

**JESUS
MY REFUGE
MY LIFE**



L E N T E N P A C K A G E

#OYPLentenProject21

The purpose of this Booklet is to allow each of us to be intentional in our Lenten journeys through offering up every single day in prayerful reflection. Wherever we may be in our own spiritual journeys, this Booklet is an invitation for us to take ownership of our faith, and to begin to witness the love of God in a season of renewal and homecoming.

We encourage you to share this resource with your own communities, cell groups, friends and family and use this Booklet to pray together with the people around you. If you are using this Booklet as your personal Lenten commitment, we encourage you to also share God's goodness with those whom you feel prompted to reach out to at the end of each week.

How to use this Booklet:

Find a quiet space and remove any form of distraction around you. Open up with a prayer, inviting the Lord to enter into this space.

Slowly read through the material for the day. Do not rush through the material, but allow the Lord to speak to you in the way that He desires.

If there are reflection questions/ activities for that particular day, be honest and vulnerable with God when writing down your responses. As much as possible, follow through with every reflection question/ activity - let that be your commitment to God for this entire Booklet.

After your reflection/ activity has been concluded for the day, say a short prayer giving thanks to God for the grace that He has given you to be present with Him in the moment.

“So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.”

- Luke 15:20

Unworthiness may be a struggle for many of us, especially in this new normal. Some of us feel like we may have betrayed God and that we are unworthy of His love. But God in His mercy has already forgiven us and wants to restore our status as His sons and daughters.

As we go into the second week of Lent, we may feel like the Prodigal Son; still far off, still a long way to go. But God, our Father, is overjoyed to see us making the effort to come home. And He is already by our side, with His loving arms around us, as we make our way Home. Let us open our hearts to receive the Father's forgiveness.

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Sunday

OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Gospel Reflection

Mark 9:2-10

"This is my Son, the Beloved"

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus: 'Rabbi,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what 'rising from the dead' could mean.

Reflection

When I read this passage, the part that struck me was where Peter suggested that they stay in that "wonderful" place. I'm sure that although they were frightened seeing such a thing for the first time, they would have also been greatly comforted seeing Jesus in His glory. But it also made me wonder what Peter was thinking when he suggested that they set up tents. Maybe, he wanted to prolong that moment of glory. (In the Gospel of Luke, Peter suggested that they set up tents just when the prophets were about to leave) Likely, he didn't want the moment to end and have to return to reality.

Reflection

This took me back to when I used to be disappointed when the spiritual high after a retreat ended, and I wanted to prolong that feeling of being "high" and feeling close to God. After the spiritual high died down, I would start to feel like I wasn't close to God. But in actuality, as I slowly learned, those feelings weren't really an indication of my relationship with God. Just like Peter, I was focused on the wrong things - not being able to feel God's glory didn't mean He wasn't there. It is not wrong to "feel good" (in fact, Jesus used the experience of the Transfiguration and let His disciples see Him in glory to strengthen their faith!) But we should welcome both the joys and the hardships, the moments when we can see Him in charge, and also those moments when hope is harder to find. God uses moments of grace and those spiritual "highs" to give us a tangible sense of hope. But even when we don't feel close to Him, He is still equally near. He is still by our side, even if we cannot feel His presence at that moment. It is in trying times that I think back to the times when I felt moments of grace, and it helps me to remember that Jesus is with me and in control always; whether or not I can see his glory and power at that moment.

Reflection Questions/ Activity

1. Reflect on a time when you felt close to God (it could be now, or a while back!) Give thanks to God for that experience.

2. What is one area of your life where you struggle to believe that God is in control? Write a prayer of surrender to the Lord and offer it up to Him!

Monday

OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Prayer

During Lent, we also unite our sufferings with the unprivileged and grow in compassion. Many times we are preoccupied with our own pain and we feel that we are the only ones struggling. As we journey through Lent, we may have sentiments that God is not for us and that we have gotten the shorter end of the stick. In looking beyond our own struggles, let us spend a moment of our day to offer up this prayer to St. John Paul II as we intercede for the world towards peace and love.

Prayer to St. John Paul

Oh, St. John Paul, from the window of heaven, grant us your blessing!

Bless the young, who were your great passion. Help them dream again, help them look up high again to find the light that illuminates the paths of life here on earth.

May you bless families, bless each family! You warned of Satan's assault against this precious and indispensable divine spark that God lit on earth.

St. John Paul, with your prayer may you protect the family and every life that blossoms from the family.

Oh St. John Paul, from heaven's window, where we see you next to Mary, send God's blessing down upon us all.

Amen.

Tuesday

OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Resource

Isaiah 58:6

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"

Most of us would feel that fasting is a time of losing freedom, where we no longer get to do what we feel like doing. Lent then becomes a time where we have to give up our conveniences, comfort and luxury out of obligation.

While we fast to unite our sufferings with Jesus and in penance for the world, the truth today is that fasting has a transformative power! It can set us free as we find that through fasting, we realize that we no longer need what we chose to give up. Scripture affirms this truth that was explained by Father Mike.

VIDEO

Fasting Can Change You Forever

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n834QqLLYhQ>

Reflection

This video resonated with me, as I too was fasting simply for the sake of it. I found myself reverting to my old ways after lent and let many things that needed addressing in my heart unsorted. Father Mike introduces keystone penances, which can change our behaviour, forming habits that mould us into who Jesus really wants us to be.

Jesus wants you and me to be free, and in the midst of our suffering little by little every day, we can be changed to become more like him. We are invited to make changes in the routine of our lives, and find meaning in our fasting during Lent.

Reflection Questions/ Activity

1. What are the reasons and motivations behind your fasting during Lent?

2. What are the areas of your heart where you want to make keystone penances and be free?

Wednesday

OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Challenge: Fasting

Pope Clement XIII in 1759 said that “penance also demands that we satisfy divine justice with fasting, almsgiving and prayer and other works of the spiritual.” The purpose of our fast is to not become physically weak or lose weight but to create a hunger, a spiritual void that only Christ can fill; in fasting from the heart, we express our love of God and acknowledge our sinfulness. We pray our sacrifices will be acceptable to the one who suffered and gave his lifeblood for us.

Challenge of the day: Refrain from meat today. Save what would have been spent for almsgiving

Thursday

OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Gospel Reflection

Luke 16:19-31

Dives and Lazarus

Jesus said to the Pharisees: 'There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day. And at his gate there lay a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to fill himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even came and licked his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

'In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his bosom. So he cried out, "Father Abraham, pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames." "My son," Abraham replied "remember that during your life good things came your way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. But that is not all: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he wanted to, crossing from our side to yours, and to stop any crossing from your side to ours.

'The rich man replied, "Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house, since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not come to this place of torment too." "They have Moses and the prophets," said Abraham "let them listen to them." "Ah no, father Abraham," said the rich man "but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent." Then Abraham said to him, "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead."

Reflection

Lent has often been a time where we practise discipline and become more fervent in prayer. But, are we called simply to pray and build a relationship with God on our own?

In today's Gospel, the rich man enjoys a comfortable life while Lazarus is simply surviving. After death, there is a role reversal where the rich man is now in torment while Lazarus is being comforted. Have we at times chosen to look past the suffering or troubles of others around us, seeing them only as "inconveniences" to us? Do we have a "somebody out there will help them" mindset?

The rich man's request to warn his fellow brothers was rejected because if they have failed to listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not listen even if someone should rise from the dead . Hence, we must listen with humility to the Holy Spirit that guides us in our lives through the promptings of our friends, from scripture and even from our conscience.

As we move into this week, let us exercise not only our own prayer life, but also grow ourselves through living it out with acts of charity. If we do see someone who is in need of help, no matter how small it is, let us practise putting our faith into action.

Have we been ignorant to the struggles of our fellow brothers and sisters for the sake of comfort? Being rich in prayer is not our only invitation, but also to practise living out the sharing of richness through acts of service/charity. In this week, commit to reaching out to someone troubled or in need to offer them your presence and help.

Reflection Questions/ Activity

1. What are some areas where I could have listened to God?

2. What are some barriers stopping me from being open to those around me?

3. How can I deepen my relationship with God so as to be more obedient and to His promptings in my life?

Friday

OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Challenge: Almsgiving

Saint John Chrysostom says this “Almsgiving above all else requires money, but even this shines with a brighter luster when the alms are given from our poverty. The widow who paid in the two mites was poorer than any human, but she outdid them all.” The call of Christians to charity is a common theme in our Gospels. However, when giving alms, sometimes we feel that it is the amount that matters. But it is not the amount but from what we can give. This contribution is one where we give heartfully from the best of our abilities. Let us then follow this and truly give from our hearts.

Challenge of the Day: Make a heartfelt contribution to a charity organisation.

Saturday

OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Guided Examen

Ask God for Light.

If we attune ourselves to God, we may find God's presence within us, speaking constantly to us.

Quiet yourself and sit still for a moment. Tune out the noise, thoughts and preoccupations that cloud your mind. Look back at your week with God's eyes, not merely your own. Ask God to make his presence known to you at this moment.

Give Thanks.

"The first point is to give thanks to God our Lord for the gifts received." Spend a few moments recalling your week and giving thanks for the gifts and graces which you have received this week.

Review the Week.

Carefully look back on the week that has just passed, being guided by the Holy Spirit. Reflect on your relationship with God.

God, where have I felt your presence, seen your face, heard your word this week?

God, where have I ignored you, run from you, perhaps even rejected you this week?

Face your shortcomings.

At times, we may have made choices that lead us away from praising and serving God. We come to a humble awareness that we are sinners in need of God's mercy and saving help. Identify and acknowledge your shortcomings in the past week. Ask for God's forgiveness.

God, I am sorry for the ways that I have offended you by what I have done or what I did not do.

Look towards the week ahead.

Make a commitment to be the person God calls you to be - his beloved child. Look forward with hope. Where do you need God to be present in the week to come? Ask God for the grace you need to be the person he calls you to be. Spend a few moments in silence allowing God to fill you with his grace.

Spend some time journaling what God has revealed to you in this time of Examen. Close your time of prayer by praying the Our Father.