

Impact

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

BE HOLY. BE PERFECT.

Jesus' words in this month's gospels are **challenging**: Turn the other cheek. Love your enemies. Forgive and be reconciled. Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes' and your 'No' mean 'No.' Pray for those who persecute you. Be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Discipleship can be demanding, yet following Jesus is also freeing. In faith, we learn to let go of the constant pursuit of things that do not last. Our lives are less filled with conflict and more focused on things that matter. We have greater perspective, an eternal perspective, in all life's circumstances. When we are tempted to turn away from God's ways and instead turn toward the Lord, we find peace and fulfillment on the path of holiness.

BE SALT AND LIGHT.

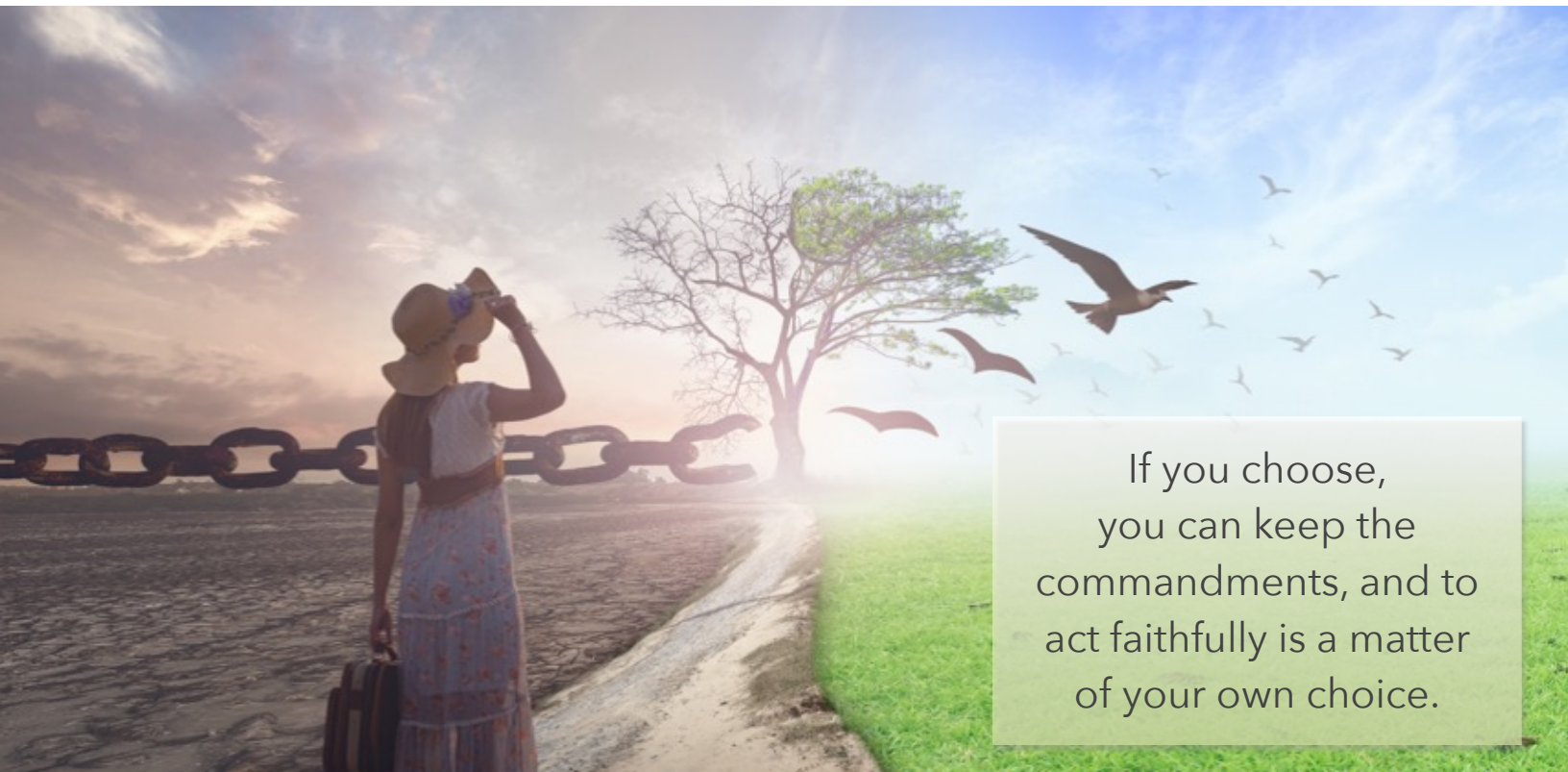
We all have times when we are stressed and tired or make our way through life without enthusiasm. The first disciples who walked with Jesus probably had those days as well. They may have grown weary on the journey. They might have missed their former lifestyle and questioned their decision to follow Jesus. Jesus encouraged them, challenged them, and urged them to stay on the path of faith, knowing that doing so is the way of truth and life, life filled with grace and meaning.

"You are the salt of the earth," "You are the light of the world," Jesus said. Jesus wants his disciples to be alive in faith, transformed by the Holy Spirit. As people empowered with the Spirit, we may add rich flavor and light where life is dull, lackluster, exhausting, dark.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

Before you are life and death, good and evil. Our Sunday readings this month, including this strong message from the book of Sirach, urge us to choose to be the people God desires, to strive toward selflessness, generosity, forgiveness, and mercy.

As disciples, when we bring faith to life, we are filled with purpose, sharing in Christ's mission to transform the world through selfless love. We are called to live faith deeply, boldly, showing others the impact of our belief and trust in the Lord in our daily lives. Choosing to live as Christ's own in the world is demanding and at the same time, it is the way of perfect love. The choice is yours. Whichever you choose will be given you.



If you choose,
you can keep the
commandments, and to
act faithfully is a matter
of your own choice.

You are a temple of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit dwells within you! When was the last time you gave this some thought? At times, what we believe as Catholic Christians may seem distant or abstract, with little bearing on the way we live our daily lives. Then, something happens that

prompts reflection, or study, or conversation with another, and faith comes to life. The Sunday readings this month remind us of a vital belief that is sometimes under-appreciated: as baptized members of Christ's Body, we are indeed imbued with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Remembering this, we recognize our call to live as good stewards of that presence.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

No hands, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world.

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands. Yours are the feet. Yours are the eyes. You are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

– St. Teresa of Avila



There are likely times when we lose sight of God's presence within, however. We may become focused on things rather than on God and the people around us; we might sink into anger, fear, or resentment of another; we may simply become busy, too busy to think about who we are, or who we are called to be. Through it all, God is with us, inviting us to a deeper friendship with him.

There is more. Knowing that the Holy Spirit is with us, we more readily realize that every person is of value, created in God's image, priceless and precious. Our actions on behalf of others are actions with and for God.

The secret of everything is to let oneself be carried by God and so to carry him to others.

– St. Pope John XXIII

Impact this month

Lent is a time for spiritual spring cleaning. Be resolved to grow in faith and discipleship.

Many of us made resolutions to bring order to our lives in the new year. In January, television and social media feeds were flooded with “hacks” for cleaning and organizing our homes and routines. Now is the perfect time to apply some of those tips as we make and fulfill our Lenten resolutions, bringing the order of discipleship to our daily lives.

Clean: Spend time in prayer. Invite the Lord to enlighten your mind and heart, showing you what needs to change in your life. Clear away the clutter of distraction and unnecessary activity in order to focus on God and more readily hear the call of the Lord. Participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation as you turn away from sin and return to the Gospel.

Organize: Establish stronger habits of faith by using the three Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and charity as a guide.

One Step at a Time: Rather than setting unreachable goals, begin small and build on your experience. Challenge yourself to take a deeper step each week of the Lenten season.

Choose and Be a Companion: Form a partnership with a family member or friend. Pray for each other. Hold one another accountable.