

# LENT 2023

A Parish Resource for Your Lenten Journey



Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Community

Manvel, Texas

### Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil: 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. (Spanish)  
8 a.m. ,10 a.m., 1 p.m. (Spanish) and 4 p.m.

### Weekday Masses

Tuesday - Friday | 9 a.m.

### Adoration

Monday, following Liturgy of the Word  
9:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m.

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesdays 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.  
Fridays 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.  
or by Appointment.

### Lenten Reconciliation Service

Wednesday, March 22  
6:30 p.m.



## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

### Palm Sunday Vigil

4:00 p.m.  
6:00 p.m. *Spanish*

### Palm Sunday

8:00 a.m.  
10:00 a.m.^  
1:00 p.m.^ *Spanish*  
4:00 p.m.

^Blessing of Palms and  
Procession will begin outside.

### Holy Thursday

Mass of the Lord's Supper  
7:00 p.m. *Bilingual*

Adoration in the Parish Hall  
following Mass until Midnight.

### Good Friday

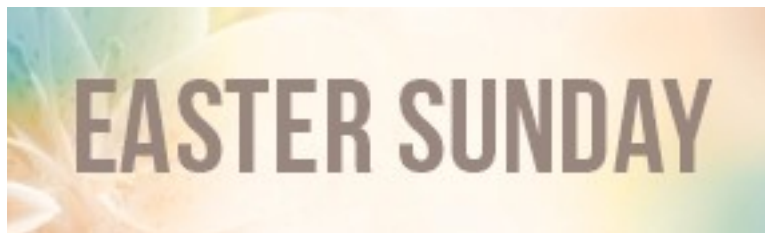
Live Stations of the Cross in the  
Church in English at noon.  
*Via Crucis in Spanish at 3:00pm.*  
Divine Mercy Novena begins.

### Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ

6:00 p.m. *Bilingual*

### Holy Saturday

Easter Vigil  
8:30 p.m. *Bilingual*



## The Resurrection of The Lord April 9, 2023

5:00 a.m.  
8:00 a.m.

10:00 a.m.  
10:15 a.m. (Hall)

1:00 p.m. Spanish  
4:00 p.m.



Lent is a meaningful time for the faithful to think deeply about stewardship. Our Lenten practices of “prayer, fasting, and almsgiving” invite each of us to grow in relationship with Christ and in our community of faith.

Please use this resource book to reflect on the message of Lent and to explore the special opportunities for prayer, fellowship and service here at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Community: Stations of the Cross on Fridays, extended Adoration hours, the Lenten Reconciliation Service, Soup for the Soul and our Parish Ministry Fair, just to name a few.

Take a few minutes at home each week to prepare for Mass with the enclosed reflections or maybe use them for family discussion after Mass. During Lent, I am asking all families to also be mindful of arriving in time to be seated at least five minutes before Mass begins. The disruption of so many people trying to enter and find a seat after Mass has begun makes it difficult to remain attentive and participate for those in the pews and those serving as ministers. Arriving early is especially important for those masses where overflow may occur so all may begin worshipping in both the church and hall together. Also, during Lent, we will end Mass in silence. Please remain in the pew until the procession has reached the back of the church and then exit in silence. We will not conclude with praying the Hail Mary together aloud.

As you reflect on your stewardship of treasure in this season, I am asking family to prayerfully consider how you can make a greater impact in our community. Consider bringing one can of food from your pantry with you each week for our food pantry. Another positive step could be through committing to a recurring offering through online giving. This is a way for you to sustain our faith community with consistent giving month after month. The more people make recurring offerings, the better we can budget and plan for ministries that mean the most to you.

May our Lenten journey be one of reflection, renewal and reverence as we walk together. You are in my prayers.

In the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

*Fr. Trung*  
Fr. Trung

*“Lord, help us to live the virtue of generosity, to love without limits.” – Pope Francis*

# PILLARS OF LENT



## PRAYER

**WHAT IS IT?** **PRAYER** is the action that leads people to God. We take time away from the distractions of the world, **to turn to God**, to contemplate, to listen and talk to Him, to read His words and meditate on them, to be one with Him. Prayer gives meaning to Lenten practices, which should draw us closer to Him.



## FASTING

**WHAT IS IT?** **FASTING** is restricting consumption, depriving yourself of both good and bad things for the glory of God. This means normally watching what you eat, on a day that it is practiced, one regular meal and two small ones. During Lent, we fast on **Ash Wednesday and Good Friday**. **ABSTINENCE** is practiced all Fridays of Lent.



## ALMSGIVING

**WHAT IS IT?** **ALMSGIVING** is the action that leads us Christians to see others, love them, listen to them and them our time, help, advice, money, shelter, company, affection. It is not limited to giving material goods, it is the gift of self. It is based on **CHARITY**, to love God and others as oneself. To give alms is to be united to Christ in his poverty.



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information from Catholic.net



BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC  
YOUTH SERVICE



# Living the Faith

## JOURNEY TO THE FOOT OF THE CROSS: BISHOP RICKEN OFFERS 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER FOR LENT

*Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin, former chairman of the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the United States 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? Hot dogs? 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.



Catholic  
Current

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# Parish activities

## Stations of the Cross

Join us for Stations of the Cross in the Church each Friday during Lent beginning Feb. 24.

7 p.m. in English

8 p.m. in Spanish

One hour before, join us for a soup supper in Room 115 of the Connie Bowers Discipleship Center, provided by our ministries.

On Good Friday, there will be Live Stations of the Cross in the Church in English at noon. Via Crucis in Spanish will be at 3:00pm.



# Stations OF THE CROSS

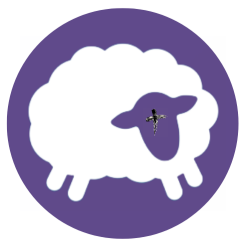


## Friday Fish Fry

The Knights of Columbus No. 6403 invites you to their Friday night Fish Fry from 5 p.m.-7 p.m. each Friday of Lent (except Good Friday) at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 129 CR 146 at Highway 6 in Alvin. All proceeds help support the many charities sponsored by the Knights of Columbus in the Manvel/Alvin area.



## Keep in touch with us via email and text!



Mass times, weather cancellations, ministry updates and more delivered to your phone. To sign up, text SHOJCC to 84576 or sign up online at [shojcc.flocknote.com](http://shojcc.flocknote.com).

## EGiving

Faith Direct offers a safe and secure way to donate to Sacred Heart of Jesus CC. through direct debit from your checking/savings account or through your credit/debit card.

There is no cost to you, and the program provides a great benefit to our parish.

Sign up today by visiting [faith.direct/TX151](http://faith.direct/TX151).



# Parish activities



  
**MYSTERIES**  
*of the ROSARY*

**ENTER INTO THE MYSTERIES AND  
REDISCOVER THE POWER OF THE ROSARY**

An authentic encounter with Christ leads to our transformation and sanctification. Mysteries of the Rosary integrates deeply reflective insights on the life of Christ, theological truths, and captivating stories.

**Seven Powerful Episodes**  
 Rediscover the Power  
 The Agony in the Garden  
 The Scourging at the Pillar

The Crowning of Thorns  
 The Carrying of the Cross  
 The Crucifixion of Our Lord  
 The Pathway to Paradise

**THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES**  
*Series One*

**JOIN US THURSDAYS 7:00PM TO 8:30PM  
DURING LENT, STARTING FEBRUARY 16th  
via ZOOM:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83872107791?pwd=a0x0VnNZUUR0VjExTkNmckRlCHU3Zz09>  
 Meeting ID: 838 7210 7791 Passcode: 36578

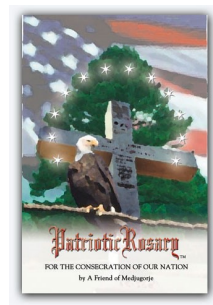
Join on Smart Device	Resource Materials
	

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The Rosary group Walking with Jesus and Mary invites you to join them in praying the Holy Rosary every Monday at Sacred Heart Catholic Community Church at 7 p.m. This is a Spanish-language group, but all are invited. If you have any questions, please contact Carlos Chuquiruna at 832-508-8618, Pompilio Salto at 832-404-8787 or Juanita Martinez at 281-830-8450.

The Patriotic Rosary was inspired by Our Lady of Medjugorje and is a powerful prayer for divine protection and mercy for our nation. The Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Community Patriotic Rosary group prays every Wednesday at 6:15 p.m. in the church.



# 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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# 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

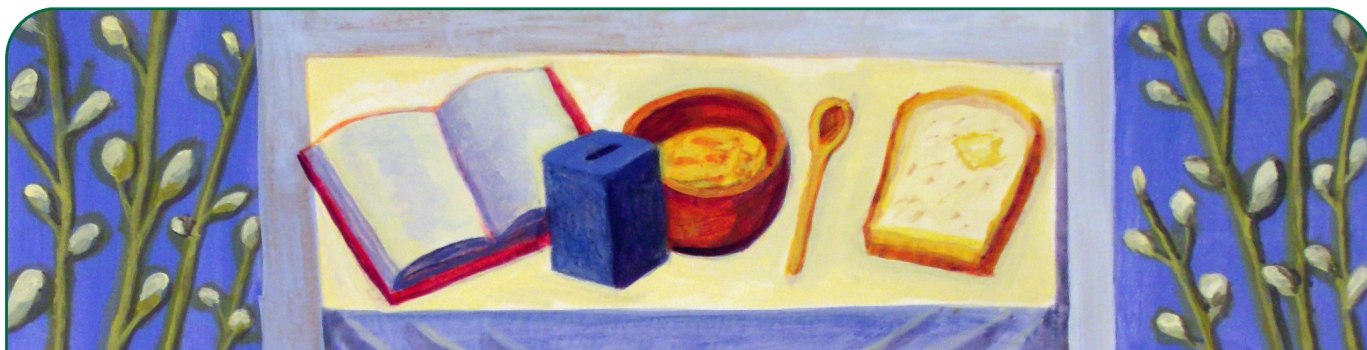


*Today's readings: Genesis 12:1–4a; Psalm 33:4–5, 18–19, 20, 22; 2 Timothy 1:8b–10; Matthew 17:1–9.* Every year on the Second Sunday of Lent we remember the transfiguration of Jesus. Placing ourselves in the narrative on that high mountain, new details might be noticed that draw us into deeper layers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

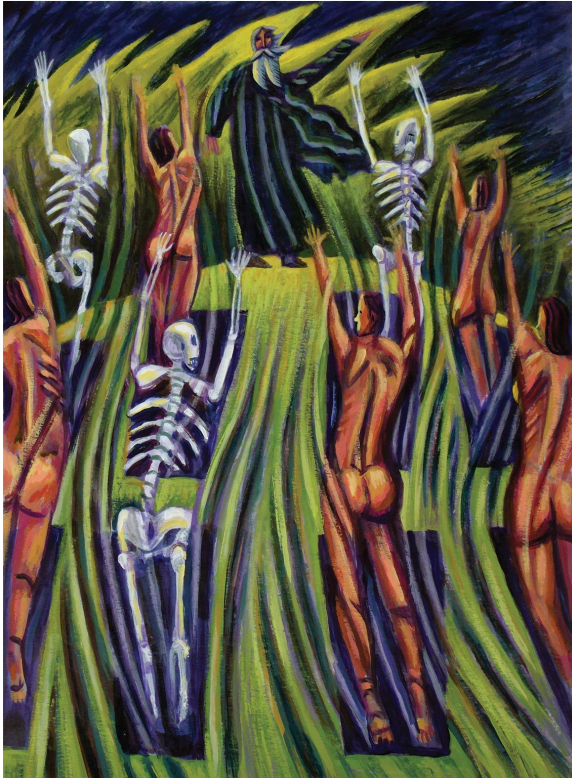


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**KEEPING THE SEASONS**  
LENT AND EASTER 2023

# 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



Lent is the time for greater love,  
listen to Jesus' thirst...

*'Repent and believe'*

What are we to repent?  
Our indifference, our hardness of heart.

What are we to believe?  
Jesus thirsts even now, in your heart  
and in the poor - He knows your weakness.

He wants only your love,  
wants only the chance to love you.

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta

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