

Lent 2015 A Resource for Youth

A Time for Conversion and Renewal



Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Thursday before the Mass of the Lord's Supper. At this time, the Church commemorates Jesus delivering Himself up to God for our salvation, calls us to conversion, and invites us to renew our option for Christ and His Kingdom and to live as His **missionary disciples**.

To be a disciple of Christ is to be a **missionary disciple**. As Pope Francis continues to remind us, "Baptism makes us 'missionary disciples' within the communion of the Church each one of us becomes a **missionary disciple**." As **missionary disciples** we are called to be active in fulfilling the primary mission of the Church, to make disciples of all nations by sharing the Good News of the Gospel.

This means all of us — not just those who are called to go to other countries. We are called to bring the love and saving message of Jesus to wherever we are *and* to those far away by our prayers and sacrifices for those in mission countries and for the people they serve who are frequently the poorest of the poor.

First Sunday of Lent – 40 Days of Spiritual Preparation

Lent recalls the 40 years that the Jewish people spent in the desert before reaching the Promised Land, and the days that Jesus spent in the desert preparing for His mission.

◊ Recall something for which you have had to prepare a long time.

Every great event requires a lot of preparation and Jesus invites you today to prepare for the next 40 days to celebrate His resurrection with Him. Open your heart so that your reflection and prayer will bring you closer to Jesus.

Go Deeper – The Symbols of Lent

During Lent notice changes in the church environment symbols and Mass. Many churches do not put holy water at the entrance or flowers on the altar; in others, no instruments like guitars or

First Sunday of Lent – 40 Days of Spiritual Preparation *continued*

drums are used. At Mass the *Gloria* and the *Alleluia* are omitted and the color of the clothes (priest's vestments) are purple.

All these symbols favor meditation and seriousness, and differentiate the Lenten Season from the Season of Easter. Extend this attitude of meditation and seriousness into your daily life:

- ◊ What activities can you put aside to devote that time to God?
- ◊ What can you stop doing or start doing, as a sign of seriousness and strength to overcome what separates you from Jesus and His mission?

Second Sunday of Lent – Jesus is Your Friend

One of the best things that can happen is to have a good friend to talk and share life with in both good and difficult times. Good friends help us grow, because they respect our uniqueness and when necessary, challenge us with affection, and we listen with love and openness.

- ◊ How many good friends do you have?

Today deepen your friendship with Jesus, the best friend of all, the one who never fails us. Get ready to talk with Him who commits Himself to us to the point of giving His life.

Become a Friend of Jesus

Build your friendship with Jesus and invite him to strengthen your friendship with your friends and faith family.

- ◊ Choose a place to talk to Jesus in quiet; your room, the backyard, the beach.
- ◊ Invite Jesus to talk to you. Read the Gospel of Mark 9:2-10 or Mark 2:1-12.
- ◊ Ask Jesus what He wants to tell you silently.
- ◊ Make a note of what you hear and respond from the heart.
- ◊ Think about your friends, family and your brothers and sisters in Christ in mission countries. How can you apply your experience with Jesus to your relationship with them?

Third Sunday of Lent – God Hears the Voice of Those Who Suffer

All around us in the world there is much pain, sometimes caused by sickness and death of family and friends; some by extreme poverty and injustice. God is not indifferent to the pain or the injustices, nor should we be indifferent.

- ◊ Have you ever felt alone in times of pain and suffering?
- ◊ Can you think of some people who are always willing to help those who suffer?



Third Sunday of Lent-God Hears the Voice of Those Who Suffer

continued

Learn and Pray for Those Who Suffer

To be a missionary disciple of Jesus is to continue His mission here on earth to bring the joy of the Gospel to all and to care for the poor and suffering in the world. Jesus' ability to perceive and respond to reality was formed in light of the history of salvation. He clearly spoke against society and religion when they excluded the poor and the marginalized, allowed the abuse of the weakest. He devoted much of His ministry to teaching that everyone has the same dignity, freedom and rights. We are called to do the same.

- ◊ Read some of the issues of *MISSION Magazine* found at <http://www.onefamilyinmission.org/society-propfaith/read-mission-magazine.html>.
- ◊ Pray for the missionaries and people in the articles.
- ◊ What more can you do as a missionary disciple of Jesus?



Fourth Sunday of Lent – Sons and Daughters of the Light



Andrea Bocelli, a great Italian singer, has to memorize all the song lyrics and melodies because he is blind. He is very confident, and has a great spirit and much energy. He is married, loves his son very much and loves to gallop on his horse. Andrea has the great blessing to have been able to overcome the limits of his blindness.

- ◊ What about you? Can you see and enjoy the light? Do you have some blindnesses that prevent you from growing and being productive? Do you have gifts that you waste by not having developed them? What aspects of your life are difficult for you to accept? Are there things you don't want to see?

What Aspects of Your Life Need the Light of Jesus?

During these last 15 days of Lent, reflect on the deeper aspects that give direction to your life and pray to Jesus enlighten them and help you become light for others.

- ◊ What are your hopes and your biggest ambitions? Are they on the same wavelength as those of Jesus or on a very different path or even opposing sides?
- ◊ What shines more, your qualities or your weaknesses? How can you sharpen your skills to turn them into virtues, according to the light that Jesus gives you? How can you minimize your weaknesses using the Holy Spirit, to cause less harm to yourself and those around you?

Fourth Sunday of Lent — Sons and Daughters of the Light continued

Don't despair; remember that life is a journey to God and therefore it is a gradual process of spiritual growth. Faith gradually shapes our lives, interests, tastes, beliefs, passions and actions. The key is in letting everything be illuminated by the light of Jesus and by the grace of God so we can keep moving forward.



Fifth Sunday of Lent — Jesus is Our Role Model of Life

If we want to live according to God's plan, we need to keep Jesus as our role model. This Sunday's readings help us to do so.

- ◊ What does it mean to you to have Jesus as your role model?
- ◊ When is it hardest for you to be and act like Jesus?

We follow Jesus when we act as He would have in the same situation. We fail when we act in a manner contrary to how He would have in the same circumstance.

You will hear in the readings about God's plan and Jesus' obedience because of His total trust and love of the Father. Are you ready to listen?

"Let It Go" Behaviors and Attitudes

1. On a piece of paper draw yourself running towards a finish line. The finish line is Jesus Christ-God. Make the path long enough to place signs along the way.
2. Write a goal that will help you be a better missionary disciple in the signs towards the finish line. Write a word that represents an action/behavior or attitude you need to eliminate in order to reach the written goal.
3. Consider doing this activity with one to three friends. Share your drawings and identify the key goals. If you share with a friend(s) reflect on the following:

How alike are your goals?**

How similar are they to the life Jesus is calling you to live?

Which goals are specific to youth and which will remain a goal as adults?

**If you do this reflection alone, skip the first question.

4. Reflect on how you can support one another to reach your goals. What kind of support will you need and what can you give to others?



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