

Lent Companion

2019

Lent is a journey to prepare to participate fully in the joy of Easter. During this time, we are called to change our habits and free our hearts to better serve God and others.

As Pope Benedict explained, “Lent offers us the opportunity to deepen the meaning and value of our Christian lives, and it stimulates us to rediscover the mercy of God so that we, in turn, become more merciful toward our brothers and sisters.”

This Lenten Companion invites you to reflect on this journey and truly experience this challenging but merciful season of authentic conversion.

Think how you could use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or other social media to help you this lent. Let is a time to acknowledge our failings and turn back to God. Our small sacrifices during Lent remind us of Jesus’ redeeming sacrifice.

Ash Wednesday March 6th

Joel 2:12-18

Psalms 51:3-4, 5-6av, 12-13, 14, & 17

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

In today's gospel Matthew says "Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you." This is a great reminder to us all as we start this Lenten Journey. We should not be screaming from the rooftops that you are giving up this or doing that. We are called to give alms or sacrifice in silence for God will see all the things we do in the silence. This lent I challenge you to do a couple of things firstly give up something and don't tell anyone just let it be between you and God. Secondly do something that makes you a better person; this could be building up your self-esteem, this could be reading the daily readings or going to daily mass during the week, you could also make a point to read the story of the saint of the day every day. The second one is harder than you think but whenever I do it I end Lent stronger in my faith and closer to God.

This year I will be using social media to help me appreciate all that God has given me in my life. I will post a photo on my Instagram every day. If you would like to follow my Lenten journey, please feel free to follow me on Instagram at @talinn1993. I will also be posting something on the St. Joseph's Instagram every day @st.josephscatholic

Thursday March 7th

Sacrifice

What is Lent? Why do we give things up during Lent and lean into praying more and giving to those in need? Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when we get ashes on our foreheads. Ashes in the Old Testament were an outward sign of repentance. They hold the same significance for us. Marked with our ashes, we remind ourselves and one another to turn back toward God. When we receive ashes on our foreheads, we hear the words, “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.” This reveals to us what Lent is all about. It is a time for us to turn away from sin and turn toward God. The ashes are an outward expression of what we will be doing the next 40 days of Lent – Beginning again and refreshing our relationship with God. Lent is a time in which we reflect on the areas of our lives where we have been failing to love God and put Him first. Through the practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we work to better our relationship with Jesus.

But why do we do this for 40 days? *Read Luke 4:1-2.* We follow the example of Jesus. He went into the desert for 40 days to pray and fast before He began His public ministry. So too, we spend 40 days preparing our hearts for Easter and making more room in our lives and our hearts for God. We should live our Lent with a purpose, we should see these 40 days as a great opportunity to grow closer to God. Just like the example of a tree that needs to be pruned and cut back, we too have to remove the things in our lives that are getting in the way of our relationship with God.

Friday March 8th

Matthew 6:16

Jesus says to the disciples “When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrite. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting...” Today you are fasting from meat and are probably, like me, craving a cheeseburger more than ever, since you should not have one. But keep it to yourself conceal yours struggle and offer it up to the Lord. He is here to help you to give you strength to do all things all you have to do is ask!

You may be asking yourself why can't we eat meat anyway? Here is why!

- 1) On Fridays, we refrain from eating meat since Jesus sacrificed his flesh for us on Good Friday.
- 2) Traditionally, meat was more expensive and eaten only during times of feasting and rejoicing.
- 3) Why is fish permitted on Fridays? Fish doesn't belong to the ‘flesh meats.’ The Latin word for meat is “Caro,” from which we get words like carnivore and carnivorous applies to flesh meant and does not include fish.
- 4) What is considered flesh? Flesh meat includes any meat from poultry or mammals, such as beef, chicken, and pork. Products that come from these animals can be consumed on Fridays, such as milk and eggs.

Saturday March 9th

Matthew 6:17

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them... but when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.” This is not to say DON’T pray in public it is saying don’t be a showboat about it. You should pray before ALL meals even in the lunchroom at school or at your work lunches. But your prayer life is between you and God and it should be kept there it is no one else business or concern focus on you and God this Lent and he will repay you tenfold.

First Sunday of Lent March 10th

FAST

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalm 9:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

Today's Gospel talks about Jesus going into the desert for 40 days and being tempted by the devil. This is a good reminder of why we have 40 days of Lent 40 days to pray 40 days grow even closer to our Lord. Jesus goes into the desert and does not eat for 40 DAYS can you imagine... at the end of those days the Devil came to him, as he comes to us every day, he offered him bread to which Jesus say's "one cannot live on bread alone." He offers him power over the whole world if he will just turn his back on God, Jesus says "You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve." The devil tries to turn it back on Jesus quoting scripture too, yes the Devil knows scripture and he is trying to twist it and turn it to trick us to follow him. Then Jesus basically drops the mike saying, "You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test." BOOM the devil holds no power over Jesus and we can't let him hold power over us either. Jesus held the fast for 40 days with all these temptations and so can you. When we fill our lives with obligations, relationships, or ways of thinking that distract us from focusing on Jesus, we are less able to experience life to its fullest.

This week challenges you to create space in your life for the full life Jesus came to give us. Over the next few days we are going to talk about different things you can be doing this Lent to make it more fruitful.

March 11th

Give Up Sin & Carry Out Duties In Life

To carry out duties in life, serve God by living out your vocation in love each day. Be a good mother, father, teacher, worker, student, religious minister, priest... God is calling each of us to be a living sacrifice. Offer your daily life through Christ! My challenge to you today is quite simple Kids get up from the dinner table and do the dishes tonight, clean the kitchen and dining room, then clean your bedroom, get your homework done. Don't make your parents nag you about doing these things.... Parents I challenge you to tuck your kids into bed tonight (whether they are 6 or 18) Pray with them before going to bed I will put the prayer my mom said with me every night before bed at the bottom of the page!

To give up sin, show your love for God by keeping his commandments, especially by loving others as he has loved us. Turn away from sins, laziness in prayer and unwillingness to do better. Every day the Devil is trying to find a way into your life he is a battlefield we are living on... There is a battle in the world yes but there is one in our hearts too. The Devils singular goal is for YOU not to go to heaven he is jealous of you and is doing everything in his power to ruin your life. Don't let him he sends temptations our way and puts sin in our path as a way to separate us from God. God never abandons us but he gave us Free Will to choose. So, what are you going to choose?

Lord Look down from Heaven about,
and touch this special Child with Love.
Protect and Guide this Little One,
Till each and every day is done.
Remind us often that it's true,
This little life is a Gift from You.
A miracle you've sent our way
Lord Bless This Little Child Today

Amen.

March 12th

Pray

PRAY. PRAY. PRAY. Be in constant prayer. Pray in the morning, evening and mealtimes. Pray alone and share in the liturgy. Pray for your family and friends, for those who suffer, and for the Church and the world.

The first practice that the Church gives us to help us grow closer to God during our Lenten journey is prayer. Just like a tree without branches is really not a tree at all, a relationship with God is impossible without prayer. Prayer is an essential part of growing closer to God because it is the foundation of a relationship with Him. Prayer is a conversation with God. If you want to have a friendship with someone, it is important that you talk with him or her and spend intentional time together. How many of us get annoyed when our friend is on the phone when we are trying to talk to him or her? How many of us would be sad if our friend fell asleep when we were talking? How many of us would wonder if someone was our friend if they walked away and did not want to talk to us? If we truly want to turn our hearts to God, we have to have a relationship with Him; and part of having a relationship with another person is communication and spending quality time together. That is what prayer is. We set aside time in our day to have a conversation which God in order to learn more about Him and talk to Him about what is going on in our lives. There are different forms of prayer and there are also different ways you can pray. Prayer can be as simple as sitting with God. You could also learn more about Him by reading the Bible or praying the rosary and reflecting on His life. You can find great examples of how to follow Him by reading about the lives of different Saints. Just as you like to have the attention of your friends when you're spending time together, it is important that you are not distracted by your phone or in a place that is going to make you want to fall asleep when you pray. Prayer is essential to our relationship with god – and a relationship with God is essential to living a happy life. When we know God, and know we are loved unconditionally by Him, we realize how present He is within our lives. Knowing that He saves, protects, and guides us, we cannot help but be filled with happiness, joy, security, and love through all stages of our lives.

March 13th

Do Good Works & Give Alms

To do good works, help those in need, pray for other people and be ready to serve them in their time of need; help Jesus by helping others. This is so easy and most of us do it already! But we can always improve right? Open the door for some, help someone in need, shovel your neighbor's driveway, mow your neighbor's yard! There are little things we can do every day to make this world a better place little acts of kindness that can bring a smile to someone's face and let them see Jesus in you!

To give alms, help the poor and support the good works of the Church. Give cheerfully to God, who has given us everything we have. Almsgiving is a practice in which we give to those who are poor and less fortunate – this can be through giving of our money and giving of our time. This is something we are called to do throughout the year, in particular through tithing to our parish. We give monetary support to our parish in thanksgiving for all it gives to us. During Lent, we are called to focus more intently on almsgiving and reconsider what we have been doing to give back to God. Almsgiving is certainly “the right thing to do,” but we are called first and foremost to take care of those in need because Christ asks us to. *Read Matthew 25:34-40.* Jesus has always made it abundantly clear that we are called to take care of one another. We are called to help the needy, the poor, the lonely, the homeless, and those who are left ours. This is a part of our duty as Catholics and Christians, to imitate our Lord who had a heart for the poor and asks – almost even requires – us to have the same attitude. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ. We are the body of Christ; when one of us is suffering, all of us are suffering. One of the important aspects of almsgiving is that we are not called to simply give our leftovers – we are called to give from our first fruits. *Read Genesis 4:3-5.* The Lord was pleased with Abel because he gave his very best, the first of his flock, as an offering to God. On the other hand, Cain gave Him a lesser offering from his harvest. WE are called to be like Abel, recognizing that everything we have comes from God and therefore we should give back the very best of what we have.

March 14th

Do Meditative Readings

Doing meditative reading is AMAZING it is a way to nourish your faith by spending time in quiet reading and reflection. Prayerful reading of God's word each day opens our hearts to the Spirit and lets God's thoughts and ways influence ours. One of my favorite ways to do meditative readings is doing Lectio Divina bellow is a GREAT image that walks you through how to do this meditation with any readings.

HOW DO YOU PRAY THE LECTIO DIVINA?

Lectio Divina is a practice of **scriptural reading**. It involves meditating on a passage of the Bible, preferably the **Gospel of the day**.

Steps to pray:

- 1. INVOKE**
Invite the Holy Spirit to guide the reading of the Scripture.
- 2. READ**
Ask yourself: What is this passage saying? If you can, use a Bible commentary.
- 3. MEDITATE**
In a moment of silence, try to listen to the voice of God.
- 4. PRAY**
Begin to dialogue with the Lord and open yourself to his will.
- 5. CONTEMPLATE**
Listen closely with your heart and put into practice what he has told you.

How to pray? 10 ways of praying

CatholicLink

March 15th

Abstain & Fast

What is the difference between Abstaining and Fasting???

To abstain means to give up meat or other desirable foods during Lent, especially on Friday, the day of Christ's saving death on the cross.

Fasting is cutting down on the amount of richness of food and drink. An empty stomach can lead to more attentive prayer. Fasting during Lent is the practice of giving something up for 40 days in preparation for Easter. The reason we fast is because it is a powerful tool that helps us learn self-discipline – the ability to control our feelings and emotions – which can help us resist temptations. We are called to give up something during Lent, as well as participate in the mandated days of fasting that everyone in the Church does together. We abstain from meat every Friday as another form of self-discipline and remembrance of all Christ gave up for us on Good Friday. If you are older than 14, you are also called to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by eating less food than you normally would. This is another way to learn self-discipline and help us overcome bigger temptations that we might face later in life. During Lent, the practice of going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and fasting can be incredibly powerful for our lives. When we go to the Sacrament, we are forgiven of our sins, and through the discipline of learning from fasting, we learn how to better avoid sin in the future. It is important to pick something to fast from for the right reasons. It should not be about going on a diet to lose weight or doing something extreme for attention. You should fast from something that will be challenging, but that will also help you get rid of things that keep your heart from God, so you can grow in relationship with Him. The void that is created by fasting should be filled with something that strengthens your relationship with God.

March 16th

Control Desire for Possessions & Control Desire for Entertainment

Build up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. Cut down on material possessions, eliminate frills, lessen wants, share yourself - your time and your talents - with others. Also, too much entertainment - TV, movies, radio, spectator sports and other distractions - can lead to less or not time for the works of the Lord. In Matthew chapter five we learn about the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus says

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

~Matthew 5:3-12

What does this mean? Let me break it down for you

- Blessed are you when you are not addicted to stuff.
- This does not sound like a formula for happiness... but what is Jesus really saying here... Blessed are you who are not addicted to good feelings.
- Being meek does not mean being weak or a pushover, a better word would be gentle. Blessed are you who are gentle
- Righteousness is doing Gods' will so Blessed are those who Hunger and Thirst to do God's will.
- Blessed are you who forgive others and do not dwell on how much it hurts. We are called to love those who do not always love us.
- Blessed are you when your heart is free from sin and practices chastity
- Blessed are those who have Peace of Mind and Peace of Heart
- Blessed are you when you have courage to defend the world today.
- REJOICE AND BE GLAD, FOR YOUR REWARD WILL BE GREAT IN HEAVEN!

Second Sunday of Lent March 17th

PRAY

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18
Psalm 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 9:28b-36

Imagine being with the disciples in today's gospel... you are supposed to be praying with Jesus, but you doze off and when you wake up you see Moses and Elijah are there talking with Jesus. This gospel always gets to me that Jesus took his disciples up on a mountain to pray. One of my personal favorite places to experience our Lord, besides in front of the Eucharist, is out in nature. Outside seeing the beautiful Black Hills that God created, that is where I love to pray. Prayer can seem mysterious, either because of doubts about the ability of prayer or because it's difficult to incorporate prayer into daily life.

The challenge for the second week of lent is making time in your day to read and pray the Lord's prayer, then to create your own prayer based on the model of the Lord's Prayer. Some of the greatest examples of prayer are the Saints this week we will be learning about some of the Saints and how they can help us grow in prayer.

A Litany for Lent

We fast from judging others,
but feast on patience.
We fast from apparent differences,
but feast on unity of all life.
We fast from words that pollute,
but feast on words that affirm.
We fast from complaining,
but feast on appreciation.
We fast from bitterness and anger,
but feast on forgiveness and mercy.
We fast from discouragement,
but feast on hope.
We fast from suspicion,
but feast on trust.
We fast from idle gossip,
but feast on purposeful silence.
We fast from problems that overwhelm,
but feast on prayer that strengthens.

March 18th

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Here are excerpts from her book No Greater Love on Prayer!

“I don’t think there is anyone who needs God’s help and grace as much as I do. Sometimes I feel so helpless and weak. I think that is who God uses me. Because I cannot depend on my own strength, I rely on Him twenty-four hours a day... My secret is very simple: I pray. Thorough prayer I became one in love with Christ. I realize that preying to Him is loving Him... Perfect prayer does not consist in many words, but in the fervor of the desire which raises the heart to Jesus... Love to pray. Felt he need to pray often during the day. Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God’s gift of Himself. Ask and seek and your heart will grow big enough to receive Him and keep Him as your own. We want so much to pray properly and then we fail. We get discouraged and give up. If you want to pray better, you must pray more. God allows the failure, but He does not want the discouragement. He wants us to be more childlike, more humble, more grateful in prayer, to remember we all belong to the mystical body of Christ, which is praying always.”

Saint Teresa of Calcutta (aka Mother Teresa) was such a Holy woman, but a humble. I would encourage you to read her Book No Greater Love the above quotation is just from the first 3 pages of the book and there is so much more knowledge to be gained from this wonderful woman!

March 19th

St. Joseph (Patron Saint)

The carpenter Joseph is a familiar figure in the Christmas story. Joseph was engaged to Mary, who would bear our Lord. Neighbors knew Jesus as “The carpenter’s son.” While there are many biblical references to Joseph that confirm the contemporary belief that he was Jesus’ father, there is no record of anything he ever said. Matthew and Luke, the only Gospels that tell us anything about the childhood of Jesus, clearly express that while others “supposed” Joseph to be his father, they themselves affirm the Virgin Birth.

The Gospel of Matthew tells us that Joseph received in a dream a divine revelation regarding the birth of Jesus. Though one imagines the inner conflict and emotions Joseph and Mary must have experienced, the New Testament account does not record any hesitation. The important thing noted in the Gospels is that Joseph responded to God as obedient as Mary. He accepted his place in the divine drama.

The last time we hear anything about Joseph is the account of Jesus’ visit to the Jerusalem temple at the age of twelve. Scholars assume Joseph died before Jesus began his public ministry. It is entirely possible that Jesus took over the responsibilities of Joseph’s carpentry business in those unmentioned years before his baptism in the Jordan by John.

It is a great tribute to Joseph that Jesus spoke of God in terms of a father. Though human fatherhood is but a dim reflection of God’s caring love, it is a starting place for comprehending the love of our Father who is in heaven.

Consecration to Saint Joseph Prayer on next Page

Consecration to St. Joseph
(Of Children by Their Parents)

O glorious St. Joseph,
to you God committed the care
of His only begotten Son
amid the many dangers of this world.

We come to you
and ask you to take under your special protection
the children God has given us.
Through holy baptism they became children of God
and members of His holy Church.
We consecrate them to you today,
that through this consecration
they may become your foster children.
Guard them, guide their steps in life,
form their hearts after the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

St. Joseph,
who felt the tribulation and worry of a parent
when the child Jesus was lost,
protect our dear children for time and eternity.

May you be their father and counselor.
let them, like Jesus,
grow in age as well as in wisdom
and grace before God and men.
Preserve them from the corruption of this world,
and give us the grace one day
to be united with them in heaven forever.

Amen.

March 20th

Saint Pope John Paul II

Though our hearts are made for prayer, it is a true art that requires practice and patience. The good news is that the saints have gone before us and learned how to pray in the midst of many trials and tribulations. Their spiritual wisdom is invaluable and can help us in our own spiritual journeys, giving us encouragement in the daily struggle of prayer.

St. John Paul II was a master of prayer. He prayed for hours each day, interceding for the world and drawing closer and closer in his relationship with God. This is what sustained him during his early life in Nazi-occupied Poland, and it remained the central part of his life while pope.

He wrote much about prayer, often giving practical tips to young people. Here are eight such tips that address various difficulties in prayer and give hope to the soul tempted to abandon prayer.

- “Remember that you are never alone, Christ is with you on your journey every day of your lives! He has called you and chosen you to live in the freedom of the children of God. Turn to Him in prayer and in love. Ask Him to grant you the courage and strength to live in this freedom always. Walk with Him who is ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life.’”
- “The Rosary is my favorite prayer. A marvelous prayer! Marvelous in its simplicity and its depth. In the prayer we repeat many times the words that the Virgin Mary heard from the Archangel, and from her kinswoman Elizabeth.”
- “Prayer, intimate dialogue with the One who is calling you to be His disciples, must come first. Be generous in your active life ... and be deeply immersed in the contemplation of God’s mystery. Make the Eucharist the heart of your day.”
- “Prayer joined to sacrifice constitutes the most powerful force in human history.”
- “If you really wish to follow Christ, if you want your love for him to grow and last, then you must be faithful to prayer. It is the key to the vitality of your life in Christ. Without prayer, your faith and love will die. If you are constant in daily prayer and in the Sunday celebration of Mass, your love for Jesus will increase. And your heart will know deep joy and peace, such as the world could never give.”
- “How did Jesus himself pray? ... we know that his prayer is marked by a spirit of joy and praise.”
- “When it is difficult ... to pray, the most important thing is not to stop praying, not to give up the effort. At these times, turn to the Bible and to the Church’s liturgy. Meditate on the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. Ponder the wisdom and counsel of the apostles and the challenging messages of the prophets. Try to make your own the beautiful prayers of the Psalms.”
- “When you pray, you must realize that prayer is not just asking God for something or seeking special help, even though prayers of petition are true ways of praying. But prayer should also be characterized by thanksgiving and praise, by adoration and attentive listening, by asking God’s pardon and forgiveness. If you follow Jesus’ advice, and pray to God constantly, then you will learn to pray well. God himself will teach you.”

March 21st

Saint Augustine

(From his *Letter to Proba*)

So that we might obtain this life of happiness, he who is true life itself taught us to pray, not in many words as though speaking longer could gain us a hearing. After all, we pray to one who, as the Lord himself tells us, knows what we need before we ask for it. Why he should ask us to pray, when he knows what we need before we ask him, may perplex us if we do not realize that our Lord and God does not want to know what we want (for he cannot fail to know it) but wants us rather to exercise our desire through our prayers, so that we may be able to receive what he is preparing to give us. His gift is very great indeed, but our capacity is too small and limited to receive it. That is why we are told: Enlarge your desires, do not bear the yoke with unbelievers. The deeper our faith, the stronger our hope, the greater our desire, the larger will be our capacity to receive that gift, which is very great indeed. No eye has seen it; it has no color. No ear has heard it; it has no sound. It has not entered man's heart; man's heart must enter into it. In this faith, hope and love we pray always with unwearied desire. However, at set times and seasons we also pray to God in words, so that by these signs we may instruct ourselves and mark the progress we have made in our desire, and spur ourselves on to deepen it. The more fervent the desire, the more worthy will be its fruit. When the Apostle tells us: Pray without ceasing, he means this: Desire unceasingly that life of happiness which is nothing if not eternal, and ask it of him who alone is able to give it.

March 22nd

Saint Teresa of Avila

If you have ever had the fortune (or misfortune) to talk to me about Saints you have heard me talk about this amazing woman as my “adoptive” saint. I learned about her when I went to Avila Spain in 2011 and have not stopped learning about her, turning to her in prayer and asking for her guidance. I am in the process of reading her autobiography titled *The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila* and I am falling more in love with her! This is what she says on prayer

I could wish, to, I had permission to say how often at this time I failed in my duty to God, because I was not leaning on the strong stormy sea, falling and rising, but rising to no good purpose, seeing that I went and fell again. My life was one of perfection; but it was so mean that I scarcely made any account whatever of venial sins, and though of mortal sins I was afraid, I was not so afraid of them as I ought to have been, because I did not avoid the perilous occasions of them. I may say that it was the most painful life that can be imagined, because I had no sweetness in God and no pleasure in the world.

When I was in the midst of the pleasures of the world, the remembrance of what I owed to God made me sad, and when I was praying to God my worldly affections disturbed me. This is so painful a struggle that I know not how I could have borne it for a month, let alone for so many years. Nevertheless, I can trace distinctly the great mercy of our Lord to me, while thus immersed in the world, in that I had still the courage to pray. I say courage, because I know of nothing in the whole world which requires greater courage than plotting treason against the King, knowing that He knows it, and yet never withdrawing from His presence; for, granting that we are always in the presence of God, yet it seems to me that those who pray are in His presence in a very different sense; for they, as it were, see that He is looking upon them, while others may be for days together without even once recollecting that God sees them.

This woman as a child convinced her brother to run away with her to tell the Mass about Jesus so that they could ultimately become martyrs.... Can you say you have ever strived to be a martyr? Later in life as you can see in the quote she struggled with the lures of the world and struggled to fight against them. And only through prayer was she able to draw closer to Jesus if you were to ask her though, I do not think, she would say she was ever close to Him...

St. Teresa of Avila Pray for Us

March 23rd

Saint's you should be praying with!

- 1) The Saint of the Day
 - a. For those of us who work in the world, it can be easy to overlook the saint of the day. We may not even hear about the Saint at Mass, if it's a minor celebration like an optional memorial. Even a brief prayer with the Saint of the day, every day, calls on one of God's most straightforward means of sanctification of time and place.
- 2) The Saint of your Baptism
 - a. Hopefully you're already celebrating the anniversary of your baptism. Who was the Saint of the day that day? The Saint was celebrating your entrance into God's family long before you were. The unfolding of your baptismal graces happens throughout your lifetime. This Saint, in other words, can be lifelong friend and guide.
- 3) Your Confirmation Saint
 - a. You likely chose this Saint yourself. How's your devotion with that Saint going? Saying "yes" to the inspirations for the Holy Spirit is a daily act, and your confirmation Saint can be a strong helper.
- 4) Your namesake Saint (if you have one)
 - a. Someone likely chose your first name for you. If it's a Saint's name, you've got a constant reminder of that Saint's patronage - a great person to pray with.
- 5) Your Middle Namesake Saint
 - a. You probably have a middle name, not your confirmation name, that someone chose for you. What's the story behind that name? If it's a Saint, does that saint's example bring out another aspect of holiness to reflect and act on?
- 6) The Saint of your First Communion
 - a. This Saint rejoiced to see you receive the greatest gift: Christ Himself. Just like parents and sponsors celebrate their children's first communion, so do the Saints who watch as their spiritual children receive the Eucharist on their feast day. A good person to pray with before receiving communion, or at Adoration.
- 7) A Saint of your career in General
 - a. If you're a writer, St. Francis de Sales should be someone you pray with. Good ol' St. Florian for the firefighters, and St. Matthew if you're an accountant. As many of us struggle with keeping work in its proper place - not too much, not too little - the patron Saint of our work can be a big help.
- 8) Your Guardian Angel
 - a. Forgotten about his one since you were a kid? Many adult Saints had extraordinary relationships with their guardian angels.
- 9) The Saint of the Church you attend
 - a. St. Joseph's or St. Paul's, your home church is named after some pretty awesome saints. Praying with that Saint before Mass or activities there invokes a powerful patron.
- 10) The Saint of your favorite hobby or sport.

You can find an AMAZING list of saint names with their feast days and what they are the patrons of at <https://www.catholic.org/saints/>

Third Sunday of Lent March 24th

GIVE

Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15

Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8, 11

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12

John 4:5-42

Today's Gospel says "A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." This gospel challenges us to give what we can to Jesus, this woman who was not a Jew, but gave Jesus water, water is free, but she had a bucket and he did not and she shared with him. What a powerful image that is. What about giving of our God given gifts, how are you building the kingdom of heaven on earth? When we give of ourselves by using the gifts God has given us to serve others, we are able to uniquely worship God.

This week challenges us to explore our gifts and talents and then creatively use them to serve those around us.

March 25th

How You Can Give to The Church?

THIS IS NOT ME ASKING YOU FOR MONEY! Guys let me tell you as a Youth Director there is nothing we love at the church more than someone who walks in and says how can I help, what can I do! (we accept and appreciate all ages') The Church does not belong to just the Pope, Bishops, and Priest. It is ours and we should take some ownership of that and do what we can to make it better. Whether it is serving in some capacity at mass (Altar servers, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Musicians, Ushers, Greeters, or Sacristans). Maybe you have a special gift you can give back to the church and the programs we do here, (like working with the youth 😊) we are always on the lookout for people to help but we love when people walk into the office and volunteer! I grew up watching my mom volunteer at the church helping our Faith Formation Director (Mary) with anything and everything. Mary always knew that if she needed help with ANYTHING she could call my mom and she would be there willing to work and get the job done. This was such an amazing example to me and my sisters what a great witness my mother was to us in giving what she could to the church! So pray about it how can you give back to the church?

March 26th

How Can You Give to Your Community?

After working at the church for almost a year I realized that even though I LOVE my job I needed to maybe give to the community in other ways as well! Not knowing where the heck to start I went to a Young Professionals “Social” where they were talking about different organization to get involved in in the community and one of them was the planning committee for the YPG (renamed The Hook) I joined the planning committee and have loved every moment of it. It has been a great way to give back to the community and make some wonderful friends. I would encourage you to do the same what are some groups in the Spearfish and Belle Fourche Areas you can get involved in? You are a part of your communities. If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity St. Vincent De Paul always appreciates any help people are able to give!

March 27th

How Can You Give to Your Family?

Just like you are a part of the Church Family and Communities you are a part of your family at home. Parents, what can you be doing to help your family grow together and grow closer to Christ? Do you pray together before meals? Do you tuck your kids into bed every night and pray with them? Do you spend real time with your kids? Kids, do you help around the house? Do you do what your parents tell you or ask you to do when they ask you? Are you kind to your siblings? Do you treat everyone at home the way you want to be treated?

I'm not perfect and Lord knows my family is not perfect but there is always room for improvement in building the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and it starts in your home with your family!

March 28th

Wise Words of Those who Gave Everything
(Part 1)

Saint Teresa of Calcutta (aka Mother Teresa)

“As Lent is a time for greater love, listen to Jesus’ thirst... He knows your weakness. He wants only your love, wants only the chance to love you.”

Pope Benedict XVI on Lent:

“Lent is like a long ‘retreat’ during which we can turn back into ourselves and listen to the voice of God, in order to defeat the temptations of the Evil One.”

“EACH YEAR, Lent offers us a PROVIDENTIAL opportunity to deepen the MEANING and VALUE of our Christian lives, and it STIMULATES us to rediscover the MERCY OF GOD so that we, in turn, become MORE MERCIFUL toward our BROTHERS AND SISTERS.”

Catherine Doherty on Lent:

“Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves... What is it that stands between us and God? Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life, the life of the Spirit? whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out, without a moment’s hesitation.”

March 29th

Wise Words of Those who Gave Everything
(Part 2)

Pope Francis on Lent:

Fast from HURTING WORDS and say KIND WORDS.

Fast from SADNESS and be filled with GRATITUDE.

Fast from ANGER and be filled with PATIENCE.

Fast from PESSIMISM and be filled with HOPE.

Fast from WORRIES and TRUST IN GOD.

Fast from COMPLAINTS and contemplate SIMPLICITY.

Fast from PRESSURES and be PRAYERFUL.

Fast from BITTERNESS and fill your heart with JOY.

Fast from SELFISHNESS and be COMPASSIONATE to others.

Fast from GRUDGES and be RECONCILED.

Fast from WORDS and be SILENT so you can listen.

March 30th

There are so many ways to GIVE this Lenten season you can give in your prayer life, you can give financially to group or individual people, you can give to your family, your parish, your community, you can give your time. We all have so much to give and God is ready to receive it! Last week we looked at the saint how much did they GIVE in their lives to the Church. It does not matter if you are 5, 105, or anywhere in between there is a way for you to give.

How are you giving of yourself this Lent?

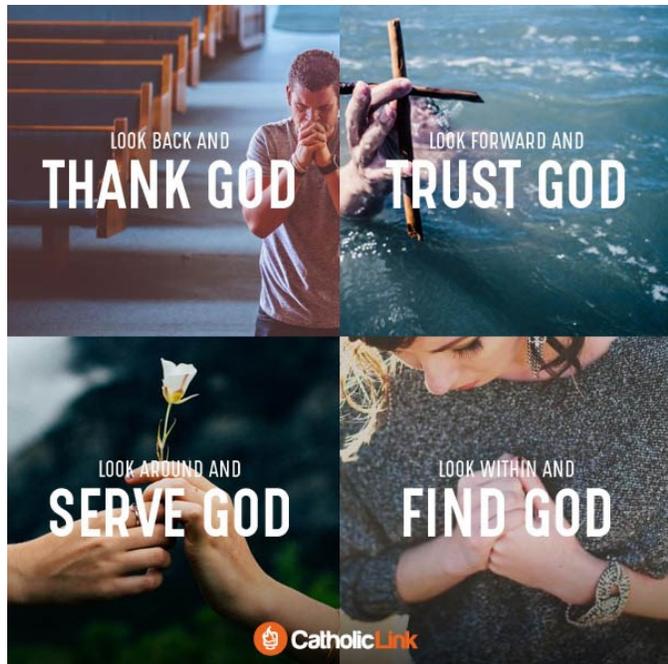
Fourth Sunday of Lent March 31st

THANK

Joshua 5:9a, 10-12
Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7
2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

One Sunday when I was rather young my mom said to me “Taylor listen to this reading I think you will like the story today” and it was the Gospel of the Prodigal Son. I have always remembered that, what a sign of a mother’s love. I always loved listening to the stories told at mass, but did not have much time for the homilies since, I did not feel, they were applicable to me... But back to the story. Today’s gospel is the story of the Prodigal Son. When I think of this story I think of my mother’s love, I have never asked her, but I like to think that she wanted me to remember this story, to remember that I will always have a home in my mother’s arms. That no matter where I go or what I do home will always be wherever my mom is. I am so thankful every day that God gave me my mom. She is perfect in every way. I know when I was in high school I did not necessarily think this but looking back everything, she did she did for my sisters and me. I will always be grateful for the sacrifices my mom, and dad, made for me. Thankfulness is more than an expression; it is an attitude of life. When we are thankful we are better able to experience blessings in our lives.

The challenge for this week is to thank someone in your life who has expressed God’s goodness to you. This week also challenges you to express God’s goodness to others in your life.



April 1st

Go to a weekday Mass as a family this week

How blessed are we that we can attend mass (almost) whenever we want? We live in a country where we can go to Mass and received the Eucharist EVERY DAY! We can be living tabernacles when we receive Jesus in the Eucharist; that is what we become, a tabernacle. Tabernacles are beautiful and elegant and perfect. You can go to mass, receive Jesus, and become a tabernacle, you become beautiful and perfect like how God created you. And to be able to do that as a family... how wonderful is that? When spending time together with your family memories and bonds are made so let those memories be at mass and the church!

April 2nd

Why Go to Mass?

Yesterday I challenged you to go to a weekday mass along with Sunday mass but Why Go To Mass at all?

1) It's a Commandment

The 3rd Commandment compels us to "keep holy the sabbath." Simply put, it means attending Mass and avoiding work that would keep us from doing so.

2) It Originated from Christ

Christ Himself said "Do this in memory of me," instituting the Eucharist for the Church.

3) The Church Calls for It

The Vatican II document Lumen Gentium calls the Mass "the source and summit of the Christian life." How can we keep fueling the fire of faith without receiving the physical presence of Christ? Communion with god is every life's ultimate goal.

4) For the Kids

If you sing, they'll sing. If you respond, they'll respond. If you're prayerful, they will be too. Keep the Eucharist at the center of your life and so will they.

5) Sharing in Faith Together

Being a Christian isn't an exclusively private thing. Christianity is a communal religion, as is our primary form of worship in the Mass. We are called to be Christians together.

April 3rd

Eucharistic Adoration (Father John Paul)

(From a Church document titled “Sacrament of Redemption”)

[134.] “The worship of the Eucharist outside the Sacrifice of the Mass is a tribute of inestimable value in the life of the Church. Such worship is closely linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.”[227] Therefore both public and private devotion to the Most Holy Eucharist even outside Mass should be vigorously promoted, for by means of it the faithful give adoration to Christ, truly and really present,[228] the “High Priest of the good things to come”[229] and Redeemer of the whole world. “It is the responsibility of sacred Pastors, even by the witness of their life, to support the practice of Eucharistic worship and especially exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the eucharistic species.”[230]

[135.] The faithful “should not omit making visits during the day to the Most Holy Sacrament, as a proof of gratitude, a pledge of love, and a debt of the adoration due to Christ the Lord who is present in it.”[231] For the contemplation of Jesus present in the Most Holy Sacrament, as a communion of desire, powerfully joins the faithful to Christ, as is splendidly evident in the example of so many Saints.[232] ‘Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, a church in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved should be open to the faithful for at least some hours each day, so that they can spend time in prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament.’[233]

[136.] The Ordinary should diligently foster Eucharistic adoration, whether brief or prolonged or almost continuous, with the participation of the people. For in recent years in so many places “adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament is also an important daily practice and becomes an inexhaustible source of holiness”, although there are also places “where there is evident almost a total lack of regard for worship in the form of eucharistic adoration.”[234]

[137.] Exposition of the Most Holy Eucharist must always be carried out in accordance with the prescriptions of the liturgical books.[235] Before the Most Holy Sacrament either reserved or exposed, the praying of the Rosary, which is admirable “in its simplicity and even its profundity”, is not to be excluded either.[236] Even so, especially if there is Exposition, the character of this kind of prayer as a contemplation of the mystery of the life of Christ the Redeemer and the Almighty Father’s design of salvation should be emphasized, especially by making use of readings taken from Sacred Scripture.[237]

[138.] Still, the Most Holy Sacrament, when exposed, must never be left unattended even for the briefest space of time. It should therefore be arranged that at least some of the faithful always be present at fixed times, even if they take alternating turns.

April 4th

Attend (or read at home) the Stations of the Cross.

One of the most powerful versions of the Stations of the cross is Mary's Way of the Cross here is an abbreviated version of the story I encourage you to read the full version if you cannot attend the Stations of the Cross tomorrow night.

First Station Jesus Is Condemned to Die

It was early Friday morning when I saw my son. That was the first glimpse I had of him since they took him away. His bruised and bleeding skin sent a sword of pain deep into my heart and tears down my cheeks. Then Pilate, from his chair of judgment, asked the crowd why they wanted my son executed. All around me they shouted, "Crucify him!" I wanted to plead with them to stop, but I knew this had to be. So I stood by and cried silently.

Second Station Jesus Takes His Cross

Regaining a little strength, I walked with the crowds to the entrance of the square. A door flew open and my son stumbled out, the guards laughing behind him. Two men dragged over a heavy wooden cross and dropped it on his shoulders. Then they shoved him down the road. My pain for him was unbearable. I wanted to take the cross from him and carry it myself. But I knew this had to be, so I walked on silently.

Third Station Jesus Falls the First Time

I followed close behind my son as he stumbled toward Calvary. Nothing had ever hurt me more than to see him in such pain. I saw the cross digging into his shoulders. My heart dropped when I saw him fall face to the ground, the heavy cross landing squarely on his back. For the moment I thought my beloved son was dead. Now, my whole body began to tremble. Then the guards kicked him. He rose slowly and began to walk again, yet they still whipped him. I wanted to protect him with my own body. But, I know this had to be, so I walked on and wept silently.

Fourth Station Jesus Meets His Grieving Mother

I had managed to break through the crowd and was walking side by side with my son. I called to him through the shouting voices. He stopped. Our eyes met, mine full of tears of anguish, his full of pain and confusion. I felt helpless; then he eyes said to me, "Courage! There is a purpose for this." As he stumbled on, I know he was right. So I followed and prayed silently.

Fifth Station Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

I could now see almost complete helplessness on the face of my son as he tried to carry his heavy load. Each step looked as if it would be his last. I felt his every pain in my heart and I wanted the whole thing to end. Then I noticed some commotion near Jesus. The guards had pulled a protesting man from the crowd. They forced him to pick up the back of the cross to help lighten my son's load. He asked the guards why this had to be. I knew, and so followed silently.

Sixth Station Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

As I continued close by Jesus, a woman pushed past the guards, took off her veil and began to wipe my son's sweating, bloody face. The guards immediately pulled her back. Her face seemed to say, "Why are you doing this to him?" I knew, so I walked on in faith, silently.

Seventh Station Jesus Falls the Second Time

Again, my son fell, and again my grief was overwhelming at the thought that he might die. I started to move toward him, but the soldiers prevented me. He rose and stumbled ahead slowly. Seeing my son fall, get up again, and continue on, was bitter anguish to me, But, since I knew this had to be, I walked on silently.

Eighth Station Jesus Speaks to the Women

I was walking a few steps behind Jesus when I saw him stop. Some women were there crying for him and pitying him. He told them not to shed tears for him. They had the opportunity to accept him as the messiah; like many others, they rejected him instead. He told them to shed tears for themselves, tears that would bring their conversion. They did not see the connection between that and his walk to death. I did, and as he walked on, I followed silently.

Ninth Station Jesus Falls the Third Time

This fall of Jesus was agony to me. Not only had he fallen on the rocky ground again, but now he was almost at the top of the hill of crucifixion. The soldiers screamed at him and abused him, almost dragging him the last few steps. My heart pounded as I imagined what they would do to him next. But, I knew this had to be, so I climbed the hill silently behind him.

Tenth Station Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

With my son finally relieved of the weight of the cross, I thought he would have a chance to rest. But the guards immediately started to rip his clothes off his blood-clotted skin. The sight of my son in such pain was unbearable. Yet, since I knew this had to be, I stood by and cried silently.

Eleventh Station Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

As they threw Jesus on the cross, he willingly allowed himself to be nailed. As they punctured his hands and his feet I felt the pain in my heart. Then they lifted up the cross. There he was, my son, whom I love so much, being scorned as he struggled for the last few moments of earthy life. But I knew this had to be, so I stood by and prayed silently.

Twelfth Station Jesus Dies on the Cross

What greater pain is there for a mother than to see her son die right before her eyes! I, who had brought this savior into the world and watched him grow, stood helplessly beneath his cross as he lowered his head and died. His earthly anguish was finished, but mine was greater than ever. Yet, this had to be and I had to accept it, so I stood by and I mourned silently.

Thirteenth Station Jesus Is Taken from the Cross

The crowd had gone; the noise had stopped. I stood quietly with one of Jesus' friends and looked up at the dead body of our savior, my son. Then two men took the body from the cross and placed it in my arms. A deep sorrow engulfed my being. Yet, I also felt deep joy. Life had ended cruelly for my son, but it had also brought life to all of us. I knew this had to be, and I prayed silently.

Fourteenth Station Jesus in the Tomb

We brought Jesus' body to a tomb and I arranged it there myself, silently weeping, silently rejoicing. I took one more look at my loving son, and then walked out. They closed the tomb and before I left, I thought, I knew this had to be... it had to be for you! I would wait in faith silently.

Fifteenth Station Jesus Is Raised from the Dead

I could only be most grateful for the sacrifice of my son for us. Yet, what emptiness I felt trying to live without him whom I loved so! But, only two days later that emptiness was filled beyond belief – he had risen! Our savior had opened the doors to a new life. That is the way it had to be – because his undying love for you would not stop at anything less. I could rejoice forever, but not in silence.

April 5th

Make something as a family

Every year when I was growing up we would make Easter story cookies either before Easter Vigil or instead of going to the Easter Vigil. We did this as a family. It was a time to reflect on the passion of Christ and work together as a family to make these cookies. This weekend at some time make Easter Story cookies as a family! Here is my favorite recipe!

Easter Story Cookies

1 cup pecan halves
1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar
3 egg whites
1 pinch salt
1 cup white sugar

Directions

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F

- 1) Place pecans in a resealable plastic baggie. Beat the pecans into small bits using wooden spoon.
Read John 19:1-3
- 2) Put 1 teaspoon vinegar into a medium bowl.
Read John 19:28-30
- 3) Add egg whites to the vinegar.
Read John 10:10-11
- 4) Sprinkle salt into the egg whites.
Read Luke 23:27
- 5) So far, the mixture isn't very appetizing. Add 1 cup sugar.
Read Psalm 34:8 and John 3:16.
- 6) Beat with mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed.
Read Isaiah 1:18 and John 3:1-3.
- 7) Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoons onto parchment paper lined baking sheet.
Read Matthew 27:57-60.
- 8) Place cookies in the oven close the door and turn the oven off.
Read Matthew 27:65-66.
- 9) Go to bed.
Read John 16:20 and 22.
- 10) In the morning open the oven and take out the cookies.
Read Matthew 28:1-9

April 6th

Go to Confession Together with your Family

How to Make a Good Confession

- 1) Find a Church
Check the bulletin for confession times and penance service times.
- 2) Greet the Priest
Make the sign of the cross. Say “Bless me father, for I have sinned. My last confession was...”
- 3) Confess your Sins
Tell the priest about your sins. They will walk you through the process. If you’re uneasy or need help – just ask.
- 4) Trust in God
Be honest. You don’t have to hide anything! Remember that God wants to bless you with forgiveness.
- 5) Say “I’m Sorry”
following your confession, say “I’m sorry for these and all of my sins.”
- 6) Accept your Penance
The priest will offer a penance, which will help you renew your life with God and your resolve to be a better Catholic.
- 7) Act of Contrition
Say an Act of Contrition to express sorrow for your sins.
- 8) Be Absolved
The priest will absolve, or forgive, you of your sins.
- 9) Go in Peace
That’s it! You are forgiven and God Rejoices.

Fifth Sunday of Lent April 7th

SERVE

Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

Philippians 3:8-14

John 8:1-11

God values everyone equally and immensely. When we express this to each other we are experiencing life with more love.

**This week challenges you to think critically about
how your actions value others.**



April 8th

Serving at Mass (altar servers)

I'm going to cop out of talking about this and encourage you to WATCH AN AMAZING VIDEO. That in reality says it better than I can.... So go to youtube and search

The Altar Server * MUST SEE*****

I will also share it on Facebook today, so you can get it there too!

April 9th

YOUCAT AND DOCAT

So I love these two books and carry the YOUCAT around in my bag with me... like always... So I'm going to give your guys excerpts from the introductions of these two books to show you how they can help. Why is this relevant? Every household that a young person walks into should have these books and the introductions are written by Popes. That's right you read correctly Popes are the ones who promote and encourage these books.

YOUCAT Intro

"Today I recommend for your reading an unusual book. It is unusual both because of its content and because of the way it came to be. I would like to tell you a little about how it was written because then it will be clear why it is so unusual. You could say that it came to be from another work, whose organs go back to the 1980s. It was a difficult time for the Church and for society worldwide. New guidance was needed to find the path to the future. After the Second Vatican Council and in a changed cultural situation, many people were confused about what Christians actually believe, what the Church teaches, whether in fact she can teach anything at all, and how everything can find its place in a culture that had changed from its very foundations. Is it still reasonable today to be a believer? (the intro goes on to talk about how the Catechism of the Catholic Church was created.) In the World Youth Days since the introduction of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, young people from all over the world have come together, young people who want to believe, who are seeking God, who love Christ, and who want fellowship on their journey. In this context the question arose: Should we not attempt to translate the Catechism into the language of young people? Should we not bring its great riches into the world of today's youth? Of course, there are many differences even among the youth of today's world. And so now, under the capable direction of the Archbishop of Vienna, Christopher Cardinal Schonborn, YOUCAT has been produced for young people. I hope that many young people will let themselves be fascinated by this book."

DOCAT Intro

"My predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, put into your hands a Youth Catechism, YOUCAT. Today I would like to commend to you another book, DOCAT, which contains the social doctrine of the Church. The English verb "to do" is part of the title. DOCAT answers the questions: "What should we do?" it is like a user's manual that helps us to change ourselves with the Gospel first, and then our closest surroundings, and finally the whole world. For with the power of the Gospel, we can truly change the world.

I would encourage you all to look into these books and how they can help your family grow in your faith and help the youth of your family understand their faith!

April 10th

YOUCAT on Social Justice

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How does social justice come about in a society?

Social justice comes about where the inalienable dignity of every person is respected, and the resulting rights are safeguarded and championed without reservation. Among these is also the right to active participation in the political, economic, and cultural life of the society. [1928-1933, 1943-1944]

The basis of all justice is respect for the inalienable dignity of the human person, “whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to us by the Creator, and to whom the men and women at every moment of history are strictly and responsibly in debt” (Pope John Paul II, *Encyclical Sollicitudo rei socialis*, published 1987). Human rights are an immediate consequence of human dignity, and no State can abolish or change them. States and authorities that trample these rights underfoot are unjust regimes and lose their authority. A society is not perfected by laws, however, but rather by love of neighbor, which makes it possible for everyone to “look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as ‘another self’” (GS 27, 1).

April 11th

DOCAT on Service

27

Why does the Church have a social doctrine?

Human beings are profoundly -> social creatures. Both in heaven and on earth man is dependent on community. Back in the Old Testament, God gave his people human regulations and commandments by which they could lead a life that is just and good. Human reason can distinguish unjust actions from the just deeds that are necessary to build a just social order. In Jesus we see that justice is fulfilled only in love. Our present-day notions of solidarity are inspired by Christ's love of neighbor.

26

Why is the church interested not only in the individual?

It used to be that the Church was accused of being interested only in the salvation of the individual soul. In fact, every individual human being counts in God's sight. We are all irreplaceable and unique. Nevertheless, from our mother's womb we are dependent on communion with other human beings. We can be happy only in good relationships with others. Therefore, it says in the account of creation: "Then the LORD God said, 'it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'" (Gen 2:18). God is interested in the total welfare of a person and, therefore, also in his development of community, in which people participate in manifold ways.

April 12th

DOCAT

Love as Service to the Church

“The entire activity of the Church is an expression of a love that seeks the integral good of man: it seeks his evangelization through Word and Sacrament, as undertaking that is often heroic in the way it is acted out in history; and it seeks to promote man in the various areas of life and human activity. Love is therefore the service that the Church carries out in order to attend constantly to man’s sufferings and his needs, including material needs.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas* (2005), 19

The way that I understand this is; the best way to serve the church and the world around us is to LOVE. We should love everyone hate should not even be a word in our vocabulary we are called to love and we are made for love. How can you love better today?

April 13th

Corporal Works of Mercy

What are you “doing” to build up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth? Jesus gave us a pretty great list of things to help us do it you know, a list to help us make the world a better place and help us get to heaven.

Feed the Hungry.

Give Drink to the Thirsty.

Clothe the Naked.

Visit the Sick.

Welcome the Stranger.

Visit the Imprisoned.

Bury the Dead.

How are you doing these things you're your life? Could you be doing one of these things today? Maybe go through your closet and donate the things you don't wear anymore. Or you could donate either food or your time to the Food Pantry. Maybe you could bake a dessert or make a salad for the next funeral at the parish... Smile at everyone you see... visit the elderly in the nursing homes, make them cards... There are little things you can do every day to infuse the Corporal Works of Mercy into your daily life.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord April 14th

REFLECT

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

Luke 22:14 - 23:56

The gospel this week starts out talking about Jesus Journeying to Jerusalem. Can you imagine that trip? Knowing you are going to your death but going anyway? Jesus made the journey though for you and me. He made the Journey so that we could be saved. This last week leading up to east we are to reflect on where we were at the start of this Lenten journey and where we are now. Living a full life requires change. During this week, we will reflect on each of the previous weeks, what we have learned, and how we will recommit ourselves to these actions, even after this journey is over.

April 15th

Reflect: Fast and Pray

Fast: When we fill our lives with obligations, relationships, or ways of thinking that distract us from focusing on Jesus, we are less able to experience life to its fullest. This week we were challenged to create space in our lives for the full life Jesus came to give us.

Pray: Prayer seems mysterious, either because of doubts about the ability of prayer or because it's difficult to incorporate prayer into daily life. In week 2 we were challenged to make time in our days to read and pray the Lord's Prayer, then to create our own prayer based on the model of the Lord's Prayer.

How did these things go?

Did you do them? And incorporate them into your daily lives?

If not, **THAT IS OKAY** we have a loving and merciful God who loves you exactly where you are, but is always desiring to be closer to you!

April 16th

Reflect: Give and Thank

Give: When we give of ourselves by using the gifts God has given us to serve others, we are able to uniquely worship God. This week we were challenged to explore our gifts and talents and then creatively use those to serve the people around us.

Thank: Thankfulness is more than an expression; it is an attitude of life. When we are thankful we are better able to experience blessings in our lives. We were challenged this week to thank someone in our life who has expressed God's goodness to us. Also, to express God's goodness to others in our lives.

How did these things go?

Did you do them? And incorporate them into your daily lives?

If not, **THAT IS OKAY** we have a loving and merciful God who loves you exactly where you are, but is always desiring to be closer to you!

April 17th

Reflect: Serve

God values everyone equally and immensely. When we express this to each other we are experiencing life with more love. This week we were challenged to think critically about how our actions value others.

How did this go?

Did you do it? And incorporate service into your daily lives?

If not, **THAT IS OKAY** we have a loving and merciful God who loves you exactly where you are, but is always desiring to be closer to you!

Thursday of the Lord's Supper April 18th

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-15

What happened on that day

- Jesus celebrates the Passover Seder/Last Supper with the Apostles
- He washed their feet, showing them what type of leaders, they are to be as priests.
- Jesus institutes the Eucharist
- Jesus suffers the Agony in the Garden, sweating blood in anguish as he prays.
- Judas betrays Jesus and hands him over to the authorities. Jesus is arrested.
- Jesus is taken away and imprisoned.

What you'll see at church

- The priest wears white because it's a joyful day, celebrating our love for Jesus in the Eucharist.
- The priest will wash people's feet as a sign of his dedication to those whom he serves.
- No masses are celebrated on Good Friday, so the priest must plan (and consecrate) ahead.
- After mass, the altar is stripped, and most decorations are taken down or covered. The consecrated hosts are transferred to an "Altar of Repose" somewhere else in the Church until needed on Good Friday. (Often, due to security, a move to a more secure location is done late Thursday night.) This absence of the Eucharist helps us experience the loss and emptiness the Apostles felt on Good Friday.
- The chrism Mass, in which the bishop blesses all the holy oils for his diocese, is also celebrated on Holy Thursday.

Live the day

- Cover our put away your holy pictures and/or statues.
- Take on special fasts or increase your prayers and/or devotions.
- Simulate visiting Jesus in prison by making a pilgrimage to local parishes' Altars of Repose.

Friday of the Passion of the Lord April 19th

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25

Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9

John 18:1 – 19:42

What happened on that day

- While Jesus is interrogated, Peter denies knowing him three times
- Pontius Pilate questions Jesus. He offers the crowd a choice: Jesus or Barabbas?
- Jesus is Scourged.
- Jesus carries the cross on which he will be crucified.
- Jesus is nailed to the cross and left to die.
- He gives his mother Mary to John, and in turn, each of us.
- Jesus Dies.
- Guards come to break Jesus' legs to speed his death. Already dead, they pierce his side.
- Jesus' body is taken down from the cross, prepared for burial, and placed in the tomb.

What you'll see at church

- The priest wears red to bring to mind the blood Jesus shed.
- This is the one day all year on which no masses are celebrated.
- The tabernacle will still be empty and the church still undecorated.
- Candles are lit only when Jesus (in the eucharist) is present, and during the Veneration of the Cross.
- St. John's account of The Passion is read. The congregation often reads the part of the crowd demanding Jesus' crucifixion to reinforce how our sins made necessary the cross of Christ.
- The veneration of the Cross occurs during the good Friday service. Those at the service show a sign of love (kiss, genuflect, etc.) to a cross in thanksgiving for Jesus' cross.

Live the day

- Keep silence throughout the day, especially from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. when Jesus was on the cross
- Increase your time spent in praying. Reflect on the Passion.
- Pray the Stations of the Cross.
- Start the Divine Mercy Novena.
- Take on extra fasting or increased other acts of piety.
- Pray the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary.

The Easter Vigil April 20th

Genesis 1:1 – 2:2

Genesis 22:1-18

Exodus 14:15 – 15:1

Isaiah 54:5-14

Isaiah 55:1-11

Baruch 3:9-15, 32 – 4:4

Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28

Romans 6:3-11

Luke 24:1-12

What happened on this day

- Jesus rises from the dead and leaves the tomb.
- The guards at the tomb report what happened to the chief priests, who pay them off to tell a cover story.
- Peter and John check out the tomb. All they find are the burial clothes.
- Mary Magdalene sticks around the tomb and encounters Jesus.
- Jesus walks to Emmaus with two of his disciples. They realize it's him only after breaking bread.
- Jesus appears to more disciples, shows them his wounds, gives them power to forgive sins.

What you'll see at church

- The priest wears white because we're joyfully celebrating Jesus' victory over death!
- The Paschal Candle, the "Light of Christ," is carried in to the church and the congregation's candles are lit from it.
- The Exultet prayer and lots of extra readings help us recall salvation history.
- We sing ALLELUIA for the first time since before Lent started!
- We sing the Litany of the Saints, asking them to join us in prayer to God.
- People coming into the Catholic Church are Baptized and Confirmed.

Live the day

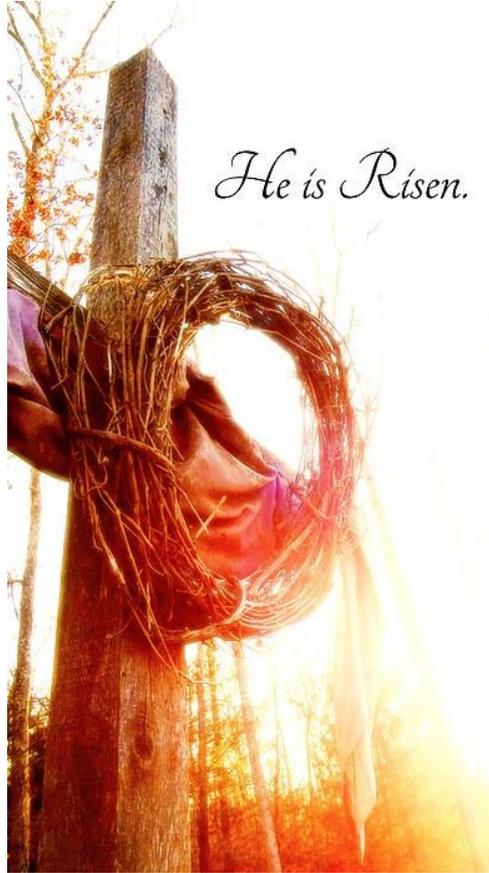
- Take the day totally off from work and schoolwork.
- Decorate your house. Easter Lilies symbolize the hope, joy, and new life found in the resurrection.
- Have a feast!
- Keep it up. Catholics celebrate the Octave of Easter; that means Easter is 8 days long!

Easter Sunday April 21st

Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-9



He is Risen.

Christ the Lord is Risen today
ALLELUIA

Thank your Father John Paul and Janet for all your help with this companion
I could not have done it without you both!