

JESUS
MY REFUGE
MY LIFE



LENTEN PACKAGE

#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.

"God so loved the world that he gave his
Only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in
him should not perish but have eternal life"

- John 3:16

This week, we celebrate Laetare Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent. The word 'Laetare' means 'rejoice', and so we take a breather from the more solemn mood of the rest of Lent to celebrate and recognise the hope and joy that awaits us at Easter.

This is the time we are reminded of our calling for this season - it is not to just complete our Lenten commitments, or just to pray, fast or give alms; it is to set our eyes on God even more deeply and wholeheartedly.

Because this season was given as a gift by our God who loved, loves and will love us so much that He gave us Jesus, to guide our way towards Him, and have eternal life with Him.

The core of our Christian faith is to pursue this relationship with our Father, not for our own sake, but as the only reasonable response to a love so pure such as God's for us. Let us open our hearts to this relationship with God, so that we may find greater communion with God as we continue on this week.



Table of Contents

- 01** Gospel Reflection
Sunday
- 03** Prayer
Monday
- 05** Resource Reflection
Tuesday
- 07** Challenge: Fasting
Wednesday
- 08** Gospel Reflection
Thursday
- 10** Challenge: Almsgiving
Friday
- 11** Guided Examen
Saturday



Sunday

of the fourth week of Lent

Gospel: John 3:14-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus: 'The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.'

Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son.

On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil.

And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.'

Sunday

of the fourth week of Lent

Reflection

In today's Gospel we are invited to ponder and reflect upon the unconditional love of God. In this season of Lent, it may have been a challenge thus far to keep up with our Lenten commitments. Maybe we started out Lent "well", but eventually started to face some dryness in prayer. This may make Lent feel gloomy and dreary. Or maybe Lent has been quite smooth sailing and we feel close to God.

During Lent, we are often faced with the temptation to look inward and focus too much on our Lenten commitments. In today's Gospel, we are invited to recognize and remember that as we follow and walk with Jesus in his passion, that the hope and promise of Easter is a free and unmerited gift from God. "God sent his Son into the world so that through him the world might be saved", not because we deserve it but purely out of his immense love for us.

As we read this Gospel passage, let us remember that His love and mercy is not something we have to earn and that God is the one who is entering and moving into our lives. Our acts of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are commitments to help us be more open and receptive to listening to the Lord's voice in our lives.

"The light has come into the world, and the people loved darkness rather than light." Today let us recognize that Jesus, the light, has come into the world to enter into our darkness. He desires to fight for you.

Reflection Questions

1. What prevents me from entering and living in the light of God's love?
2. Have I allowed Jesus to fight for me?

Monday

of the fourth week of Lent

"Stay with Me"

St. Pio of Pietrelcina

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have You present so that I do not forget You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me, Lord, because I am weak and I need Your strength, that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my life, and without You, I am without fervour.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my light, and without You, I am in darkness.

Stay with me, Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me, Lord, so that I hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me, Lord, for I desire to love You very much, and always be in Your company.

Stay with me, Lord, if You wish me to be faithful to You.

Stay with me, Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I want it to be a place of consolation for You, a nest of love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late and the day is coming to a close, and life passes; death, judgment, eternity approaches. It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way and for that, I need You. It is getting late and death approaches, I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows.

O how I need You, my Jesus, in this night of exile! Stay with me tonight, Jesus, in life with all its dangers. I need You. Let me recognise You as Your disciples did at the breaking of the bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the Light which disperses the darkness, the force which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me, Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to remain united to You, if not by communion, at least by grace and love.

Stay with me, Jesus, I do not ask for divine consolation, because I do not merit it, but the gift of Your Presence, oh yes, I ask this of You!

Stay with me, Lord, for it is You alone I look for, Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit, because I love You and ask no other reward but to love You more and more.

With a firm love, I will love You with all my heart while on earth and continue to love You perfectly during all eternity.

Amen

Monday

of the fourth week of Lent

Reflection

I hold this prayer extremely close to my heart during this Lenten season. Through it, I recognise my love and desires are reciprocated, and how much I need the Lord to be present in my life.

This lets me acknowledge that my struggles are extremely real, and my patience may be wearing thin. As I face this, the Lord reminds me of the truth that with faith, suffering is not meaningless. It can absolutely be transformative

He is close in our vulnerable moments and He truly desires to provide consolation to our tender hearts. Sometimes we don't know the full reason why God allows the suffering that He does. But the truth remains that He can bring beauty and goodness out of anything. I am able to unite my sufferings with Christ's sufferings and because of that, I can console Him and be consoled by Him.

So, today we invite you to set aside a little more time for prayer to be still with the Lord. As you say to Him "stay with me" in the honest words of Saint Padre Pio, vividly remind yourself that the Lord is compassionately listening to your every word.

Activity

Bring a sentence from this prayer into your week to open yourself to receive the grace of His consolation.

Tuesday

of the fourth week of Lent

Resource

Simplicity - Rend Collective

click [here](#) to listen



"I come in simplicity
Longing for purity
To worship You
In spirit and truth
Only You"

Tuesday

of the fourth week of Lent

Reflection

Today's resource is something simple to help attune ourselves to our calling this lent.

This Lenten journey, we were invited to return to God by returning to our native, unembellished selves. It's so easy to allow ourselves to get swept up in the demands and worries of this world. I really love the line "Lord strip it all away / 'Til only You remain". I feel it sums up my prayer this lent, as I ask God to show me what is essential and what is not; what is my true self, rooted in Him, and what are the parts of me that are distracting me from Him.

Having pruned our hearts to its natural, child-like state, the only thing left to do is to worship God, to sing out to Him to thank Him for His love, and reciprocate the best we can. This is the crux of our faith – to encounter God authentically and build our relationship of love with the help of the Holy Spirit.

I invite you to take this song as a prayer today, to ask the Lord to help you desire Him wholeheartedly.

Activity

Spend some time with God to ask Him to reveal to you what He wants to strip away, and what He wants to reveal.

Wednesday

of the fourth week of Lent

Challenge: Fasting.

Today's challenge is to reassess how our fast has been these 4 weeks.

During our fast, have we been focusing our eyes on God? Have we been lifting up our sufferings for God or have we stumbled along the way?

When we have been fasting for 4 weeks, it's easy to fall into the temptation of going through the motions, and focusing on the fast itself rather than our relationship with God. This could be in the form of fasting without accompanied prayer and almsgiving. In other cases, we may have been struggling with our fast and have unintentionally found loopholes around them.

If you have been struggling with your fast, we encourage you to take it day by day and begin again, lifting every single day and the struggles you experience to God. If you have been doing well so far, reflect on how your fast has helped you grow closer to God. Think about how your relationship with Him was 4 weeks ago and how it is now.

Afterwards, let's think of how we can further imitate God today. Pray and ask the Lord if there is anyone he is calling you to walk with in this season of lent. Maybe the people around us have been facing personal struggles and need a family or friend to be with and talk to or maybe they need an accountability partner to help them through their lenten journey.

As we carry on with the week, despite the distractions, let's keep our eyes focused on God and rely on him for strength when we are faced with difficulties.

Thursday

of the fourth week of Lent

Gospel: John 5:31-47

Jesus said to the Jews: ‘Were I to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid; but there is another witness who can speak on my behalf, and I know that his testimony is valid.

You sent messengers to John, and he gave his testimony to the truth: not that I depend on human testimony; no, it is for your salvation that I speak of this. John was a lamp alight and shining and for a time you were content to enjoy the light that he gave. But my testimony is greater than John’s: the works my Father has given me to carry out, these same works of mine testify that the Father has sent me. Besides, the Father who sent me bears witness to me himself. You have never heard his voice, you have never seen his shape, and his word finds no home in you because you do not believe in the one he has sent.

‘You study the scriptures, believing that in them you have eternal life; now these same scriptures testify to me, and yet you refuse to come to me for life! As for human approval, this means nothing to me. Besides, I know you too well: you have no love of God in you. I have come in the name of my Father and you refuse to accept me; if someone else comes in his own name you will accept him. How can you believe, since you look to one another for approval and are not concerned with the approval that comes from the one God? Do not imagine that I am going to accuse you before the Father: you place your hopes on Moses, and Moses will be your accuser. If you really believed him you would believe me too, since it was I that he was writing about; but if you refuse to believe what he wrote, how can you believe what I say?’

Thursday

of the fourth week of Lent

Gospel Reflection

Above all, believe in God's love:

In this passage, Jesus diagnoses why the Jews have difficulty believing that he is the Messiah. He implies that the Jews were so intent on studying the scriptures that they were blind to God's love. In this respect, we ourselves may sometimes be guilty of the same mistake and miss the forest for the trees.

The scriptures are not just a text for scholarly study. Rather, they were given so that we may know, love and serve God. However, it is alright to make mistakes while searching for meaning in the scriptures! God works in mysterious ways and He will not always show His love to us in ways which we expect.

Hence, it is important for us to be humble and open-minded to accept God's love however He chooses to express it. Being stubborn would likely only make us blind to His love. Above all, we should nurture our personal relationship with God and never forget His love for us. Always remember that our faith is a very precious gift.

Reflection Questions

To reflect on how we perceive God's love, we can ask ourselves some questions.

1. What does the Word of God actually mean to us?
2. Are we open enough to embrace God's love even in unexpected ways?

Friday

of the fourth week of Lent

Almsgiving.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” - John 13:34-35

The invitation from the Lord in Almsgiving is simply to recognise how Jesus has loved us, and in turn, love others in the way that He has loved us. Have you encountered the Lord's love for you in this season of Lent? Today, spend some time sitting with the Lord, and allow Him to reveal to you how He has loved you and who He wants you to share His love with.

Challenge:

Allow Jesus to reveal to you a person that He wants you to pray for. As you offer up intercessions for this person over the next few days, drop them a message or write them a note with any messages that the Holy Spirit has inspired you to tell them at the end of the week.

Saturday

of the fourth week of Lent

Guided Examen

Heart of Gratitude:

Quiet your hearts and take a few deep breaths.

Picture a long road across a great plain. You have crossed the midpoint of Lent and that is cause to rejoice! That said, this is but a checkpoint in the greater journey – a petrol station for you to stop, rest and take stock of your progress so far.

Think back on the road you have travelled along up to this point. Consider the events in the past week which stood out to you and recall your feelings. Take pride in the fact that you have reached this point in your journey and thank the Lord for his blessings. Undoubtedly, there were rough patches along the way, but never forget that God loves you and is guiding you towards him.

Saturday

of the fourth week of Lent

Guided Examen

Deepen your relationship with God:

Think back, have you included God in all the highs and lows which you have experienced?

God desires to share an intimate relationship with you on this journey no matter how fearful or hesitant you are to open up. He wants to be with you for both the ugly and beautiful, the small and big moments.

Entrust yourself to God:

Finally, prepare to entrust yourself to God. Like a navigator, God has the means to guide you safely and bring you to greater heights. While you may be the driver, your vision is still limited. Will you allow God to be the navigator of your life and look after you?

Lift a prayer for guidance, entrust your journey to him and receive his blessings with a joyful heart.