

P O P E F R A N C I S

Living
Lent *with* Love

ENCOURAGEMENT
& DAILY PRAYERS



ASH WEDNESDAY

Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world.

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

Loving God, isn't this what you long for from me? That I re-turn: that I turn and turn again back to your love. As I begin this Lenten journey, the desire of my heart is to draw closer to you, source of compassion, and to embody your tenderness and care for others. May I cooperate with your grace so that I see with fresh eyes, listen with open ears and discover anew your divine perspective and the joy of living as your beloved. Amen.

READ JOEL 2:12-18

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

In baptism we receive not only a creed to profess but also a particular way of life—one that calls for full engagement and sets us on the path to goodness.

THE LIGHT OF FAITH

Loving God, through my baptism you welcomed me into the family of God. Every day you unfold the path before me and invite me to move forward with a loving heart. Limited by my human condition, I may sometimes make following you a rather complicated set of steps, but it's simple, really: to cling to you who made me, to live in your love, to walk in your paths, to hold as sacred the call to enter each day trying my best to imitate your son, Jesus. Amen.

READ DEUTERONOMY 30:15-20

FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society.

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

Loving God, during these days when I enter into more engaged prayer, fasting and giving with a generous heart, you make it pretty clear just how I and we—the individual and the collective—are meant to live Lent. You ask us to set a place at the table so we can share bread with the hungry and to let go of any unjust, unwelcoming attitudes or actions that might prevent all from fully participating in your feast of love. May the light of your hospitality shine forth both in me and in my neighbors throughout this day.

Amen.

READ ISAIAH 58:1-9

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first, and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

Loving God, it all begins with you, doesn't it? Because you have first loved me, I am impelled to act on your divine impulse. Because of your love, I'm able to move into each new day with a loving heart; to take the first step—sometimes boldly and sometimes in spite of my fear or timidity—to respond to the needs of others; to work to restore what is wounded or lost; to hold with tenderness the brokenness of others as well as my own. Amen.

READ ISAIAH 58:9-14

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Love for All

Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. Each is responsible for the care of this family.

LAUDATO SI, ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Loving God, this is quite a comparison! I know that you have breathed life into all of us creatures. I know that both humankind and our planet were created by and are held in your love. Now I hear Pope Francis tell me in direct, unmistakable words of a new and startling equation: the reverence and tenderness I evidence in my relationship with the Earth is no different from the reverence and tenderness with which I treat the other. May I see both as expressions of your divine artistry and may I give my attention over to tending to the wholeness of our one community, sustained by your care. Amen.

READ GENESIS 2:7-9; 3:1-7

MONDAY

FIRST WEEK IN LENT

Sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length. Yet Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others.

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

Loving God, you leave no wiggle room here. When I see my neighbor struggling to put food on the table, when I see the stranger longing for a safe and welcoming place to call home, when I see the person held captive by fear, addiction, loneliness, human failings, I am looking directly into your face. You challenge me to let go of avoidance or the pretense of not seeing. You challenge me to recognize, name and welcome your body in the crucified people of our world. Amen.

READ MATTHEW 25:31-46

FRIDAY FOURTH WEEK IN LENT

All of us who are baptized are missionary disciples.

We are called to become a living Gospel in the world.

TWITTER, FEBRUARY 25, 2014

Loving God, your son, Jesus, lived and witnessed the depth of meaning behind the word “sent.” Consumed by his call, he boldly edged closer to the Paschal mystery, to his suffering, death and rising. Love was the impetus that drove him to the fulfillment of this mission. May it be love that drives me as well, for I also am sent. I am baptized and charged with becoming your Gospel lived large. May the manner in which I stand in relationship to you, to others and to all creation speak openly of your presence alive among us. Amen.

READ JOHN 7:1-2, 10, 25-30