

Living Faith

LENT



DAILY
CATHOLIC
DEVOTIONS

Steadfast at the Start

*A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.* PSALM 51:12

WANTED: “a clean heart” at the beginning of Lent. Out with the old habits to make room for better ones. Our merciful God patiently waits for us to return, to be steadfast in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We’ve been here before, ready to begin again.

I imagine God’s restoration of my heart to be a complete transformation. Not just wiped clean—bandaged and waiting for healing. I’ve become comfortable harboring hurt feelings and grievances. I’ve grown complacent with my habitual rushing through prayers “to go get something done.” The word “create” gives me hope that this clutter I’ve left lying around in my heart (which I’ve become comfortable stepping over or ignoring) is gone. Life will still be messy and time will be short. But I am different. I place my trust in God’s mercy and begin Lent with a steadfast spirit.

~ DEBORAH A. MEISTER

Spiritually Enriching

He is like a tree

*planted near running water,
That yields its fruit in due season,
and whose leaves never fade.*

Whatever he does, prospers. PSALM 1:3

Lent is here. It's a good thing. Don't let it go to waste. It should be a time to take stock of both our spiritual and temporal lives. Lent offers us the opportunity to change, and we know change is never easy. Looking at our temporal side, we may have slipped a bit. It could be alcohol, gambling, gossip, damaged relationships. (We all have our flaws.) No matter what you wish to change in your life, you can accompany that change by tending to your spiritual side. Let's say you are going to give up whatever bad behavior you have and replace the time and energy spent doing that with something spiritual—prayer, visiting the sick, working for peace, helping the homeless. If you make the commitment, you just may emerge from this holy season a better person, spiritually enriched—a tree bearing much fruit, prosperous and strong.

~ PAUL PENNICK

Prepared for Anything

A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

PSALM 51:19

I travel quite a bit, and one of the things I enjoy most about traveling is the preparation beforehand.

It's odd, though. I love researching the history and culture of a destination, but when it comes to the trip itself, I hardly ever actually plan an itinerary.

Preparing, it seems, is different than planning. Prepared, I have a sense of what to look for. But if I'm enslaved to my own plan, who knows what else I'll miss?

So it is with Lent. As I begin this season, I think I am prepared. I've listened to the wisdom of Christ through his Church, and I know why I am fasting, praying and attending to acts of mercy. My heart is contrite.

I'm sort of prepared. But plan the stops along the way? I won't do it. The exact shape of this journey is in God's hands, not mine.

Lord, help me to enter this season prepared and ready for you to move in my life.

~ AMY WELBORN

Times of Change

Jesus saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him. LUKE 5:27-28

In our current theology, there is an ancient Greek term often used: *metanoia*—a change of life. This word is especially applicable during the Lenten season, an ideal time to improve our spiritual lives. *Metanoia* is an example of the story of Matthew (a.k.a. Levi). He was doing his job of writing Jewish and Roman tax reports, but he changed his job to become one of the Twelve Apostles and to write his famous gospel of the words and deeds of Jesus.

Each year, Ash Wednesday leads us into this spiritual springtime of 40 unique days to experience an atmosphere of grace, with daily Masses, devotions, personal sacrifices and charitable deeds. We don't want to miss these available blessings this year. Take time to contemplate that a *metanoia* moment may inspire you to begin a more virtuous and rewarding spiritual way of living.

✎ FR. JAMES MCKARNS

Repent, Remember, Restart

This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel. MARK 1:15

This season of Lent is a time of rebirth and renewal, of spring breaking forth and restoring our freedom from the places in our lives where we lack trust in God's promises, places where our selfish habits block us from being open to God's goodness. Perhaps a path to this freedom is to focus on the "re" words—repent of wrongs, remember that you are God's, restart and reset your patterns so you can be renewed and restore your relationship with God and community.

The practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving offer tools through this journey of change, a journey of recommitment to the fundamentals that help feed our true purpose.

Come Easter, may we all emerge from the troubles and sorrows, like new life bursting forth after a storm, to give God glory and praise.

~ SR. JULIA WALSH, F.S.P.A.

Today, Everyone Is My Beloved

Whatever you did for one of these least...you did for me.

MATTHEW 25:40

Think of the person in this world whom you love the most. How do you react when you see this person? You are at your best. You try to be patient, generous, kind and loving.

Imagine what you would be like if everyone you met today, you treated as that beloved person. This might give us an inkling of what Jesus wants from us.

Why don't you try it out? The first person you meet today, treat that person as if you loved him/her dearly. Then do it for the second person, the third and so on. Keep it up all day.

Wouldn't that be a wonderful way to live? Perhaps this can be your Lenten resolution.

~ MSGR. STEPHEN J. ROSSETTI

LENT IS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR EACH OF US TO REFLECT UPON OUR BEHAVIORS AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. We start out enthusiastically vowing to improve ourselves and to enrich our spiritual life. But, at some point, we may fall short of our lofty goals. With *Living Faith Lent*, you will have daily reinforcement through Lenten-themed devotions written by the authors of the popular *Living Faith Daily Catholic Devotions* magazine. Daily Scripture and reflections for the entire season will guide you to a greater appreciation of the joy of new life in our risen Savior.

THIS BOOK, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE PARISH PRODUCTS, IS AVAILABLE ON  AND 

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