



Happy are those who ... delight in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.  
They are like trees planted which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves shall not wither;  
In all that they do, they prosper.

Psalms 1:1-3

# The Word Renews



## **Jesus 4 Everyone**

*The slogan of the New Evangelisation in the  
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore*



1 *Jesus is depicted by the figure "J"*

2 *In Jesus we say "Yes"*

3 *It is "us" who encounter Jesus*

4 *The colour tone in the word "Jesus" shows a movement from lukewarm (yellow/orange) depicted by "us" to passionate (red) depicted by "Yes"*

5 *The yellow tone on the 3 strips moving into the red tone shows another movement from lukewarmness to passion after encountering Jesus*

6 *The 3 strips signify that by our baptism, we are called to be priest, prophet, and king. We share in the 3-fold mission of Jesus Christ.*

7 *"4" represents the four Tenets of the New Evangelisation: Word, Worship, Communion and Witness.*



## Catholicsg Radio

brings you the audio version of 2022 Lent Reflection Booklet.  
Join our presenters as they take you through the reflection via the  
CatholicSG Radio app.

**Broadcast time will be on:**

**Every Wednesday at 7:45am**

Starting from Ash Wednesday (2 March 2022).

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Apple App Store



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### Podcast Versions

The same reflections will be available as podcasts on the app itself.

## YOUR OPINION

*is valuable*

Thanks for picking up a copy of this booklet!  
As you dive into the pages of this booklet,  
we would like to know what worked and what  
could be better improved. Let us know what  
you think by giving us your valuable feedback.



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# Lent Message 2022



*Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,*

*We have all experienced the topsy-turvy world of the pandemic. A loosening of the restrictions followed by a tightening of the measures only to be relaxed once again. This is to some extent an epitome of our lives. One day we are growing in our relationship with the Lord and the next day, we are back in the dumps. One day we are riding the waves and the next, drowning in the very waters we thought we had conquered. Victory gained becomes victory lost. Freedom gained to freedom lost as we battle on with the sins that have been resisting our efforts to eradicate.*

*Lent, once again, offers a possible time of solace. Reminding us that the storms will pass through, for which we should learn to jettison as it is not needed for the pilgrimage to our heavenly abode. Let us look not on our ever-changing commitment and disregard for what we have decided to do, that is, to focus on the constant invitation of our Lord and His never changing love for us.*

*Observe this season of Lent on what the Lord is offering through His Word and the power that comes from that Word. Let your world and struggles, be renewed by the Word of the Lord. As you journey through this season, try your best to journey with someone else, and better still with a community. Jesus did not come into this world alone and neither did He walk on it alone. Let the Word transfigure you to be who Jesus wants you to be.*

*May the Lord bless you with graces as you begin this Lenten season with vigour and perseverance.*

**Rev. Fr. Terence Pereira**

*Episcopal Vicar for the New Evangelisation*



# The Purpose **of this Booklet**

This resource is intended for families, RCIA groups, parish organisations, ministries, small Christian communities and neighbourhood Christian communities. It may also be used for individual reflection.

- To promote the Christian community in the neighbourhood as a place where we can hear the word of God and put it into practice.
- To give participants an experience of community and a sense of their mission by reaching out to neighbours and those in need.
- To gather parish organisations / ministries to pray together as one and put Christ back in the center.

To increase communication between family members. Love should be the main message in all communication, so the sessions are aimed at families sharing stories, doing meaningful activities together, sharing faith and being reconciled with one another.

## How to Use **this Booklet**



These reflections may be used either (1) before participating in Sunday's liturgy, as a way of preparation to receive God's Word at Mass, or (2) after participating in the liturgy as a continuation of 'breaking open the Word of God' in our lives.

In the spirit of generosity, group members volunteer beforehand to read Scriptures and other parts of the text.

A different group facilitator can take the responsibility in each session to foster good interaction and to keep time.

Someone should record the discussion in general terms and then email it to the members who are absent.

The duration of each session is about two hours.

The time and place for the next meeting should be announced at the end of each session.



# Session Format



## Opening Prayer

Everyone will pray the opening prayer and sing an opening hymn to foster a spirit of reflection and openness to God's Word and one another.

## Readings

The three scripture texts should be read at least twice, allowing some time for a silent listening to the Word.

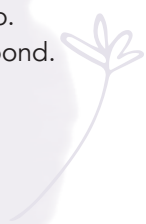
Then the passages are explained by the leader or group facilitator using the given write up. Preparation is recommended for the leader or group facilitator to read and understand prior the meeting.

## Thoughts

Someone reads this section, which is meant to deepen our reflection(s) on the readings of the week. Allow adequate time for reflection(s).

## Reflections

This section is designed for personal reflection and sharing if you are in a group. Then, select the "Supplementary Questions" relevant to your group. Allow time to reflect on these questions and also time for everyone to respond.



## Take Home

Discern how the Word of God is inviting us collectively or individually to respond through concrete action(s).

## Doing Your Bit


Your action to reach out or evangelise to another person to share the Good News of Jesus.

## Closing Prayer

The session ends with a prayer being prayed by everyone in the group. Everyone will pray for each participant and then for the community.

## Appendix: Activities

The appendix section contains activities that further enrich our spiritual journey with our fellow sisters and brothers in Christ.



# Facilitating Group Reflection



***For where two or three  
meet in my name,  
I am there with them  
- Matthew 18:20***

Be mindful of Christ's presence. Adopt a humble and reverent manner when speaking or acting within the group. Read the text meditatively and give your best attention to the words of the Scripture readings.

***May they all be one,  
just as, Father,  
you are in me and  
I am in you  
- John 17:21***

Help everyone to feel at home and take special care to welcome newcomers. Treat each person as a beloved member of the community and invite one another to participate in the session by taking turns to read the text. Use a language that everyone can understand so that no one feels left out.

***...and their great men  
make their authority felt.  
Among you this is  
not to happen  
- Mark 10:42-43***

Avoid being authoritative or domineering by acting aggressively, flaunting knowledge or telling others what to do. If there is advice to be given, do so after the reflection is done. Choose words that are easily understood by all when speaking. Avoid giving lengthy and verbose sharing that consume other people's opportunities to offer their sharing.

***If anyone wants to be a  
follower of mine, let him  
renounce himself and take  
up his cross every day and  
follow me - Luke 9:23***

At the core of these reflections is the Word of God, the teachings of the Church and the invitation for our conversion towards Christ. If the group wanders away from this during the session, gently invite one another to re-focus.

***Because when the time  
comes, the Holy Spirit  
will teach you what  
you should say  
- Luke 12:12***

There is no need to prepare sharing in advance or to appoint people to share. Wait patiently for God's Spirit to inspire generosity and remember to give thanks after someone volunteers to contribute their own faith experience.

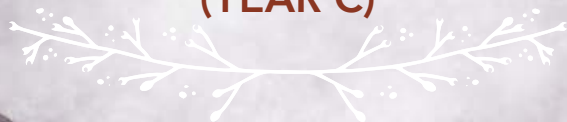
***...your light must shine in  
people's sight, so that, on  
seeing your good works,  
they may give praise to  
your Father in heaven  
- Matthew 5:16***

These reflections challenge us to do the will of God - to reflect the love of Christ to others we meet. Spend some time at the start of the next group session sharing with one another how each one has tried to do this over the past week.



# The Word Renews

SUNDAYS OF LENT  
(YEAR C)



## Sundays of Lent (Year C)

# The Word Renews

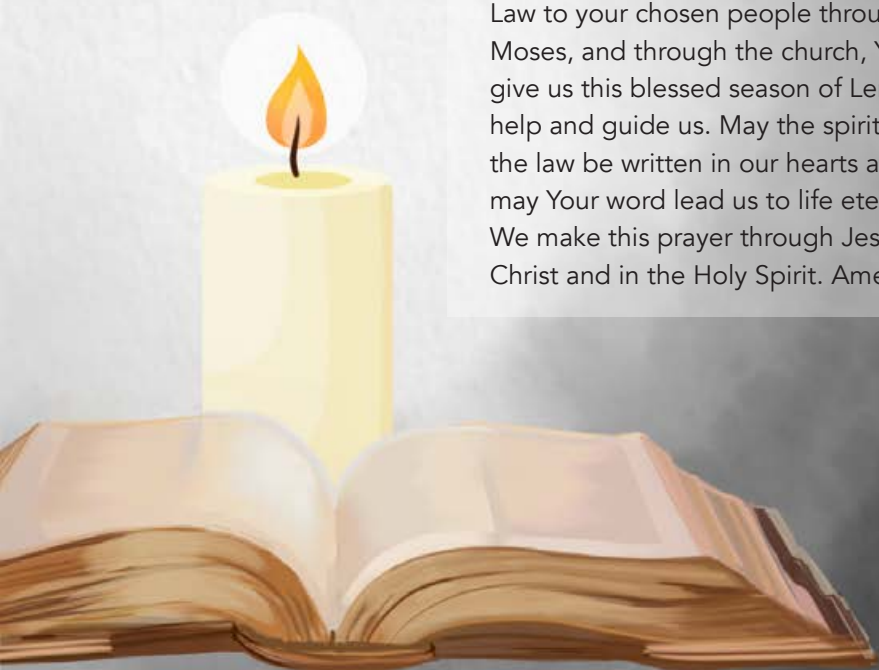
Week	Readings	Theme
1st Sunday of Lent	Deuteronomy 26:4-10; Romans 10:8-13; Luke 4:1-13	<i>The Word Leads to Life</i>
2nd Sunday of Lent	Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 9:28-36	<i>Transfigured by the Word</i>
3rd Sunday of Lent	Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12; Luke 13:1-9	<i>Converted by the Word</i>
4th Sunday of Lent	Joshua 5:9-12; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32	<i>Alive in the Word</i>
5th Sunday of Lent	Isaiah 43:16-21; Philippians 3:8-14; John 8:1-11	<i>Rooted in the Word</i>
Passion/ Palm Sunday	Luke 19:28-40 Isa 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; Luke 22:14-23:56	<i>A Pilgrimage to the Living Word</i>

1st Sunday of Lent

# The Word Leads to Life

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God, You invite us to change our lives, renew our faith, revitalise our community and grow in relationship with You. You gave the Law to your chosen people through Moses, and through the church, You give us this blessed season of Lent to help and guide us. May the spirit of the law be written in our hearts and may Your word lead us to life eternal. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. Amen.





## **1st Reading: Deuteronomy 26:4-10**

The Book of Deuteronomy is a fascinating and important book of the Bible. Its name is derived from two Greek words; deuterios meaning second, and nomos meaning law. The second law. Today's passage establishes the instructions for the celebration of the Feast of Weeks, where the Israelites were commanded to give of the first fruits from their harvest as an offering to the Lord. The instructions required the offering to be accompanied by recalling the saving actions of the Lord. The wandering Aramean mentioned in verse 5 was likely referring to Jacob, whose descendants fell into slavery in Egypt. However, God our Father heard their cries and liberated them from slavery to begin anew in the promised land that was "overflowing with milk and honey." This offering of the first fruits was to remind the Israelites to be grateful that the land they occupied, the produce they enjoyed, and ultimately all their lives were gifts from the Lord, whose faithfulness they could always count on.

## **2nd Reading: Romans 10:8-15**

From the Law given to Moses and its renewal in the Book of Deuteronomy, we move to the theme of the new Law established by Jesus Christ. This is a central theme of St. Paul's letter to the Roman church. St. Paul believed that the Law of Moses was a system of rules and rituals given to the Hebrews at a particular moment in history. A mere rote following of these rituals and doctrines does not lead anyone to salvation. What we need to do, is to ensure that the spirit of the Law is written in our hearts and minds. This is demonstrated by a proclamation of faith in the saving power of Jesus Christ. Through trusting in and relying on Jesus Christ, the promise of a renewed relationship with God our Father is now available not only for a particular group of people, in a particular moment in history, but for all people and for all eternity.

## **Gospel Reading: Luke 4:1-13**

The Gospel on the First Sunday of Lent always recalls Jesus' 40-day journey in the desert for forty days. The desert is symbolic of going away to be by ourselves, spending time with God our Father and of getting rid of any distractions that keep us away from Him.

We generally avoid anything that resembles a desert. Silence, emptiness, solitude, the lack of comfort and Wi-Fi connection – these are to be avoided. Yet, the church's tradition observes this Lenten season of forty days inspired by Jesus' time in the desert. We are invited to pray and do penance, to face up to our temptations, to purify our commitment and fidelity to God our Father.







## Thoughts

What is the definition of temptation? Temptation is the attraction to something that is seemingly good, that we do not have but want. That may seem surprising. Many might interpret or define temptation as a desire for something that is bad. However, most temptations that we face involve something that is relatively good. A particular food, an intimate relationship with a certain someone, a position of power and authority or maybe a new car or phone. However, the food that we crave may not be good for our health, the relationship may betray the commitment that we have made to our spouse, the power that we desire may not be motivated by service but for ourselves and we may not need a new car or phone because the one we have works just fine.

In the Gospel today, Jesus is tempted in the desert by the devil. The devil makes three seemingly good propositions to Him. Jesus is tempted to turn stone into bread, to assume all earthly power for Himself and finally, to make an exhibition of His powers. Why not, we might think. Why shouldn't Jesus use his power? Turning stone to bread would easily feed all the hungry in the world, taking all power for Himself would put an end to violent and corrupt leaders, and if He demonstrated His powers openly, people would come to believe in Him.

Jesus is led into the desert by the Holy Spirit so that we will learn to discern between what is really good and what is only seemingly good or even false.

In the desert, Jesus seeks to discern and to listen to the Word of God that leads to life. This is the word that we must be faithful to. The season of Lent is a time for us to discern and to listen to this Word of God. Only when we do so, will we find life.



## Reflections

### Personal Reflection & Sharing Questions

*Take time to reflect on the following, then share if you are in a group.*

What struck you from the passages of scripture?

What stirs your heart? Remain with it for a while.

As I begin this Lenten journey, the Word of God that had given me a direction in life is:

How have you been led in your life by the Word of God?

### Supplementary Questions

*You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.*

### For Small Christian Communities

As a Christian community, what are the constant temptations that we face?

Does the concern for food and daily cares draw us away from the community meetings?

How do we plan to grow to trust one another and the Lord during this season of Lent?

### For Ministries

What are the temptations that we face as ministry leaders and members?

Lent being a time for renewal and growth; how do we plan to resist the constant temptations in our ministry?

### For Families

The Book of Deuteronomy and St. Paul call us to move beyond the observance of the letter of the law. How do we center our family life on the Word of God?

Do we read the Word of God as a family?

Does the Word of God lead us to speak life-giving words?

### Take Home

In the dialogue between faith and the ways of the world, the Word of God becomes a lamp unto my feet that leads to life in abundance.

### Doing Your Bit

Come up with a list of 10 life's difficulties and a list of 10 challenges in life. Find applicable scripture texts for each of these difficulties and challenges. Ask yourself if these texts would bring you direction and or comfort to carry on in your pilgrimage to Kingdom of God.

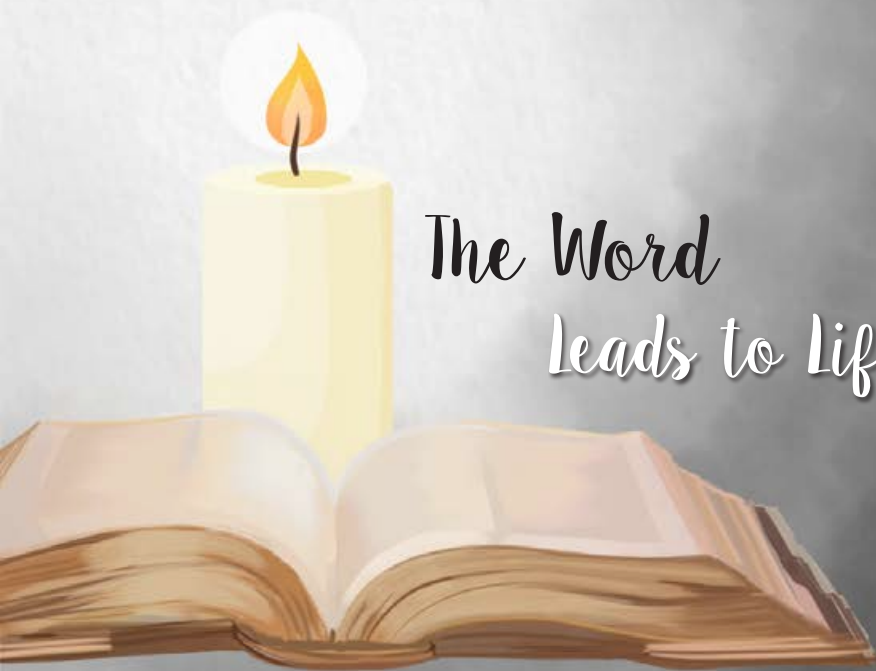


## Closing Prayer

Loving and merciful Father, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert and there Jesus confronted the devil in his own environment. Jesus faced the temptations, resolutely through the Word. The devil was unable to overcome Jesus because the Word gave him life. This is a powerful example for us to follow. The power of the Word to give life is certain. May this Lenten season be a time for us to grow in our commitment to live as disciples of Your Son Jesus by turning to the Word when confronted with the situations of life. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



*The Word  
Leads to Life*





2nd Sunday of Lent

# Transfigured by the Word

## Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we praise and bless You for the gift of Your Word. For the promise that You give to us; that we may be raised in the glory of Christ Jesus. May Your Word continue to aid us to persevere in this second week of Lent as we seek to orientate ourselves toward You and to be renewed by You. We make this prayer through our Saviour and our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.



## **1st Reading: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18**

This reading shows God our Father giving His word to Abram. It begins with His promise of descendants (15:5) and ends with the promise of land (15:18). Two promises in which the people of Israel place their hopes on.

In response to these promises, God our Father simply asks of Abram and his descendants to have faith and believe in Him. This is exemplified in verse 6 when Abram's act of faith in God's promises was regarded as an act of righteousness. This expression of Abram's relationship with God the Father is continually referred to as a model for Christians in the New Testament.

These promises was punctuated with a ritual in which the person who walks between the animal halves is making the commitment that calls down upon himself the fate of these animals if he does not keep his word (Jer 34:18). This punctuates the establishment of a covenant between God the Father and Abram.

## **2nd Reading: Philippians 3:17-4:1**

St. Paul opens this text by imploring his readers to be imitators of him, and in turn imitators of Christ (1 The 1:6). He expresses sorrow in realising that not everyone will be able to persevere in living in this likeness of Christ and that many have fallen away, "behaving as the enemies of the cross of Christ."

In the time that St. Paul wrote this letter, Christians were no longer subject to Jewish laws - including food restrictions and circumcision. However, he recognises that there were some groups of Christians who continue to insist that they should observe these laws, which led to a discord as to whether Christians were saved by obedience and works of those laws or by faith.

His letter continues to remind his readers that they are citizens of heaven, not of earth, and that they have a Saviour who will come and bring them back transfigured - renewed in His glory.

### Gospel Reading: Luke 9:28-36

In Luke's narration of the transfiguration, the transformation of Jesus's face draws parallel to the radiance of Moses' face when he encountered God the Father on Mount Sinai (Exo 34:29). However, the inclusion and description of Jesus' clothes is similar to that which Luke uses to describe the appearance of angelic figures. (Luke 24:4, Acts 1:10) This emphasises that Jesus' transformation is not just due to an encounter with God the Father but that Jesus Himself is the source of divine glory. This point is further established by verse 32 when the disciples 'saw His glory.

The significance of the presence of Moses and Elijah brings our attention to the founding 'Law and Prophets' of the Old Testament and how Jesus will be the ultimate fulfilment of scripture. The words of God the Father's voice in verse 35 echoes what was said at Jesus' baptism. (Luke 3:22) However, instead of speaking directly to Jesus, the message here is directed to the disciples, amplifying the relationship between Jesus and His Father and the call for obedience to Jesus.



## Thoughts

The theme of the transfiguration runs through all three readings of this week which aligns very much to the Lenten theme this year 'The Word Renews'. In the 1st Reading, the nature of the relationship between Abram and God the Father is transfigured through God giving His Word to him. This start of a renewed covenantal relationship between God and man establishes a significant change in our relationship with God the Father. In the 2nd Reading, St. Paul strongly reminds us that we are just visitors on this earth and when the time comes, Christ Jesus Himself will renew our 'wretched' bodies into 'copies of His glorious body'. Just as how God the Father allowed the glorious divinity of Jesus to be witnessed by the disciples in the Gospel, St. Paul affirms that we will be included in that glory through the power of Christ.

If we look closer at each reading, we see another theme running through - obedience in faith. God the Father asks of Abram to trust Him and he did in obedience. St. Paul exhorts us to imitate him standing firm in the Lord and to have faith so that we will be rewarded. In the narration of the transfiguration, God the Father commands of the disciples to 'Listen to Him.' In that moment, God removed the human veil of Jesus in order that the disciples can come face to face with the divinity in Him and to be renewed in their faith.

The Word of God is powerful and alive. It directs, guides, and renews our lives. However, it can only do so if we allow it to. The promise of God our Father will be fulfilled and it only requires of us to have faith in Him, and to follow firmly in all that is revealed through Christ Jesus in the Word.

## Reflections

### Personal Reflection & Sharing Questions

*Take time to reflect on the following, then share if you are in a group.*

What struck you from the passages of scripture?

What stirs your heart? Remain with it for a while.

Lives changed as individuals obeyed the Word of the Lord. They were never the same persons again. In what area of your life can such a transformation take place?

### Supplementary Questions

*You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.*

### For Small Christian Communities

How do we continually allow the Word to renew our community?

In which areas of our community do we need a renewal?

### For Ministries

The transformation in the ministry cannot take place without obedience in faith to the Word of God. What Words will your ministry choose to follow from this season of Lent?

How does the ministry enable its members to know the law and prophets found in the Word of God?

### For Families

Who in your family do you look up to because he or she has been transformed by the Word of God?

Do you emulate that member of your family?

How can the family renew its relationship with one another?

### Take Home

Hold firm to God's promises and be led by His Word in scripture to be transformed.

### Doing Your Bit

Examine yourself to see if you were able to use the scripture texts that you associated with difficulties and challenges.






# Transfigured by the Word

## Closing Prayer

Father in Heaven, we thank You for the promise of new life in Christ. We thank You for the gift of Your Son as the Word to guide us on our pilgrim journey. To gaze on Your Word enables us to be transformed in our way of life and in so doing give glory to You, Father. During this season of Lent, may we be granted the graces to open our hearts to a renewal of faith. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





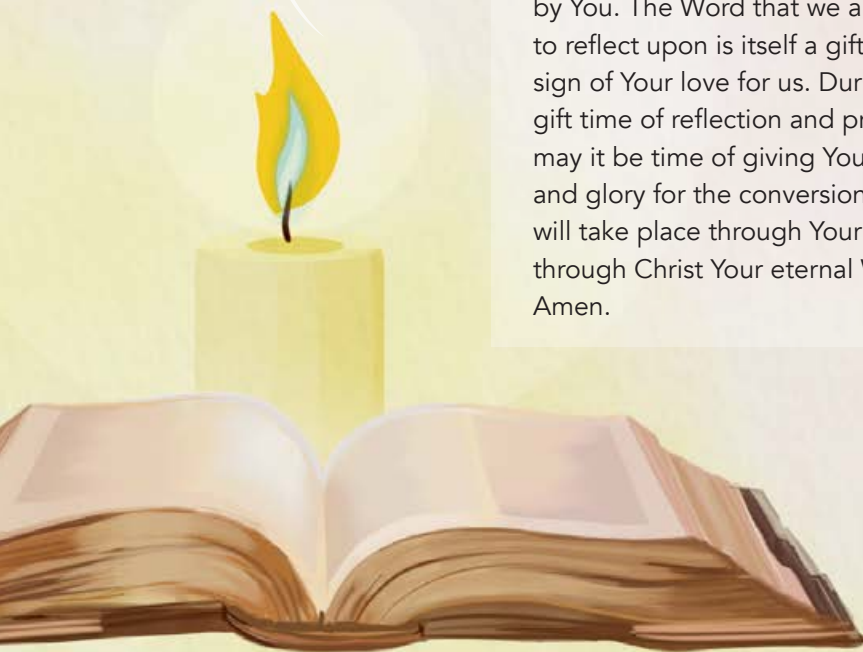


## 3rd Sunday of Lent

# Converted by the Word

### Opening Prayer

Father, Your Word is spirit and life. It has the power to cut through our deepest thought and direct us deeply to our truest self as created by You. The Word that we are going to reflect upon is itself a gift and a sign of Your love for us. During this gift time of reflection and prayer, may it be time of giving You praise and glory for the conversion that will take place through Your Word through Christ Your eternal Word. Amen.



## 1st Reading: Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15

A most intriguing and pivotal moment in the history of Israel, where God the Father reveals His own name. A moment when He calls the one who is to save Israel from Egypt, because the suffering people of Israel were crying out to their God in desperation.

The burning bush, which burns and yet not consumed, is a “strange” but significant sight, as it shows God manifesting Himself through ordinary things, the extraordinary.

God the Father’s self-revealed name (YHWH) is even more extraordinary, translated into English as ‘I Am who I Am’ (as per our Exodus text) or ‘I am the One who will be there for you’ (according to some scholars).

After revealing who He is, God our Father sends Moses on a mission, of revealing who God is, and how He acts, for the people who belong to Him.

## 2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12

Israel took the Lord for granted and became complacent in their relationship with God our Father (“the man who thinks he is safe”). They began to feel entitled to be saved and sated, according to their expectations, else they would complain. This is despite God our Father’s providence of daily manna and pigeons, despite leading them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night and despite quenching them with water from a rock.

When things do not go their way, they complained or they did things their way, like fashioning a golden calf and worshipping it. The very act of complaining shows that they think they have a better way of doing things and living life, that God our Father’s wisdom is actually not wisdom in their eyes. This is Pride, which always precedes the Fall.

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 13:1-9**

Jesus has strong words for His audience, reminding them that we should not be complacent in our faith, but we must work at it through repentance. Complacency presupposes pride, repentance presupposes humility. Our humble heart will find favour with God our Father because we turn our minds to Him (repentance = *metanoia* = turning our mind) and we make space in our hearts for Him.

Why, our God always has space in His heart for us, that one more year to manure the barren fig tree. God, the gardener will dig *deeper* into our soul to nourish it and to care for our spirit.

It is with prideful complacency; we look egotistically to ourselves and stop looking upwards for grace and mercy. However, with humble repentance, we will intentionally place our trust in God our gardener to tend to our soul.

## Thoughts

Naming is Be-ing.

What does that mean? When we are asked “Who are you?”. Our instinctual response will be to give our names. Beyond our names, do we know who we really are? Is it merely our actions, habits, values, achievements, occupations, relationships that define who we are? Or do our names reflect the core of our being, our identity?

God our Father’s name ‘I Am’ signifies His Be-ing (recall that ‘am’ is derived from ‘to be’), which means that He is the living God, not just of history, but of the present and the future. He is the eternal ‘I Am’, hence He IS always with us. He is the ‘now’.

What is our response to this love? Do we, in our complacency pick and choose when we want to engage with this God of love? Do we in pride, we tell Him that we do not need Him or His way of loving?

Perhaps our readings invite us to have a change of heart (repentance, *metanoia*) and in humility, empty our hearts of prideful self-will. Allowing the Gardener to dig deep into our souls and plant His seed of merciful and renewing LOVE. Lent can be is this meaningful season of repentance, of turning our hearts back to God our Father, making space for Him. Only then can Lent, which means springtime, truly be for us, a season converted by the Word give hopeful renewal leading us towards a grace-filled life.

## Reflections

### Personal Reflection & Sharing Questions

*Take time to reflect on the following, then share if you are in a group.*

What struck you from the passages of scripture?

What stirs your heart? Remain with it for a while.

God our Father promised us the fullness of life. This is possible when I allow His Word to change me, in mind and heart, i.e., metanoia and repentance. How have I responded to this invitation?

### Supplementary Questions

*You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.*

### For Small Christian Communities

What have we become used to in our community that we no longer see the need for conversion?

What specific area of our community life needs conversion to be more united in Jesus Christ?

How can we, as a community, encourage one another to repent and make space in our hearts for God?

### For Ministries

How do we allow for the presence of the Lord in our ministry meetings and activities?

Do we allow God our Father through His Word to lead and show the way, like the pillar of cloud and fire leading Israel through the desert?

### For Families

Do I have the merciful heart of the Gardener, giving my family members *another year* to bear fruits of virtue?

Has the Word of God been the cause of the conversion that members of the family have gone through?

Do I offer members of my family the Word of God?

### Take Home

Only a humble heart can make space for God our Father to reveal Himself to us allowing His wisdom to purify and lead.

### Doing Your Bit

Pray for those that you know who are going through some difficulties and challenges in life. difficulties and challenges.

## Closing Prayer

Father, You, gave us the Word so that we may know life and through the acceptance of this Word through actions live the very life You offer to us. During this season of Lent, as we have read the Word, so may Your Word accomplish within us the conversion that You look forward to. May the living out our faith though Your Word inspire others to have a conversion of heart as we ourselves undergo the conversion that will bring us closer to You. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



*Converted by  
the Word*



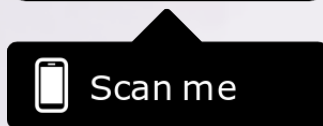




## WE NEED YOUR

# Feedback

Thanks for using this booklet so far!  
Has the booklet been easy to use?  
We would really love to hear from  
you. What could have made your  
experience better? Let us know!



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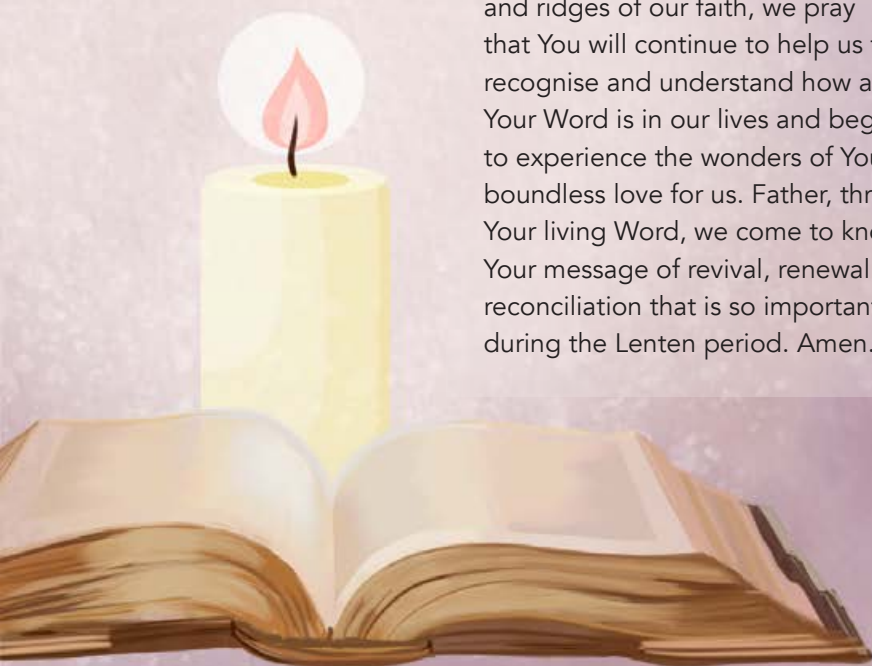
4th Sunday of Lent

# Alive in the Word



## Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us as your beloved children. You give us Your only begotten Son, Jesus, to be our protector, leader, redeemer and healer through our journey towards You. As we walk through the valleys and ridges of our faith, we pray that You will continue to help us to recognise and understand how alive Your Word is in our lives and begin to experience the wonders of Your boundless love for us. Father, through Your living Word, we come to know Your message of revival, renewal and reconciliation that is so important during the Lenten period. Amen.



## **1st Reading: Joshua 5:9-12**

The time has arrived to renew the covenant between the Israelites and God our Father. A generation has passed since they left Egypt and the completion of the circumcision ritual means this new generation can now celebrate the Passover which is the pivotal event in the lives of this chosen people of God. The celebration of the Passover, a foreshadow of baptism, is the affirmation of God our Father's promise of salvation and a renewal of the special relationship that our Father has with His chosen people, that His covenant with them does not end with them entering the promised land but continues into a life that is full. Everything that they have is from God our Father who is so desirous of having His children enjoy the fullness of life. As the Israelites move from eating manna to the produce from the land, it signifies the potential of this fullness of life in God our Father who is always leading the people to something better, if only they would realise and follow.

## **2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**

Baptism is the entry to a life in Jesus Christ that is free from bondage and slavery. It is the full life that God our Father wish for all humanity to have. Taking us as we are with our old and dead ways, Jesus Christ heals, perfects and elevates us back into the right relationship with God our Father. This is the restoration and reconciliation work of Jesus Christ that is passed on to all who believed in Him beginning with the Apostles. As 'new creation' made anew by baptism, we become the representatives to carry on the message that God our Father's deep desire for the entire human family to be restored, reconciled in right relationship and deep in His embrace.

**Gospel Reading: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32**

The focus of the parable is not the sons but the father who seeks to restore the family; broken by the younger son's departure and the elder son's estrangement. Jesus is revealing the unconditional love of His Father. Our Father, out of love created us to be free and bestowed upon us a free will, who reaches out to us when we are lost and rejoices when we return. The two sons represent two immature ways of relating to God: rebellion and childish obedience. Both these ways are overcome through the experience of mercy.

Only by experiencing forgiveness, by recognising that one is loved with a freely given love, a love greater than our wretchedness or our own merit, do we finally enter into a truly filial and free relationship with God our Father, living fully as His beloved child.



## Thoughts

St. Irenaeus wrote: "*Gloria enim Dei vivens homo*" which translates to 'the glory of God is the human being fully live'. This is what God our Father wants of us, to be fully alive according to His vision. To be alive according to God our Father's vision means we need to be attuned to His desire for us. God our Father is desirous to have all creation live in a right relationship with Him and with others. Beginning with the Israelites, His plan of salvation unfolded with a clear message - we as creatures need to acknowledge and accept His lordship over our lives. This means we can attain the fullest of life only through Jesus Christ, drawing us into one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Apart from this, we are far from the life that God our Father so desired for us to have.

We see this illustrated in the familiar parable of the prodigal son. In choosing to ask for his share of the inheritance from the father, the younger son in his rebellion had wished for his father's death because according to Jewish custom asking for inheritance is asking for a part of a person's life. He also chose to live a life according to the ways of the world away from his father's love which is choosing death over life.

On the other hand, the older son even though he remained in the house was not alive to the love of the father as well, treating all he did as chores and obligations rather than from a relationship with the father. The father invited his two sons back to life, offering them reconciliation and to make right the relationship. The making right of the relationship with all humanity was realised through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection to reconcile us with God our Father as we read in the second letter to the Corinthians. In baptism, we are restored and made new and alive in the life of Christ. We bring this message of reconciliation to all because, just as God our Father wanted the Israelites to remain alive in their relationship with Him, this message of reconciliation is still relevant today.

Every year as we journey through the season of Lent, we are often reminded to die to self to have life in Christ to the full. To be alive in the Triune God begins with a relationship with the Word of God and His Word should be at the heart of our lives, in our decision making, our challenges and joys. Apart from this, it is a sterile life that we are living.

## Reflections

### Personal Reflection & Sharing Questions

*Take time to reflect on the following, then share if you are in a group.*

What struck you from the passages of scripture?

What stirs your heart? Remain with it for a while.

Am I alive in my relationship with Jesus Christ and God our Father? Are there areas in my life that are dead because I am controlling this relationship with Jesus Christ instead of submitting?

### Supplementary Questions

*You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.*

### For Small Christian Communities

The love of the community is shown through forgiveness.

When was the last time there was a reconciliation service in the community?

Are there any hidden resentment and grudges that we bear with one another?

### For Ministries

Envy and jealousy often destroy the unity of any ministry.

Are the actions and decisions that we take based on the Word of God?

How alive in the Word (*members act and speak inspired by the Word of God*) are the ministry members?

### For Families

Are there areas of imbalance of relationship with God and with each other in our family? What are they and what can we do to strive to maintain right relationship?

### Take Home

God our Father's love is boundless and unconditional. His mercy is beyond our sinful nature. He is always here with us and He will provide our needs in His way.

### Doing Your Bit

Meet up with the person(s) that you have been praying for and begin a conversation about where they are in their lives. At this point listen without offering any advice.

If you are comfortable and if that person is comfortable, end the time together with a prayer. If you don't know what prayer to pray, you can just pray the Lord's Prayer.

When you are on your own, continue praying for the same people you know in difficult and challenging situations in life.

## Closing Prayer

Ever loving Father, You, want us to have life in abundance and You sent Jesus for this purpose. To know this abundance life is to live Your Word. As the reflections, during this season of Lent, have come to this point, enable us to aspire to be alive in Your Word through further reading and reflection of Your Word to live fully as Jesus wants us to glorify You in our daily lives. May this living of Your Word, inspire others to want to inquire about the mystery of Your love for all mankind. Through these uncertain times may Your Word be a harbour for all who search for peace and a meaning in life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.




Alive in  
the Word









## 5th Sunday of Lent

# Rooted in the Word

### Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we celebrate the Fifth Sunday of Lent, the power of Your Word becomes more evident in our journey. May the Word grow deep roots in our hearts as we read about Your great care for those who have lost their way and those who have become tired on this pilgrimage of faith and life. Your Word helps to liberates us from false hopes, false aspirations and ideals and continues to renew us as we struggle to be truthful to Your ways. Jesus Christ, Your Son is our only way, truth and life. We bid you through the Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## 1st Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

This passage was written at the end of the Jewish exile in Babylon (597-539 BC). The Babylonien King Nebuchadnezzar II, having conquered the Jews, forced them out of their land and exiled them in his kingdom. This is often interpreted by the Jews as divine punishment for their idolatry and disobedience. However, when Persian King Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon, he freed the Jews, allowing them to live and worship as they pleased.

In this passage, God our Father announces freedom to the captive Jews and describes how He was going to lead them back home. He is seen here as renewing His promise of deliverance to His people: "No need to recall the past, no need to think about what was done before. See, I am doing a new deed" (vv. 18-19). Just as He had delivered the Jews from slavery in Egypt centuries ago, He will now restore their fortunes because He has forgiven their sins. He will provide for their return journey, giving them water and protection from wild animals in the desert, so that they can once again worship Him as a nation.

## 2nd Reading: Philippians 3:8-14

St. Paul's letter to the Christians at Philippi was written while he was in prison, under guard for preaching Christ. Nevertheless, this letter has been termed "the letter of joy" as St. Paul in contrast to his gloomy situation, writes exuberantly about his experience of "knowing Christ Jesus" and his eagerness in wanting to attain union with Him.

The power of the Word of God in renewing a person is portrayed powerfully here. St. Paul describes how he has broken off links with his past (v. 13) to embrace Christ as his "goal", ever since Christ revealed Himself to him on the road to Damascus. Previously, St. Paul was a Pharisee, a strict observer of the law and zealous persecutor of Christians, who believed that salvation was attained through keeping the traditions of the elders. However, his phenomenal experience of the risen Lord made him realise what he had previously believed in was "rubbish".

What St. Paul, the forgiven sinner, realises now is the importance of being rooted in God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ rather than simply keeping to the letter of the law (*"I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ."*). He now understands salvation as growing in faith in Jesus and pressing onward to attain "the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus".

## **Gospel Reading: John 8:1-11**

In this Gospel reading, we see how Jesus radically challenges people's understanding of justice. Divine justice is a justice that is rooted in love and mercy rather than a vindictive application of the law.

Here, the scribes and Pharisees bring to Jesus a woman caught in the act of committing adultery. Her accusers state that according to the Law of Moses, adulterers are to be stoned to death. They demanded Jesus to give an answer of what is to be done, knowing full well that under Roman occupation, the Jewish people have no authority to execute people. They knew that in order to answer their question, Jesus will be forced to publicly propose an action that will put Him in contrary to one law or the other.

Jesus' simple yet loaded reply was, "If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her". In one stroke, Jesus directs the accusers' attention back on themselves and making them realise that they, too, are sinners no better than the adulterer they accuse.

Jesus' radical statement and the way the accusers departed one by one in shame, show how God's Word can powerfully enlighten people to God's understanding of law and mercy. Although the decrees of God are merciful, they are rooted in righteousness. Even as Jesus forgives the woman and assures her that He does not condemn her, He also does not ignore her grave offence and tells her very clearly, "don't sin any more".



## Thoughts

The central theme running through all three readings is God the Father's forgiveness of sinners and restoring them to His friendship so that they can live the lives they are meant to live. All three readings show that when one is deeply rooted in God's Word, people's understanding of who He is and His bountiful love and mercy is constantly renewed. They also show how being rooted in His word rather than blindly following the laws can give us clarity of vision for our purpose and mission in life.

The 1st Reading shows how our merciful God forgives the sins of His chosen people and leads them back from the Babylonian exile. He reminds them of His faithfulness across the ages, how He delivered them from their previous captivity in Egypt by parting the waters of the Red Sea and drowning Pharaoh's horsemen. Now He is doing "something new", bringing them out of their present captivity and providing water and protection for them as they journey homewards so that they can once again "announce my praise" as His chosen people.

In the 2nd Reading, St. Paul presents his awareness as a forgiven sinner who has been renewed and transformed by his faith in Jesus. So convinced is St. Paul of the "supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus" that he desires a share in Christ's sufferings and even His death so as to be able to experience Christ's resurrection. It is this rootedness in his new-found faith in God's love that propels him to strive continually towards his goal of union with Christ.

The Gospel reading of the woman caught in adultery is a story of sin committed and sin forgiven. It displays the inexhaustible mercy and compassion Jesus gives to repentant sinners. By making "sinlessness" as the condition for the right to throw the first stone, Jesus renews our understanding of what God's law is

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Thoughts ...

all about - convicting us of sin in order not to condemn us but to help us realise our need for God's grace and mercy. This turns the accusers on their head and forces them assess the state of their own spirits. He thus metes out a just rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees of the harshness of their own self-righteousness and shows mercy to the sinner.

The Sunday readings thus challenges us to show the same mercy we have received from God to our neighbour. We are to live as forgiven people, actively seeking reconciliation with God our Father and one another during this Lenten season. All three readings portray God as merciful with steadfast love and reminds us that we should not be self-righteous and judge others harshly when God our Father is calling us all tenderly to conversion.

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## Reflections

### Personal Reflection & Sharing Questions

*Take time to reflect on the following, then share if you are in a group.*

What struck you from the passages of scripture?

What stirs your heart? Remain with it for a while.

Are my actions rooted in the Word of the Lord?

Do I seek to address the concerns of my life with the Word of the Lord?

Does the Word of God convict me to forgive someone in my life?

## Reflections



## Rooted in the Word

### Supplementary Questions

*You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.*

#### For Small Christian Communities

Have we been spending time studying, reflecting, and grounding ourselves in the word of God?

Has this helped us to renew our understanding and appreciation of God's merciful love for us?

Do we judge others and if so, in what ways?  
How do we as a community stop this?

#### For Ministries

Are the routines, customs and guidelines of the ministry rooted in the Word of God?

Are our actions and words rooted on justice, love, peace and joy that is found in the Word of God?

#### For Families

Does the family refer to the Word of God before deciding on family matter?

Does the family refer to the Word of God before judging one another or others outside the family circle?

Does the family turn to the wisdom found in the Word of God in important matters of life?

#### Take Home

Only in His Word will you find forgiveness and life.


#### Doing Your Bit

Meet up with the person(s) that you have been praying for and ask if their situations have improved or if they are still the same. After listening attentively, offer one (*and only one*) scripture text that you think might be of help to this person. If you are comfortable and if that person is comfortable, end the time together praying Psalm 23. (Refer to Page 76)

When you are on your own, continue praying for the same people you know in difficult and challenging situations in life.







## Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, Your word constantly renews and surprises us by its unfathomable love and mercy. As we seek justice, may it be rooted in Your Word, and may we deal with others in a loving manner for them to receive Your Word to have a conversion of heart that draws them closer to You. May this Lenten season be a time where we are deeply rooted in Your Word and act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with You and others. In the name of Your beloved Son, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Rooted in  
the Word





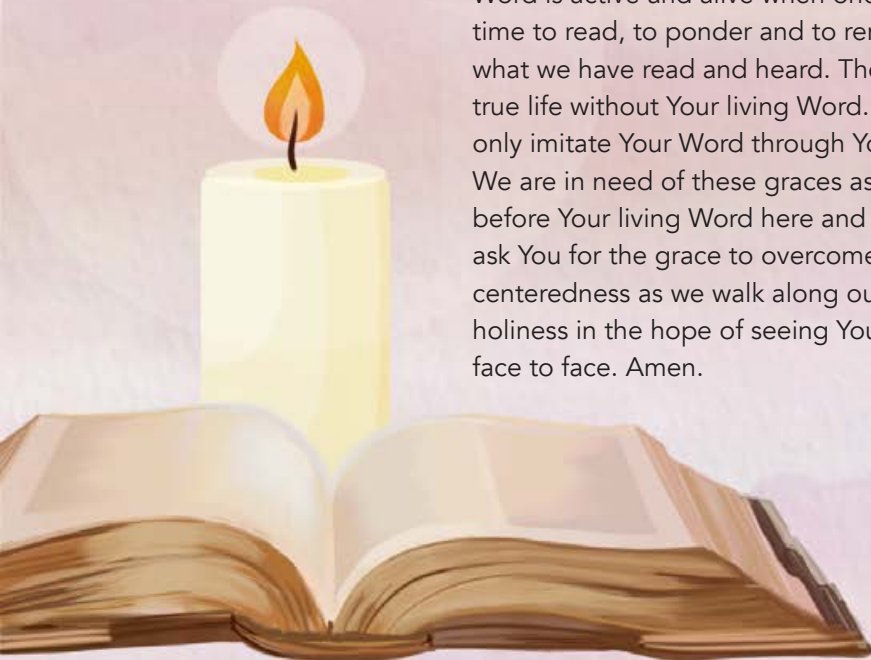
Passion/ Palm Sunday

# A Pilgrimage to the Living Word



## Opening Prayer

God our Father who surpasses all human understanding, You showed us through Your Son Jesus that Your heart embraces all people, especially the lowly, the poor, and the outcast. We are privileged to know that Your Word is active and alive when one spends time to read, to ponder and to remember what we have read and heard. There is no true life without Your living Word. We can only imitate Your Word through Your graces. We are in need of these graces as we come before Your living Word here and now. We ask You for the grace to overcome our self-centeredness as we walk along our path to holiness in the hope of seeing You one day face to face. Amen.



## **Procession: Luke 19:28-40**

If there were any doubts about the kingship of Jesus, the evangelist puts them to rest in his version of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. This story is found in all four Gospels and attests to the symbolic entry by the historical Jesus into the Holy City. Reminiscent of Solomon's ride on David's mule, (1 Kings 1:38-40) there is no ambiguity in Luke's mind as to the kingly identity of Jesus. Even if there were no human lips to profess it, nature herself proclaim the truth due justice - "the stones will cry out" (v. 40). In response to their king, the subjects lay down their cloaks, unaware that their king is about to lay down something greater, His own life for them.

## **1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7**

The righteous one of God our Father is portrayed as a "Suffering Servant" in the writings of the prophet Isaiah. The image of the Suffering Servant symbolises faithful perseverance, and alludes to the opposition often faced by those who choose to follow God. It is an image that can be applied to all of God's chosen who experience hostility and rejection from outsiders and from those who are supposed to receive His message. Under duress, the Suffering Servant does not seek for external consolation nor rely on material possessions for comfort and security. Only God is their sole source of fortitude. Filled with God's strength, the Suffering Servant sets their face "like flint" to withstand all earthly tribulations in hope of eternal reward.

## **2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6-11**

Biblical scholars agree that this hymn to Christ pre-dates St. Paul's writings, revealing that a significant portion of early Christians already believed what would only be affirmed nearly three centuries later at the Council of Nicaea – the suffering and risen Jesus had a divine nature. St. Paul borrowed this ancient poem in this letter written during his captivity not only expressed his own faith in Christ as the Son of God, but also linked his own imprisonment to the obedience of Jesus confronting the cross. In his own self-emptying response, St. Paul saw himself as one who shared in the sacrifice of the Son of God who promised heavenly glory. The apostle entreated the Philippian community to profess the same attitude in the face of adversity.

**Gospel Reading: Luke 22:14-23:56**

Luke's audience was largely Greek speaking and not tuned into Jewish culture and expression. The Gospel of Luke is thus a Gentile-friendly narrative of Christ's life and a good "outsider's introduction" to the Jesus story. The evangelist took great care to structure key messages of Jesus' teachings into the passion narrative:

1. The kingly one enters Jerusalem in a lowly fashion; in God our Father's eyes, the greatest is the humblest;
2. The Son of Man "is among you as one who serves";
3. The promise of God is never achieved through the violence of the sword but with submission and obedience to Him.

Throughout His passion and death, Jesus fulfilled perfectly the image of Isaiah's Suffering Servant.



## Thoughts

The theme of spiritual humility is threaded into the Gospels, featuring prominently in Jesus' own preaching and lifestyle that actively avoided all forms of grandeur. Our Lord's humble life-ethic, leading up to His redemptive sacrifice on the cross, is sometimes summed up in Christian tradition by the Greek word *kenosis*. St. Paul's letter to the Philippians 2:7 poetically praised the Son of God who "poured out" himself (*ekenosen*) taking the form of a slave. Spiritual humility is identified as a key value of those who wish to live in God's Kingdom. Christians emulate the Lord when they adopt the same humble and self-giving attitude of the Master "who came to serve and not to be served" (Mt. 20:28).

It has never been easy to live the spirituality of *kenosis*. Is it even more difficult to do so today? Doesn't pragmatism dictate that to move forward, we must look out for ourselves? Can we truly be sacrificial for others, or will our instinct for survival turn us against each other in what the philosopher Thomas Hobbes called "a war of all against all"?

The instinct to self-preserve is a necessary part of our human nature. It helps us to be aware of our surroundings and to avoid danger. Parents train their children to be able to fend for themselves and survive the challenging environment of adulthood. The self is a gift from God our Father that deserves respect and a need nurture it. It is important to note that care of the self extends to care for others.

Society emphasises self-care for success and idealises high self-esteem for wellness. However, there is a fine line between self-care and self-indulgence. Industries and technological cultures normalise the idea that you and you alone decide how to actualise yourself as a human being – and that route to full human potential is by non-stop consumption. Consider how much time and money is spent pursuing longevity and youthful vigor. We live under a meritocratic logic: other people are either objects to be used, or they are competitors and adversaries. Stay ahead of all them at all costs. Are these impulses contradictory to *kenosis*?

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Thoughts ...

Would we be inclined to give ourselves for others if we are always wary of other people? Research published in July last year by the Institute of Policy Studies concluded that 65.4% of Singaporeans polled believed that we must be very careful of other people, as opposed to 34.6% who felt that most people could be trusted. Acts of love can be perceived with suspicion when majority of our population are conditioned to be cautious of other lest they take advantage of us.

Christians thus find themselves at an intersection of conflicting cultural messages: on one hand society drives us to protect our self and succeed against others. On the other our religion commands us to love even strangers and the undeserving to the point of self-sacrifice. It's a struggle to reconcile our survival instinct with the truth that Jesus came into the world not just to give up His life for His close friends and family, but for all humankind. How do we balance that kind of love with the harsh realities of our dog-eat-dog environment? Is it possible to integrate being Singaporean and being Catholic at the same time?

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## Reflections

### Personal Reflection & Sharing Questions

*Take time to reflect on the following, then share if you are in a group.*

What struck you from the passages of scripture?

What stirs your heart? Remain with it for a while.

Where do I draw the boundary between self-care and self-sacrifice?

Is there a difference between my secular identity as a Singaporean (job, family and civic role, etc.) and my religious identity as a Catholic?

Do I see living the Word of God as a pilgrimage through the endless opposition of being in the world and not of the world?



## Reflections

### Supplementary Questions

*You may wish to reflect on one of the following questions according to your context.*

#### For Small Christian Communities

How does my own self-centeredness negatively affect the Christian life of my community?

What examples of self-sacrifice have I seen among members in my own community that I want to emulate?

#### For Ministries

All of what Jesus did was for the salvation of others. Am I doing the same in my ministry?

What examples of *kenosis*, from ministers (religious, ordained, or laity) who truly work for God and others, can I follow?

#### For Families

There is an assumption that people are more willing to sacrifice for family rather than for those who are not related. Would I agree? Why or why not?

Do I recognize and appreciate members of my family who have made Christ-like sacrifices for me? What have I done to show this?

#### Take Home

The Word of God cannot be understood in a day nor is it for a day but for a pilgrimage of life.

The Living Word is for the living.

#### Doing Your Bit

Meet up with the person(s) that you have been praying for and ask if their situations have improved or if they are still the same. Once again just listen attentively. Ask the person, what can possibly be done by the person concerned. After this, invite the person to the Easter celebrations. If you are comfortable and if that person is comfortable, end the time together praying Psalm 23. (Refer to Page 76).

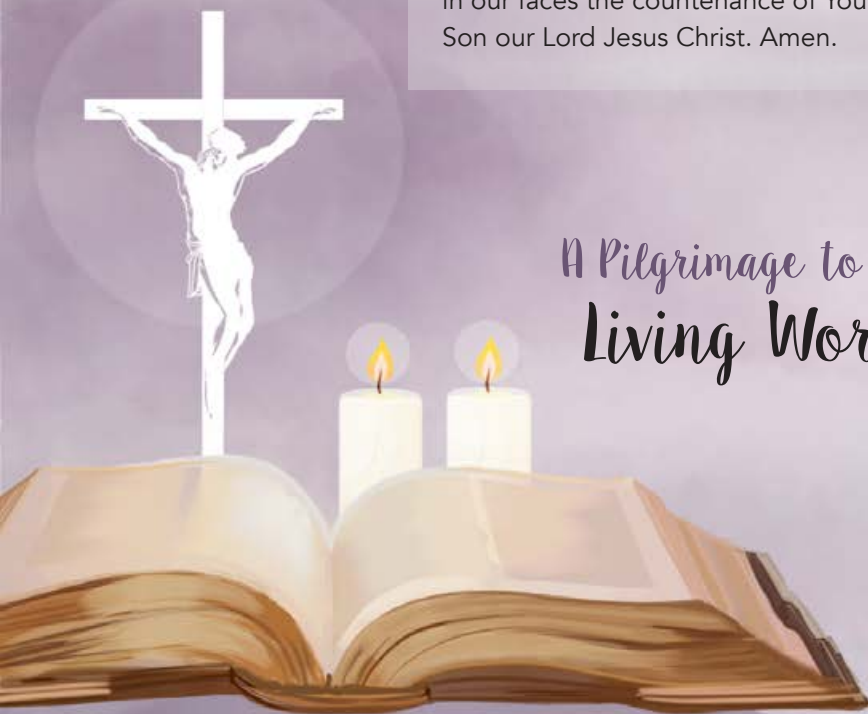




## Closing Prayer

God our Father, as we journey through these times of uncertainty, contradiction, self-preservation, and materialism, only Your Word gives us life. Jesus Christ, your beloved son, emptied Himself of His glory to be the suffering servant king in order to show us that there is more to life than what the earthly kingdom of possessions, fame and power can offer. In this pilgrimage of ours, may it be towards Your Word that gives life. As this season of Lent draws to a close, may our pilgrimage to Your living Word exhibit to others Your love and concern for all humanity. May they discover in our faces the countenance of Your own Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

*A Pilgrimage to the  
Living Word*

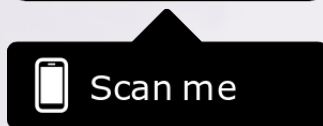






## WHAT COULD WE HAVE DONE BETTER?

Thanks for using this booklet! We hope that the reflections have helped you and your community to grow in faith. Did this booklet meet your expectations? What else would you like to see in future booklets? Your feedback is important to us. Let us know!



***one.org.sg/feedback***

## Appendix

# Lenten Activities



### Reflections For The Families

Lent is a season of preparation for Easter. A time for us to reflect on God our Father's salvation plan to bring His people from darkness into light and how we respond to His call to holiness. The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts through Holy Saturday. Through our Lenten observance of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; we, the faithful, embark on a 40-day journey in the footsteps of our Lord. Just as He spent 40 days in the desert more than 2,000 years ago.

### Family Activity 1: Stations of the Cross

A family way of the cross can be a simple quiet time of prayer or an opportunity for meditative and contemplative reflection on each station. Before you start, here are a few pointers that might be helpful:

- You may choose to pray the Stations of the Cross using those in your parish or you may use paintings or images based on each station (you can use a different set of pictures each week). This could be an opportunity for your family to experience God through liturgical art.
- Remind your family members that this activity is a prayer. We pray the Stations of the Cross to help us enter deeper into the mystery of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection.
- You may choose to do all stations at a time or you may choose to reflect on one or a few stations each time.
- When you begin at a station, spend a few moments gazing at the image before you. As you begin your prayer, reflect on what each station means to you, what touches you, what Jesus is saying to you here, whether you could identify with the people in this station, what you are thankful for, etc.

### Materials Needed / Environment:

- Pictures representing each of the 14 stations
- Lighted candles for the first 12 stations
- Candle snuffer
- Matches
- Darken the room – but leave a lamp on or the light in a nearby room so you can still read.

## Lenten Activities

# Stations of the Cross

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, You love us so much that You gave yourself totally on the Cross to make us holy. We want to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. Show us the way to holiness as we meditate on the Way of the Cross. Help us to walk together by faith as a family renewed in Your word and love. Amen.



# Stations of the Cross

*(Light all candles for the first 12 stations.)*

## **Begin each station with:**

"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."

After each station you say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be...

## **First Station:**

### **Jesus is condemned to death**

Jesus is brought before Pilate by people he knows – the chief priests and elders. Although He is innocent, no one stood up for Him. Pilate sees that he can do nothing and not wanting further trouble, he sentences Jesus to death.

### **Look at Jesus**

*Has anyone ever said mean or hurtful things about you, or has anyone ever told an untruthful thing about you? If someone did that to you, look into your heart and recall how you felt. Maybe you were scared, or hurt, or maybe you felt very angry.*

*Offer up your heart to Jesus. See how Jesus is loving you when you show Him what happens in your heart. Then, when you are ready, ask Jesus to help you make your heart more like His. Maybe you want to ask Jesus to help you to remember that God our Father is always with you.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the first station.)*

# Stations of the Cross

"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."



## **Second Station:**

### **Jesus carries His cross**

After Jesus has been flogged by the soldiers, mocked at and spat upon, He is made to carry the heavy cross by Himself from the city to Calvary (or Golgotha).

#### **Look at Jesus**

*Have you ever had something happen that was very difficult for you? Sometimes we are not treated nicely or someone in our family is very sick. Sometimes, we just can't have things the way as we want them.*

*Take some time to look at what your heart is like when this happens. Then, when you see what your heart is like, show your heart to Jesus. See how Jesus is loving you when you show Him what happens in your heart. When you are ready, ask Jesus to help you make your heart more like His.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the second station.)*

## **Third Station:**

### **Jesus falls the first time**

Jesus falls to the ground for the first time, exhausted by the weight of the cross. The cross keeps pushing into His shoulder, and the stones on the road hurt His feet. People yell and push Him; the soldiers shout for Him to move faster. How tired Jesus is!

#### **Look at Jesus**

*Falling really hurts, doesn't it? When people make mistakes, it is like falling. And when that happens to us, our heart may feel like it has been hurt.*

*Can you remember a time when you fell, when your heart experienced hurt? As you bring that memory to mind, explore how your heart felt. Give your heart to Jesus. See how Jesus is loving you as you show Him your heart. When you are ready, ask Jesus to help you make your heart more like His.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the third station.)*



# Stations of the Cross

"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."



## **Fourth Station:**

### **Jesus meets His mother**

Jesus sees His mother. Amidst the angry crowd, she is there, watching. Both Mother and Son can feel the other's pain. There is nothing they can do to make the pain go away but both are able to offer comfort with their presence.

### **Look at Jesus**

*If you can remember a time when you were very sad, show Jesus what your heart looked like when you felt that way. Picture Jesus loving you when you show Him your sad heart. Then, when you are ready, you can ask Jesus to help you make your heart more like His.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the fourth station.)*

## **Fifth Station:**

### **Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carries His cross**

On the way to Calvary, the soldiers grab a man to carry the cross for Jesus. The passer-by is Simon of Cyrene, who happens to be heading for Jerusalem from the country. They continue on the long road, carrying the cross together.

### **Look at Jesus**

*Sometimes helping someone can be difficult, for so many different reasons. Maybe someone asks you for help when you haven't finished something that you'd like to do. Or maybe you just don't feel like helping that person. Can you think of a time when you were asked to help someone but did not want to help?*

*Share that moment with Jesus, and picture Him loving you as you hand over your heart to Him. Maybe you can even hear Jesus whisper, "Thank you for helping." When you are ready, you can ask Jesus to help you to obtain a helping heart.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the fifth station.)*



# Stations of the Cross

"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."



## **Sixth Station:**

### **Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**

Jesus is hot, tired, and sweating. His face is covered in sweat, blood and dust from the long walk. Filled with compassion, Veronica steps out from the crowd to wipe His face with a cloth.

#### **Look at Jesus**

*Sometimes you may have done something that you thought was very small or unimportant: bringing a glass of water or juice to someone, or even giving someone a helping hand with a chore. Maybe you just smiled at someone who looked sad!*

*As you think of the times when you have helped, show Jesus your heart. As you picture Jesus loving you, maybe you can also picture Jesus leaving an image of His face on your heart. What a wonderful heart you have! When you are ready, ask Jesus to help you make your heart even more like His.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the sixth station.)*

## **Seventh Station:**

### **Jesus falls the second time**

Jesus falls to the ground for a second time. The cross grows heavier and heavier. The noise from the crowd and from the soldiers makes Him feel even worse. It gets harder to get up. But Jesus gets up and keeps going.

#### **Look at Jesus**

*Have you ever had a hard time with something? Or do you feel as if you keep messing up on something? Nothing seems to improve after all your efforts at making things better.*

*How does your heart feel when that happens?*

*Maybe your heart feels the same way when He fell that second time. As you entrust your heart to Jesus to let Him know how it felt, picture Jesus loving you. Jesus understands exactly how you feel. When you are ready, ask Jesus to help you make your heart more like His.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the seventh station.)*





# Stations of the Cross

"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."



## **Eighth Station:**

### **Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

A great number of people follow Jesus, and among them are women who are beating their breasts and wailing as they watch Him suffer. He tells them to take care of others, and especially to take care of their children: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children."

### **Look at Jesus**

*Sometimes it is easy to just think about ourselves -- about how things aren't going the way we want it, or about the problems that we have. It is very hard, then, to think about other people. How does your heart look when you do that, when you think only about yourself?*

*Show your heart to Jesus, and picture Him still loving you with your heart that way. When you are ready, ask Jesus to help you have a heart that is like His, a heart that thinks about other people and remembers them. That's the kind of heart Jesus has.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the eighth station.)*

## **Ninth Station:**

### **Jesus falls a third time**

Jesus falls to the ground, yet again, for the third time. The journey seems so long and hard to bear. However, with great courage and endurance, Jesus continues towards Calvary. His love for us overcomes His pain.

### **Look at Jesus**

*And Jesus gets up again, even though it is hard for Him to do. When we have really tried to do our best yet unable to succeed, it is easy to give up. Sometimes other people just keep yelling at us, or sometimes other people make fun of the way we do something.*

*Can you remember a time when you felt so tired in your heart, when you seemed to be having a sad or hard time with someone or something?*

*Look at how your heart felt, and show your heart to Jesus. When you are ready, ask Jesus to help you to be more like Him whenever you feel this way.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the ninth station.)*

# Stations of the Cross

"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."



## Tenth Station:

### **Jesus is stripped of his garments**

The soldiers take Jesus' clothes and divide them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also take His tunic; now the tunic is seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So, they say to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." Jesus stands in front of the crowd with only a small piece of cloth covering part of His body.

### **Look at Jesus**

*Is it hard to share or to give away something that you like? Do you find that at times you tend to keep everything for yourself? Have you ever let something of yours be the reason for bad feelings or bad words between you and someone else?*

*If you remember a time when something like this happened, remember how your heart felt. Then, turn over your heart to Jesus. When you are ready, ask Jesus to help you to receive a heart that is like His.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the tenth station.)*

## Eleventh Station:

### **Jesus is nailed to the Cross**

It is nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified Him. The inscription on the charge against Him reads, "The King of the Jews". And with Him they crucify two bandits, one on His right and one on His left. There are many people who passed by; some stop to mock and taunt Him.

How much Jesus must have hurt as the soldiers nail Him to the cross. But He looks at the people who have hurt Him and He asks God to forgive them.

### **Look at Jesus**

*Can you think of a time when someone hurt you with unkind words or actions? Was it hard for you to forgive that person?*

*Jesus knows that forgiving is hard to do. That's why Jesus will help to change your heart when you ask Him to help you to forgive someone. See how your heart looks after you ask Jesus to do this. When you are ready, ask Jesus to help you to be more like Him.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the eleventh station.)*

# Stations of the Cross

"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."



## **Twelfth Station:**

### **Jesus dies on the Cross**

It is now about noon, and darkness comes over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light fails, and the curtain of the temple is torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, says, "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit." Having said this, He breathes His last.

*(Remain in silence for a moment.)*

### **Look at Jesus**

*Did you ever feel that you wanted to make something better, or that if you had only tried harder, something would change the way you want it to change? Or maybe you felt that you did not try hard enough at something, and something bad happened as a result.*

*If you can think of a time like that, then show Jesus your heart, and let Him love you. When you are ready, you can ask Jesus to help make your heart be more like His heart.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

*(Snuff the candle for the twelfth station. Room is now in darkness except for a lamp/light nearby for reading.)*

## **Thirteenth Station:**

### **Jesus is taken down from the Cross**

Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gives him permission; so he comes and removes His body. Mary holds the lifeless body of Her Son, Jesus in her arms as she thinks about Simeon's words, "And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

### **Look at Jesus**

*Is there someone you love who has died? When you remember that person, how does your heart look? You can present your heart to Jesus, and show Him what you miss most about the person who passed away. Jesus knows what your heart looks like, and loves you when you show Him your heart. He can even help your heart become more like His.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...



# Stations of the Cross

*"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."*



## **Fourteenth Station:**

### **Jesus is laid in the Tomb**

Joseph and Nicodemus take the body of Jesus and wrap it with spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. They wash His body and wrap it in a clean sheet. Then they put His body into a tomb. When they are finished, they push a very large stone over the entrance, so that no one can go inside.

### **Look at Jesus**

*Can you remember a time when you were very sad to say "Good-bye" to someone? Maybe you were leaving the person for only a short time, or maybe it was for a long time. Maybe you said "Good-bye" to someone you loved when that person died.*

*Take a few moments to think about one of those times you were sad saying "Good-bye," and show Jesus how your heart felt then. Try to picture Jesus loving you, and being with you, with your sad heart.*

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...



# Stations of the Cross

## **Leader:**

Without Christ, the world is plunged into total darkness. When Jesus died, it seems that all is hopeless. But we know this is not the end of the story. We know that on the third day after His death, Jesus rose again. The light of the Risen Christ overcame death and brings us life.

## **Closing Prayer:**

O Lord, we unite ourselves with You in death so that we may unite ourselves with You in a resurrected life. Teach us Your ways, O Lord, so that we turn away from sins and grow in holiness. Amen.



# Family Activity 2

## Lenten Family Challenge

### Instructions:

- Start at the center, ie praying the Stations of the Cross. Strike out the tasks that you have completed.
- The aim of the challenge is to get a complete row. This row can be made either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. You will find that each row comprises of tasks involving prayer, fasting and almsgiving.
- How to win the challenge: Be the first family member to achieve a complete row!
- If you find the above challenge too simple, try and complete a new row for each week in the Lenten season!

HELP WITH SOMEONES CHORES	FAST FROM TV-SHOWS & MOVIES	PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE DID FOR YOU TODAY	GIVE SOMEBODY A HUG	FAST FROM SWEET TREATS	PRAY FOR A FRIEND	MAKE A CARD FOR SOMEONE
FAST FROM SNACKS	PRAY FOR A SOCIAL MISSION CLOSE TO YOUR HEART	HELP SOMEONE IN NEED	FAST FROM A SOCIAL MEDIA APP	PRAY THE ROSARY	DONATE SOME MONEY TO THE POOR	FAST FROM SUGARY DRINKS
PRAY FOR RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS	COOK OR BAKE FOR YOUR FAMILY	FAST FROM MEAT	PRAY FOR SOMEONE WHO IS ANXIOUS	MAKE SOMEONE ELSE'S BED	FAST FROM DESSERT	PRAY FOR HUMILITY
INVITE SOMEONE FOR A MEAL	FAST FROM A VICE OR BAD HABIT	SING A LENTEN HYMN	<b>PRAY THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS</b>	FAST FROM VIDEO OR MOBILE GAMES	SPEND TIME IN ADORATION	DONATE AN UNUSED ITEM IN GOOD CONDITION
READ THE BIBLE	PRAY FOR SOMEONE UNWELL	OFFER TO TREAT SOMEONE	FAST FROM YOUR MOBILE DEVICES	GO FOR CONFESSION	SMILE AT SOMEONE WHO SEEMS DOWN	LISTEN TO CHRISTIAN MUSIC
PRAY FOR SOULS IN PUGATORY	SPEAK WORDS OF KINDNESS	FAST FROM GOSSIP	PRAY FOR SOMEONE WHO MISSES HOME	ADOPT A MORE ECO FRIENDLY LIFESTYLE	FAST FROM JUDGING OTHERS	PRAY FOR A PRIEST
PICK UP A GOOD HABIT	BUY ONLY THINGS YOU NEED	PRAY FOR THOSE PREPARING FOR BAPTISM	AFFIRM SOMEONE	TRY SOMETHING HEALTHY	ATTEND WEEKDAY MASS	LEARN MORE ABOUT A SAINT

# Activity For

## Small Christian Communities / Ministry



### **(Re) Building relationships in our communities**

We often think that Lent is about giving up something. We give up watching Korean dramas; we give up eating meat; we give up social media, and the list goes on. Though these sacrifices are good, we need to examine our hearts and our intentions for doing these things. Are we doing them for the sake of a Lenten fast? If you think about it, it is quite 'easy'. We just need to give up whatever we have named for 40 days and after that we can go back to it again and maybe double the dose that we were having before our 'fast'. Lenten fasting is done in order to facilitate a change within us so that at Easter we are a new person; a new life is seen.

During Lent, God our Father wants to give us graces that will transform our lives. Transformed lives 'free' us to be able to love God our Father and others more. We can do this by (re)building our relationships with God our Father and each other. Let us look at the 'broken' parts of our relationships and see how God our Father is giving us the opportunity to make them right again.

In the life of our communities, relationships may be broken and we may have not given much attention to them. Sometimes, these broken relationships are avoided by everyone. Eventually, we find that some people are no longer attending our regular meetings; or when someone is present, we will find some other person missing.

This Lent, God our Father is asking us to look at these broken relationships and take the courageous step to seek the transformation that God our Father so wants our communities to have. We can then make the commitment to fast for this particular intention(s).

Apart from mending broken relationships, God our Father is inviting us to build new relationships. Who are the people that are left out from our community meetings? What can we do to build relationships with them? What have we been doing and what more can we do? We pray and fast to seek God our Father's guidance that will lead us to action.

You may consider using the 'Reconciliation prayer service' next for your community. Remember that God our Father wants to give us the freedom to renew our love with Him and His people. It is up to us to respond. Every step, no matter how small, is a way forward. We want to ask ourselves to honestly seek the way forward and truly have patience and a forgiving heart for one another.

## Reconciliation Prayer Service

*(Materials needed for this prayer service include paper and pens for writing, empty basins, a pail of water, a jug for pouring and a cloth for wiping feet during the service.)*

**Leader:** We gather together to consider what we have done and what we have left undone, to recognise our failings and our wounded-ness, and to ask that from the ashes of the past, new life can spring up for us and for all members of God our Father's human family. Let us listen to the word of God, let us acknowledge what is difficult, and let us move together towards the hope of the Resurrection.

### Reading: Psalm 51: 3-17

**Reader 1:**

Have mercy on me God, in Your goodness; in Your abundant compassion blot out my offense.

**Reader 2:**

Wash away all my guilt; from my sin cleanse me. For I know my offense; my sin is always before me.

**Reader 3:**

Against You alone have I sinned; I have done such evil in Your sight that You are just in Your sentence, blameless when You condemn.

**Reader 4:**

True, I was born guilty, a sinner, even as my mother conceived me. Still, You insist on sincerity of heart; in my inmost being teach me wisdom.

**Reader 5:**

Cleanse me with hyssop, that I may be pure; wash me, make me whiter

than snow. Let me hear sounds of joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed rejoice.

**Reader 6:**

Turn away Your face from my sins; blot out all my guilt. A clean heart create for me God; renew in me a steadfast spirit.

**Reader 7:**

Do not drive me from Your presence, nor take from me Your holy spirit. Restore my joy in Your salvation; sustain in me a willing spirit.

**Reader 8:**

I will teach the wicked Your ways O Lord, that sinners may return to You. Rescue me from death, God, my saving God, that my tongue may praise Your healing power. Lord, open my lips; my mouth will proclaim Your praise.



**Reading: Matthew 18: 21-22**

**Reader 9:**

Then Peter approaching asked Him,  
“Lord, if my brother sins against me,  
how often must I forgive him? As many  
as seven times?” Jesus answered,  
“I say to you, not seven times but  
seventy-seven times.

**Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**

**Reader 10:**

So whoever is in Christ is a new  
creation: the old things have passed  
away; behold, new things have come.

**Reader 11:**

And all this is from God, who has  
reconciled us to Himself through  
Christ and given us the ministry of  
reconciliation, namely, God was  
reconciling the world to Himself in  
Christ, not counting their trespasses  
against them and entrusting to us the  
message of reconciliation.

**Reader 12:**

So we are ambassadors for Christ, as  
if God were appealing through us.  
We implore you on behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God. For our sake  
He made Him to be sin who did not  
know sin, so that we might become the  
righteousness of God in Him.

**Leader:**

Let us take some time for  
silence as we reflect on the  
words of Scripture, what we  
need forgiveness for, and who  
we must forgive.

*(Time for Silent Reflection)*

**Leader:**

Please take time now to write  
on one slip of paper first, a  
few failings on our part, what  
we have done or failed to do  
as individuals, as members of  
families, as communities, and  
as members of our nation.

Secondly, on another slip of  
paper, write down who we must  
forgive and for what hurt, in  
our families, our communities,  
our nation, the world—we ask  
forgiveness for ourselves, our  
communities, our nation.

*(Time for reflection and writing)*



**Leader:** From giving up the old, we will contribute to new life and growth. Let us ask the Lord for mercy:

**All:** Forgive us our sins, O Lord, and help us find the strength and courage to forgive others. Create in us a renewed spirit.

**Leader:** Please tear up the papers into small pieces. Come forward to place your pieces in the box. We shall burn these pieces later and you can all witness it.  
*(All participants will bring up the pieces of paper, put them into the box.)*

**Leader:** *(Choose a piece of quiet music to be played at this time)* I shall now invite everyone here to take turns to wash each other's feet as a sign of continuous love and service to each other. Let this act of washing each other's feet be one to show that we resolve to love and serve each other better.  
*(After everyone has taken turns to wash someone's feet.)*

**Leader:** Let us thank the Lord for the promise of new life.

**All:** We give thanks to you, Lord of Life, for this opportunity of renewal. May we join with all others who celebrate life in re-committing ourselves to walk in your way of forgiveness.

May we lift our eyes towards hope for ourselves and for all our brothers and sisters. May we open our hearts to all in the community, and may our intentions and actions help create Your Kingdom of justice and peace. Amen.

*(Adapted from Education for Justice session on reconciliation)*

## **Seven Things Your Ministry or Community Can Do Together This Lent**

1. Volunteer as a team at The Food Bank (<https://foodbank.sg/>) or Willing Hearts (<https://willinghearts.org.sg/>).
2. Prayer-walk together as a community or ministry.
3. Think of someone who is staying alone. Bake hot cross buns during Holy Week together as a group and bring them to that person.
4. Offer to clean up your parish or trim palm leaves together as a ministry.
5. Gather online using video conferencing tools to reflect, meditate and share the Word of God daily.
6. Share and encourage one another in your Lenten journey via chat messaging apps.
7. Fundraise for these organisations and parishes (<https://www.catholic.sg/offertory-organisations/>).





## **PSALM 23**

### *The Divine Shepherd*

The Lord is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down  
in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name 's sake.

Even though I walk through  
the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff -  
they comfort me.

You prepare a table  
before me in the  
presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and  
mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in  
the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.

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