

Lent 2023

We often describe the Season of Lent as ‘a Journey’ and we may travel along with companions to help navigate the joys and challenges we encounter along the way. This Lent, we journey together as a parish community and family of faith.

This Lent, we offer you several resources you may wish to use as you reflect upon in your private prayer and devotion. We will pray with you each week in our bulletin and on the parish website by offering you daily reflections and scriptures to follow, prepared from the booklet entitled, ***Lent 2023, MAKE ROOM FOR LENT*** by Joe Sica. This booklet is so very well written and gently invites the reader to daily reflect during this season of reflection and spiritual renewal. *(Copies of this booklet are available for you in the narthex...free will donations are greatly appreciated.)*

Travel well, May the Holy Spirit watch over us all during this holy season, let us continue to pray for one another.

February 26 – Sunday, the First Week of Lent

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

Conquer Your Frustrations

“Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.”

Matthew 4:8

Work for the Soul – Share your frustrations with an accountability partner. You’ll feel better when you speak your mind and find out that the other person may have had a similar experience. He or she could have a helpful suggestion you haven’t thought of.

Words from the Heart – *Jesus, please help me accept frustration without getting my buttons pushed. Help me trust you in every situation. Amen.*

February 27 – Monday, the First Week of Lent
Leviticus 19: 1-2, 11-18 * Matthew 25: 31-46

I Feel Your Pain

***“I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat;
I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink;
I was a stranger, and you invited me in.”***

Matthew 25:35

Works for the Soul – Nobody likes a crisis. We don't know how we'll respond when it happens, so be prepared. Have your 'go to' friend's speed dial number. When the worst happens, draw strength from God, who will guide you through the chaos and uncertainty.

Words from the Heart – *Dear God, in times of trouble, I'm hanging on to you. Better yet, I trust that you'll be hanging on to me. Amen.*

February 28 – Tuesday, the First Week of Lent
Isaiah 55: 10-11 * Matthew 6: 7-15

Forgiveness Heals

***“For if you forgive others for their transgressions,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”***

Matthew 6: 14

Works for the Soul – Try a simple experiment. Make a fist and hold it tight. After a few seconds, you'll start to feel the discomfort. Consider what would happen if your fist remained in this position for weeks, months, or even years. That's what happens with bitterness. The tension is always there. You may want to hurt the other person and get even, but almost without exception, the hurt you do to yourself will be even greater.

Words from the Heart – *Dear God, help me bury the hatchet forever, truly forgive, and be free. Amen.*

March 1 – Wednesday, the First Week of Lent
Jonah 3: 1-10 * Luke 11: 29-32

Choose a Better Life

“They repented at the preaching of Jonah.”
Luke 11: 32

Work for the Soul – On an index card, write down your self-defeating behavior and the price you pay for engaging in it. List the opportunities you have missed because you chose these actions. Now begin to choose healthier alternatives. Put the index card into an envelope, address it to yourself, and mail it in three weeks. Then, contemplate and marvel at how far you’ve come.

Words from the Heart – *Dear God, I need your help to change my behavior and reclaim my power. I promise to do my part. Amen.*

March 2 – Thursday, the First Week of Lent
Esther C: 12, 14-16, 23-25 * Matthew 7: 7-12

Three Magic Words

***“Ask, and it will be given to you;
seek, and you will find;
knock, and it will be opened to you.”***
Matthew 7:7

Works for the Soul – Try saying “I love you” when it’s least expected. If your spouse is used to hearing you express your love when you leave for work in the morning, call again when you get to the office. Pray, during Lent, that the Lord will increase your love to overflowing.

Words from the Heart – *Dear God, You are always there to catch me when I fall and listen when I need to talk. I love you! Amen.*

March 3 - Friday, the First Week of Lent
Ezekiel 18: 21-18 * Matthew 5: 20-26

Resolve to Reconcile

***“Go first and be reconciled with your brother,
and then come and offer your gift.”***

Matthew 5:24

Works for the Soul – If you still live with haunting memories, nagging resentment or even anger, consider talking to a trusted friend, priest, or grief counselor so you can process your feelings. Seek to gain closure. Talk it out. Don't leave things unsaid that need to be said. Resolve to reconcile with your past so you can move on with your life.

Words from the Heart – *Dear God, you understand the sorrow of unfinished business. Help me work through mine so that I may find peace again. Amen.*

March 4 - Saturday, the First Week of Lent
Deuteronomy 26: 16-19 * Matthew 5: 43-48

Love Your Enemies

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Matthew 5: 44

Works for the Soul – If you have said or done something offensive to someone, apologize. Ask for forgiveness. Look for opportunities to share a kind word, shake a hand, or offer love.

Words from the Heart – *Dear God, give me great patience and confidence as I attempt to love those who are not very loveable. It isn't easy, but with your help, I can do it. Amen.*