

ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



Season of Lent

Ash Wednesday: 02 March

MARCH 2022 | DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

MARCH
2022

“A faith that does not trouble us is a
troubled faith.
A faith that does not make us grow
is a faith that needs to grow.”

Pope Francis

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Tuesday March 1

Eighth Week in Ordinary time

1 Peter
1:10-16

Psalm
98:1-4

Mark
10:28-31

Be holy, because I am holy.

The Lord's invitation today is – 'be holy just as I am holy'. To many of us this call may seem a long way off because we are stuck in our worldly identity. Through baptism, we are incorporated into the nature and life of the Lord Jesus. The DNA of our generations has been crucified. Simultaneously we have been joined to our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us mature in this true identity and desire to be holy as He is holy. St Peter is also straddling between his worldly identity and the call of the Lord Jesus. Often this is our own struggle too. Our desire to gather material wants, build human relationships are more real than our heart's desire to follow the Lord Jesus. Echoing His call to Saint Peter, the Lord invites us to follow Him in our daily walk, despite persecutions, rejections and selfish desires. We need the Holy Spirit to give us supernatural power to attain the priceless reward of sharing eternal life in heaven. Let us hold onto Him, and never cease to pray for the grace of supernatural power.

Prayer: Abba Father, I long to be with you in heaven, yet, I get caught up in sinful worldly desires. Help me to heed your call to be holy as You are holy. Amen.

SEASON OF LENT

Wednesday, March 2, 2022 - Thursday, April 14, 2022

PRAYER

FASTING

ALMSGIVING

Lent is a 40 day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

It begins on Ash Wednesday
and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday.

It's a period of preparation
to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.

During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture;
we serve by giving alms;

and we practice self-control through fasting.

We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent,
but to a true inner conversion of heart
as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully.

We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into
Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

(USCCB Website)

“Repent and believe in the Gospel.”

(Mark 1:15)

Wednesday March 2

Ash Wednesday

Joel
2:12-18

Psalm
51:3-6,12-14,17

2 Corinthians
5:20--6:2

Matthew
6:1-6.16-18

God the Father will reward you.

The Lord is telling us, "return to me with your whole heart;" with fasting and prayer. We have been blessed to begin another season of Lent, another period of grace for us to repent of our sins and to return to the Lord. As we begin this season of Lent, ash is placed on our heads and we are reminded that everything is temporary. We came from the Lord and we shall one day return to him. In our short time on earth, we are invited to be merciful towards our brothers and sisters. When we fast, we do not do so, to save money. Instead we can try to use that money to do an act of charity for another person. It is important that our good deeds remain hidden. We should not parade our good deeds. Often we see people donating money or goods and then posting photos on social media to become popular. That is not the Christian way. Seeing our good deeds, it is our Heavenly Father who will reward us. God sees everything. He knows the very thoughts of our hearts. Let us be sincere, merciful and loving.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I draw closer to you and become merciful to others.
Amen.

Thursday March 3

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Deuteronomy
30:15-20

Psalm
1:1-4,6

Luke
9:22-25

True glory is in living for others.

Recently I read this caption in a newspaper, "You truly can't love others till you learn to love yourself". In Christianity this is not true, even though in the worldly understanding it makes sense. There is a gravitational pull of our flesh and the world that says that to be really happy, we have to satisfy our self. In other words to be self centered. Most Christians follow this paradigm. However the Lord says that we have to deny ourselves. To do the opposite is His clarion call. We need to understand the scriptures the way the Jewish people understood it. The Apostles did not expect or believe that the Messiah would die. After all, He was to rule with power according to the scriptures. They were even fighting for positions of power for earthly glory. God's way was going to be completely different. 'All this suffering and killing talk, are you serious?' they would have thought. For the Jews the cross meant death. No one took it willingly. The Lord invites us to deny that attitude and thus experience the glory in living not for our self but for others.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I regard others more important than myself. That is akin to death for me. Amen.

Friday March 4

Friday after Ash Wednesday

Isaiah
58:1-9

Psalm
51:3-6,18-19

Matthew
9:14-15

Fasting and surrendering to God.

As we reflect upon His Word, the Lord reminds us today of joyful fasting. Often we think about fasting from food, but there are many other forms of fasting. We may choose to fast from using social media for a few hours everyday, or we may choose to spend time speaking to a lonely friend rather than gossiping about someone. Abba Father is giving us a personal invitation to fast from our own will and surrender our actions to the Lord. By surrendering we create a space for God in our hearts. With his presence in us, the miracles manifest, darkness is dispelled, sickness gives way to health. We are invited to search our hearts. In this time of pandemic have we taken time to help our brother/sister in their hour of need? Instead of battering those who made unhealthy choices, can we approach them with empathy and love? Let us offer our heart-felt prayer to the Lord! Let us ask for his light to shine on those areas in our lives that we could offer as a sacrifice pleasing to God; "a humble and contrite heart, He will not spurn!"

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be more loving towards my brothers and sisters.
Amen.

Saturday March 5

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

Isaiah
58:9-14

Psalm
86:1-6

Luke
5:27-32

Following Jesus.

Today's first reading gives us practical steps that we can take to be favored by God. These are the acts of charity that the Church recommends us to practice, specially during the season of Lent. As we have just begun this holy season, can we try to share a meal with a stranger? Can we try to help our colleagues in our workplace when they are overwhelmed with work? Whatever we do for our brother or sister, we do it for the Lord Jesus himself. In today's Gospel proclamation we see the immediate response of Levi, to Jesus' call. How about us? Do we respond immediately to the Lord? Perhaps many years ago we attended a retreat and surrendered our lives to Jesus. However, with time some of us may have lost the eagerness to follow Christ. Today we receive a renewed invitation from the Lord: "Follow me". Will we stay behind to finalize our worldly matters and sort out our possessions? Or are we willing to surrender everything to Jesus and respond to his call to serve our brothers and sisters? Let us examine our hearts.

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to surrender my life to you and to follow Jesus eagerly. Amen

Sunday March 6

First Sunday of Lent

Deuteronomy
26:4-10

Psalm
91:1-2,10-15

Romans
10:8-13

Luke
4:1-13

Children of God.

On this first Sunday of Lent, we are reminded of God's love and concern for His people. God chose a nation for Himself to share His love. God wanted His creation to reverse to the original purpose. Therefore after the fall He worked all things together for the arrival of His Messiah.

We cannot fully understand God. But we could experience His love. Through His love we could experience His amazing work. His heart moves for the lowly and insignificant people. He chose a wandering nation for Himself. It is beautiful to read through the Jewish proclamation of faith, which is the first reading today. The scriptures clearly mention that God Himself guided His people and made them a nation by giving them a land that flows with milk and honey, which denotes abundance and prosperity. Acquiring a land symbolized that they had become a nation with a unique identity. The Messiah of God - the anointed one - came forth through this nation. God invites us to trust Him because nothing is impossible for him.

In the second reading this truth is elaborated more. St. Paul preached to the Romans to believe in Christ Jesus who is the Messiah of God. The message of salvation is that the Lord Jesus who was crucified, died and was placed in a tomb is risen. Jesus is alive, Jesus is risen! This truth needs to be proclaimed. The question is 'who made it possible'. The Lord Jesus, who became human to be fully man but never left His divinity. No one has power to come back to life (never to die again), but God made it possible. Nothing is impossible for God.

The Gospel proclamation encourages us to live as children of God. The Lord Jesus as a human being was guided to find His true identity - as was in the past for the Jewish nation. Who is Christ Jesus? He is the Son of God, who took flesh like all of us. Born of a woman, yet sinless.

His test at the wilderness is the test that we constantly are battling. We become vulnerable in front of our needs; hunger, possessions and status. Temptations may not necessarily appear explicitly. Most often temptations are implicit, we do not know that it is harmful until we are deeply caught up in it. No one decides to become an alcoholic within 24 hours, it is a process which may take months or years. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us to see the first signs of addiction in our lives. It could be longing for power and prestige, money and fame. We have a model to follow. The Lord Jesus who defeated the enemy as the Son of God, because He discovered His true identity. Let us accept our true identity as children of God, then we will experience that "Nothing is impossible for God".

Prayer: Abba Father, I am your child. Amen.

Monday March 7

First Week of Lent

Leviticus
19:1-2,11-18

Psalm
19:8-10,15

Matthew
25:31-46

The Word of God is alive.

Today's readings emphasize the power of God's Word. We need to trust his word and his promises. As believers, sometimes we do not focus on His Word. We need to read and contemplate on God's Word every day because it is alive. When we take our first step in faith, God will do the rest. When I read the scriptures, I invite the Holy Spirit to guide me and then I start to read, allowing the Lord to minister to me through His words. Sometimes nothing seems to happen but let us not give up. As we read His Word, He gives us the wisdom to understand his love and His plans. Though I have been on this journey for many years I still struggle and fall into sin. But every time we fall, we can go before the Lord and focus on His words. He will pour out his love and transform us. "The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit" (Heb 4:12). Let us take time every day to read His Word and allow the Lord to minister to us, then we will be happy in the Lord.

Prayer: Abba Father, as I reflect on your Word, may my life be transformed.
Amen.

Tuesday March 8

First Week of Lent

Isaiah
55:10-11

Psalm
34:4-7,16-19

Matthew
6:7-15

Intimate relationship with God.

Today's first reading reminds us of God's power and authority over creation. Isaiah says that every word that is spoken by God has power to be fruitful. We can see that the entire creation is sustained by God. For example rain is received in a timely manner for growing food. In today's Gospel proclamation, Jesus tells us that the God who sends us the rain and who cares for our well being is our Father. Do we see him as our Father? Should we sit for hours reciting or reading prayers and reflections for prayers to be answered? Jesus tells us that if we see God as our Father, if we build a relationship with him and speak to him regularly, we do not need to use so many words because the Father knows our thoughts and needs and gives abundantly for his children. His love for us is beyond understanding. The Lord's prayer was taught not only for us to reach out to the Father, but also to show us how to live our lives maintaining this close relationship with him. Let us ask for the grace to know, trust and depend on our Father.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we cling to you because you alone are our God.
Amen.

Wednesday March 9

First Week of Lent

Jonah
3:1-10

Psalm
51:3-4,12-13,18-19

Luke
11:29-32

Jesus alone can lift us out of misery.

There is a friend of mine with whom I closely associated for the last two years. He has been frequently coming to me for help. However, recently I started to notice a trend in his life; he seems to be getting in to some sort of trouble each time without a break, and I have started to ponder about his life, and I realised that he is so bitter, frequently angry, and holding on to his past, blaming one person or the other. Peace and happiness have been stripped away from his life. He does many external things but is unable to find peace or happiness. Today's readings are giving us a message: we can blame others all our lives for what we suffer and we can dwell in the past, but it is we who will suffer. Instead we can admit our part, repent to the one true God, and he will bring us out of our misery and unhappiness. The Lord Jesus paid the heaviest price on that cross, so that we can be forgiven. He is the way, the truth and the life and it is only through him that we can have eternal life.

Prayer: Abba Father, give me the grace of true self realisation to admit my faults and to forgive others. May I receive forgiveness from you. Amen.

Thursday March 10

First Week of Lent

Esther
C:12, 14-16, 23-25

Psalm
138:1-3,7-8

Matthew
7:7-12

Wrestle with God like Jacob.

What do I usually ask, seek and knock for, from God? "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you" (Jn 15:16) God has sent us on a mission. When we say yes to His will in our daily lives we receive what we need. "Seek first his kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you." (Mt 6:33) As we seek God in our prayer time, in the Word of God, Sacraments and life experiences we become right with Him and His kingdom is manifested among us. When we do not find Him let us persevere in fasting and prayer, like queen Esther. Wrestle with God like Jacob. Through repentance we can receive power from on high. Filled with the Holy Spirit, we knock or rather tap into heaven for those who are placed in our lives. "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (Jn 14:12)

Prayer: Abba Father, I ask for and seek your Kingdom. As I knock on the door, open to me the gates of heaven. Amen.

Friday March 11

First Week of Lent

Ezekiel
18:21-28

Psalm
130:1-8

Matthew
5:20-26

Treat everyone with dignity and love.

In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us hear about so many deaths happening around us. Thousands of people are dying each day due to COVID-19 throughout the world. Today in the Gospel proclamation we are reminded of another kind of death: dying to our sins. We are all trapped in sin knowingly or unknowingly. As Charles Spurgeon says: "God takes cognizance of the emotions from which acts of hate may spring and calls us to account as much for the angry feeling as for the murderous deed. Words also come under the same condemnation. People shall be judged for what they shall say to their brothers and sisters. To call a person 'worthless', is to kill them in their reputation, and to say to someone, "fool," is to kill them as to the noblest characteristics of a person." Only when we have remembered our wrong-doing, and made reconciliation, can we hope for acceptance with the Lord. During this season of Lent, let us continue to allow the Lord to purify our words and deeds and speak lovingly to others.

Prayer: Abba Father, wash me in the precious blood of Jesus. Cleanse my thoughts and desires that cause me to sin. Amen.

Saturday March 12

First Week of Lent

Deuteronomy
26:16-19

Psalm
119:1-2,4-5,7-8

Matthew
5:43-48

Love covers a multitude of sins.

Today's Gospel proclamation takes me back to the deep and transforming teachings of the CRL that we are children of God. This is a teaching that transformed my mindset from a feeling of an orphan when things got out of my control, to feeling like a favoured daughter, whose Father took control of every situation. Jesus says "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons (daughters) of your Father in Heaven." The first reading and the psalm speak of keeping God's commandments and the greatest commandment that God has given us is to love Him and our neighbour. Jesus reiterates this in the Gospel proclamation so that as we love, we can boldly claim our inheritance as children of God. Amid many challenges at work and personal adjustments to COVID-19, the Lord showed me, that as I gave inner responses to those who were difficult to love, His grace, which is unmerited, was showered upon me. This is the power of obeying His commandment to love.

Prayer: Abba Father, I thank you for those difficult people and situations that make me claim my sonship or daughterhood. Amen.

Sunday March 13

Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis
15:5-12,17-18

Psalm
27:1,7-9,13-14

Philippians
3:17--4:1

Luke
9:28-36

Glorious life of believers.

The first reading speaks of the Covenant God made with Abraham and his people, giving them a land and establishing them there. The Gospel proclamation in connection to this is seen, through Jesus Christ who becomes the New Covenant through which God makes a promise to humanity. The Lord will forgive sin and restore the communion with those who believe in His son Jesus Christ. Therefore the “Transfiguration” was a foretaste of this promise where the three apostles Peter, James and John were confirmed and strengthened in their faith. Jesus Christ being the mediator in the New Covenant, through His death on the Cross is the basis of this promise.

The Lord Jesus Christ defeats death by His glorious resurrection and restores life for those who believe in Him. As He says in John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth and life, no one comes to the Father except through me”, therefore we believe and worship the Lord and master who can give us the elevated beauty of God to our bodies even after we leave our earthly home, as the promise awaited by all believers.

The Lenten Season is a time in which we are expected to turn away from sin and to sincerely repent. By doing so we gain pardon for our sins and this return to our Abba Father, liberates us from bondages and shackles of sin. However day after day we realize the temporary state of our lives, just as on “Ash Wednesday” we commemorated with ashes that back to dust we all must return. The meaning of life and our existence does not make any sense if not for this glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, who through the transfiguration illustrated the same hope for the ones believing in Him. It is the foretaste of the same glory that the three apostles experienced at the Transfiguration. May this Lent be a special season in our lives where we focus on our long awaited promise of eternal life. Let this be a season where we toil and reap a bountiful harvest for the Kingdom.

We may have gone through many seasons of Lent where we may have tried and even desired to have a U turn or a change of heart to live the life God is calling us to live. During this pandemic we would have wondered where we are heading and what life is all about. As Christians we are people of hope, as God has created us for eternity. God has a great plan for his children. The Lord Jesus through his suffering, death and resurrection paves the way for us to inherit this new life. Let us focus on the passion of our Lord and be mindful of what great a sacrifice was offered for us. Let this thought help us to hope in the glorious life promised to us.

Prayer: Abba Father, make this Lent a time where I gaze more intently on the promised glorious life for believers. Amen.

Monday March 14

Second Week of Lent

Daniel
9:4-10

Psalm
79:8-9,11,13

Luke
6:36-38

Extraordinary choices.

While reflecting on the first reading, my mind goes back to Nehemiah's prayer, where we are called to return to the Lord with a heart of praise and to look back at the marvellous things the Lord has done in our lives. This privilege would have been only through word of mouth for most of our ancestors or even for some of our parents. But now, with the current technologies and globalisation we have access to things in the past and people's life experiences with God. Lent is a good time to focus on the lives of Saints. The Church has recognised their dedication and love for God so that we can look up to them and learn from their lives. They were ordinary people but their choices and love for God were extraordinary. Let us turn back to the Lord with a grateful heart and remember what He has done for us. Then we will be able to treat others the way God expects us to. Without this heart of gratefulness, we are unable to do so. Judgement comes to our hearts much easily than thankfulness. Only God can change our hearts.

Prayer: Abba Father, may our lives be transformed as we reflect on the lives of Saints. Amen.

Tuesday March 15

Second Week of Lent

Isaiah
1:10,16-20

Psalm
50:8-9,16-17,21,23

Matthew
23:1-12

More of You and less of me.

Today's readings are giving us a set of instructions, that we should follow in order to make a course correction for our life, during this season of Lent. It is a call to repentance and to have a heart for the poor and the downtrodden. Our walk through life is twofold: we need to put our lives right, and reach out to others. Both of these together would 'wash us clean and make us white as snow'. In the Gospel Proclamation the words that echo are, 'practice what you preach'. Today's readings are saying just that. We are called to follow our Master and do as he does, to obey and follow in word and in action. However, we need the grace of God to walk in His ways, to be filled with His Spirit and reach out to the lost. Without God this life is incomplete.

"Fidelity to God means willingness to serve. The more we serve, the more we are aware of God's presence. We, in turn, discover God's love and embrace." – Pope Francis

Prayer: Abba Father, renew my spirit and give me the grace to walk in your ways. Amen.

Wednesday March 16

Second Week of Lent

Jeremiah
18:18-20

Psalm
31:5-6,14-16

Matthew
20:17-28

An envious heart could be damaging.

Envy is at the heart of many relationship problems in families, in communities and even between nations. Envy is defined as the painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage. It is an emotion we tend to easily recognize in others, but find hard to discern in our own selves, as it disguises itself as other emotions. Emotions which seem larger than life in the moment. Anger, resentment, bitterness, sadness, self-pity, a feeling of inferiority, a competitiveness towards the other. In today's Gospel proclamation we see this emotion play out even among the apostles where the ten apostles were angry at James and John for having the audacity to approach Jesus and ask for the places of honour at his right and left-hand side. During this Lenten journey it may be a good idea to look into our own hearts and examine the emotions we have towards our brothers and sisters; to acknowledge the truth in our own heart; and to bring it to the merciful feet of the Lord Jesus.

Prayer: Abba Father, examine my heart, reveal to me any roots of envy and bitterness that may be hiding within me. Amen.

Thursday March 17

Second Week of Lent

Jeremiah
17:5-10

Psalm
1:1-4,6

Luke
16:19-31

Hoping in God.

In a godless world, despair is the absence of hope, and oppression is the absence of justice; however, as Kingdom dwellers, even in despair, hope is within reach, and even amidst oppression, justice is promised. A drought is a prolonged shortage of water, where life cannot thrive. However, according to Jeremiah, those who trust and hope in the Lord do not succumb to this natural phenomenon, for even through the drought, they show no distress, and still bear fruit. In today's Gospel proclamation, we see that although Lazarus suffered a great deal of injustice while the rich man enjoyed luxury, it is only Lazarus that Jesus identifies by name. The rich man is anonymous. It is Lazarus who is called into the Father's House to enjoy everlasting comfort. Even in this natural world, supernatural hope is a choice, and God's perfect justice is ours to claim. When we believe that those who hope in God shall always prosper, reap fruit, and be comforted, then the burdens we carry and injustices we endure lose their effectiveness against us.

Prayer: Abba Father, empower us to hope in you and to trust in your promises. Amen.

Friday March 18

Second Week of Lent

Genesis
37:3-4,12-13,17-28

Psalm
105:16-21

Matthew
21:33-43,45-46

God can change our rejection into a blessing.

In the first reading; Israel (Jacob), Joseph's father broke a rule of good parenting. He favoured one child over the other. Favouritism leads to bias or prejudice. Joseph's brothers hated him and they ultimately sold him to be a slave. If we live in bias it will affect our spiritual growth. Let us examine our conscience and see if common biases like ethnicity, religion, schools, education and money are in us. Favouring of one child over the other leads to hatred and loss of relationships. My maternal grandfather was the favourite child of his parents. This had caused a lot of hatred among his siblings. Due to this we never knew any of his relatives. In Joseph's story what the brothers intended for harm, God turned into a blessing to save many lives (Gen 50:20). Joseph was sent as a slave, on mission for God. In the Gospel proclamation, Jesus says that he is the cornerstone, the stone which was rejected by the builders. Though Jesus was rejected and put to death, he is now the Risen Christ, the saviour of the world.

Prayer: Abba Father, give us the grace to face rejection as we witness to your love and mercy. Amen.

Saturday March 19

Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

2 Samuel
7:4-5,12-14,16

Psalm
89:2-5,27,29

Romans
4:13,16-18,22

Matthew
1:16,18-21

God makes the impossible a reality through faith.

In the first reading, Nathan conveys God's message to David that his offspring would build the temple and his kingdom would be established forever, foreshadowing the advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This is repeated in the psalm as well. In the second reading, Saint Paul tells us that the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham was not based on legal entitlement, but on the great faith that Abraham had. Saint Paul explains that the promise is given to all of us who share the faith of Abraham who is Father of us all. Today's Gospel proclamation tells us that what was incomprehensible to Saint Joseph; the pregnancy of Mary, without them living together, was accepted by him in faith. This happened when it was revealed to him by an angel in a dream that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, she had conceived Jesus who would redeem the sins of the world. Today, scientific advancement tends to blind us to the fact that what is impossible to human capability, is entirely possible to God.

Prayer: Abba Father, make us see the power of faith and your grace which delivers the impossible. Amen.

Sunday March 20

Third Sunday of Lent

Exodus
3:1-8,13-15

Psalm
103:1-4,6-8,11

1 Corinthians
10:1-6,10-12

Luke
13:1-9

Being watchful, lest we fall.

Today's first reading gives an account of God's instructions to Moses on leading the Israelites out of Egypt. The Israelites were under slavery and bondage for more than 400 years. God intervenes in their state of misery and sets them free, free to know and love the one true God. Yet for some, that freedom was short lived.

St Peter who was zealous for God, the one who jumped into the water first and walked closely with the Lord, also denied the Lord. Peter's denial perplexed me for years. How selfish of him, what cowardice, I thought, until one day I too turned into a selfish-coward. We may be tempted to ask is it possible to deny God once enlightened by His presence? St Paul mentions in the second reading, that twenty three thousand Israelites fell in a single day after the exodus. Though they had witnessed the miracles and escaped 400 years of slavery, they rebelled against God. This now serves as an example to instruct us, lest we fall.

Sometimes the things that are not outright sinful could be the things that bring us down. I was once watching a television drama. Before long I fell into an addiction of desiring to watch more of it, beyond anything. In watching it, my mind also took me to my past, I began living in the memories of my painful past and going through days of endless self-pity. What began innocently had now turned into a full fledge bondage in my mind. I could not stop dwelling in the past. The things of the Kingdom were turning grey and the things of this world looked more real and painful at the same time. I sought prayers and was desperate for the Lord to intervene and He did through the CRL weekly messages. The Lord encountered me in prayer one day and His love broke away the addiction.

Let us be aware of the little things we allow into our lives as those things could potentially feed our flesh and trigger responses of rebellion towards God. We may have times where we think that we still function under sin or with unrepented thought patterns, but slowly we would feel the bend and the crack will eventually break under pressure. I heard a person once say, "The enemy patiently waits and baits you over and over, decade after decade. He attacks your calling now, he is not going to wait until you step into the pulpit." Let us be alert and watchful as the Lord Jesus has taught us in today's gospel proclamation, to repent or perish. His invitation for us is out of deep love as He extends His mercy for us to turn back to Him.

Let us acknowledge, 'Lord we can't, but YES You can'. We need His grace and mercy and the Holy Spirit daily.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us to deny our flesh by crucifying it on that Cross as we offer a sacrifice of praise to you. Amen.

Monday March 21

Third Week of Lent

2 Kings
5:1-15

Psalm
42:2-3; 43:3-4

Luke
4:24-30

God makes all things beautiful, IN HIS TIME.

"If the prophet had ordered you to do something difficult, would you not have done it?" (2 Kings 5:13) Often in our lives, we too seek complicated rituals and practices to receive miracles. All the while, the Lord Jesus has given us simple instructions. Perhaps it is our ego and pride that does not allow us to claim God's promises over our lives. As we listen to God's word daily, we see many promises. We also read about many promises and prophecies being fulfilled. But do we allow it to increase our faith? Or do we only hear His word without listening and acting on it? Let us resolve during this Lent, to listen to His word and to put it into practice. As the Lord Jesus reminds us, there are many people who are in need of various healings and miracles. We cannot understand why some receive healings while others do not. What is important is that we continue to hope and hold onto the Lord. As that beautiful hymn says, "He makes all things beautiful, IN HIS TIME." Let us wait for God's timing, because he knows what is best for us.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be patient as I hold onto your promises. Amen.

Tuesday March 22

Third Week of Lent

Daniel
3:25,34-43

Psalm
25:4-9

Matthew
18:21-35

True and unlimited forgiveness.

In today's first reading we see Azariah in the midst of the fire, pleading with God for forgiveness and mercy upon the people of Israel. The Israelites felt abandoned as their temple was destroyed and they thought that God had forgotten them. At times, we too may feel as if God has abandoned us, but he does not abandon us. Most often it is we who abandon him. We choose to create gods out of our money, professions, qualifications and connections. We invite other people and worldly things to take God's place in our lives. Let us repent and invite the Lord to take his rightful place over our lives. In today's Gospel proclamation we hear the Lord Jesus commanding us to forgive without any limits. No matter how many times, we need to forgive others, just as God has forgiven our many sins. Through the parable we learn that we are to be merciful to others just as God has been merciful to us. Let us act wisely so that we will not hear the words: 'Son, daughter, I forgave you, weren't you bound to forgive your brother or sister?'

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for forgiving me, let me be merciful and forgive those who wrong me. Amen.

Wednesday March 23

Third Week of Lent

Deuteronomy
4:1,5-9

Psalm 147:
12-13,15-16,19-20

Matthew
5:17-19

Greatest commandment is to Love.

Today's readings focus on the importance of following the Lord's commandments. Often we see laws and regulations as tools used to control us. However, laws are necessary to ensure safety, equality and justice in any society. Even as children, we had to obey our parents when they said; do not touch the knife, or do not get too close to the fire. When it comes to following God's laws, we need to remember that the Lord Jesus summarized the law into two main commandments. Loving God and loving our neighbours. All other instructions have been given to help us to obey these two commandments. It is a paradox since it is a commandment to love. Love must be free without any restrictions. However, divine love requires certain actions from us. For example, we cannot love God, and hold grudges against our neighbours. In spite of our many shortcomings the Lord loves us, therefore in this season of grace, let us resolve to love our brothers and sisters, and thereby be obedient to God's commandments.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I receive the grace to love you and my brothers and sisters wholeheartedly. Amen.

Thursday March 24

Third Week of Lent

Jeremiah
7:23-28

Psalm
95:1-2,6-9

Luke
11:14-23

Why are we stubborn?

Stubbornness is a quality of human beings. Stubbornness is a personality trait in which a person refuses to change his/her opinion or mind about a decision that's made. Stubborn people have a resolute adherence to their own ideas and opinions. Human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. So, why are we stubborn? Unable to obey God and give in to the lie of the deceiver? God's love is poured into us lavishly. God said that "I am your God and you're my people." Yet people rebelled. Became stiff-necked. They were stubborn and refused to listen to God's prophets because they were not vigilant, fell into the trap of disobedience and were scattered. We see that same stiff-necked attitude in the Gospel proclamation. People have put God to test once again. But Jeremiah spoke wisely to the stubborn attitude of human beings. The underlying attitude we ought to carry is obedience to God and unity among us. In obedience to God, we would not scatter but gather.

Prayer: Abba Father, transform my heart of stone into a heart of love. Amen.

Friday March 25

Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

Isaiah
7:10-14;8:10

Psalm
40:7-11

Hebrews
10:4-10

Luke
1:26-38

Let it be done unto me, according to your word.

Today's Gospel Proclamation takes us to a little village in Galilee. Imagine the fear and confusion in the mind of young Mother Mary when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. In the 'Yes' of Mother Mary was the answer, which turned the world around. The broken connection between the Creator and His creation was bridged again. God and humans became one when God took flesh in the womb of Mother Mary. The prophecy and the promise of Isaiah was fulfilled at the annunciation. The Lord Jesus who was in the womb of Mother Mary is in the Holy Eucharist today in a different form. The Letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus was given a body to do God's will. Jesus allowed this Body to be crucified. Mother Mary gave up her will and in her own way was crucified when she said 'Yes' to God. The mystery of incarnation continues in our lives when we receive the Holy Eucharist. We are called to worship and adore Him. We become anointed and blessed, and His body unites with our bodies and Heaven invades our hearts.

Prayer: Abba Father, help us to say yes to You. May we learn from our Blessed Mother in the same manner that Jesus learnt from her to say yes to You. Amen.

Saturday March 26

Third Week of Lent

Hosea
6:1-6

Psalm
51:3-4,18-21

Luke
18:9-14

We need to be humble like Jesus.

God pleads with his people to return to him; "it is love I desire and not sacrifice and knowledge of God than holocausts". The Gospel proclamation shows the contrast of the Publican and the Pharisee, one repentant, begging for mercy and the other self-righteous, proud of his achievements. Jesus says that the Publican went home justified in his true repentance. Which category do we resonate with? Maybe some of us are oblivious of this, because we are seeking God in the wrong places. As we reflect on the readings during the weeks of Lent, a beautiful theme emerges: conversion of our hearts. Renewal is nothing less than the death and resurrection of Jesus becoming operative in our own lives. In a meditation on the humility of God, theologian Richard Veras says "The only begotten son of God...reveals to us that he is gentle and humble of heart. He continually invites us to come to him and to depend upon him in weakness and weariness. His humility calls to our humility, that we may be united with him in truth and love."

Prayer: Abba Father, may we seek your mercy and be united in your truth and love through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday March 27

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Joshua
5:9-12

Psalm
34:2-7

2 Corinthians
5:17-21

Luke
15:1-3,11-32

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

We hear the familiar parable of the prodigal son in today's Gospel proclamation and the message is loud and clear. We have heard many preachings on the story. Through the parable, we know that Jesus is trying to affirm one ultimate truth about our Father in heaven: He is love and His love is for sinners and righteous alike. In other words, our Father is attracted to the weak and lost, sinful and unworthy, big and small, weak and strong and the list goes on.

Often when we read this parable, the tendency is to identify ourselves with the character of the prodigal son and naturally be grateful for our Father's love and acceptance. I feel that many of us have moved beyond this point of wasteful and sinful living. At one point or another, by the sheer grace of God, we have returned to the Father and started to live right. Therefore, now, we can easily identify ourselves with the righteous elder son. However, just as it was for the elder son in the parable, trying to do the right thing may have taken its toll on us. We try to keep the rules, live right and love others who are placed in our life with little or no joy in our hearts. We sometimes feel that all the good we do is left unnoticed. We see people who live recklessly, blessed with greater wealth and recognition than we have and even though we try to put on a holy façade, our hearts are crying out. We have gone cold and bitter.

We begin to question the Lord and grow uneasy by the minute. And our Lord sees us in our misery...He sees our long faces...He knows our heart and He speaks to us, ever so gently and assures us 'My son, my daughter, you are with me always and all I have is yours' (Luke 15:31). He is assuring us that He sees our efforts and good work and is pleased with us even when it seems as though we toil for nothing. Our Lord is reminding us that there is no need for us to struggle with our own strength, for He is there, waiting to take His rightful place in our hearts. And as we allow the Lord to take control, acknowledging our inabilities and weaknesses, His presence would make us new. As St. Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, when we choose to live in Christ by allowing Him to work within us, we indeed become a new creation, fully restored, loved and forgiven.

Therefore, today, no matter in whose shoes we see we fit in, there is hope. Because for our sake "God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21). Let us allow the Lord into our hearts and allow His goodness to grow within us so that walking in His ways become effortless.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we not grow weary in doing good but forever delight in Your ways. Amen.

Monday March 28

Fourth Week of Lent

Isaiah
65:17-21

Psalm
30:2,4-6,11-13

John
4:43-54

Trusting ourselves vs faith in God.

Trusting in ourselves is often based on our own capabilities. But faith entails believing in God's providence in the midst of our emptiness. We need to have faith, even at times where there is little or no physical evidence to believe. Is my discipleship based on faith? Because without faith we cannot please God. It was through faith that great people like Abraham became pleasing personalities to God. The Gospel proclamation says "The man had faith in the word that Jesus spoke to him." Today the Lord Jesus is expecting the same faith, which could be quite challenging because of our human frailties, but God knows our weakness. In the midst of that frailty, Jesus is calling us to believe him wholeheartedly. Once we start to believe, our faith can move mountains. Streams of water will flow from the barren land. Living water will flow into our spiritual and physical lives. The more we cling on to God's promise, the more we will be able to walk closely with God and hear his voice.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I trust in you in difficult moments. Help me to walk with you and hold your loving hand. Amen.

Tuesday March 29

Fourth Week of Lent

Ezekiel
47:1-9,12

Psalm
46:2-3,5-6,8-9

John
5:1-16

Healed, forgiven and set free.

"Do you want to be healed?" The Lord asks us the same question today. Often we keep on lamenting over our hurtful pasts, physical illnesses, sinful addictions and so many other things which lead us to feel depressed and frustrated. We claim to be helpless over these situations but the Lord in His mercy is offering us healing and freedom just as he did to the paralytic whom we read about in today's Gospel proclamation. Although he had no one to put him into the waters of the pool of Bethzatha, he received his healing and salvation directly from the Lord; the source of life giving waters. It is the will of the Lord that we be healed, forgiven and set free. In fact, it is all just one step of faith away because the mercy of the Lord is always flowing like a river that never ceases. But are we ready to respond to the words of Jesus immediately, just as the paralytic did with complete trust and confidence? Are we ready to shake off the dust of our sin and get up and walk in the new life that Christ offers us?

Prayer: Abba Father, washed by the blood of Jesus may I walk in a life of holiness. Amen.

Wednesday March 30

Fourth Week of Lent

Isaiah
49:8-15

Psalm
145:8-9,13-14,17-18

John
5:17-30

Climb the ladder to intimacy.

In the reading from Isaiah 49:8 the Lord says, "I have formed you and made you to be my Covenant with my people." It speaks of the close involvement of the Lord in our lives. We often feel orphaned and alone in this world but the truth is that the Lord has been there while we were being formed in the womb and right through our lives. This same relationship is shared between our Lord Jesus and the Father while in His earthly life and for all eternity. John 5:20 says that "the Father loves the Son and shows everything he does and he will show him even greater things than these so that you will be amazed." We are called to such intimacy. There was a monk named St. John Climacus who lived in the 6th-7th century. He was one such person who desired such intimacy with the Lord that he hid away for 20 years reading the lives of saints and spending long hours in prayer. His book titled 'the Ladder of prayer' consists of 30 steps into intimacy with the Father and is widely read during Lent to enable a deeper union with Jesus.

Prayer: Abba Father, we pray for a deep thirst to live in a greater union with you, your Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thursday March 31

Fourth Week of Lent

Exodus
32:7-14

Psalm
106:19-23

John
5:31-47

Christ is alive - meet him.

In today's Gospel proclamation the Lord Jesus stresses that God the Father sent him to be the Messiah, while St John the Baptist was the Messenger. The Lord tells the people that he does only what the Father tells him to do and sees only what the Father wants him to see. That is why Catholic Bible scholars say that essentially Christianity is Christ alive, while there is also a place for dogmas and doctrines, prayer services, novenas and other devotions. If Christ alive is Christianity, then who is a Christian? In addition to our baptism we need to be committed to Jesus personally. A Christian is a person who has a deep and growing relationship with the living Christ. St Paul's case is an example of this. As we read in Acts 9, Paul met Jesus in a dramatic way on the way to Damascus. The Lord revealed his identity and Paul realises that when he was persecuting Christians, he was persecuting the Lord. This is evidence that Christ is alive and there will be a powerful manifestation of his presence when we seek and do God's will.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you for giving us your Son who died for us, now live in us and is the way for us to gain eternal life. Amen.

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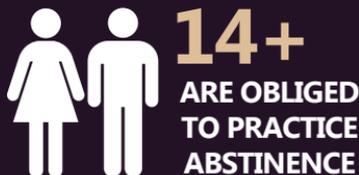
					
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Guide to Lenten Fasting & Abstinence

When? From "Ash Wednesday" to "Good Friday"

Who?



Those outside the age limits and those whose state in life (e.g. pregnant women, manual laborers, those who are ill) may be excused from the requirements of fasting and abstinence, but are encouraged to take up some other form of penitence or acts of charity or piety.

What?



NO MEAT



FISH IS OK

Meals!



1 Regular Meal



AND 2 Smaller Meals

FAST = Reduction of food | ABSTINENCE = Refraining from eating meat

Other ways of fasting can be included by keeping away from entertainment, such as social media, partying, and any other forms of enjoyments.

On Our Knees - In His Hands is a book of reflections and aid to prayer, based on the daily readings of the mass. Its purpose is to help Catholics and other Christians engaged in the normal hustle and bustle of life to discover God's presence and direction in the practical situations they are placed in. This is made possible by a group of writers who themselves are lay people living at the heart of busy day-to-day life.

