

LET YOUR WILL BE DONE

not mine



Lenten Companion 2025

Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney





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Cover Image: *Christ in the Garden of Olives* by Gaspar de Crayer, c. between 1625 and 1669. Credit: Rubenshuis / Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

Christ's entry into Jerusalem by Pierre-Paul Rubens, c. 1632.

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In the silence of the night, perched upon the Mount of Olives, Jesus prays to our Father, "Let your will be done, not mine" (Luke 22:42).

These seven words encapsulate the arc of Jesus' life and ministry that precedes that anguished night in the Garden of Gethsemane.

These words of Jesus also look ahead, for Jesus anticipates that Hour to come - His death on the Cross - not as defeat but as a sacrifice of love. Jesus will redeem the world through His obedience to the Father's will.

In this year's Lenten reflections, our contributors unpack this surrender at the heart of Christian faith. We are invited to make Christ's prayer our own, not only this Lent but throughout our lives, and entrust ourselves ever more deeply to the will of God by our daily decision and conversion.

As our authors underscore, this surrender of faith does not take place all at once but unfolds through daily fidelity, prayer and intimacy with the Lord, by our active decision to listen to His Word and share in the grace of His divine life. Rather than threatening to destroy or devastate us, this surrender brings true life, reveals our true identity as beloved sons and daughters of God, and emboldens us to live our discipleship with Him.

However, as Jesus himself experiences, this path of surrender and conversion to the Father's will is not without anguish, suffering or challenge. It does not render us immune from the heartache and vicissitudes of the world and the uncertainty of the moment. At times in our human condition, we desire to "let this cup pass" from our lives.

It is our trust in the Lord and His desire for our good that enables us to stay upon the path of conversion and redemption He sets out before us. It is this trust and willingness to be changed by our encounter with the Lord that allows us to meet the Cross with the virtue of faith, the confidence that hope brings, and with the assurance of the love of the Lord and life in Him that never ends.

I pray that these reflections nourish your dedication to the way of Jesus this Lent.

Daniel Ang

Sydney Centre for Evangelisation

How to use this

Lenten Companion

This is a suggestion for how individuals and small groups could use this Companion. Put aside time during the week leading up to each of the Sundays, or on the day itself.

1. **Begin with the Opening Prayer** in which you entrust the time to God and ask for His grace.
2. **Prayerfully read the Gospel passage.** An ancient method of doing this is *lectio divina* (divine reading), which is outlined briefly on this page. You may find it helpful to read the Gospel passage more than once.
3. **Read the Gospel reflection.**
4. **Take some time to pray** using the questions as a guide to consider more deeply the Gospel passage and the reflection. You may find it helpful to use a journal to write down your thoughts. Groups may choose to discuss the responses to the questions together.
5. **Conclude with the Closing Prayer** in which you thank God and entrust your needs to Him.

Image at left: *Christ Carrying The Cross*, Andrea Solario, c. 1513.

Scripture quotations taken from The Jerusalem Bible
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Lectio Divina

Lectio (reading)

Begin by reading the passage slowly and gently either aloud or silently. It is helpful to savour each portion, constantly listening for a word or a phrase which speaks to your heart. It is helpful sometimes to read the passage again, going back to certain words, repeating them, memorising them and allowing them to sink in more deeply.

Meditatio (meditation)

Ponder more deeply on the words or images which speak to you, allowing the words to move from the head to the heart. Continue to sit with these words, ruminating on them, engaging your mind, and reflect on what God might be saying to you through them. Give this to God and allow the light of the Word to shed new levels of meaning on them.

Oratio (prayer)

Speak to God in response to the Word or the thoughts which arose during meditation. This dialogue or prayer can take many forms – thoughts, ideas, writing, images or simply sitting in deep silent awareness of God's presence. The important thing is to speak to God just as we would with someone who knows and loves us.

Contemplatio (contemplation)

In this step, our words and thoughts subside and give way to silent presence where we rest in God's embrace. This experience may last for only a short time, or for a longer period, depending on the individual and the grace of God. Here we allow God to take over and we simply let go and receive.

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Visit www.jamberooabbey.org.au/prayer/lectio-divina-praying-with-the-sacred-scriptures/

The Paschal Triduum

The Paschal Triduum is the most sacred time of the year for Catholics. In these three days the Church commemorates the last moments of Jesus Christ's earthly life: His last supper, passion and death, burial and resurrection.

The Triduum officially begins on Holy Thursday evening with the Mass of the Lord's Supper. It is preceded by the whole season of Lent, but the most immediate preparation for it is Holy Week which begins on Palm Sunday. In most dioceses the last liturgical celebration before the start of the Triduum is the Chrism Mass celebrated on Holy Thursday morning by the local bishop surrounded by all the clergy of his diocese.

The Triduum is so important that the Church understands it to be a liturgical season in its own right. It is a very short season indeed, but its relevance is so great that it is set aside from all other seasons, including Lent and Easter.

The liturgy of the Sacred Triduum consists of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening, the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord on Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil on the evening of Holy Saturday. However, we should think about these liturgies not as three separate celebrations, but rather as three parts of the one liturgy that begins on Holy Thursday and ends on Holy Saturday. This is why the Thursday and Friday liturgies do not end with the traditional 'Go in peace' but instead the faithful depart in silence to return the next day for the next stage of this one celebration.

There are some distinctive features of each day of the Triduum liturgy which make those days different to any other liturgy during the year.

On **Holy Thursday** the tabernacle is empty and unveiled, and the sanctuary lamp is not lit. The mood of the celebration changes from a joyous beginning to a more sombre ending. Although the Mass begins with a long-awaited Gloria ('Glory to God in the highest,' not sung during Lent) accompanied by the ringing of the bells, after the Gloria the bells go silent until the Easter Vigil. Instead,

wooden clappers are used to remind us that we have entered the period of the Lord's suffering and passion. The Mass on Holy (or Maundy) Thursday commemorates in a special way the institution of the Eucharist and Priesthood and in many parishes the celebrant imitates the gesture of Christ from the Gospel by washing the feet of twelve people. At the end of the Mass the Blessed Sacrament is carried in procession into the altar of repose and the main altar is stripped of all cloths, flowers and candles. The faithful are encouraged to spend some time adoring the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament at the altar of repose. In many parts of the world the faithful maintain a tradition of visiting seven different churches to pray at seven altars of repose and to reflect on Christ's last night on this earth. The tradition is also practiced in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

The following day, **Good Friday**, is the only day of the year when Mass is not celebrated. In most parishes people participate in the Stations of the Cross in the morning, but the most important part of the day is the Liturgy of the Passion which should begin around 3pm. The celebration begins in silence and once the procession arrives at the sanctuary, the celebrant prostrates himself before the stripped altar. The readings talk about Christ's passion and are followed by extensive and solemn intercessions where the community of the Church prays for the whole world. Then the Veneration of the Cross takes place where a veiled crucifix is brought in procession to the altar, gradually unveiled and then venerated by the celebrant, other ministers and the rest of the faithful. The liturgical books recommend using only one cross since one cross symbolises the one and only sacrifice that Christ has offered for our salvation. In procession, each of the faithful are invited to individually venerate the cross. The celebration concludes with the Rite of Communion for which the Hosts consecrated on Holy Thursday are used. After the concluding prayer the participants depart in silence.

The most elaborate, and arguably the most important

The last Supper window, Nottingham Cathedral. Photo: Lawrence OP/Flickr, CC BY-NC 2.0

celebration in the whole liturgical year, takes place on **Holy Saturday** evening. It begins outside the church with the blessing of fire, the preparation of the new Paschal candle and the procession with individual candles into the dark church. The Paschal candle is the most striking and important liturgical symbol of this celebration. It brings to mind Christ the light of the world who enlightens and conquers all darkness. The new era of life which began with Christ's Resurrection is symbolised by certain features of the Paschal candle: only one candle can be used (recall the one cross used on Good Friday), it has to be made of beeswax, it has to be new every year, and it needs to be large. Before the procession, the candle is marked by the Greek letters alpha and omega (symbolising the beginning and the end), the numerals of the current year and five grains of incense which symbolise the five wounds of Christ.

Once the faithful arrive in the church following the candle in procession, a long Liturgy of the Word begins. It includes the Easter Proclamation (the Exultet), many biblical readings (up to nine!) and a solemn Alleluia which was not sung for more than forty days of Lent. After the homily begins the Baptismal Liturgy which consists of the Litany of the Saints, the Blessing of the Water, the Renewal of Baptismal Promises and the actual Sacrament of Baptism, if in the parish there are catechumens who have requested it. The Mass concludes with a solemn dismissal accompanied by the paschal Alleluia.

The liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian life, and the Paschal Triduum is the most important liturgical celebration of all. In these holy days the Church invites us to open our hearts even more to the grace that Christ offers to all those who want to follow Him through the suffering of Golgotha to the joy of the empty tomb on Easter morning.

- Dr Mariusz Biliniewicz





First Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Loving Father, thank you for this season of Lent. We come before you now in humility and gratitude as we listen to your voice in this Gospel passage and reflection. During this time of prayer, and throughout this Lent, may we be transformed by your love and mercy, and respond to your invitation for us to witness to you in the world. By the power of your Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ we pray: *your will be done, not mine.*

Gospel of St Luke 4:1-13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. Then the devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf.' But Jesus replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone.'

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, 'I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.' But Jesus answered him, 'Scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said to him 'throw yourself down from here, for scripture says:

He will put his angels in charge of you to guard you, and again:

They will hold you up on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

But Jesus answered him, 'It has been said:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.

Gospel Reflection

By Bishop Richard Umbers

We begin the holy season of Lent by following Christ into the wilderness, led there by the Holy Spirit for forty days. This number denotes a period of preparation and purification: 40 days in the Ark for Noah and his family during the great flood; 40 years of Israelites wandering in exile before the Promised Land; 40 days of Moses' fasting in preparation to receive the Law.

And so, the Lord prepares for His ministry in silence, solitude, fasting and prayer...which the devil attempts to disrupt. It's a familiar feeling.

Christ is tempted by the devil with very human things; food, for He was hungry, power, for He is poor, and a challenge to God's providence, for He is alone and exposed to the elements. Although it may seem ludicrous that God Himself would be tempted by the power of evil, in His response, Christ shows us the emptiness of the devil's promises, and, most insidious of all, how the devil can twist the very Word of God into a temptation to test God.

As we journey through life, we are assailed by

attacks that target our human weakness, made especially apparent when we are discouraged by our failure to keep up our Lenten practices. Christ calls us to stand strong in Truth, and to be faithful to our baptismal promises: "Do you reject Satan? And all his works? And all his empty promises?"

We are fallen human beings, and sometimes, the promises of Satan are inviting. We may be hungry for worldly things and swayed by the devil's lies.

Yet, as we enter the season of Lent, we can be encouraged by the knowledge that Christ has already walked through the wilderness of this world, shared

"We can be encouraged by the knowledge that Christ has already walked through the wilderness of this world, shared in our human weakness, and offers us His divine strength."

in our human weakness, and offers us His divine strength. We are baptised in His Spirit, strengthened by His Word, and nourished by His Body. Through Him, with Him, and in Him, we may persevere in prayer and unite ourselves more closely to His Passion. The journey that begins with the preparation in the wilderness ends in the triumph of the Cross and Resurrection.



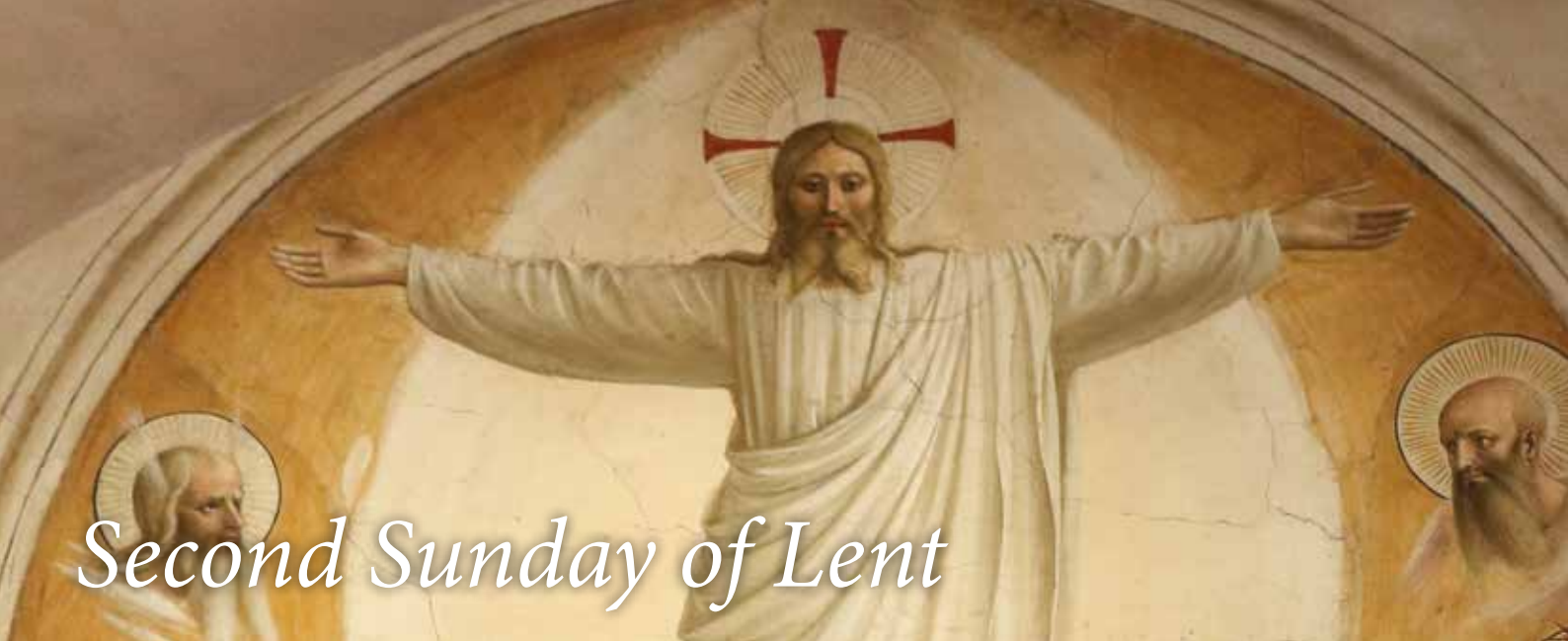
Closing Prayer

Most loving Father, thank you for your mercy and patience. Give me the grace to choose your will over mine. May I rely on your strength, as Jesus did, to resist the devil's attempts to disrupt me. I have been baptised in the Holy Spirit; may I be strengthened by the Word and nourished by the Body of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. In which ways will I unite myself more closely with God this Lent through times of silence, solitude, fasting and prayer?
3. How can I encourage others to recognise and reject Satan's empty promises and to experience the triumph of the Cross and Resurrection?

Christ in the Wilderness by Moretto da Brescia, ca. 1515–20. Image: Rogers Fund, 1911/Public Domain



Second Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Loving Father, thank you for this season of Lent. We come before you now in humility and gratitude as we listen to your voice in this Gospel passage and reflection. During this time of prayer, and throughout this Lent, may we be transformed by your love and mercy, and respond to your invitation for us to witness to you in the world. By the power of your Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ we pray: *your will be done, not mine.*

Gospel of St Luke 9:28-36

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' – He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. And a voice came from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.' And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.

Gospel Reflection

By Christina Guzman

Admitting our faults and wrongdoings can be challenging. Yet as we enter this second week of Lent, Luke asks us to do just that through humility and a true conversion of heart.

Like Peter, who “did not know what he was saying,” we often fall into a false sense of security, believing we know better than God, echoing the fall of Adam and Eve.

Thankfully, Lent is a time for growth, urging us to confront the illusion that we have an answer for everything or that we cannot improve. Yet growing can be painful, so how can we do such a difficult thing?

The answer lies at the beginning of the passage with Jesus leading His disciples into solitude for prayer. We too are called to grow and deepen our relationship with God through intentional prayer. By doing so, we confront our uncertainties and shortcomings, opening ourselves to His voice and abundant mercy.

God himself proclaims, “This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to Him!” Are we truly listening

“By surrendering to God’s voice each day, we draw closer to His plan for our lives, embracing truths that may be difficult to accept, but falling ever more in love with Him.”

to Christ? Are we ready to surrender our personal ‘truths’ to embrace His transformative Truth? While daunting at first, the more we practice and ask God to know Him better, the easier this will get and the more natural it will be to ask for God’s will to be done.

You may experience fear, you may experience hesitation, and you may experience pain, but persevere and trust that God will meet you in this vulnerability. Without humility and vulnerability, we cannot embody His light.

By surrendering to God’s voice each day, we draw closer to His plan for our lives, embracing truths that may be difficult to accept, but falling ever more in love with Him.

May we seek a deeper relationship with Christ this Lent, based on love and dependence on Him, allowing His light to shine within, transforming our hearts.

It’s okay not to know everything and it’s okay to make mistakes. God will always be there for us, ready to guide and ready to forgive. Embrace Him!



Closing Prayer

Most loving Father, thank you for your mercy and patience. Give me the grace to choose your will over mine. By the power of your Holy Spirit, help me to draw closer to you daily so that when my earthly pilgrimage is over, I may share in the glory of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. How will I grow and deepen my relationship with God through daily prayer? Am I prepared to grow in humility and truth, and to allow Jesus to transform me?
3. In which ways can I witness to others my dependence on Christ this week, allowing His Light to shine in me and through me?

The Transfiguration of the Lord by Bl. Fra. Angelico, c. 1439-43. Credit: Lawrence OP/Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



Third Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Loving Father, thank you for this season of Lent. We come before you now in humility and gratitude as we listen to your voice in this Gospel passage and reflection. During this time of prayer, and throughout this Lent, may we be transformed by your love and mercy, and respond to your invitation for us to witness to you in the world. By the power of your Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ we pray: *your will be done, not mine.*

Gospel of St Luke 13:1-9

Some people arrived and told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to them, 'Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did.'

He told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to the man who looked after the vineyard, "Look here, for three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?" "Sir," the man replied "leave it one more year and give me time to dig round it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down."

Gospel Reflection

By Lawrence Qummou

It's a question that's been wrestled with since time immemorial: why do good people suffer? In Jesus' day, many thought that suffering was a sign of God's displeasure, proof that the victim had somehow fallen astray of God and was receiving their just desserts. But it's clear that in this life, suffering spares no one. All of us at some point will experience pain, heartache, illness, loss, and eventually the death of our physical bodies.

In this Gospel passage, Jesus uses the example of two tragedies, one caused by human brutality, the other seemingly an accident, to highlight the fact that suffering isn't reserved for the unrighteous only (Lk 13:1-9). Elsewhere Jesus reminds us that the sun rises on both the evil and the good and that rain drops on the just and unjust alike (Mt 5:45). But if suffering isn't just something that plagues the wicked, how do we make any sense of it? How do we square the pain of suffering with the Good News?

Our English word 'passion,' the term we use to describe the salvific events culminating in

Christ's death on the cross on Good Friday, comes from the Latin term 'passio' which means to 'endure' or 'suffer.' And so, the suffering of the Son of God, the Word made flesh, is key to our salvation: through His wounds we are healed. But we also have a role to play in the Good News that is our redemption. Repentance. In turning away from sin and seeking the goodness of God, suffering is transformed from something meaningless into something grace-filled. When

we repent and believe in the Gospel, we rediscover the fullness of God's love and recall that while we were still sinners, Christ suffered and died for us (Rom 5:8).

The greatness of God's love for us is manifested in His patience and perseverance. He calls us back to Him repeatedly, and like the *Parable of the Fig Tree*, He offers us many chances to bear fruit. Lent is a special time for us to take up this offer to journey towards repentance. A journey of transformation, from darkness to light, when the suffering on the cross of Golgotha is transformed into the source of our salvation.

“When we repent and believe in the Gospel, we rediscover the fullness of God’s love ...”

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. Am I willing to repent of my sins and to rediscover the fullness of God's love?
3. How can I help others to square the pain of suffering with the Good News this week?

The Vine Dresser and the Fig Tree by James Tissot, c. 1886–1894. Credit: Brooklyn Museum, 00.159.82_PS2.jpg



Closing Prayer

Most loving Father, thank you for your mercy and patience. Give me the grace to choose your will over mine. By the power of your Holy Spirit, may I humbly accept my sufferings. I ask you to transform them and allow them to bear fruit, and so unite me with the Cross of your Son, Jesus Christ.



Fourth Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Loving Father, thank you for this season of Lent. We come before you now in humility and gratitude as we listen to your voice in this Gospel passage and reflection. During this time of prayer, and throughout this Lent, may we be transformed by your love and mercy, and respond to your invitation for us to witness to you in the world. By the power of your Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ we pray: *your will be done, not mine.*

Gospel of St Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them: 'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery. 'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father. 'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate. 'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come" replied the servant "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property – he and his women – you kill the calf we had been fattening." 'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found."

Gospel Reflection

By Helen Wagner

We all want to be free. Who of us wants to be told what to do? We would rather do whatever we want, whenever we want it. But this is not freedom.

The two sons in this parable believe they are trapped, not appreciating that they are beloved sons, and living in freedom. The younger son goes out in search of pleasure, turning his back on his responsibilities and his family. He is free to go, but instead of thriving he is reduced to misery. Even before he became a slave on a farm, he was a slave to his own desires.

The elder son remains at home, but rather than fulfilling his responsibilities out of gratitude and love, he convinces himself that he has slaved for his father all these years. If he is a slave, it is not his father who has made him so, but his own pride, resentment, jealousy, and self-entitlement.

If we are honest with ourselves, we can be like these two sons. When we cannot say 'no' to that piece of chocolate or when we can't

stop scrolling mindlessly on our phone, we are not free. When we compare ourselves to others or harbour feelings of anger and resentment, we are not free. We are saying to God: *My will be done, not yours.*

True freedom is the ability to choose the good. It is important to master our wills so that we do not fall into the slavery of sin. We

can do this by making sacrifices every day—learning to say 'no' to me and 'yes' to God—so that when we are faced with bigger challenges, we will have the resolve and strength to say, 'your will be done, Lord, not mine.'

When we fail to choose His will, all is not lost. We can, like the younger son, return to the Father

saying, "I have sinned against heaven and against you." In the Sacrament of Confession, the Father runs to meet us and pours His mercy upon us. He restores our dignity by welcoming us back into relationship with Him. As beloved sons and daughters of the Father, we do not need to go out in search of freedom; we already have it.

“True freedom is the ability to choose the good. It is important to master our wills so that we do not fall into the slavery of sin.”



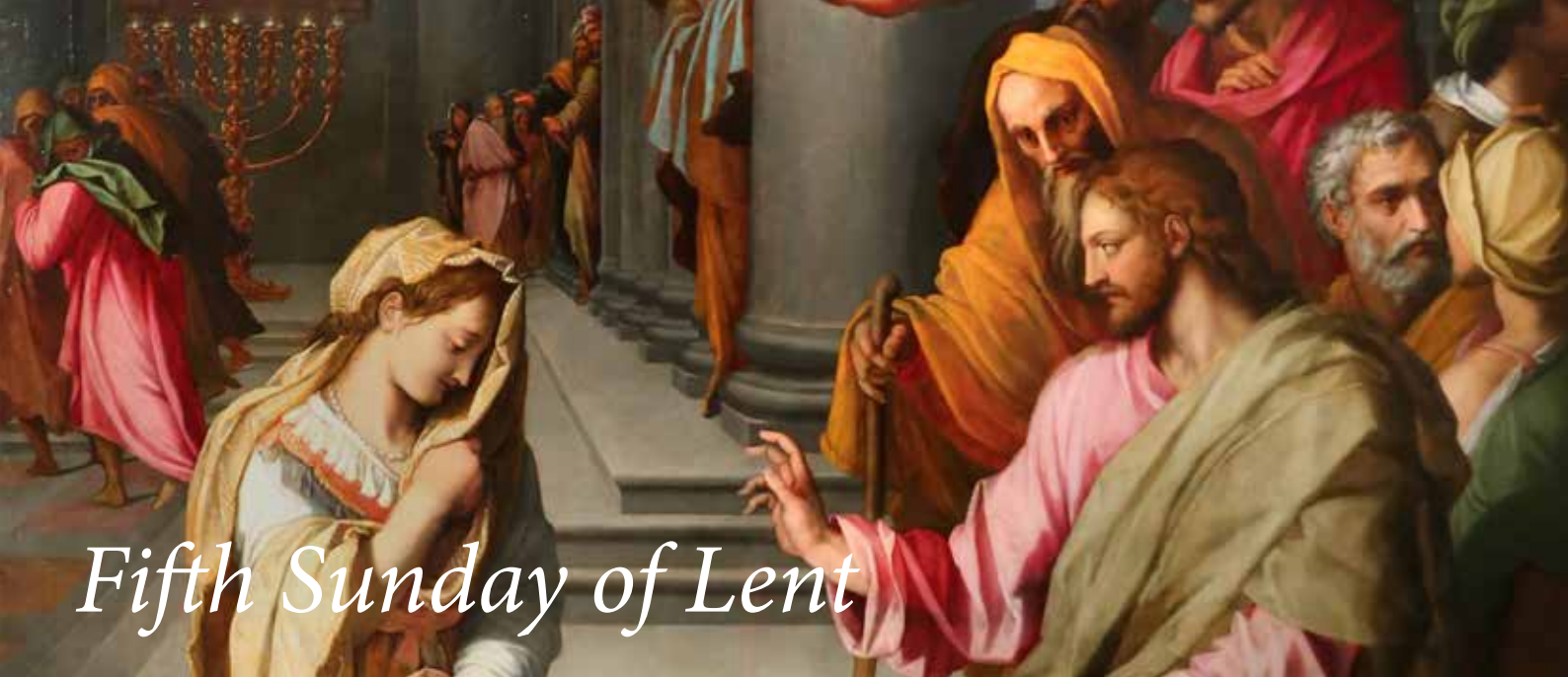
Closing Prayer

Most loving Father, thank you for your mercy and patience. Give me the grace to choose your will over mine. By the power of your Holy Spirit, may I grow in responsibility and freedom, and learn to detach from all that keeps me from your love, through the example of your obedient Son, Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. In which ways am I like the two sons in this parable?
3. How will I encourage others to return to the Father to receive His mercy this Lent?

Return of the Prodigal Son by Michel Martin Drolling, c. 1806. Credit: Ji-Elle/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0



Fifth Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Loving Father, thank you for this season of Lent. We come before you now in humility and gratitude as we listen to your voice in this Gospel passage and reflection. During this time of prayer, and throughout this Lent, may we be transformed by your love and mercy, and respond to your invitation for us to witness to you in the world. By the power of your Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ we pray: *your will be done, not mine.*

Gospel of St John 8:1-11

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and do not sin any more.'

Gospel Reflection

By Dr Paul Morrissey

There are three protagonists in this famous Gospel passage: the Pharisees who scapegoat the woman, the woman caught in adultery, and Jesus. Let us look at each in turn.

It should be easy for us to relate to the Pharisees. How often do we see the sins of the other, either those in our immediate orbit or the abstract 'other' who we do not know? We say to ourselves that my life would be so much better without the sins of the other. "Thank you, Lord, that I am unlike all these other sinners!" Jesus teaches us to not judge the other, but even more than that, He wants us to bring sinners to Him. Not in the way of the Pharisees, who want condemnation, but in the way of love, so that our brothers and sisters can experience the Lord's mercy and forgiveness.

The sinful woman brought to Jesus should also be easy to relate to. Each of us is a poor sinner, but we often fear the Lord as a judge

who will condemn. We want to hide from Him, scared and ashamed. But the Lord wants to forgive us, not to condemn. This Lent, if we haven't already, we need to seek the Lord's mercy, especially in sacramental Confession.

Jesus in this passage is again the master teacher, educating the pharisees and the woman in the way of forgiveness and love. It is also the only passage in the Gospels where Jesus writes, and yet we do not know what is written. There is a tradition in the Fathers of the Church that says Jesus was writing down the sins of those in the crowd who wanted to

stone the woman. I do like this tradition, for it shows how intimately Jesus knows us and that there is no concealing our sins from Him. Why then do we still act as though we can hide from His love? As Jesus writes our sins in the sand, He stands ready to forgive each one of them. All we need do is ask.

"This Lent, if we haven't already, we need to seek the Lord's mercy, especially in sacramental Confession."



Closing Prayer

Most loving Father, thank you for your mercy and patience. Give me the grace to choose your will over mine. By the power of your Holy Spirit, purify my actions and help me to always forgive the faults of others, with a desire to lead them to your Son, Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. Have I sought the Lord's mercy in the Sacrament of Confession this Lent? If not, when might be a time that I could?
3. Are there people whom I tend to judge? How can I extend mercy toward them and witness to the love of God?

Christ and the Adulteress by Alessandro Allori, c. 1577 Credit: Sailko/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 3.0



Palm Sunday

Opening Prayer

Loving Father, thank you for this season of Lent. We come before you now in humility and gratitude as we listen to your voice in this Gospel passage and reflection. During this time of prayer, and throughout this Lent, may we be transformed by your love and mercy, and respond to your invitation for us to witness to you in the world. By the power of your Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ we pray: *your will be done, not mine.*

Gospel of St Luke 22:39-42, 23:32-49*

[Jesus] then left to make his way as usual to the Mount of Olives, with the disciples following. When they reached the place he said to them, 'Pray not to be put to the test.' Then he withdrew from them, about a stone's throw away, and knelt down and prayed. 'Father,' he said 'if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine.' [The story of the Passion unfolds, and the soldiers lead Jesus to His Crucifixion]. Now with him they were also leading out two other criminals to be executed. When they reached the place called The Skull, they crucified him there and the two criminals also, one on the right, the other on the left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.' Then they cast lots to share out his clothing. The people stayed there watching him. As for the leaders, they jeered at him. 'He saved others,' they said 'let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One! The soldiers mocked him too, and when they approached to offer vinegar they said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.' Above him there was an inscription: 'This is the King of the Jews.' One of the criminals hanging there abused him. 'Are you not the Christ?' he said. 'Save yourself and us as well.' But the other spoke up and rebuked him. 'Have you no fear of God at all?' he said. 'You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus,' he said 'remember me when you come into your kingdom.' 'Indeed, I promise you,' he replied 'today you will be with me in paradise.' It was now about the sixth hour and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The veil of the Temple was torn right down the middle; and when Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, he said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' With these words he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he gave praise to God and said, 'This was a great and good man.' And when all the people who had gathered for the spectacle saw what had happened, they went home beating their breasts. All his friends stood at a distance; so also did the women who had accompanied him from Galilee, and they saw all this happen.

* Excerpt from Luke 22:14 – 23:56

Gospel Reflection

By Sister Cecilia Joseph, OP

You do you. Stay woke. Unlearn and relearn. Question existing assumptions. Our culture challenges the voice of authority, seeking to eliminate any experience of discomfort or suffering.

Obedience is confronting and counter-cultural. My parents recently celebrated 50 years of marriage having promised fidelity 'until death do them part' Religious men and women vow obedience 'for all our life' until death unites us with our Divine Spouse. During the Rite of Ordination, the bishop asks the man to be ordained, "Do you promise respect and obedience to me and my successors?" He responds "I do" as he is given to his Bride, the Church. Christian obedience, in the big and small moments of life, is often a joyful acceptance of God's will: *be it done to me according to Thy Word.*

Yet, how do we respond to the 'no' of Christian living, to the doors that close, or to the situations that we do not choose? What if God's will comes in the form of the Cross? In today's Gospel, Jesus trembles before His

Father's will: "if you are willing, take this cup away from me". Throughout the Gospels, obedience is the defining characteristic of Jesus, the fullest expression of who He is in relation to the Father. He shows us in His agony that obedience may require the difficult surrender to a plan not of our own making. *Let your will be done, not mine.* Bishop Andrew Cozzens, reflecting on the obedience of Christ, explains that this prayer is the deepest expression of the heart of Christ. As a cry to God from the depth of our being, it is the perfect prayer. *Let your will be done, not mine.*

"Let your will be done, not mine."

In the Orthodox tradition, a striking icon entitled *Christ the Bridegroom* depicts Jesus as seen in today's Gospel: scourged, mocked, crowned with thorns, being led to His death. Through His total self-gift to His Bride on the Cross, Jesus holds nothing back in offering His life for us. Will I accept this unconditional love and let it transform my daily 'yes', in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy? I do. Come, Lord Jesus!



Closing Prayer

Most loving Father, thank you for your mercy and patience. Give me the grace to choose your will over mine. By the power of your Holy Spirit, help me to accept my sufferings with humility and trust, and unite myself to you on the Cross with your Son, Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. Do I truly accept the unconditional love of Christ on the Cross for me?
3. In which ways do I witness to the self-gift of obedience in a world that challenges the voice of authority?

The Crucifixion by Giambattista Tiepolo, c. 1745-50. Credit: Saint Louis Art Museum/Public Domain



Easter Sunday

Opening Prayer

Loving Father, thank you for this season of Lent. We come before you now in humility and gratitude as we listen to your voice in this Gospel passage and reflection. During this time of prayer, and throughout this Lent, may we be transformed by your love and mercy, and respond to your invitation for us to witness to you in the world. By the power of your Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ we pray: *your will be done, not mine.*

Gospel of St Luke 24:1-12

On the first day of the week, at the first sign of dawn, they went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, but on entering discovered that the body of the Lord Jesus was not there. As they stood there not knowing what to think, two men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side. Terrified, the women lowered their eyes. But the two men said to them, 'Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here; he has risen. Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee: that the Son of Man had to be handed over into the power of sinful men and be crucified, and rise again on the third day?' And they remembered his words.

When the women returned from the tomb they told all this to the Eleven and to all the others. The women were Mary of Magdala, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. The other women with them also told the apostles, but this story of theirs seemed pure nonsense, and they did not believe them.

Peter, however, went running to the tomb. He bent down and saw the binding cloths but nothing else; he then went back home, amazed at what had happened.

Gospel Reflection

By Fr Julian Wellspring

It is Easter morning, the first day of the week, and like Peter I too am amazed.

Amazed at new life. The risen Christ has overcome sin and death to provide us with a share, even now through Baptism, in His glorious Resurrection. Our new life in eternity

begins in Baptism and each day provides an opportunity to increase our love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit with whom we desire to share the full glory of the resurrection in eternity.

I am amazed at Peter, Mary of Magdala, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. These ordinary people are entrusted with the Good News for all humanity in

every place and time—the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their simple but loving efforts to share the Good News are blest by God. Our own simple efforts to proclaim the Good News are always effective under the power

of God's grace, no matter who we are. God still needs ordinary people to take the Good News to all humanity in these times.

I am amazed at the terrified women. They had forgotten that Jesus had told them: "the Son of Man will be handed over into the

power of sinful men and be crucified, and rise again on the third day." What have I 'forgotten' that God has told me in Scripture and prayer? So many people live their lives in fear, terrified of the future and with little hope. Remembering the personal fidelity of the risen Christ to each one of us enables us to live lives without fear depending ever more

"Their simple but loving efforts to share the Good News are blest by God. Our own simple efforts to proclaim the Good News are always effective under the power of God's grace, no matter who we are."

deeply on His gracious providence.

Today amazement turns to joy knowing that we are the Easter people and "Alleluia is our Song" (St. Augustine).



Closing Prayer

Most loving Father, thank you for your mercy and patience. Give me the grace to choose your will over mine. By the power of your Holy Spirit, may I receive with joy the truth of the Resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. What have I forgotten that God has told me in Scripture, revelation, or prayer?
3. Do I believe that God's grace works through me? To whom will I share the Good News of the Resurrection this Easter?

The Holy Women at Christ's Tomb by Annibale Carracci, c. late 16th century. Credit: Lluís Ribes Mateu / Flickr, CC BY-NC 2.0 DEED

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS BY SAINT JOHN PAUL II

After announcing each station, repeat the following:

Prayer: *We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.* Response: *Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*



Station 1: Jesus is condemned to death

“You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.” Pilate said in answer: “What is truth?” Jesus, the Son of the living God, the Redeemer of the world, [was] condemned to death by crucifixion. Over the centuries the denial of truth has spawned suffering and death.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, you accepted an unjust judgment. Grant to us and to all the men and women of our time the grace to remain faithful to the truth. Do not allow the weight of responsibility for the sufferings of the innocent to fall upon us and upon those who come after us. To you, O Jesus, just Judge, be honour and glory for ever and ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*



Station 2: Jesus takes up his Cross

The moment that Jesus of Nazareth took up the Cross in order to carry it to Calvary marked a turning-point in the history of the cross. The symbol of a shameful death, reserved for the lowest classes, the cross becomes a key. From now on, with the help of this key, man will open the door of the deepest mystery of God.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, who accepted the Cross at the hands of men to make of it the sign of God's saving love for humanity, grant us and all the men and women of our time the grace of faith in this infinite love. By passing on to the new millennium the sign of the Cross, may we be authentic witnesses to the Redemption. To you, O Jesus, Priest and Victim, be praise and glory for ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*



Station 3: Jesus falls the first time

It was our sins that crushed the divine Condemned One to the ground. It was our sins that determined the weight of the Cross that he carries on his shoulders. It was our sins that made him fall. The Redeemer of the world addresses in a wordless way all those who fall. He exhorts them to get up again.

Prayer: O Christ, as you fall under the weight of our faults and rise again for our justification, we pray, help us and all who are weighed down by sin to stand up again and continue the journey. Give us the strength of the Spirit to carry with you the cross of our weakness. To you, O Jesus, crushed under the weight of our faults be our praise and love for ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*

Meditation and Prayers by Saint John Paul II (abridged)

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Station 4: Jesus meets his Mother

On the way of the Cross Mary shows herself to be the Mother of the Redeemer of the world. It is the Sorrowful Mother who speaks, the Handmaid who is obedient to the last, the Mother of the Redeemer of the world.

Prayer: O Mary, who walked the way of the Cross with your Son, your mother's heart torn by grief, but mindful always of your fiat and fully confident that He to whom nothing is impossible would be able to fulfil his promises, implore for us and for the generations yet to come the grace of surrender to God's love. Help us, in the face of suffering, rejection, and trial, however prolonged and severe, never to doubt his love. To Jesus, your Son, honour and glory for ever and ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary... Glory be...*



Station 5: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross

We can imagine that Simon did not want to do this and objected. Carrying the cross together with a convict could be considered an act offensive to the dignity of a free man. In a unique way, the Son of God has made him a sharer in his work of salvation.

Prayer: O Christ, you gave to Simon of Cyrene the dignity of carrying your Cross. Welcome us too under its weight, welcome all men and women and grant to everyone the gift of readiness to serve. Do not permit that we should turn away from those who are crushed by the cross of illness, loneliness, hunger or injustice. As we carry each other's burdens, help us to become witnesses to the gospel of the Cross and witnesses to you, who live and reign for ever and ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary... Glory be...*



Station 6: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

The Redeemer of the world presents Veronica with an authentic image of his face. The veil upon which the face of Christ remains imprinted becomes a message for us. In a certain sense it says: This is how every act of goodness, every gesture of true love towards one's neighbour, strengthens the likeness of the Redeemer of the world in the one who acts that way.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, you accepted a woman's selfless gesture of love, and in exchange ordained that future generations should remember her by the name of your face. Grant that our works and the works of all who will come after us will make us like unto you and will leave in the world the reflection of your infinite love. To you, O Jesus, splendour of the Father's glory, be praise and glory for ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary... Glory be...*



Station 7: Jesus falls the second time

Here in the dust of the earth lies the Condemned One. Crushed by the weight of his Cross. His strength drains away from him more and more. But with great effort he gets up again to continue his march. To us sinners, what does this second fall say? More than the first one, it seems to urge us to get up, to get up again on our way of the cross.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, you fall under the weight of human sin and you get up again in order to take it upon yourself and cancel it. Give to us, weak men and women, the strength to carry the cross of daily life and to get up again from our falls, so that we may bring to future generations the Gospel of your saving power. To you, O Jesus, our support when we are weak, be praise and glory for ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary... Glory be...*



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS BY SAINT JOHN PAUL II

After announcing each station, repeat the following:

Prayer: *We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.* Response: *Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*



Station 8: Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

“Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” These are the words of Jesus to the women of Jerusalem who were weeping with compassion for the Condemned One...If, as we follow Christ on the way of the Cross, our hearts are moved with pity for his suffering, we cannot forget that admonition.

Prayer: O Christ, you came into this world to visit all those who await salvation. Grant that our generation will recognize the time of its visitation and share in the fruits of your redemption. Do not permit that there should be weeping for us and for the men and women of the new century because we have rejected our merciful Father's outstretched hand. To you, O Jesus, born of the Virgin Daughter of Zion, be honour and praise for ever and ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*



Station 9: Jesus falls the third time

Falling to the ground for the third time on the way of the Cross, he cries out loudly to us once more the mystery of himself. Let us listen to his voice! This Condemned Man, crushed to the ground beneath the weight of the Cross, now very near the place of punishment, tells us: “I am the way, and the truth and the life.” (Jn 14:6)

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, through your humiliation beneath the Cross you revealed to the world the price of its redemption. Grant to the men and women of the third millennium the light of faith, so that, as they recognize in you the Suffering Servant of God and man, they may have the courage to follow the same path which, by way of the Cross and self-emptying, leads to life without end. To you, O Jesus, our support when we are weak, be honour and glory for ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*



Station 10: Jesus is stripped and offered gall and vinegar to drink

“When he tasted it, he would not drink it” (Mt 27:34). He did not want a sedative, which would have dulled his consciousness during the agony. He wanted to be fully aware as he suffered on the Cross, accomplishing the mission he had received from the Father.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, who, with supreme dedication, accepted death on the Cross for our salvation, grant to us and to all the world's people a share in your sacrifice on the Cross, so that what we are and what we do may always be a free and conscious sharing in your work of salvation. To you, O Jesus, Priest and Victim, be honour and glory for ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*

Station 11: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

From the Cross, Christ draws us by the power of love, divine Love, which did not recoil from the total gift of self; infinite Love, which on the tree of the Cross raised up from the earth the weight of Christ's body, to counterbalance the weight of the first sin; boundless Love, which has utterly filled every absence of love and allowed humanity to find refuge once more in the arms of the merciful Father.

Prayer: O Christ lifted high, O Love crucified, fill our hearts with your love, that we may see in your Cross the sign of our redemption and, drawn by your wounds, we may live and die with you, who live and reign with the Father and the Spirit, now and for ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*



Station 12: Jesus dies on the Cross

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34). At the height of his Passion, Christ does not forget man, especially those who are directly responsible for his suffering. Jesus knows that more than anything else man needs love; he needs the mercy which at this moment is being poured out on the world.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, in the moment of your agony you were not indifferent to humanity's fate, and with your last breath you entrusted to the Father's mercy the men and women of every age, with all their weaknesses and sins. Fill us and the generations yet to come with your Spirit of love, so that our indifference will not render vain in us the fruits of your death. To you, crucified Jesus, the wisdom and the power of God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*



Station 13: Jesus is taken down from the Cross and given to his Mother

In the arms of his Mother they have placed the lifeless body of the Son. The Gospels say nothing of what she felt at that moment. It is as though by their silence the Evangelists wished to respect her sorrow, her feelings and her memories. Or that they simply felt incapable of expressing them.

Prayer: Implore for us the grace of faith, hope and charity, so that we, like you, may stand without flinching beneath the Cross until our last breath. To your Son, Jesus, our Saviour, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory for ever and ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*



Station 14: Jesus is laid in the tomb

The lifeless body of Christ has been laid in the tomb. But the stone of the tomb is not the final seal on his work. The last word belongs not to falsehood, hatred and violence. The last word will be spoken by Love, which is stronger than death.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you were drawn by the Father from the darkness of death to the light of a new life in glory. Grant that the sign of the empty tomb may speak to us and to future generations and become a wellspring of living faith, generous love, and unshakeable hope. To you, O Jesus, whose presence, hidden and victorious, fills the history of the world, be honour and glory for ever and ever. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory be...*



AN AID TO YOUR EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

BY ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY FISHER OP

I am the Lord your God: you shall not put other gods before me.

Positive value: Reverence for God.

- What are my priorities in life? Do I put God first and love Him with all my heart or do I put something or someone before God?
- Do I pray daily?
- Do I receive the teachings of Christ and His Church with an open heart and profess them openly? Or have I resisted less convenient teachings or denied them so as to get along?
- Do I receive Holy Communion often (at least annually in Eastertide), and prepare well for this? Or have I gone to Communion thoughtlessly, ungratefully or without first confessing grave sins?
- Do I go to Confession whenever I have committed a serious sin and am I honest when I go to Confession?
- Have I engaged in any occult, satanic or superstitious practices?
- Have I avoided activities that I know can be occasions of sin for me?

You shall not take God's name in vain.

Positive value: Respect for the things of God.

- Do I give due honour to God, His holy name, sacred ministers and sacred things?
- Have I used the name of the Lord (God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit...) disrespectfully, or the names of Mary or the saints?
- Have I deliberately harboured hatred or resentment towards God?
- Have I cursed or wished evil on another person?
- Have I lied under oath or violated a vow?

Keep the Lord's Day holy.

Positive value: Worship of God.

- Do I make worship of God a priority in my life?
- Is Sunday my day of rest, prayer and dedication to my family, avoiding unnecessary work and shopping?
- Have I missed Mass on Sunday without a serious reason? Or on a Holy Day of Obligation (in Australia: 25 December and 15 August)?
- Do I try to be there for all of Mass and try to be engaged with God, his Word and the sacred actions while I am there?
- Do I fast and do penance at the proper times (Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, other Fridays)? Do I fast for an hour before receiving Holy Communion?

Honour your father and mother.

Positive value: Reverence for family.

- Do I love, honour and respect my parents, other older people, and those in authority?
- Have I shown appropriate care for my spouse, children, siblings, other family?
- Have I neglected the aged, sick or lonely?
- Have I tried to ensure that my children receive the sacraments, are given good religious instruction and practice their faith?

You shall not kill.

Positive value: Reverence for life.

- Do I uphold the dignity of every person?
- Do I love others appropriately and forgive those who hurt me? Or do I harbour hatred, grudges or prejudices?
- Have I deliberately harmed someone, physically, emotionally, or in reputation?
- Do I care for my own physical, emotional, and spiritual health?
- Have I abused alcohol or drugs or driven 'under the influence'? Do I act recklessly?
- Have I had an abortion or helped someone else to have one?

VI You shall not commit adultery.

Positive value: Reverence for sex and the body.

- Do I reverence my own body and have I been faithful to my state in life (married, vowed, single)?
- Am I a flirt? Have I engaged in immodest or sexually inappropriate behaviour?
- Do I honour my own marriage / family and support others in their family life?
- Have I committed sexual acts outside of marriage?
- Have I used bad language or told impure jokes?
- Have I used or encouraged others to use contraception or sterilisation?
- Have I viewed pornographic magazines, film or websites?

VII You shall not steal.

Positive value: Reverence for earthly goods.

- Do I honour the goods of the earth and of other people and try to contribute to the improvement of this world?
- Do I share with those in need, giving generously to charities and contributing to the material needs of the Church?
- Have I stolen, pirated or damaged other people's property?
- Have I cheated someone or failed to make just restitution?
- Do I gamble excessively or spend wastefully?
- Do I act justly with respect to my employer, employees and in my tax affairs?

VIII You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

Positive value: Reverence for truth.

- Do I always seek to know and speak and live by the truth? Or have I lied, exaggerated or sworn falsely?
- Do I gossip or reveal confidences without good reason?
- Have I damaged someone's good name or failed to defend those unjustly criticised?
- Have I plagiarised or been academically dishonest?

IX You shall not covet your neighbour's wife or people.

Positive value: Reverence for persons.

- Do I reverence other people's bodies and state in life?
- Do I guard my senses, imagination and memory? Or have I wilfully lusted after another person or entertained impure thoughts?
- Am I envious of the abilities, talents, beauty, friendships or success of others?
- Do I ridicule, humiliate or manipulate others?
- Do I encourage others to live good lives? Or have I encouraged them to engage in a sin or wrongly assisted them in doing so?

X You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

Positive value: Reverence for higher things.

- Do I put the higher things first in my life or am I materialistic and part of the consumer culture?
- Am I excessively attached to material goods or envious of what others have?
- Do I show respect for the earth? Or do I unnecessarily damage the ecology?
- Have I desired or planned to steal, destroy or damage the property of another?
- Do I trust God to provide or fail to be grateful when He does?

“Merciful
and gracious
is the Lord,
slow to anger,
abounding in
mercy.”

(Ps 103:8)



A Prayer for Renewal



lessed are you, Father,
who, in your infinite love
sent us your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,
that we may have life, and have it in abundance.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,
renew our Eucharistic communities.

May they be places of encounter
with the living Christ,
centres of evangelisation and outreach
to our community in love and mercy.

Grant us the gifts of faith, hope and love
to be faithful disciples of Jesus and
radiant witnesses to the people of Sydney.

Our Lady, Help of Christians. *Pray for us!*

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Star of the New Evangelisation. *Pray for us!*

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. *Pray for us!*



**PARISH
RENEWAL TEAM**

SYDNEY CENTRE FOR EVANGELISATION

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