

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



Look Deep

All-knowing God,
you see deep into our hearts
and understand all that we need.
Thank you for meeting us
in the everyday messiness of our lives.
Look upon us with compassion
and mercy.
Free us from anything that blocks
a true relationship with you
and quench the spiritual thirst
we carry today.
Pour your love into our hearts anew
and guide our paths to eternal life,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 12, 2023
God Sees Our Hearts



Today's readings: Exodus 17:3–7; Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9; Romans 5:1–2, 5–8; John 4:5–42. The Third Sunday of Lent marks the midpoint on our journey from Ash Wednesday to Holy Week. Day by day the invitations to turn our hearts toward God and receive his gifts of mercy and love intensify. The midday encounter between Jesus and the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well amplifies the invitation extended on Ash Wednesday to "return to me with your whole heart" (Joel 2:12).

We can imagine Jesus approaching each new encounter seeking to intuit, "What does their heart need from me?" Jesus immediately perceived the deepest needs of the woman's heart and pivoted the conversation from physical thirst to spiritual thirst. His willingness to ignore the social norms

of the time and speak to her with frank familiarity reminds us that God's invitation to relationship is for everyone, no matter our past, our gender, our ancestry, our place in life.

Jesus reveals his divine purpose to this outcast woman and offers her the hope of eternal life. Our second reading, from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans, echoes this remarkable promise, "Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us" (5:5).

Throughout Lent, God summons us unceasingly. The woman at Jacob's well represents every one of us. When God looks deeply into your heart today, what spiritual thirst needs to be quenched?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 13

Look for the Prophets

Prophets are people specially chosen to be messengers of God's Word in their time and place. Our Scriptures tell story after story about the persistence of prophets and resistance to their message. Prophets often surprise us in their simplicity and ordinariness. Take a moment today to look for the prophets God has sent in the here and now. Open your heart to the message they offer. *Today's readings: 2 Kings 5:1–15b; Psalm 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4; Luke 4:24–30.*

Tuesday, March 14

70 × 7

Today's message cuts right to the heart. Forgiveness is hard. But it is a requirement of discipleship. Jesus calls us to forgive and forgive and forgive again. Take this command to prayer today. Whom do you still need to forgive? It might even be yourself. Write a letter to Jesus specifically naming whom you need to forgive, the reason, and ask for help to take the next step. *Today's readings: Deuteronomy 3:25, 34–43; Psalm 25:4–5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8 and 9; Matthew 18:21–35.*

Wednesday, March 15

Living Witnesses

Pope Francis reminds us that “all of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord” (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 121). No matter our occupation or place in life, we are first and foremost teachers of our faith. We teach with our words, but even more through our actions, gestures, and choices. Our ultimate purpose is to allow our life to speak the faith we carry within. This is how we give glory to God. *Today's readings: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20; Matthew 5:17–19.*

Thursday, March 16

Listen to My Voice

The Lord commands, “Listen to my voice” (Jeremiah 7:23). The psalmist echoes, “If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts (Psalm 95:7–8). The voice of the Lord that comes to us daily through the season requires our openness. While serious, challenging, and straightforward, our Lord clearly speaks the path of life for us. He tells us how to live, how to love, how to pray, how to give, how to forgive. Do you allow his voice to guide your life? Take these thoughts to prayer. *Today's readings: Jeremiah 7:23–28; Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9; Luke 11:14–23.*

Friday, March 17

St. Patrick

Patrick and his monks ministered to the people of Ireland in the early fifth century. The monks based their spirituality on that of St. Jerome and St. Augustine, who affirmed that no person can walk without a guide. The monks practiced an early form of confessional counseling, inviting people to acknowledge their sins and repair the conduct of their Christian lives. This week marks the midpoint of Lent. How are you doing toward creating a clean heart? There is still plenty of time before Easter to seek the sacrament of reconciliation and make needed adjustments in daily choices. *Today's readings: Hosea 14:2–10; Psalm 81:6c–8a, 8bc–9, 10–11ab, 14 and 17; Mark 12:28–34.*

Saturday, March 18

Cultivate Humility

Humility is a virtue that exudes from our very being. The virtue is conveyed with our eyes, with our demeanor, and with our spirit, even before words reveal our true selves. A spirit of humility is cultivated through a life of gratitude for the blessings we have received and with sincere awareness of our dependence upon the generous giver of those blessings. There is always room to grow so we call upon the words of the psalmist in our daily prayer and ask for a humble spirit. *Today's readings: Hosea 6:1–6; Psalm 51:3–4, 18–19, 20–21ab; Luke 18:9–14.*

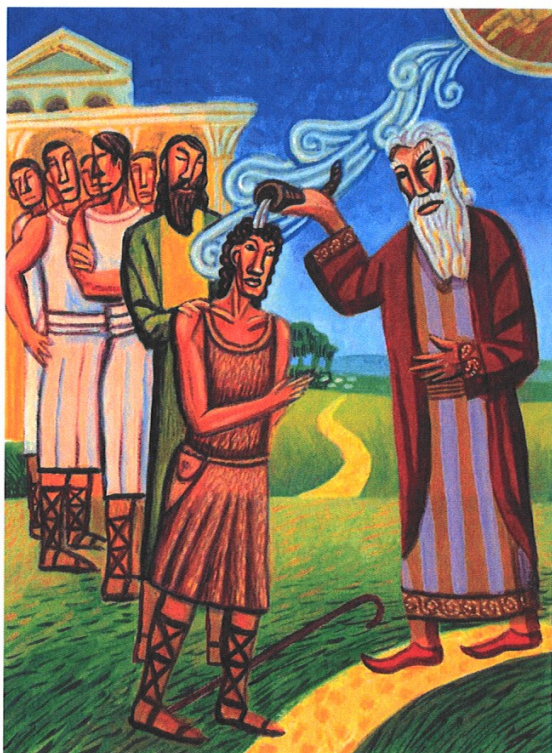


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KEEPING THE SEASONS
LENT AND EASTER 2023

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Help Us See

Good and gracious God,
you see our inner life,
and bring light to the darkness.
Thank you for shining your loving
kindness
on our desire to know your Son.
Lift our hearts with joy today.
Help us inhale the signs of spring hope
coming to life around us.
Cast your holy light on the shadows
of our lives
and heal our spiritual wounds.
Gift us with the desire to see the world
with the eyes of faith
through Christ the Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 19, 2023

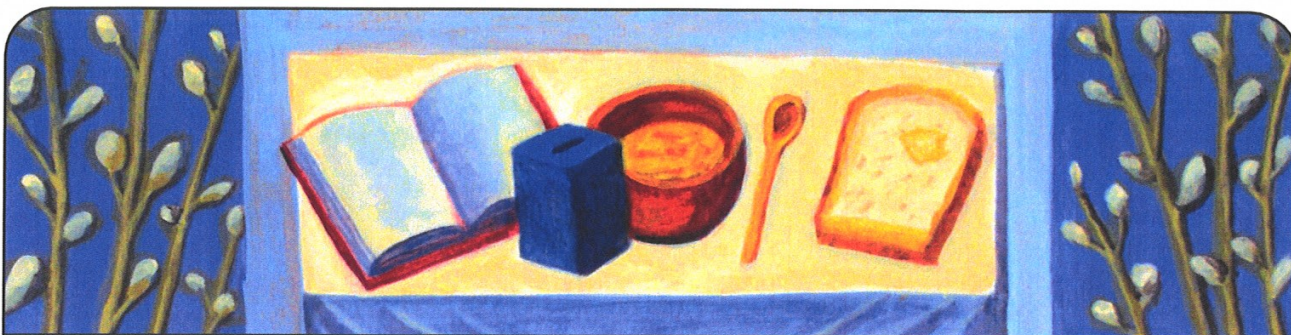
Spiritual Sight

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6–7, 10–13a; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 6, 6 (1); Ephesians 5:8–14; John 9:1–41. The Fourth Sunday of Lent is known as Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday, a name inspired by the entrance antiphon, “Rejoice, O Jerusalem” (Isaiah 66:10). Today, we momentarily pause from some of the penitential observances of Lent. With joy, our eyes turn toward Easter. This spirit of rejoicing is reflected in our liturgies, which differ from the other Sundays of Lent. Flowers are permitted in the sanctuary. The priest may wear rose-colored vestments, ordinarily worn only on one other day of the liturgical year, the Third Sunday of Advent, or Gaudete Sunday.

The Scripture readings also highlight reasons to rejoice. Jesus proclaims to his disciples, to a blind man on

the side of the road, and ultimately to all of us, “I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). Perceiving the deepest needs of the man’s heart, Jesus performs a miraculous healing. He restores the man’s physical sight to offer him spiritual sight. Through his subsequent encounters with Jesus, the healed man comes to see, believe, and follow him.

Today we are invited to wake up from our blindness. Jesus looks into our hearts and desires to illuminate our intrinsic goodness. He offers us the gift of spiritual sight to see God’s essence radiating through all human reality. Shall we follow the blind man’s lead and joyfully look at the world and all those we meet with the eyes of faith?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 20

St. Joseph

Today we lift up Jesus' earthly father, St. Joseph, who embodied virtue as a father, dedicated worker, compassionate husband, and faithful listener. In fact, our sacred Scriptures recount his choices but never his words. Four times Joseph listens to the angel sent by God to guide his choices, and each time he courageously answers with quiet, trusting obedience. Make time today to emulate his prayer stance by quieting your heart and listening. *Today's readings: 2 Samuel 7:4–5a, 12–14a, 16; Psalm 89:2–3, 4–5, 27 and 29; Romans 4:13, 16–18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18–21, 24a or Luke 2:41–51a.*

Tuesday, March 21

Holistic Healing

The healing power of Jesus is on full display in the Gospel story about the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. As with most healing stories attributed to Jesus, being “made well” is twofold. Jesus restores both physical health and implores those who are healed to seek spiritual health by avoiding sin. Lent offers us the path to wholeness. Healing comes in a variety of forms. Where do you need Jesus' healing touch today? *Today's readings: Ezekiel 47:1–9, 12; Psalm 46:2–3, 5–6, 8–9; John 5:1–16.*

Wednesday, March 22

The Lord is Near

The responsorial psalm today gets right to the hopeful theme of Lent: God desires to be close to us. The descriptions of the Lord as kind, merciful, slow to anger, gracious, kind, compassionate, faithful, attentive, just, and holy lead to the acclamation that “the LORD is near to all who call upon him” (Psalm 145:18). Place Psalm 145 on your bathroom mirror or over your kitchen sink where you will be reminded throughout each day of God's enduring desire to be in relationship

with us. *Today's readings: Isaiah 49:8–15; Psalm 145:8–9, 13cd–14, 17–18; John 5:17–30.*

Thursday, March 23

Sent by God

Jesus makes a bold claim to the Jewish community: “the Father has sent me.” As he says this, Jesus implores them to heed his voice and trace his living presence to the promises made to Moses. They respond with blind resistance. We have the gift of a much longer view on this interchange between Jesus and the community. Do we respond with faith or skepticism? *Today's readings: Exodus 32:7–14; Psalm 106:19–20, 21–22, 23; John 5:31–47.*

Friday, March 24

Close to the Brokenhearted

Our responsorial psalm tenderly proclaims the promise that the Lord is “close to the brokenhearted” (Psalm 34:19). Part of the human condition is the experience of loss, disappointment, rejection, grief, and depression. Our faith offers us confident consolation that the Lord saves “those who are crushed in spirit” (34:19). Remember that we are never alone in our despair; the Lord never forgets us but especially leans in to be close when we are low. *Today's readings: Wisdom 2:1a, 12–22; Psalm 34:17–18, 19–20, 21 and 23; John 7:1–2, 10, 25–30.*

Saturday, March 25

Annunciation of the Lord

The word *annunciation* means “announcement.” In our faith story, the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary changes the course of history. Lent reminds us that God is announcing good news to us in a variety of forms and through the most unexpected messengers. Attend to the angels in our midst, sent by God to inspire, encourage, challenge, and affirm us. The week began with Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday. Today's feast bookends our week of rejoicing. What good news is God offering us today? *Today's readings: Isaiah 7:10–14; 8:10; Psalm 40:7–8a, 8b–9, 10, 11; Hebrews 10:4–10; Luke 1:26–38.*



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KEEPING THE SEASONS
LENT AND EASTER 2023

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Guide Us

God of life,
you raised Lazarus from death
and in doing so revealed your divine love.
Open our ears to your truth,
help us see your glory,
and empower us to trust and believe.
Guide our minds and hearts
in these final days of Lent,
purify us from anything
that blocks us from belief,
so that we will be ready
to sincerely profess our faith
with the Church community at Easter.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 26, 2023

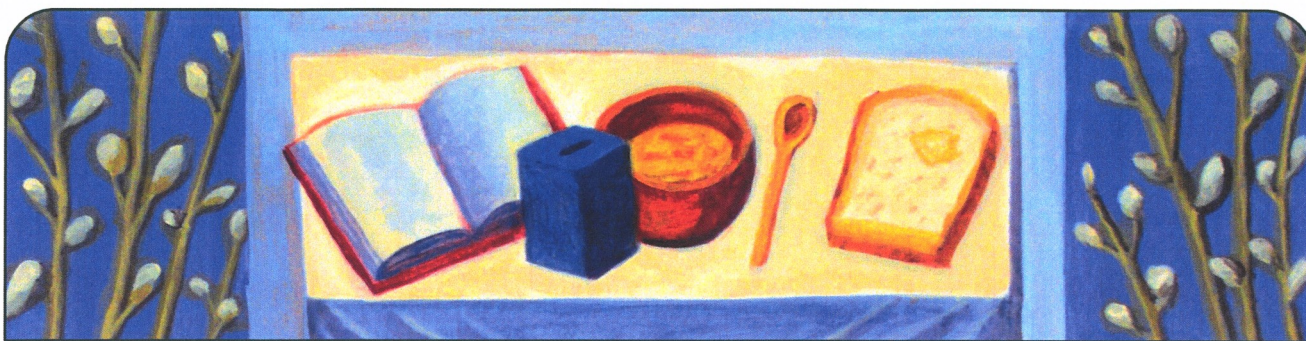
Do You Believe This?



Today's readings: Ezekiel 37:12–14; Psalm 130:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8; Romans 8:8–11; John 11:1–45. The readings from the Gospel of John proclaimed on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent are explicitly tied to the scrutiny rites celebrated with those preparing for baptism at Easter. Throughout Lent, the assembly participates in these rites that are part of the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The assembly, too, benefits spiritually as all pray that the candidates be enlightened with a deeper knowledge of Christ and purified from anything that blocks their full assent of belief. Those seeking baptism are preparing to approach the font and make a profession of faith in front of the community. Simultaneously, the rest of us are preparing to renew our baptismal promises with full hearts.

These Gospel accounts guide us so that we may hear and believe (like the Samaritan woman), see and believe (like the man born blind), and finally believe without proof (like Martha, Mary, and Lazarus). In each of these Gospels, Jesus reveals his true identity. They culminate in the exchange between Jesus and Martha on the road to Bethany. Jesus proclaims to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25) and then asks Martha, “Do you believe this?”

This final week of Lent invites us to join those preparing for baptism in prayer and reflection. Are you ready to affirm with Martha: “Yes, Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world” (John 11:27)?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 27

True Justice

Daily news sources regularly report stories of innocent people wrongly imprisoned. Seeking exoneration for the wrongfully convicted is the life work of many people committed to truth and justice. Today's Scripture stories remind us that this sin has repeated itself across the centuries. One of the corporal works of mercy urges care for the imprisoned. How are you called to a deeper awareness of the need for an unbiased criminal justice system? *Today's readings: Daniel 13:1–9, 15–17, 19–30, 33–62 or 13:41c–62; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; John 8:1–11.*

Tuesday, March 28

Not Alone

Patience runs thin in today's Scripture readings. The Israelites complain with weariness on their sojourn to the Promised Land. The Pharisees of Jerusalem shudder in exasperation at the words of Jesus. Jesus offers a message of assurance in response, "The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone." No matter our frustration or lack of understanding, God remains steadfast and close to us. When impatience flares, try this antidote: take five deep breaths, recall God's nearness, and then respond. *Today's readings: Numbers 21:4–9; Psalm 102:2–3, 16–18, 19–21; John 8:21–30.*

Wednesday, March 29

Keep Holy the Lord's Name

There is a beloved *VeggieTales* episode recounting the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's trust in God's faithfulness in the face of King Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace. These trusting servants of God stand in the fire and sing with one voice to God, "Blessed is your holy and glorious name, praiseworthy and exalted above all for all ages" (Daniel 3:52). They provide a poignant model of trust in God and reverence for God's holy name. Pay attention to your use

of the Lord's name today. Are there instances when you do not honor the name of the Lord in your speech? *Today's readings: Daniel 3:14–20, 91–92, 95; Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56; John 8:31–42.*

Thursday, March 30

Remain Steadfast

As Holy Week draws near, the promises made to the faithful through the covenant with Abraham echo stronger in our daily Scriptures. Jesus faces threats from all sides and the psalmist assures us that the Lord "remembers forever his covenant" (Psalm 105:8). We are close to the end of our Lenten journey. God has constantly communicated his desire to be close to us. Have you responded with faithfulness to your Lenten intentions? *Today's readings: Genesis 17:3–9; Psalm 105:4–5, 6–7, 8–9; John 8:51–59.*

Friday, March 31

The Lord, Our Strength

The prophet Jeremiah, the psalmist, and Jesus all face threats and enemy attacks. Yet all three readings echo trust in God's mantle of protection and steadfast faithfulness. They provide a powerful reminder for us that God is near in times of great distress. *Today's readings: Jeremiah 20:10–13; Psalm 18:2–3a, 3bc–4, 5–6, 7; John 10:31–42.*

Saturday, April 1

Dwell in God

The promises of the prophet Ezekiel are a source of hope for the faithful across all generations. Ezekiel delivers the assurance of God, "My dwelling shall be with them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Ezekiel 37:27). The enemies of Jesus circle in close and the Scriptures remind us that God is even closer, "like a shepherd guarding his flock" (Jeremiah 31:10). Holy Week begins tomorrow. Make plans to accompany Jesus through the solemn remembrances of his journey from suffering to resurrection. *Today's readings: Ezekiel 37:21–28; Jeremiah 31:10, 11–12abcd, 13; John 11:45–56.*



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KEEPING THE SEASONS
LENT AND EASTER 2023

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD



Open Us, Lord

God of salvation,
you sent your beloved Son to dwell among us
and show us the way, the truth, and the life.
His humble obedience in pouring out his love
for us on the cross
unlocked the path to eternal life with you.
Give us the strength to follow Jesus
through Holy Week

to share in his passion and glory.
Open our hearts to receive his gift of saving
love anew
so that we might in turn share it with
all the world.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

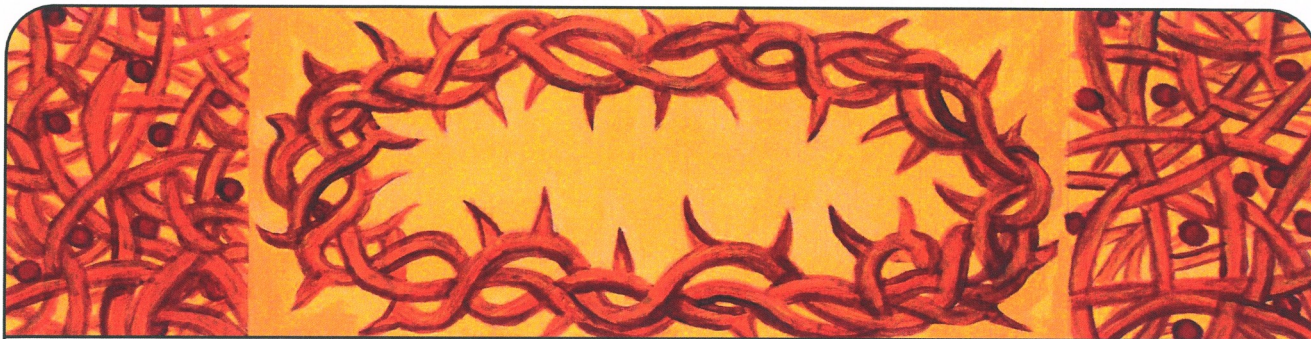
Sunday, April 2, 2023

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Today's readings: Procession: Matthew 21:1–11. Mass: Isaiah 50:4–7; Psalm 22:8–9, 17–18, 19–20, 23–24; Philemon 2:6–11; Matthew 26:14–27:66. Today marks a major turning point in the liturgical year, and the way the liturgy is celebrated signals the transition. The assembly processes and waves palm branches just as did the crowds that gathered to welcome Jesus to Jerusalem. In the Liturgy of the Word, we participate in the proclamation of the Gospel account that follows that day, detailing the arrest, trial, conviction, torture, crucifixion, and death on the cross. It is heart-wrenching and mystifying.

In looking back at the last three Sundays of Lent, we recall that Jesus reveals his full identity to the woman from Samaria, the man blind from birth, and Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. On trial, however, he is mute before Pilate. His humility and obedience to God reveal his divinity.

Holy Week offers us the opportunity to walk alongside our Lord from the cross to the garden. This week is sacred. Approach it like a week-long retreat. Make arrangements to fully participate in the liturgies of Holy Week and to prayerfully accompany our Lord through it all.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, April 3 Faithful Friends

Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with perfumed oil and dries them with her hair. This tender gesture took place at a banquet held in Jesus' honor for restoring her brother Lazarus to life. We can look to Jesus and his authentic friendship with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, to emulate in our relationships. *Today's readings: Isaiah 42:1-7; Psalm 27:1, 2, 3, 13-14; John 12:1-11.*

Tuesday, April 4 Wear the Armor of Faith

Both the prophet Isaiah and the psalmist recall the hand of God in our lives from the moment we are created in our mother's womb. The Gospel passage highlights our tendency to forget our origins in God and turn away in betrayal. Reflect on how your Lenten practices have helped you form habits that have strengthened your armor of fidelity. *Today's readings: Isaiah 49:1-6; Psalm 71:1-2, 3-4a, 5ab-6ab, 15 and 17; John 13:21-33, 36-38.*

Wednesday, April 5 Spy Wednesday

Wednesday of Holy Week is referred to as "spy Wednesday" because the Gospel reading from Matthew reveals that Judas will betray Jesus. Look for an opportunity to upturn the ignominy of this day. Invite someone to attend Mass with you on Easter. Share your faith in Jesus with someone who doubts. Send an Easter card promising prayer to someone who needs spiritual support. *Today's readings: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 69:8-10, 21-22, 31 and 33-34; Matthew 26:14-25.*

Thursday, April 6 Holy Thursday

The season of Lent ends as the sun sets today and the Sacred Paschal Triduum commences. Jesus, fully aware that "he had

come from God and was returning to God," chooses the intimate gesture of washing his disciples' feet (John 13:5). He draws as close as possible to those he loves. As he did for his disciples, he does for us tonight at the Mass of the Lord's Supper. *Today's readings: Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-15.*

Friday, April 7 Bend on Knee

In union with Christians around the world, the faithful assemble on Good Friday to recall the final hours of Jesus' life—when he is condemned to die, beaten, forced to carry his cross, and publicly crucified. Approaching the cross, the faithful offer a gesture of veneration. We touch, kiss, bow, or genuflect to the instrument of our salvation. God steadfastly invites us to draw close. Today we do that on bended knee. *Today's readings: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42.*

Saturday, April 8 Keep Vigil

We continue our journey through the Sacred Paschal Triduum after sundown at the Easter Vigil. Through Scripture readings, psalms and prayers, we deliberately recount the entire plan of salvation from God's handiwork in creation to Jesus' overcoming the power of death in resurrection. Listen carefully to the story unfold. It is a magnificent synthesis not to be missed. *Today's readings: Genesis 1:1-2:2 or 1:1, 26-31a; Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24, 35 or Psalm 33:4-5, 6-7, 12-13, 20-22; Genesis 22:1-18 or 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Psalm 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11; Exodus 14:15-15:1; Exodus 15:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18; Isaiah 54:5-14; Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13; Isaiah 55:1-11; Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6; Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11; Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28; Psalm 42:3, 5; 43:3, 4 or Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 or Psalm 51:12-13, 14-15, 18-19; Romans 6:3-11; Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23; Matthew 28:1-10.*



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KEEPING THE SEASONS
LENT AND EASTER 2023

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD



Alleluia! Alleluia!

God of joy,
you raised Jesus from the dead
and unlocked the path to eternal life
for all of creation.
Awaken us to the gift of salvation
poured into the world
with Christ's victory over death.

Infuse our hearts with joy
as we pray, sing, and dance in celebration.
Bless our Easter worship
and time gathered with family and friends
this day.
Through Christ the risen Lord. Amen.

Sunday, April 9, 2023

Alleluia!

Today's readings: Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23; Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8; Sequence Victimae paschali laudes; John 20:1-9 or Matthew 28:1-10 or, at an afternoon or evening Mass, Luke 24:13-35. Celebrating Easter is like watching the sunrise in the most beautiful place ever visited. All along our journey through Lent our eyes have been tuned for directional arrows in the Scriptures pointing our steps toward God, who summons us unceasingly.

At Easter we open our hearts fully as the Son rises gloriously and his rays fill us with joy. Together with the

community of faith, we renew our baptismal vows. Like a long-married couple renewing their marriage vows, we baptized Christians renew our commitment to Jesus Christ and the Church. We welcome sprinkles of blessed baptismal water as a symbol of our bond in faith. It is a joyous response to God's invitation to return to him with ready hearts. The resurrection is celebrated with our jubilant renewal of faith as the Gloria and Alleluia are sung and trumpets and bells resound. Our sanctuaries and homes are filled with fragrant flowers and our tables hold choice foods to share with those we love. The Son is alive and with us always! Alleluia!



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, April 10 Do Not Be Afraid

In Matthew's resurrection account, the first appearance of the risen Lord is to Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary." The encounter is utterly unexpected. The women were looking for the disciples. They could not imagine seeing Jesus. The first words Jesus speaks are "Peace" and "Do not be afraid." With their fear dispelled, the women embrace their call to be the first witnesses of the risen Christ. *Today's readings: Acts 2:14, 22–33; Psalm 16:1–2a and 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; Matthew 28:8–15.*

Tuesday, April 11 Called by Name

John's resurrection account mirrors Matthew's in that the first appearance of the risen Lord is to Mary Magdalene. Consumed with grief and confusion, Mary is unable to recognize Jesus until he calls her by name. At the sound of her name, Mary is forever transformed. With certainty, she announces the good news. On the day of our baptism, and continually throughout our lives, God calls us by name and sends us as living witnesses to the world. *Today's readings: Acts 2:36–41; Psalm 33:4–5, 18–19, 20 and 22; John 20:11–18.*

Wednesday, April 12 Be Alert

There is so much good news to unpack and celebrate about the resurrection of Jesus that the Church gives us fifty days in the Easter season to do this. Today is one of the many times when we hear about the time Jesus appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. He approaches and walks with them, first listening, then teaching, and ultimately revealing. Jesus does that with each of us, day by day, through the Easter season. Be alert for when he shows up! *Today's readings: Acts 3:1–10; Psalm 105:1–2, 3–4, 6–7, 8–9; Luke 24:13–35.*

Thursday, April 13 Go Deeper

As Jesus ate and spoke with his disciples in Jerusalem, Luke tells us that "he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). He reinterpreted sacred Scripture in light of his birth, death, and resurrection, revealing a new layer of meaning about the plan of God. How might we allow our daily reading of the Scriptures through this Easter season to bring us to a deeper understanding of the paschal mystery in our time? *Today's readings: Acts 3:11–26; Psalm 8:2ab and 5, 6–7, 8–9; Luke 24:35–48.*

Friday, April 14 Fifty Days

Today we hear from John about Jesus' third appearance to his disciples, this time on the beach of the Sea of Tiberias. The disciples have returned to their occupation of fishing. Jesus will be sending them back to the vocation to which he called them as evangelists. Jesus did not give up on his beloved disciples; he does not give up on us. Easter is not over; it has just begun. During these fifty days of Easter, we have time to contemplate how the Lord draws us close, feeds us, and empowers us to be living witnesses of joy. *Today's readings: Acts 4:1–12; Psalm 118:1–2 and 4, 22–24, 25–27a; John 21:1–14.*

Saturday, April 15 Go Out to the Whole World

The octave (eight days) of Easter concludes with Mark's account of how Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene. She immediately went to announce the good news. But, alas, she was met with resistance and disbelief. Witnessing the truth of Jesus Christ in today's culture requires confronting skepticism and rejection. But as Jesus instructed the disciples then, he commands us now to persist and "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). *Today's readings: Acts 4:13–21; Psalm 118:1 and 14–15ab, 16–18, 19–21; Mark 16:9–15.*



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KEEPING THE SEASONS
LENT AND EASTER 2023



FASTING AND FEASTING

Lent should be more than a time of fasting.
It should also be a joyous season of feasting.
Lent is a time to fast from certain things and to feast on others.

It is a season to turn to God:

Fast from judging others; feast on the goodness in them.
Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on unity of all life.
Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.
Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing power of God.
Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.
Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger; feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism.
Fast from worry; feast on divine order.
Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.
Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives.
Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from hostility; feast on non-resistance.
Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.
Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal Truth.
Fast from discouragement; feast on hope.

Fast from facts that depress; feasts on truths that uplift.
Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm.
Fast from suspicion; feast on truth.
Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire.
Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the sunlight of serenity.
Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that supports.

~William Arthur Ward

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF
ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON
2700 W SPRING CREEK PKWY, PLANO, TX 75075
972-596-5505 | WWW.SETONPARISH.ORG