



2025 LENTEN *Discipleship Challenge*

Every Catholic school student knows that there are three theological virtues: Faith, Hope, & Love. St. Paul teaches that the greatest of these is love. But hope is the hinge on which both faith and love hang, the hinge of the Holy Doors opened by Pope Francis at the start of Holy Year 2025 last Christmas Eve. Taking place every 25 years, the Jubilee concludes with the closing of the Holy Door on 6 January 2026, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

The Holy Door is deemed 'Holy' since it calls all those who enter to walk in holiness. The origin of the ritual goes back to Pope Martin V

who, for the Extraordinary Jubilee of 1423, opened a Holy Door to enter the Lateran Basilica.

"During the Holy Year," Francis implored, "may the light of Christian

"May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

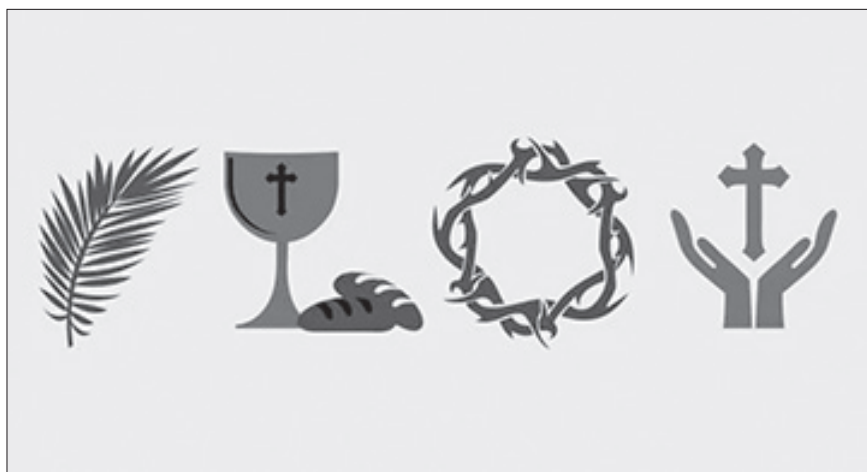
— ROMANS 15:13

hope illuminate every person and may the Church bear faithful witness to this hope in every part of the world! The door of hope has opened wide to the world. God speaks to each of us and says: 'there is hope also for you!'"

This is a living hope. Saint Augustine writes that hope sends us to transform

injustice and evil in the world. Our theme for Jubilee 2025 is "Pilgrims of Hope," a year of hope for a world

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“I am the door”

— JESUS



Together in Prayer

A Bread of Life Family of Parishes

CONTINUED FROM COVER

suffering the impacts of war, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 pandemic, and the climate crisis.

With this in mind, the Holy Father encourages us, "We are called to find our hope in Christ, and then, without delay, carry that hope with us, as pilgrims of light amid the darkness of this world. This is the Jubilee. This is the season of hope in which we are committed to the transformation of our world, so that 2025 may truly become a time of jubilation. Dear sister, dear brother, the 'holy door' of God's heart lies open before you."

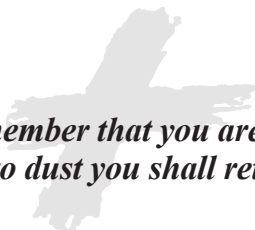
Consider the booklet that you hold in your hands a guide through this 40 day pilgrimage. Each day

lists the scripture readings of the day followed with a brief reflection composed by fellow parishioners. Included are practical ideas to assist our formation as pilgrims of hope. If you miss a day, simply pick where you left off the next day.

May we enter through the door that is Christ and beacon others to follow. May Holy Year 2025 transform each of us into the people of hope that the world so desperately needs. In this spirit, may every door we enter in 2025 be a Holy Door through which we pass as pilgrims of hope.

In Christ,

—*Ite Missa Est Team*



***“Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return”***

1 Wednesday, March 5th | Ash Wednesday
JL 2:12/ 2 COR 5:20-6:2/ MT 6:1-6, 16-18

Gracious and merciful is the LORD, slow to anger, and rich in kindness. — JOEL 2:13

The ashes that mark our foreheads are not for show. They are a witness, a frightening reminder and yet at the same time a proclamation of hope. Dust we are, but God breathes life into dust. Lent is a great dichotomy – a penitential season yet imbued with hope. In this Holy Year let us, at the start of Lent, contemplate the graciousness of our God who is rich in kindness and how we might also be gracious and kind. Choose just one way that exemplifies these virtues and, starting today, dedicate yourself to that throughout this “season of hope,” Holy Year 2025.

2 Thursday, March 6th | Thursday after Ash Wednesday
DT 30:15-20/ LK 9:22-25

Blessed are they that hope in the Lord — PSALM 40:5

Pope Francis writes that “we carry hope with us, as pilgrims of light.” There are certainly people we know who are dwelling in darkness. They may be suffering grief, loneliness, fear, or pain. Take the opportunity to reach out to someone in need of comfort with a phone call, an email, a text, or a visit and share your encouragement and love. Be a light of hope through your compassion and care. It is amazing how such a simple gesture, to know that somebody cares, helps others get through the day.

ite missa est
GO, YOU ARE SENT FORTH
MT 28:19

Daily Mass Readings are available online at www.itemissaest.org

Post your reflections on Facebook or record your thoughts and share with others who are participating in the challenge.

3 Friday, March 7th | Friday after Ash Wednesday
IS 58:1-9A/ MT 9:14-15

This is the fast I choose: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed. — ISAIAH 58:6

In Holy Year 2025, we are not only to be pilgrims of light but also to pack lightly! Fasting allows us to shed excess concerns about self or immediate pleasures, lightening the load so as not to distract us from the path of true discipleship. Today's readings connect us with the purpose of the Lenten fast – metanoia or change of heart. What can we let go so as to “travel light?” What gets in the way of our being pilgrims of light and hope so desperately needed by those we meet along the pilgrim's path? Contemplate this throughout this first Friday of Lent.

4 Saturday, March 8th | Saturday after Ash Wednesday
IS 58:9B-14/ LK 5:27-32

Why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners? — LUKE 5:30

So, what's with Jesus eating and drinking all the time? His ministry began in Cana at a wedding banquet and ended in Jerusalem at the last supper. There were meals for the four thousand and five thousand. He ate in the house of Zacchaeus, the home of the Pharisee, and on the road to Emmaus (there are 10 times in Luke where Jesus dines with others). Some scripture scholars jokingly say that Jesus ate his way through the gospels. Is Jesus at your table, too, the unseen guest at every meal? Grace before meals invites him to eat with us. Why not pray grace before meals throughout this Lent and perhaps thereafter?

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MASS READINGS



and other **LENTEN**
RESOURCES

5 Sunday, March 9th | First Sunday of Lent
DT 26:4-10/ ROM 10:8-13/ LK 4:1-13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days to be tempted by the devil.

— LUKE 4:1-2

The temptations of Jesus in the desert shed light on the common ways we are lured off the pilgrim path to God by chasing after comfort, power, control, and pride, sending us on winding detours or even losing sight of the path all together. Jesus shows the way to navigate these temptations by relying on humility, obedience, and trust. The Holy Year, above all else, calls us to be holy. Holiness is not about avoiding the struggle to overcome the forces that try to lead us astray, but to face them as Jesus does today. Today, pray these words of St. Charles de Foucauld as you place your life into God's hands. "Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you. I am ready for all, I accept all."

6 Monday, March 10th
LV 19:1-2, 11-18/ MT 25:31-46

Be holy as the LORD your God is holy! — LEVITICUS 19:2

Holiness is not limited to personal sanctification but rather extends from the sacrament of the altar to the sacrament of our neighbor. In Greek the word for holiness is "haggios" which translates to "different." As we are God's holy people we are to be "different." Most astoundingly, our "holy" God, too, is "different" from other gods and demands that we too be "different" – a people molded by the LORD and not molded by the world. Throughout our Family of Parishes our Holy Year gives us ample opportunities to grow in holiness. Using the resource you hold in your hands is one way. Google our parish bulletin for other opportunities this Lent as well.

7 Tuesday, March 11th
IS 55:10-11/ MT 6:7-15

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted. — PSALM 51:12

We all feel sorrow sometimes. On the journey of life, it is good to know that God has our backs. We can pass this support on to fellow pilgrims along the way. Today, treat someone to coffee and a chat or text someone to let them know that you are thinking of them. The hope you offer them is God's hope, the one who is the source of all hope in this Holy Year of hope.

8 Wednesday, March 12th
JON 3:1-10/ LK 11:29-32

A clean heart create for me, O God — PSALM 51:12

Do you do spring cleaning at your house? It is an opportunity to rid ourselves of “stuff.” Spring cleaning is different from everyday cleaning. It's deeper, more thorough. It means organizing the closets and drawers. It means cleaning out the garage or the freezer. The late comedian George Carlin had a stand-up routine about “stuff.” A house, he explained, is just a place for us to keep our stuff: “As we get more stuff, we need to buy a bigger house, so we have a place to put our stuff.” Lent is an opportunity to declutter. Make a list of usable clothing and items to donate. Take inventory, too, of what in your spiritual life could do with some decluttering.

9 Thursday, March 13th | The Feast of the Chair of Peter
EST C:12, 14-16, 23-25/ MT 7:7-12

Jesus said to his disciples: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

— MATTHEW 7:7

Jesus offers hope and assures us that God desires to provide what we need. Think of that door on which we are invited to knock on today as the Holy Door, 2025. “To the one who knocks the door will be opened” (Mt 7:8). He adds that if we, “with all our sinfulness,” would not fail to respond to another, then how much more will God respond to us? It is not that we pray and God answers. It is that our praying is already God answering within us and through us. Don't hesitate to knock at the (holy) door. Throughout this day whenever you pass through a door say the words to yourself, “LORD, show me the way.”

10 Friday, March 14th
EZ 18:21-28/ MT 5:20-26

Settle with your opponent quickly while on your way to court.

— MATTHEW 5:25

In the course of discourse between people seemingly small misunderstandings can escalate quickly into confrontation. This especially can happen at times of difficulty or stress when what is needed is cooperation and the benefit of the doubt. Situations like this call for compromise before they get out of hand. In a dispute, even if only one heart is open, the spirit of resolution can shine through as a guiding light. In the Holy Year, as pilgrims of light, let us put efforts for reconciliation front and center when disagreements inevitably occur. We might ask ourselves, “Will this matter a year from now?”

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11 Saturday, March 15th
DT 26:16-19/ MT 5:43-48

Love your enemies — MATTHEW 5:43

Are there harder words from the Lord Jesus than these? This does not mean that we overlook harm or abuse. St. Thomas Aquinas defines love as “choosing and willing the good of the other.” Thomas Merton puts it well, “Our task is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. That is not our business and in fact it is nobody’s business. What we are asked to do is to love, and this love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbors worthy.” Praying for enemies is a great act of love. Call to mind someone who has caused you pain and sorrow. Pray that this individual may know God’s mercy but also pray that God’s grace will transform this relationship and bring you healing and wholeness.

THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

12 Sunday, March 16th | Second Sunday of Lent
GN 15:5-12, 17-18/ PHIL 3:17-4:1/ LK 9:28B-36

Then from a cloud a voice came and said, “This is my chosen Son; listen to him.” — LUKE 9:35

How well do we listen to the voice of Jesus in the Gospels? His words are challenging, asking us to do things that are difficult and quite frankly, that we don’t want to do. “Love your enemies, do good to those who persecute you” (Mat 5:44). Who wants to do that? But God the Father has commanded us to listen to Jesus. This is what God has asked, and we must try and do it, no matter how difficult. Let us pray, “Good and gracious God, help me to listen and live the words of Jesus. I want to be nourished by your holy word.”

13 Monday, March 17th
DN 9:4B-10/ LK 6:36-38

Justice, O Lord, is on your side — DANIEL 9:7A

"Justice, O Lord, is on your side" is a powerful statement, signifying that while injustice seems rampant, the ultimate source of justice resides with the LORD of justice. Even when we falter, Daniel's words today serve as a reminder to hope in God's perfect justice and find strength in knowing that our just God will prevail. These are words to hold on to throughout this Holy Year as an added assurance we might pray the breastplate of Saint Patrick: "Christ beside me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, King of my heart." Wear a bit of green on this St. Patrick's Day.

14 Tuesday, March 18th
IS 1:10, 16-20/ MT 23:1-12

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean... — ISAIAH 1:16

And how are they to wash themselves, make themselves clean? By offering more sacrifices? No, by redressing the wrongs done to others, to "defend the orphan; plead for the widow." In first century Palestine, these were the weakest and most neglected. There can be no repentance unless care is taken of the rejected and the unloved, those who dwell in the shadows. Metanoia (change of heart) as demonstrated by radical actions towards the weak and neglected is what the LORD desires. In this we carry hope with us as children of light. This is where the Holy Door must lead. Today, spend time in prayer and choose a way to help support an Almsgiving project.

15 Wednesday, March 19th | Solemnity of Saint Joseph
2 SAM 7:4-5A, 12-14A, 16/ ROM 4:13, 16-18, 22/ MT 1:16, 18-21, 24A

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that by Saint Joseph's intercession your Church may continually watch over the unfolding of the mysteries of salvation, whose beginnings you entrusted to his faithful care.

— COLLECT PRAYER

St. Joseph is the patron of the universal Church. Our Collect Prayer today parallels Joseph watching over Jesus. Today is a day to "Go to Joseph," as many of the great saints did. We go to the one who listened to what the boy Jesus had to say to him, so now he can go to Jesus with our concerns. Go to Joseph with a prayer to live as virtuously as he did. Go to Joseph with whatever petition is in your heart. Allow Joseph to watch over and protect you, as he did Jesus. Today imagine those hidden years of the Holy Family. What concerns might the boy Jesus bring to the master of the house he grew up in? Spend time meditating on this.

16 Thursday, March 20th
JER 17:5-10/ LK 16:19-31

Blessed are those who follow not the counsel of the wicked nor walk in the way of sinners, nor sit in the company of the insolent, but delight in the LORD and meditate on God day and night. — PSALMS 1:1-2

Today we welcome spring! Holy Year 2025 calls us to be pilgrims of hope to a world in desperate need of it. Hope is a uniquely Christian virtue. The opposite of hope is despair. How can we practice hope and avoid despair? Benedict XVI writes, “A first essential setting for learning hope is prayer. When no one listens to me anymore, God still listens to me. When I can no longer talk to anyone or call upon anyone, I can always talk to God. When there is no longer anyone to help me deal with a need or expectation that goes beyond the human capacity for hope, he can help me.” Consider Pope Benedict's words and how they might help you going forward.

17 Friday, March 21st
GEN 37:3-4, 12-13A, 17B-28A/ LK 15:1-3, 11-32

Here comes the master dreamer! Let us throw him into the cistern and see what becomes of his dreams. — GENESIS 37:20

In Genesis today, Joseph appears an obvious “loser.” But we know that by Joseph’s losses, all of Israel would be saved. Joseph’s brothers never imagined “what would become of his dreams!” What “cisterns” have you fallen into that turned out to be blessings in disguise? Who do you currently know trapped in cisterns of their own? Reach out with a phone call or a note and offer them support and a listening ear.

18 Saturday, March 22nd
MI 7:14-15, 18-20/ LK 15:1-3, 11-32

Who is there like you, the God who removes guilt and pardons sins for the remnant of your inheritance — MICAH 7:18

Meditating on the words of the prophet Micah, there is nothing like the experience of leaving the sacrament of reconciliation and feeling God’s forgiveness flooding over us, reconnecting us with the LORD and one another. In turn, who needs your forgiveness? Pray for that person with your whole heart and ask the LORD to remove all bitterness and resentment from your heart. If the person has passed on, ask for the same forgiveness, and free yourself as well as them.

THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

19 Sunday, March 23rd | Third Sunday of Lent
EX 3:1-8A, 13-15/ 1 COR 10:1-6, 10-12/ LK 13:1-9

Sir, leave it for this year. I will cultivate the ground and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. — LUKE 13:9

Jesus tells the parable of the barren fig tree. The owner wants to destroy it, but the gardener offers to nurse it so to eventually bear fruit. It's a lesson in devotion and persistence. Where in your life do you need Christ the gardener to prune back layers of sadness or disappointment? Or is the divine gardener encouraging you to celebrate the rich fruit in your life? How might he be offering you healing and rebirth? The gardener respectfully requested "about a year" as a time frame. For us this is a Holy Year time frame, a time of jubilee and renewal nurtured in hope. Pray a decade of the rosary asking for God to bring you healing, renewal, and a better awareness of the gifts you are called to share with others.

20 Monday, March 24th
2 KGS 5:1-15AB/ LK 4:24-30

Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times, according to the word of the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. — 2 KINGS 5:14

Naaman's healing is a story of hope realized through humble obedience and faith. Initially, Naaman refused the prophet Elisha's directive to wash himself in the Jordan River, thinking it seemed too simple, too ordinary. But in the end, he is persuaded to comply, and his reward is swift and complete healing. Like a pilgrim on a journey, we may sometimes question the route we're on but seeking and trusting God's guidance will lead us to transformation. The pilgrimage of faith requires obedience, patience, and hope, even when the way seems unclear. Today do something disagreeable you have been putting off out of obedience. This is a "holy" action in this Holy Year.

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21 Tuesday, March 25th | Solemnity of the Annunciation of the LORD
IS 7:10-14, 8-10/ HEB 10:4-10/ LK 1:26-38

Therefore, the LORD himself will give us a sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel, which means, “God with us!” — ISAIAH 7:14

Jesus came to us as a helpless child, and through this humble beginning his nativity brings hope to a waiting world. As we sing in the carol, “The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.” Children are signs of hope. Share words of encouragement and love with a child on this solemnity. With an older child, encourage them that their future brings much anticipation and that we admire them and have confidence in them. Support children in our parishes who are food insecure by donating to one of the Bread of Life food pantries or the Blessings Bag program for school children.

22 Wednesday, March 26th
DT 4:1, 5-9/ MT 5:17-19

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that schooled through Lenten observance and nourished by your word ... we may be devoted to you with all our hearts. — COLLECT PRAYER

Lent observance is a time to forgive transgressions as well as a time to ask for forgiveness. It is a time of looking forward to growth and new beginnings – with spring flowers popping up around us. Yes, daffodils and hyacinth are stretching through the soil and the cold to bring hope for what is to come. Does the earth demonstrate a greater sign of hope? Take a walk today around your neighborhood and enjoy these glorious signs. And give thanks.

23 Thursday, March 27th
JER 7:23-28/ LK 11:14-23

Walk in all the ways that I command you, so that you may prosper.

— JEREMIAH 7:23

A pilgrimage is a journey. Like all journeys, there are potholes. Jeremiah, the reluctant prophet, knew lots of bumps and bruises along the way. Halfway along our Lenten pilgrimage, let us be reinvigorated with a reminder from Pope Francis when he opened the Holy Door, “We are ‘Pilgrims of Hope,’ pilgrims for a world suffering the impacts of war, political upheaval, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 pandemic, and the climate crisis.” That is a big order. But even a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Contemplate that the LORD is with us every step of the way. And we are mere instruments, as it is the LORD’s work we are doing. Acknowledge this in your prayers today by repeating the words, “I am a mere instrument. It is the LORD’s work!”

24 Friday, March 28th
HOS 14:2-10/ MK 12:28-34

You are not far from the Kingdom of God! — MARK 12:34

Renowned Rabbi Hillel, a contemporary of Jesus, was asked the same question by a rabbinical student that Jesus is asked in today’s Gospel, “What is the greatest commandment?” “What you find hateful do not do to another. This is the whole Law. Everything else is commentary. Now go learn that!” Happily, the scribe approaching Jesus was more pliable, so much so that Jesus praised him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God!” What does “not being far from the Kingdom of God” mean to you? With this question evaluate your progress as our pilgrim journey of hope as Lent 2025 reaches its halfway mark.

25 Saturday, March 29th
HOS 6:1-6/ LK 18:9-14

For it is mercy I desire and not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than holocausts. — HOSEA 6:6

In today’s gospel, the tax collector laments, “I am a sinner.” The Pharisee prays, “Thank you God for not making me like others.” For Jesus “the publican went home justified while the Pharisee did not.” The tax collector embraces Hosea’s words, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” The Pharisee is a public holy man who is not holy at all. The tax collector is a public sinner who ends up being the saint. This provides more evidence that the Kingdom of God turns the world’s expectations on its head. As we strive to grow in holiness, pray the words, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice” as a reminder that we are called to imitate God’s compassion and love.

THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

26 Sunday, March 30th | Fourth Sunday of Lent
 JOSH 5:9A- 10-12/ 2 COR 5:17-21/ LK 1-3, 11-32

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

— 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20

The Letters of St. Paul are frequently read throughout Lent. On Ash Wednesday, St. Paul quoted Isaiah, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you” (2 Corinthians 6:2). This passage heralded the beginning of the Lenten journey. On Palm Sunday, we hear the magnificent first century hymn in Philippians of Christ “emptying himself” (Phil 2:5-11). Filled with hope, the themes of Christian life are found in today’s second reading (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Spend time with the text today, especially the words, “On behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” How is God calling us to become reconciled and grow in holiness through Christ?

27 Monday, March 31st
 IS 65:17-21/ JN 4:43-54

Lo, I am about to create a new heavens and a new earth.

— ISAIAH 65:17

Is this reading from Isaiah predicting the future? The prophets are not foretellers or fortune tellers but forth tellers, seers of the big picture – rooted in the Sinai covenant and measured by the plight of the most vulnerable among them. Those who manipulate the Bible to “predict” our times miss the mark. The prophets we hear in scripture aren’t warning us about specifics for our times, but they do warn us of corrupt systems of domination that can occur in every time and place. We must be on the alert today for those people who use the scripture to predict doom and destruction. To quote Ralph Abernathy, “I don’t know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future.” Repeat this hopeful message throughout the day.

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28 Tuesday, April 1st
EZ 47:1-9, 12/ JN 5:1-6

It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.

— JOHN 5:10

As the parent of a special needs child, I have seen professionals with years of education and experience teaching and guiding differently abled people. Often those with “book” smart ideas get hung up doing things by the “book,” overlooking the miracle that actually takes place because it isn’t done “by the book.” Going about your day on this Tuesday of Lent, ask yourself, “When might I have let my own presumptions keep me from seeing the miracle right before me?” Then pray: “LORD, sometimes I can’t see you working right before my eyes. Help me to see the miracles you send every day.”

29 Wednesday, April 2nd
IS 49:8-15/ JN 5:17-30

Can a mother forget her infant, or be without tenderness for the child of her womb? — ISAIAH 49:15

This reading from Isaiah expresses great tenderness. It has a delicacy of expression and feminine touch that feels more like Therese of Lisieux or Jane Frances de Chantel than a bearded prophet. This love of a mother is profound, but the love of our God is even greater. God loves all people, including the child still in the womb. Unborn children are a hope for our future world. Today, pray for pregnant mothers and their babies. Consider donating to an organization that provides financial, medical, and emotional support to pregnant mothers in need.

30 Thursday, April 3rd
EX 32:7-14/ JN 5:31-47

The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. — JOHN 5:36

How often do we recall with grateful hearts on our journey that the Father sent Jesus to show us how much we are loved? This eternal generosity of God can be our continual source of hope and joy even when challenges and sorrows come. On this day make an extra effort to discover God’s love, evident especially in the ordinary blessings like a beautiful sunrise, the hug of a loved one, or a delicious meal. The Almighty must love the ordinary, having made so much of it! Contemplate “ordinary” gifts and practice gratitude for our good and gracious God.

31 Friday, April 4th
WIS 2:1A, 12-22/ JN 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

O God, who has prepared fitting helps for us in weakness, grant, we pray, that we may receive their healing effects with joy and reflect them in the holy way of life. — COLLECT PRAYER

What are these “fitting helps” of which the Collect Prayer refers? Certainly, the sacraments which communicate grace are fitting helps. The Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints, the angels and archangels are also sources for intercession to help in times of trouble. Eucharistic adoration brings peace and hope. Even this booklet of reflections can be a “fitting help” to aid in daily living. Spend time today reflecting on how you can allow these many graces to help you grow in holiness now and throughout this Jubilee Year.

32 Saturday, April 5th
WIS 2:1A, 12-22/ JN 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

The guards answered, “Never before has anyone spoken like this man.”
— JOHN 7:46

Jesus spoke words that not only bring comfort and mercy but challenge us to love our enemies and those at the margins. He comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable. At the start of the Jubilee Holy Year, Pope Francis challenged us, “Hope calls us, as Saint Augustine would say, to be upset with things that are wrong and find the courage to change them.” In prayer, consider one action that will contribute to changing structures that keep people impoverished or at the margins. Or more purposefully support those you encounter who are rejected or scorned by others.

THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

33 Sunday, April 6th | Fifth Sunday of Lent
IS 43:16-21/ PHIL 3:8-14/ JN 8:1-11

“Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir.” — JOHN 8:11

Today we are challenged to respond to sin in the way that Jesus does with the woman about to be stoned – the way of mercy and compassion. It is not only she who needs merciful love. Those who condemned her were mired and bound in their self-righteousness. St. John XXIII said it best, “All is forgiven those who forgive.” Our God does not stand there with stones to hurl in condemnation. Instead, God has turned those stones to bread to nourish us. And we must do the same. Pray today’s Responsorial Psalm response: “The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.” Consider the many ways that God has shown you mercy and allow that experience to lead you to sharing mercy with others.

34 Monday, April 7th
DN 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62/ JN 8:12-20

Thus was innocent blood spared that day. — DANIEL 13:62

Susanna was wrongfully accused by two very influential elders. She would have suffered stoning if the “young boy Daniel” had not intervened. Integrity and justice win out. Our church is opposed to capital punishment, holding that all human life is sacred, and every person has dignity created in the image of God. (Catechism of the Church # 2267) We know that innocent people have been executed, plus there are racial disparities in our judicial system. As part of your Lenten practice, advocate for life sentences as a just alternative to the death penalty. Consider contacting your elected official to encourage them to create legislation to abolish the death penalty.

35 Tuesday, April 8th
NUM 21:4-9/ JN 8:21-30

When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM.
— JOHN 8:28

Moses lifts up the symbol of the serpent and transforms it into an instrument of salvation, prefiguring the redemption which comes from Christ lifted up on the cross. We must always remember that at the center of Christianity is a person- Jesus. He is lifted up on the cross as he emptied himself in radical surrender and took on sin. Therefore, one cannot understand Christianity, without understanding this profound humiliation of the Son of God, who humbled himself and made himself a servant unto death, on a cross. Spend time praying before a crucifix and reflect on the depth of love that Jesus the great “I AM” demonstrates through His death on the cross. Allow this reflection to strengthen your faith in Jesus knowing that he accompanies each of us as we carry our daily crosses.

36 Wednesday, April 9th
DN 3:14-20, 91-92, 95/ JN 8:31-42

They walked among the flames, singing to God and blessing the LORD.
— DANIEL 3:24

The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego teaches that 1. Fidelity to the LORD must be given in the face of great danger. 2. Quiet, respectful disobedience can be a powerful testimony. 3. Accountable friends help us stand firm in our faith. These three men sang amidst the flames proclaiming that they were committed to living out God’s commands even if it resulted in death. Is there something occurring in our world today that requires us to stand together for God’s justice and truth? Prayerfully ask for God’s wisdom and strength as you choose one way to about bring God’s justice. Caring for our environment is one possible option to explore.

37 Thursday, April 10th
GN 17:3-9/ JN 8:51-59

Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM.” — JOHN 8:58

God created everything in love. Throughout salvation history, the Almighty invites us to live in this love, in particular when we share in the divine compassion by being compassionate. Thus we share in God’s work! Find one way to share that compassion with someone you encounter today in your daily routine. It may be something as simple as a smile, holding the door for another person, taking time to listen to another’s worries – all of these can provide an opportunity to mirror God’s care to a fellow pilgrim. It’s amazing how a single kindness can carry someone through the whole day

38 Friday, April 11th
JER 20:10-13/ JN 10:31-42

Let me witness the vengeance you take on them for to you I have entrusted my cause. — JEREMIAH 20:12

Jeremiah and most of the prophets had plenty of obstacles to overcome. As mouthpieces for YHWH, they spoke truth to people who were deaf to it. Sadly, Jeremiah became vindictive and wanted God to punish those who would not listen. Aren’t we all like this sometimes? Putting all in God’s hands without expectations requires God’s grace. Ours is not to tell God what to do. Imagine those who have caused you distress and place them in God’s hands. Repeat throughout the day the words “totus tuus” (“All is yours”). St. John Paul II used this as his papal motto. Allow this prayer to remind you to put all your trust in God.

39 Saturday, April 12th
EZ 37:21-28/ JN 11:45-56

The LORD will guard us as a shepherd guards his flock.
— JEREMIAH 31:10

Our response to today’s psalm is from Jeremiah, “The LORD will guard us as a shepherd guards his flock.” Jesus is the Good Shepherd accompanying us on our pilgrimage. And we, in turn, are to accompany others. Many love this image. But it would have been a startling comparison in the early Church. Shepherds were poorly regarded, and they were prohibited from worshiping in the Temple because they were considered defiled. Despite their status, it was the lowly shepherds that were the first to hear of the birth of the messiah according to Luke. Who are those in your life that others spurn? Include and reach out to one at the first chance you get as we approach Holy Week.

holy week

2025 MASS SCHEDULE

HOLY THURSDAY

7:00 PM Immaculate Conception (Bilingual)

GOOD FRIDAY

12:00 PM Immaculate Conception

6:00 PM St. Mary (Spanish)

7:00 PM Taize Prayer Service Immaculate Conception

EASTER VIGIL

8:45 PM Immaculate Conception (Bilingual)

EASTER SUNDAY

9:00 AM St. Anthony*

9:00 AM St. Helen

9:00 AM Immaculate Conception (Spanish)

9:45 AM St. Mary

10:45 AM Holy Angels

11:00 AM Immaculate Conception

12:15 PM St. Mary (Spanish)

5:00 PM Immaculate Conception*

**Please note: No incense at these two Masses.*

BREAD OF LIFE
PAN DE VIDA
PARISH

**Eastertime
Bible Study**

Presented by Tim Cronin, with time for faith sharing

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS: MAY 7, 14, 21, 28, JUNE 4 & 11

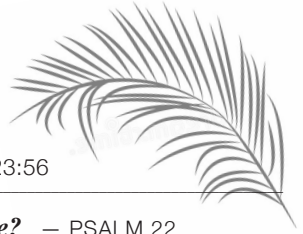
7:00-8:30 PM AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHAPEL

Register at tjcronin224@gmail.com

Primary resource: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN by Scott M. Lewis, Liturgical Press

HOLY WEEK

40 Sunday, April 13th | Palm Sunday
 LK 19:28-40/ IS 50:4-7/ PHIL 2:6-11/ LK 22:14-23:56



My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? — PSALM 22

Our world is in disarray. Violence, corruption, greed, catastrophic weather, and suffering fill the daily headlines. As a homilist once challenged, “If we think that the cross of Christ is a ‘past event’ then we have not walked the confines of our parish!” Yes, the cross remains firmly planted in our midst. Pope John Paul the First wrote, “The cross is not a destination. It is a path.” Pope Francis opened the Holy Door to show us that path. As a pilgrim of hope, spend time asking God to show the path you need to bring hope to those whose crosses are heavier than yours.



41 Monday of Holy Week, April 14th
 IS 42:1-7/ JN 12:1-11

My servant will open the eyes that are blind, bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

— ISAIAH 42:7

The Suffering Servant has been called by the Holy One to do God’s work and carry out the divine plan. He will be “a light of the nations” and will bring “from the prisons those who sit in darkness.” Originally this referred to release from Babylonian exile, but it also indicates the hope of liberation from spiritual bondage. As we begin Holy Week, we are reminded that the work of the Suffering Servant has to go on through us. There are no spectators during Holy Week! We are to be part of the work which the Paschal Mystery inaugurated. Our task in Holy Week is to slow down and be present as the story of our salvation unfolds.

42 Tuesday of Holy Week, April 15th
 IS 49:1-6/ JN 13:21-33, 36-38

And it was night. — JOHN 21:30B

“Judas went out and it was night,” the darkest moment in history, the day of shadows. The LORD of history will be hung, stripped, beaten, abandoned, and betrayed. The instruments of torture did not pain Jesus as much as the denial and betrayal of friends – the worst darkness of all. Our lives echo this, all of us having experienced betrayal from family or friends. Can we offer our darkest times to the Father as Jesus did? Isn’t this Holy Year Holy Week the perfect time to do so? Recall that a single candle can distill the blackest night. In the midst of the darkness, how can you be light to someone throughout your daily activities today?

43 Wednesday of Holy Week, April 16th
IS 50:4-9A/ MT 26:14-25

He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me is the one who will betray me. — MATTHEW 26:23

Today is the last full day of Lent. What was the seating arrangement at a Jewish Passover meal? Low to the floor “L” shaped tables with cushions to lounge on; the host (in this case, Jesus) would have been at the “intersection” of the “L.” In order to “dip his hand” in the dish with the host (Jesus), the betrayer would have sat closest to him, actually rubbing elbows. We do not know what Judas’ actual motives were. Perhaps he thought it would have turned out differently. Have you ever unknowingly let someone down to the point of betrayal? Throughout the day pray the mantra, “Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me.”

THE EASTER TRIDUUM

44 Thursday, April 17th | Holy Thursday
EX 12:1-8, 11-14/ I COR 11:23-26/ JOHN 13:1-15

If I, your master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model, so as I have done you also must do. — JOHN 13:14

Jesus showed the way as a servant leader. Our task is to live in imitation of him. At sundown today Lent ends and we enter the Easter mystery. Make every effort to attend the liturgies of the Triduum. Keep in the forefront of your mind the image of Christ the “foot washer.” So, we, too, are to be “foot washers.” It is through our service to others that we become beacons of hope and imitators of Christ so desperately needed by the world.

45 Friday, April 18th | Good Friday
IS 52:13-53:12/ HEB 4:14-16, 5:7-9/ JN 18:1-19:42

It was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured.
— ISAIAH 53:4

At the start of Lent we asked, “Why was Jesus tempted?” Now in the Triduum we ask, “Why did Jesus suffer?” Was it because his blood appeased a vengeful God? But it was God who loved us with an undeserved love and invited a response of love from us. Suffering born as an expression of self-sacrificial love is such a response – an emptying of oneself. Such love brims over and touches the lives of others. It is the love of God and not the revenge of God that redeems us. This is the Paschal Mystery, the heart of everything. Check out the liturgies available in our Family of Parishes and celebrate these holiest days – the holiest of the Holy Year!

46 Holy Saturday, April 19th | Easter Vigil
 GEN 1:1-2:2/ GEN 22:1-18/ EX 14:15-15:1/ IS 54:5-14/ IS 55:1-11/
 BAR 3:9-15, 32-4:4/ EZ 36:16-17A, 18-28/ ROM 6:3-11/ MK 16:1-7

Of this night scripture says: “The night will be as clear as day: it will be my light, my joy!” — EASTER EXULTET

Tonight, we celebrate the central liturgy of the entire year. Everything pivots around this night. Tonight hope, the heart of Jubilee 2025, is not some simplistic “everything will be fine” but as Fr. Richard Rohr writes, “the certainty that everything in the end has a victorious meaning no matter how they turn out.” Rohr further reminds us, “Now we are ready for Sunday, the first day of the week, the ever-new day of Resurrected life, which will allow us to henceforth read all our lives backward and understand and read it forward with hope.” Let us especially lift in prayer the elect who pass through the waters of baptism this night and join us at the Eucharistic table.



47 Sunday, April 20th | Easter Sunday
 ACTS 10:34A, 37-43/ COL 3:1-4/ JN 20:1-9

We ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.
 — ACTS 10:41B

The first Easter was not a blast of light, angel trumpets, or earthquakes. Rather Jesus came into the midst of his disciples. Peter recounts that he “ate and drank” with them. Is there a more human thing to do than share a meal? Similarly, as in that meal, he comes to us in the Eucharistic liturgy, with words and song and movement and eating and drinking. Here, as he did with Magdalene, he whispers our name. Spend this Holy Year Easter Day contemplating the glorified yet very human Christ as he whispers your name. Make that your simple Easter prayer over the next 50 days. This is the name given you when you died and rose with him in the waters of baptism. This is the name he will speak when you stand before him on that Day of Judgment. Slow down and take time today. Listen. Do you hear him?



HOW TO MAKE A PALM CROSS

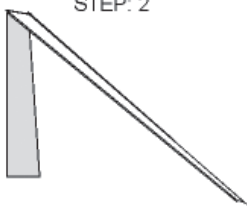
NEED: One palm leaf strip about 24"-26" in length, 1/2" in width, tapering to the end.

STEP: 1

Fold the palm leaf down,
about 5-6" from the bottom.



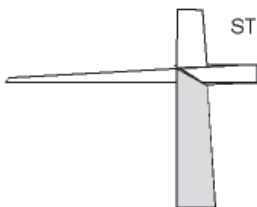
STEP: 2



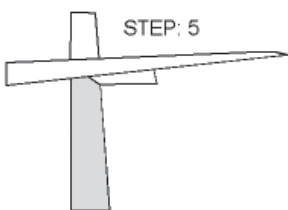
STEP: 3



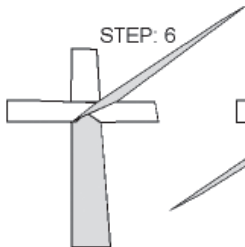
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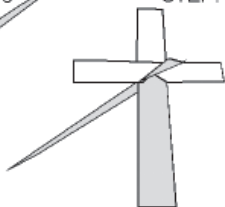
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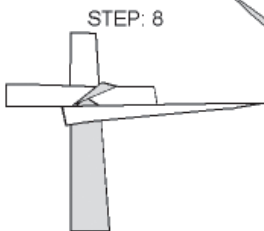
STEP: 6



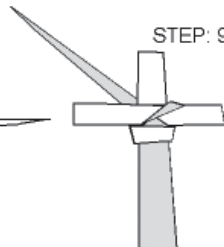
STEP: 7



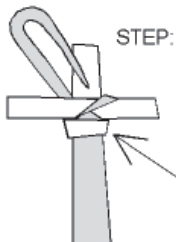
STEP: 8



STEP: 9

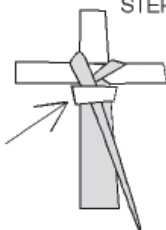


STEP: 10

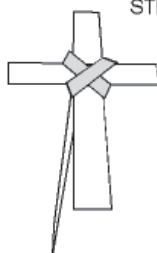


Tuck in the
tapered end of
the palm leaf
and pull it
through.

STEP: 11



STEP: 12



Turn the
cross over.
This is the
front view.

“ONE BREAD, ONE BODY.”

Holy and Loving God,
throughout the ages you have sought to
love, redeem, save and be with us.
At the appointed time
You showed us your face in Jesus-
the word made flesh,
the God who dwelt among us.
Showing your limitless love,
Jesus broke bread saying, “This is my Body.”
He took wine and said, “This is my Blood.”
He then laid down His life on the cross and died for us.

In bread and wine,
He continues to dwell among us.
Each time we celebrate the Eucharist,
we enter into Communion with Jesus and with one another.

In this Communion, we-
the greatest and least, sinner and saint,
rich and poor, young and old,
from the East, West, North, and South
citizen, immigrant, and refugee-
become THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST.
As the Body of Christ,
may we be the sacrament of your
love, redemption and unity in our world.
Father, we ask all this, through Christ our Lord,
and in union with the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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ite missa est
GO, YOU ARE SENT FORTH
MT 28:19