

DIOCESE OF OSSORY

LENT RESOURCES AND REFLECTIONS



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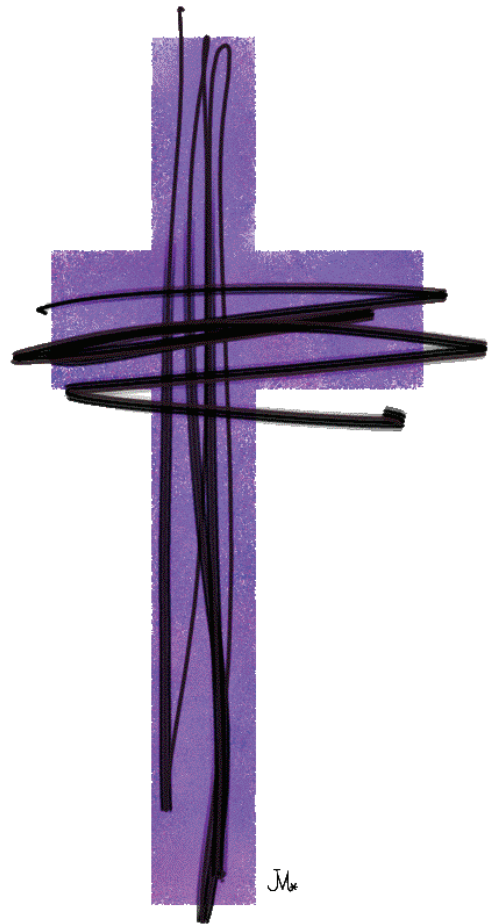
LENTEN PRAYERS & REFLECTIONS

THE MEANING OF EASTER

Weekly Thoughts for Lent

As the days lengthen and spring brings new growth to the earth after the winter, the six weeks of Lent provide us with an opportunity to grow in our awareness of God's presence in our lives. It is a time during which we strive towards an inner conversion of heart by opening both our hearts and our minds to self examination and self discipline during these weeks before Easter.

The season of Lent is traditionally the time for those wishing to become members of the Church to prepare for Baptism. In the early Church the whole Christian community accompanied these 'Catechumens' in their spiritual journey and, in so doing, each person also prepared themselves to renew their own baptismal vows at Easter. By making space for our own spiritual growth we will be able to encourage other people to accompany them in their spiritual journey towards a deeper understanding of the Paschal Mystery, the great mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.



TRYING HARDER

Let us pray that we will try harder to love you in all the things that we say and do and in all the choices that we make during this season of Lent. May we always be people of love and forgiveness. As we journey with you this Lent may we become closer to you, grow to know you more and learn to live in a new way. As we remember your death, Jesus, we know that it was a sign of God's great love for us. Live in our hearts this Lent and help us to share this love with our families, friends, and everyone that we meet. Amen

FOR FORGIVENESS

Dear God, we pray today to ask your forgiveness for the times when we turned away from your love. Give us the courage to be honest with ourselves and to see ourselves as we truly are. May we try to see the best in the people we meet today. There may be people in the room who have been cruel and hurtful. Give us the strength to try to let go of the hurt, forgive them and move on. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

JUDGE NOT

*If you judge people you have no time to love them.
Mother Teresa*

During Lent we talk a lot about giving up something we enjoy. Are there things that we do in our lives which we don't necessarily enjoy but which we could still do with giving up? Do we, for example, pass judgement on others unfairly and without giving them a chance? Are these judgements we make hurtful to others. This Lent help me to look deeper into the people I meet. Grant me wisdom and understanding in my interactions with the people I meet. Help me God to see others as your creations, worthy of my thoughtfulness and are. We pray to the Lord.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING

Do I notice if someone around me is struggling? Or do I avoid them and their issue? Am I a good listener? Am I an understanding person? Can I do something to help someone this Lent that I know is struggling?

Loving God, protect and comfort those who are suffering at this time. Help me to recognise someone who is going through a rough time. Help me to be a good listener and to be understanding of other people's problems. Amen

FOR THE SICK

God our Father, we think today of people who are sick in mind or body. Help them to accept the cross that they bear. May they have family and friends to support them in their time of need. We give thanks today for the doctors and nurses who work tirelessly for the good of their patients. We ask that you be with those who care for a sick relative at home. Sometimes this is not an easy task, emotionally or financially. We think of anyone who struggles with ill health this Lent as we say: Hail Mary...

FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

Loving God, we pray this Lent for those people who have lost their jobs and who are unable to find employment. May they retain their dignity and self respect. May we never look down on someone who is unemployed and may we always appreciate what we have and be grateful for the opportunities we have.

FOR THE BEREAVED

*"Someone I loved once gave me a box full of darkness It took me years to understand that this too was
a gift"
Mary Oliver*

Loving God, people around me sometimes feel such terrible sadness. Sometimes, too, I am weighed down by worry and stress. At times like this help me to feel you with me. This Lent may I feel close to you and comforted by this closeness. May I use this time of Lenten reflection to get to know you better. As we remember those whom we loved who have died, may we be comforted and think of them with fondness and smile at the good memories we have of them. May their souls and the souls of all of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

FOR FAMILY

What does my family need this Lent? What kind of a family member am I? Am I a peacemaker? Am I grateful for everything that my family does for me? Do I contribute?

Loving God, I pray for my family today. Watch over all of us and keep us safe. Help our home to be a place of peace and love. We remember families who are in difficulty because of addiction, unemployment or violence. Protect them and keep them safe. We pray to the Lord Our Father...

FOR THOSE PREPARING FOR BAPTISM

Baptism is the first Sacrament of Initiation for anyone wishing to become a member of the Catholic Church. Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the spirit and the door to the other Sacraments. Jesus himself asked to be baptised so that he could properly start his mission. The oil used in the ceremony of Baptism is called the oil of Chrism and is a sign of God's blessing and love.

We pray today that we will live up to the expectations that God has of us as Baptised Christians. We pray too for families who are preparing for baptism this Easter. We think today also of those who are persecuted worldwide because they have chosen to be baptised. We pray to the Lord...



Prayers for Lent

COME AS YOU ARE

Come as you are, that's how I love you.
 Come as you are, feel quiet at home.
 Close to my heart, loved and forgiven.
 Come as you are.
 Why stand alone?

No need to fear, love knows no limits,
 No need to fear, love never ends.
 Don't run away shamed and disheartened.
 Rest in my love, trust me again.

I came to all sinners, not just the virtuous.
 I came to bring peace, not to condemn.
 Each time you fail to live by my promise.
 Why do you think I love you the less?

Come as you are,
 That's how I love you.
 Come as you are, trust me again
 Nothing can change the love that I bear you,
 All will be well,
 Just come as you are.

A PRAYER FOR LENT

At lent,
 We should try the key to our heart's door,
 It may have gathered rust.
 If so, this is the time to oil it,
 In order that the heart's door
 May open more easily
 When the Lord Jesus
 Wants to enter at Easter time!
 Lord, oil the hinges of our heart's door
 That they may swing gently and easily
 To welcome your coming.

Liturgies, Litanies and Prayers from around the World.)

Prayer Service For Lent

STONE RITUAL

Preparation

- Prepare the sacred space and include a basket of stones and a copy of prayers used.
- Discuss the meaning of Lent.

Introduction:

Lord, as we begin our Lenten journey towards the celebration of Easter we ask you for the strength and courage we need to change. We pray that the prayers we say and the sacrifices we make in this Lenten season will open our hearts to receive God's forgiveness and turn our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, places where love, honesty and justice can live.

Ritual and Reflection:

Pass around a basket of stones. Allow each person to pick the stone they would like.

Reflect on the stone... feel the stone in your hand... the hardness and the edges... think about the journey of that stone as it started out as a big stone that got chipped off on the beach being trampled on... picked up... and touched for the first time... think about the hardness that surrounds your heart right now what can you give up to soften it... negativity, jealousy etc as you prepare to bring the stone up to the sacred space think of a word that describes what you are prepared to give up this Lent, besides the physical things, so as to soften your heart towards God. Bring stones up to the sacred space one by one.

Music

'Open The Eyes of My Heart' by Paul Baloche

Closing Prayer

Conclude with the prayer 'Beatitudes of the Heart' by Flor McCarthy, SDB.

Beatitudes Of The Heart

Blessed are the open hearted; They will know what love is.
 Blessed are the warm hearted; They will radiate goodness.
 Blessed are the soft hearted; Their lives will be fruitful.
 Blessed are those who set their hearts on the kingdom of God;
 Everything else will be given to them.
 But also for those whose hearts are closed;
 They will neither be able to give nor receive.
 Alas for those whose hearts are cold;
 They will never know the warmth of true friendship.
 Alas for those whose hearts are empty;
 All goods in the world will not satisfy them.

Sacred Space

Prepare a prayer/sacred space this Lent. Use the colour purple and a variety of the following symbols.

ASHES

Ashes remind us of the passing nature of our lives and ashes call us to reflect on how we are living the time we are given here on earth.

CROSS

As Christians, the Cross is our most precious and sacred symbol. The cross is a symbol of LOVE, 'no one has greater love than the one who lays down his life for his friends.' (John 15:13). The cross is a symbol of HOPE because we see it in the light of Easter.

BOWL OF HOLY WATER

The Holy Water is a reminder that we are preparing to renew our baptismal promises.

CANDLE

The Candle reminds us that the light of Christ is with us during our Lenten journey. The light of Christ surrounding us, enfolding us, a light that scatters the darkness. As we light the candle we are preparing ourselves for the new fire that will be lit at the Easter Vigil.

AN OPEN BIBLE

An open Bible reminds us of the central place of God's word in our lives during Lent.

HEART

This can be cut out of red felt/paper/material. Lent awards us the opportunity for conversion of heart. To open our hearts to God. 'rend your hearts, not your garments' (Joel 2:12 13)

