

OLM Parish Family
Health Ministry Lenten Program
"Walk with Jesus on the Road to Jerusalem"



First Sunday of Lent

Readings: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

At the start of Lent, it is important to prepare our spirit to receive abundantly the gift of divine mercy. The Word of God warns us to repent and believe in the Gospel, and the Church indicates that prayer, penance, fasting and generous aid to our brethren are the means to enter into the atmosphere of authentic interior and community renewal. In this way, we can experience the superabundant love of the heavenly Father, given in fullness to all humanity in the paschal mystery. We can say that Lent is the time of a particular concern on God's part to pardon and forgive our sins: it is the time of reconciliation. For this reason, it is a most appropriate time for the fruitful reception of the sacrament of Penance.

St. John Paul II - General Audience, February 17, 1999

Reflection

Today is the First Sunday of Lent. The gospels in the Church's three-year cycle of readings focus on Jesus' temptation by the devil in the desert. The devil tried to persuade Jesus to bow down to him, but Jesus would not. Have you given thought to preparing your heart this Lent? We are told that when we "repent and believe in the Gospel" and pray, fast and give alms, we "enter into the atmosphere of authentic interior and community renewal. Why not take the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation through our Paterson Diocesan-wide "Welcome Home to Healing" by visiting any church on the Mondays in Lent from 7-8:30PM.

Beginning Prayer

Dear Jesus, we are sorry for all of our sins and failures. We want to be better. We want to serve one another more lovingly. With your grace, we will.

Fasting

Today, fast from gossip. If you **REALLY** feel the need to talk about someone, stop and say a prayer instead.

Almsgiving

Think of some ways to bring love to someone this week. Some ideas might be to make a dessert or greeting card to bring to a shut-in, to offer to help an elderly neighbor with a chore or to visit someone who would appreciate some company.

Intention

Pray for all orphans of the world, that they will be blessed with a home and loving family.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, please take care of all those who are orphans or alone.
Bring them comfort and love.

Faith Journey Questions

1. Jesus knew the words of the Hebrew Scriptures in his heart and could turn to them in every moment of his human life. How often do I turn to the Scriptures as a support for my spiritual life?
2. By virtue of our being baptized and sealed by the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have power and freedom over the devil. In my life, when have I experienced this power and freedom?
3. Am I ready for Lent? Am I prepared to go out into the desert and face every temptation and testing that may take me away from Jesus? What do I need to change in my life before Holy Week?

Lenten Challenge

Decide on what you will "do" for Lent. Also try to attend Mass often. The Eucharist is our greatest communal prayer and a wonderful way to encounter Jesus.

Lent Quiz

While Jesus was in the desert, Satan tempted him to sin instead of following who's will?

Prayer for Sundays of Lent

Heavenly Father, as I enter into this first week of my Lenten journey, guide me to the path that leads to you. Fill my heart with gratitude, patience, strength and peace as I strive to become the-best-version-of-myself, honestly admitting my shortcoming and sins. As I renew my resolve each day to become a better person, let me hear your voice in the deepest reaches of my heart. Give me rest in you. Help me to accept others, showing them your great love instead of casting judgment. Stay with me through the busy days this week and remind me that when I need comfort, solitude, wisdom or guidance, I can always turn to you. Help me develop discipline and generosity through fasting and almsgiving, and come closer to you through prayer this Lent. In your name I pray, Amen.



First Week of Lent - Monday - *Matthew 25:31-46*

It is not how much you give, but how much love you put in the giving
St. Mother of Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection

So often we worry that we have to accomplish so much. It is only natural to feel this way; we usually have very long "to-do" lists. Mother Theresa wanted to show us another way to view our actions. She wanted everyone to focus on love rather than on the number of accomplishments. Our Lord wants our love, not our lists. Knowing this can bring us incredible peace in our hearts.

Beginning Prayer

Dear Lord, during this special season of Lent, increase the love in our hearts and grant us the graces we need to act more lovingly and sincerely, and to seek out those in need.

Fasting

Is there a bad habit you need to work on correcting? Maybe this is a day to try and do just that. Try being less irritable and more loving today. This may be the day to fast from being grumpy, or uncharitable.

Almsgiving

Challenge yourself to do whatever you need to do today with love, trying to please Jesus in everything. Whether it's being polite and treating everyone with respect and helping someone with something at work or in the community. It will please Jesus when done with love.

Intention

Pray for people who are in need.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, help us to try to always look to you.

Lenten Challenge

Try and give everyone you meet today a nice compliment.

Lent Quiz

The season of Lent begins on what day?



First Week of Lent - Tuesday - Matthew 6:7-5

We are not Christian "part time", only at certain moments, in certain circumstances, in certain decisions; no one can be Christian in this way - we are Christian all the time! Totally!

Pope Francis: General Audience, May 15, 2013

Reflection

Pope Francis does not mince words. Neither does our Church. We are not to follow the teachings of the Church only when it is convenient. The teachings are life sustaining. Specifically, they are in place to guide us to heaven. Take some time today to think about how your behavior has been lately. Ask yourself if you are a Christian full time, at every moment-or not. Think about or discuss as a family about this and encourage yourself or your family/friends about how they can make the effort to be a full time Christian - "totally", as Pope Francis exclaimed.

Beginning Prayer

Dear Jesus, guide me (our family) each day throughout Lent to understand more fully what it means to be a Christian.

Fasting

Today fast from bickering. If you have children (or other family members), that if they wish to argue, they should instead pause and say a prayer for that person.

Almsgiving

Give at least five minutes of prayer times for someone with whom your relationship is not as it should be.

Intention

Pray for our enemies and the enemies of the Church.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, help us to be full-time Christians-totally!

Lenten Challenge

Go the whole day without arguing with anyone.

Lent Quiz

What is it called when we disobey God, hurt others and hurt ourselves?



First Week of Lent - Wednesday - Luke 11:29-32

Do I pray? Do I speak with Jesus or am I frightened of silence? Do I allow the Holy Spirit to speak to my heart? Do I ask Jesus: What do you want me to do, what do you want from my life? This is training. Ask Jesus, speak to Jesus and if you make a mistake in your life, if you fall, if you should do something wrong, don't be afraid.

Say: "Jesus, look at what I have done, what must I now do"?

Pope Francis: Address, World Youth Day, July 27, 2013

Reflection

If it were not for prayer, what would we do? How could we even survive? Prayer is so necessary to be able to connect and converse with our loving God who gives us strength and grace to carry on. We must carve out time in our busy days to get to know God at a deeper level. If we don't schedule the time, the day might slip away in busyness or distraction. Take the time to retreat from the busyness, especially during this season of Lent. Seek the silence in which to converse with God and listen to what he is trying to whisper to your soul. This beautiful season is the perfect time for prayer - not as a regimented requirement, but because we should want to talk with God. Jesus loves us even when we make mistakes.

Beginning Prayer

Dear Jesus, please remind me (us) to listen to you.

Fasting

Today fast from noise. It might be difficult, but try hard to find the quiet today.

Almsgiving

Give some time to God.

Intention

Pray for those who don't know how to pray.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, help me (us) to always stay close to you.

Lenten Challenge

Today, be more courteous in your attitude, words and deeds.

Lent Quiz

What is the Lenten spiritual practice of lifting our minds and hearts to God?



First Week of Lent - Thursday - *Matthew 7:7-12*

"Be kind and merciful. Let no one ever come to you without coming away better and happier".
St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection

Mother Teresa's words remind us of the Scripture passage: "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake"? (Mt 7:9-11). We naturally want those who we love to live better and happier. That's precisely one of the reasons you are making this Lenten journey - for the betterment of your's and your loved one's spiritual lives and with God's grace, their happiness in heaven. Beyond your family and loved ones, our Lord calls you through Mother Teresa's words to be looking out for the betterment of others too.

Beginning Prayer

Dear Lord, help us to be open to your graces and message for us today and each day of Lent.

Fasting

Today resist saying anything unkind today, especially if someone is unkind to you.

Almsgiving

Show a special kindness to someone in your life. It would be particularly special if you could show kindness to someone who is unkind or uncaring.

Intention

Pray for those who are unkind or do not show mercy.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, Mother Teresa has taught that no one should ever come to us without coming away better and happier. Help us to be generous and loving people.



Lenten Challenge

Make a list of ten things you are grateful for in your life.

Lent Quiz

What is the Lenten spiritual practice of sharing one's wealth with those in need?

First Week of Lent - Saturday- Matthew 5:43-48

God forgives, not with a decree, but with a caress, caressing our wounds of sin.

Pope Francis: Address, Homily, April 7, 2014

Reflection

Why are we so reluctant to confess our sins, not only to our Lord, but to each other? I suppose one reason is that we are afraid that the person would be angry with us or not forgive us. Jesus knows the effects of sin: the shame and discouragement we all carry. Jesus came to set us free from the burden, not once, but again and again and again. Because that's just how often we need it. May we never fear to face the truth of our sins and always ask for forgiveness.

Beginning Prayer

Dear Jesus, help me (us) surrender our hearts to you today.

Fasting

Today think about a time you did not forgive someone. Remember and forgive.

Almsgiving

Just as Jesus gave his life for us, let us give Him ten minutes today in some way - possibly by helping or praying for someone in need.

Intention

Pray for someone who you may have hurt by your words or actions

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, forgive us our sins.
(you can also pray the Act of Contrition)

Lenten Challenge

Forgive someone who may have hurt you by words or actions.

Lent Quiz

Finish this prayer: "I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly _____".

