

Lent 2019

As we begin Lent, it is important to remember that there are countless ways to get “in touch” with the spirit of Lent. There are many opportunities to engage in prayer, fasting and charity to those in need. As we embrace our new theme “*Caring for Our Common Home*”, the need to help others is extended to include caring for our environment.

Fasting and Feasting: Try to practice one of these each day during Lent.

1. Fast from grumbling. Feast on gratefulness.
2. Fast from food. Feast on scripture.
3. Fast from television. Feast on holy images and the crucifix
4. Fast from idle chatter. Feast on listening.
5. Fast from loudness. Feast on silence.
6. Fast from anger. Feast on forgiveness.
7. Fast from selfishness. Feast on generosity
8. Fast from sadness. Feast on joyfulness.
9. Fast from complaining. Feast on thankfulness.
10. Fast from blaming. Feast on praising.
11. Fast from gossip. Feast on building up others.

- 12 Fast from arrogance. Feast on littleness.
- 13 Fast from day dreaming. Feast on prayer.
- 14 Fast from busyness. Feast on stillness.
- 15 Fast from quick answers. Feast on pondering.
- 16 Fast from being first. Feast on being last.
17. Fast from being right. Feast on being teachable.
- 18 Fast from laziness. Feast on usefulness.
19. Fast from being in the spot light. Feast on being unnoticed.
20. Fast from judging. Feast on acceptance.
21. Fast from frustration. Feast on peacefulness.
22. Fast from words. Feast on The Word.
23. Fast from comparing. Feast on uniqueness.
24. Fast from ugliness. Feast on beauty.
25. Fast from obligation. Feast on self-donation.
26. Fast from dissatisfaction. Feast on being satisfied.
27. Fast from wastefulness-feast on conserving
28. Fast from your plan. Feast on God's plan.
29. Fast from your purpose. Feast on God's eternal purpose
30. Fast from greed. Feast on giving.
31. Fast from complexity. Feast on simplicity.
32. Fast from frowning. Feast on smiling.
33. Fast from accusing. Feast on praising.
34. Fast from commenting. Feast on quietness.
35. Fast from negativity. Feast on being positive.

36. Fast from hurting. Feast on helping.
37. Fast from being liked. Feast on being loved by God.
38. Fast from wishing. Feast on counting blessings.
39. Fast from fear. Feast on courage.
40. Fast from wasting time. Feast on giving time.

Ash Wednesday, March 6th

Read Joel 2:12-18

"But now, now it is Yahweh who speaks-come back to me with all your heart..."

Focus: *Being Grateful*

Each day, thank God for the many blessings you have been given.

Thursday, March 7th

Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20

"See, today I set before you life and prosperity..."

Focus: *Listening*

In your conversations today, concentrate on actually "hearing" what the other person is saying.

Friday, March 8th

Read Isaiah 58:1-9

"...to share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor..."

Focus: *Generosity*

Share something you have, whether something material or your time.

Saturday, March 9th

Read: Luke 5:27-32

“And leaving everything he got up and followed him.”

Focus: *Being “Teachable”*

Contrary to what our human nature may lead us to believe, we are not always right! Be open to constructive criticism.

Sunday, March 10th -the First Sunday of Lent

Read: Luke 4:1-13

“You must serve the Lord your God, and serve him alone.”

Focus: *On God’s Plan*

What we want is not necessarily what God wants for us. Let go and let God.

Monday-Saturday, March 11th -16th

Read: Matthew 6:7-15

“Yes, if you forgive others their failings...”

Focus: *Forgiveness*

Recite the “Our Father” each day this week. Is there someone you need to forgive?

Sunday, March 17th -Second Sunday of Lent

Read: Luke 9:28-36

"This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him."

Focus: *Stillness*

Treat yourself to some quiet time with God

Monday-Saturday, March 18th-23rd

Read: Luke 6:36-38

"...the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back."

Focus: *Acceptance*

Refrain from making judgements this week.

Recite the "Apostles Creed" each day.

Sunday March 24th -Third Sunday of Lent

Read: Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15

"leave it one more year..."

Focus: *The Word*

We must be steadfast; never giving up. God never gives up on us!

Just as we, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, pray to clear our souls, throughout the coming week, try to do some "spring cleaning" and gather unused items/clothing for those in need.

Monday-Saturday, March 25-30

Read: Matthew 18: 21-35

"...how often should I forgive?"

Focus: *Courage*

It can take a great deal of courage to forgive someone who has hurt you.
Think about who may need your forgiveness.

Sunday, March 31st - Fourth Sunday of Lent

Read: Luke 15:1-3,11-32

"I will get up and go to my father..."

Focus: *Being Loved by God*

Whenever we repent, Our Father is there to greet us with love and warmth.

Do we need to assess the areas of our lives; work, family or the things we spend money on?

Monday-Saturday, April 1-6

Read: John 4:43-54

Focus: *Counting Blessings*

"Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

Each day God blesses us; gives us signs of His unending love.

This week, ponder on the blessings you have been given each day.

Sunday, April 7th- Fifth Sunday of Lent

Read: John 8:1-11

Focus: *Praising*

"Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

Long before our own life began, Jesus died for us...now He asks us to pursue His life in us; surely reasons for our continual praising of His Holy Name.

Are we aware of the constant outpouring of mercy and love that we receive from Jesus?

Monday-Saturday, April 8-13

Read: Matthew 1:6,18-21

Focus: *Your Uniqueness*

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid..."

God has a plan for each of us; it may seem to us, humble and insignificant, but don't be fooled.

Our response to God's plan for us matters. We have no way of knowing how God will use "our uniqueness" to carry out His plan.

Sunday, April 14th -Palm Sunday

Read: Philippians 2:6-11

Focus: *Giving*

"...he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death..."

Jesus gave up everything for us; condemned so we could be forgiven, dying so we could be given life eternal.

We are being asked to serve rather than being served.

Monday-Wednesday, April 15-17th

Read: Matthew 26:14-25

Focus: *Silence*

"Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."

I can only imagine that such a statement from Jesus, would bring immediate silence into the room; the disciples must have been shocked that he would say such a thing; "Surely not I, Lord?"

Our schedule may not permit silence, but can we find a special time to rest with Jesus to prepare ourselves; our body, our souls, our spirits?

Lent continues, today, to be a time when we face our sinfulness, not just as individuals but as a community. We look to God, to help us change our lives. Seeking forgiveness is an important part of being a Christian, not just in Lent, but throughout the year.

By clearing away the "clutter" in our lives, we can see more clearly what is actually important.

Sincere thanks to Life Member Sharon St Jean for these Lenten reflections.