

THIS IS MY BODY

given for you



Lenten Companion 2026

Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney







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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“This is my Body given for you.” These profound words spoken by Christ at the Last Supper reveal the heart of our Christian faith and the spirit of this Lenten season. They are also the words that form the theme for the International Eucharistic Congress in 2028, which Sydney will host.

Why do they matter so much? In short, they express a monumental truth: before we could ever reach for God, He gives Himself to us completely in His Son, Jesus Christ. We receive His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—pure gift.

Lent itself is such a gift. More than just a season of obligation, these forty days are a grace-filled invitation from God to draw closer to Him, to turn to His mercy and to repent for those times we’ve fallen short. Lent offers us precious opportunities to cling to His love through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—pathways that open our hearts to the love of God so that we might bring His love to all people.

This Companion is a most worthy guide for you as you undertake this Lenten journey. In these pages you will find prayers to direct your heart towards Christ, together with deep reflections on God’s word, the divine mysteries, and His saving acts in history.

As you pray with these pages alongside the faithful throughout Sydney, you join in the beautiful communion of the Church—united as one body despite the distances between our parishes and homes, bound together in one faith, and most powerfully, in the Eucharist we share: that same Body of Christ who gives Himself to each of us.

I pray that this Companion may lead you into a profound and personal encounter with Christ, who gave Himself up for all of us—the greatest of all gifts.

Yours in Christ

Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP
Archbishop of Sydney

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: Giovanni Portelli Photography.

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.

The Holy Eucharist

The Words of Institution (Consecration)

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU. TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

These are the words of consecration, as recorded in Scripture, that Jesus Christ spoke at the Last Supper when He instituted the Holy Eucharist. The words themselves reveal the depths of the mystery of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. The gift of every Mass not only reminds us of the Last Supper and the Passion of Jesus Christ but enables us today to participate in that very same reality of our salvation. From the words of Jesus emerge three linked realities of the Eucharist: Presence, Sacrifice, and Communion. Reflecting on each of these aspects aids our understanding and appreciation of the Holy Mass.

We speak of Jesus' **presence** in the Eucharist as the Real Presence. From the words of Jesus Himself: "This is my Body, this is the chalice of my Blood", we know that He gave us the gift of His Body and Blood as He asked us to 'do this in memory of Him.' Jesus knew that He was to suffer and die and then rise from the dead and ascend to His Father, so at the Last Supper He institutes the Eucharist for His enduring presence on earth. When the priest at Mass consecrates the bread and the wine, these elements of

earthly nourishment are transformed into Jesus Christ—they are no longer bread or wine but His Body and Blood. The priest 'doing this memory of Him' perpetuates Jesus' presence among us for our salvation.

The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist serves our need for healing and nourishment. Jesus chose the most ordinary elements of nourishment, bread and wine, to be transformed for us into the most extraordinary nourishment. Our wonder and marvel of the Eucharist, the reality of how close God wishes to walk with us, draws us into divine love and changes the ordinariness of our lives into the extraordinary Christian lives that we have been called to live.

The Eucharist makes present the **sacrifice** of Jesus Christ on the Cross, as He says that it is His Body *given up* and His Blood *poured out*. The sacrifice of the Eucharist is our salvation from sin as we participate in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It was on the night before Christ was to suffer that He gathered His Apostles to receive what was to be *given up* and *poured out* for them on the Cross.

For us, the salvific historical event of the Passion is made present on the altars

of our churches in the Mass. We speak of Christ's glorious Passion, where after the Resurrection He retains the wounds of the Crucifixion which are now glorified. The wounds of Christ's death do not disappear with His Resurrection but become glorified. The transformation of His wounds reveals to us that in His Body is the path from death to glory. The wounds of His glorified Body eternally manifest the interior sacrifice of His heart on the Cross, in which we are called to join our hearts at Mass. Our participation nourishes us in Christ's sacrificial love, transforming our wounds from death to life.

Even though the Passion refers to a historical moment in time, it is the culminating event of Christ, who is the Eternal Word made flesh. For this reason, at every Mass, where Christ is offered to the Father, *it does not repeat His death* but makes possible our participation in the once and for all perfect sacrifice. The Eucharistic sacrifice therefore transcends and unites all times, always transforming the reality of sin and death into the risen life of Christ. This is the heart of the Easter event.

Christ, our sacrificial Lamb, offers us His true presence in the Eucharist to make present the eternal power of His sacrifice on

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

Calvary. Participation in the Mass is the most privileged way we can receive what Christ's sacrifice won for us; namely, freedom from sin, nourishment in divine love and the promise of eternal life.

We speak of the Eucharist as holy **communion**. The Eucharist binds us into ever stronger communion with the Trinity and all our Christian brothers and sisters. Communion is more than membership because its foundation is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is the essence of what unites us. Christ's sacrifice on the Cross establishes for us communion with God. From this foundation, our participation of this event in the Eucharist is the source of communion with each other. The Apostles at the Last Supper receive Christ's Body *offered up* and Blood *poured out* for them, which is completed on the Cross. Communion in this sacrifice builds the unity of the Church through her proclamation of Christ's sacrificial victory over sin. Christ offers His Body and Blood for the *forgiveness of sin*, so that what separates us from God and fractures human relationships can be healed in and through Him.

For us, the Eucharist continues to heal our souls in the sacrificial love of Christ, which forges bonds of communion between us and God, and with our fellow Christians. The fruits of communion rely on a spirit of docility in the reception of the Eucharist. Openness to the perfect love of the crucified Christ transforms the fragileness of human love into bonds of divine communion.

The Eucharist satisfies the deepest longings of the heart by offering the opportunity to receive God's perfect and most unitive love. The Eucharist therefore must be at the heart of our whole existence, wherein our call to live our Christian lives may be done with Eucharistic hearts burning with the fire of divine charity.

Pope St John Paul II stated that there can be no danger of excess in our care for this mystery of the Eucharist. Our care and love for the Eucharist grows through practices of adoration and spiritual communion and must find expression in our care for all God's people. Our participation in the one *sacrifice* makes us *one body*, since the sacrifice of Jesus Christ overcomes the reign of sin and division, and establishes the new communion we have in His Body. Indeed, it anticipates the perfect divine communion that we are called to share in heaven where all divisions are healed.

- Rev Dr Benjamin Johnson OFM Cap





First Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you in this beautiful season of Lent with hearts open to receive every grace that you want to give us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be filled with gratitude to your Son for the sacrifice that He made for our salvation. Let us bow down before Him in adoration as He gives Himself to us with the words: *this is My Body, given for you.*

Gospel of St Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God' he said 'throw yourself down; for scripture says:

He will put you in his angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says:

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

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says:

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

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

Gospel Reflection

By Mat De Sousa

By beginning our Lenten journey with the account of Jesus in the wilderness, we are invited to consider how we can better unite our penitential efforts with Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross.

We read that after Jesus fasts for forty days and nights, the devil fails to tempt Him away from His mission.

Jesus is faced with three temptations: pleasure, honour and power.

Yet Christ does not give into His hunger with the satisfaction of eating bread; nor does He exchange His obscurity for Messianic recognition, or His anonymity for worldly influence.

Jesus knew that choosing shortcuts over sacrifice would not hasten His earthly ministry. His actions would not have borne lasting fruit, and His mission would then have been robbed of its true fulfilment.

This truth is revealed to us again when Christ overcomes further temptations during His Passion, up until His victory on the Cross.

From Pilate's power to release Christ from His crucifixion (Jn 19:10), to the bystander's mockery and goading of Christ to 'come down

from the Cross' (Mt 27:40-42), Jesus keeps to His mission.

He does so—just as He did in the wilderness—strengthened by Scripture and consoled with the understanding that His sacrifice will produce ever-lasting fruit. So how can we follow in Christ's footsteps and ensure that we don't miss out on experiencing this fruit of Christ's sacrifice at Easter?

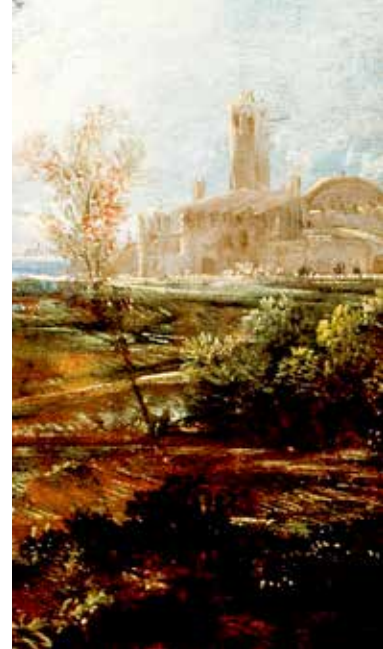
We can devote more time to reading and reflecting on the Scriptures, for it will strengthen our resolve against the temptations of this world.

We can choose to not put God to the test and demand reward for our Lenten sacrifice; instead, we can offer our sacrifices for the sake of another and for God's Will to be done.

We can practice what we preach and keep true to His commandments, for this is how the world will know we are His disciples and be converted to Christ.

This is how we may strengthen ourselves spiritually and unite our sacrifices to Christ crucified, taking part in His redemptive suffering and bearing spiritual fruit for us and for those in our lives.

“Jesus knew that choosing shortcuts over sacrifice would not hasten His earthly ministry.”



Closing Prayer

Eternal Father, thank you for your tender love for me. Grant me the grace to desire a deeper communion with you.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, may I never give in to temptation, but surrender myself completely to your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. When have I turned to Scripture to give me strength? How can I do this more?
3. How can I witness to the importance of prayer and sacrifice this Lent?

Landscape with the Temptation of Christ by Alessandro Magnasco and Antonio Francesco Peruzzini, circa 1715. Image: LACMA/Public Domain



Second Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you in this beautiful season of Lent with hearts open to receive every grace that you want to give us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be filled with gratitude to your Son for the sacrifice that He made for our salvation. Let us bow down before Him in adoration as He gives Himself to us with the words: *this is My Body, given for you.*

Gospel of St Matthew 17:1-9

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' When they heard this the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, 'Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'

Gospel Reflection

By Karina Bohorquez Lemos

On the mountain, our Lord granted the disciples a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven, a glimpse of glory to strengthen their faith for what lay ahead. He knew their frailty, their fear, their confusion. He knows ours too. And yet, even so, He invites us to trust Him, to let go of fear, to release our need for control, and not to despair over our weakness or failures. For even in our darkest moments, even when humanity seems to have done its worst, God remains undefeated.

The same Lord whom the disciples beheld, radiant, majestic, and divine at the Transfiguration, would soon appear wounded, frail, and powerless, hanging upon the Cross. Yet within this paradox—the inseparable bond between the Cross and glory—lies the very power of God. Our Lord overcame evil not by escaping suffering, but by entering into it; not by

coming down from the Cross, but by embracing it completely. Through His dying and rising, He transformed weakness into strength, suffering into redemption, and death into life.

Every daily act of surrender, every acceptance of suffering, every choice to love, especially when

“Every daily act of surrender, every acceptance of suffering, every choice to love, especially when it costs us, becomes a moment when His image is etched more deeply into our hearts.”

it costs us, becomes a moment when His image is etched more deeply into our hearts. Jesus has shown us the way. Let us follow Him with courage, perseverance, and faith. Let us allow Him to shape us into His likeness, to mould saints from our fragile clay.

Heavenly Father, grant us the grace to listen to your beloved Son and to love Him with all our mind, heart, and soul, so that all we think, do, and say, may be for your greater glory, our good, and the good of those around us. Amen.



Closing Prayer

Eternal Father, thank you for your tender love for me. Grant me the grace to desire deeper communion with you. By the power of the Holy Spirit, help me to accept my suffering and yearn to share in the glory of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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 areas of my life do I struggle to release control, and to place my trust in Jesus?
3. What is one way that I can help someone whom I know, to look forward to the Kingdom of Heaven?

Transfiguration of christ icon. Credit: Dimitris Vetsikas/Pixabay



Third Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you in this beautiful season of Lent with hearts open to receive every grace that you want to give us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be filled with gratitude to your Son for the sacrifice that He made for our salvation. Let us bow down before Him in adoration as He gives Himself to us with the words: *this is My Body, given for you.*

Gospel of St John 4:5-16,19-26,39-42

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' – Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied: 'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.' 'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied: 'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.' 'Sir,' said the woman 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water. I see you are a prophet, sir. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said: 'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know: for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come – in fact it is here already – when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah – that is, Christ – is coming; and when he comes he will tell us everything.' 'I who am speaking to you,' said Jesus 'I am he.' Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done,' so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

Gospel Reflection

By Fr Paschal M. Corby OFM Conv.

The Gospel story of Christ and the Samaritan woman unfolds in the oppressiveness of the heat of the day. We find Jesus exhausted and thirsty. The presence of Jacob's Well is a welcome sign of relief in an otherwise harsh and unforgiving land. But this provident gift of water points to something beyond physical refreshment. Christ uses it to speak of a *living water* more precious and lasting than life itself; not water that merely satisfies a physical thirst, but something that meets man's deepest needs. It is the thirst for communion with the living God, and Christ points to Himself as its source.

This gift of living water is not something that is external to us, but rather an inner force, a spring, *welling up to eternal life*. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit which is given to those who believe in Jesus. Later in John's Gospel Christ will proclaim: *If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water'* (Jn

7:37-38). Note that it is out of the believer's heart—from our hearts—that streams of living water, the gift of the Holy Spirit, will flow. The one who believes, who loves, and is in communion with Christ becomes a wellspring that gives life to others; flowing out of us and welling up to eternal life—flowing out over our families, our friends, our work colleagues and all we meet, that we might be sources of God's grace to others.

But in order to be filled with God's life-giving Spirit, we must first empty ourselves of everything that is not of Him. In this season of Lent, through our prayer

and penance, we renew our desire to purify ourselves from our attachment to sin, so that we might be renewed by God's grace. Let us therefore draw close to Him who is the fountain and source of grace. Let us drink deeply from His presence in Word and Sacrament, so that united to Christ, in the Holy Spirit, we might draw others to the source of life in God.

“But in order to be filled with God's life-giving Spirit, we must first empty ourselves of everything that is not of Him.”



Closing Prayer

Eternal Father, thank you for your tender love for me. Grant me the grace to desire deeper communion with you. By the power of the Holy Spirit, help me to turn away from sin, and transform my life so that I may be united with your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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 empty myself of everything that is not of God? How can I drink more deeply from His presence, especially in His Word and the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Confession?
3. How can I draw at least one person to the source of life in God this week?

Christ and the Woman of Samaria by Benedetto Luti, c. 1715–20. Credit: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Public Domain



Fourth Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you in this beautiful season of Lent with hearts open to receive every grace that you want to give us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be filled with gratitude to your Son for the sacrifice that He made for our salvation. Let us bow down before Him in adoration as He gives Himself to us with the words: *this is My Body, given for you.*

Gospel of St John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man, and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored. His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man!' They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man. 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away. Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and worshipped him.

Gospel Reflection

By Dr Mariusz Biliniewicz

The story of the healing of the man born blind has traditionally been used in preparing catechumens for reception into the Church: baptism is the ultimate illumination and cleansing from sin—a rebirth into new life in Christ.

The author of the Fourth Gospel juxtaposes the physical blindness of the healed man with the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees. The tragedy of physical blindness is real, but the drama of spiritual blindness is even greater. Physical infirmity can be healed by God, but there is no cure for self-inflicted spiritual blindness.

The Pharisees pretend to be genuinely interested in what happened to the man and in who Jesus truly is. However, when the man truthfully answers their questions, it becomes clear that their curiosity is only a façade. They have already made up their mind and are merely looking to have their pre-determined conclusions confirmed.

Anything that does not fit their narrative must be dismissed. Accepting Jesus for who He is would come at a cost—a price they are not willing to pay.

Jesus opens the eyes of those who seek the truth. At the same time, He allows those who are not interested in it to go their own way. He opens the man's eyes first physically, and then spiritually: the blind man recognises Him not only as a healer, but also as the Son of Man, the Lord.

"This is my Body, given for you." At the Last Supper, on the Cross, and in the Eucharist Jesus gives up His Body for the salvation of the world. We do not see Him with our bodily eyes,

but with the eyes of faith.

Lord, help us always to seek the truth without prejudice. Open our eyes to see you as the true Light of the World—the Light who brings us out our darkness into the light of His truth and love.

“At the Last Supper, on the cross and in the Eucharist Jesus gives up His Body for the salvation of the world.”



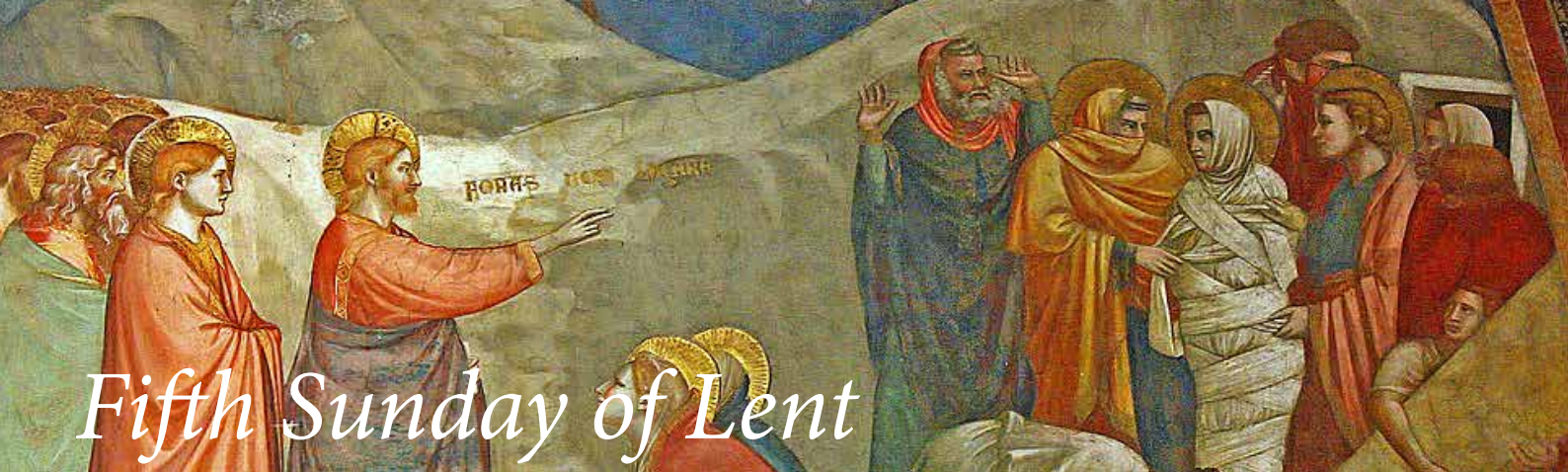
Closing Prayer

Eternal Father, thank you for your tender love for me. Grant me the grace to desire deeper communion with you. By the power of the Holy Spirit, restore my spiritual sight so that I may see in the Eucharist the Real Presence of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. When is a moment in my life when I received the grace to recognise that Jesus is the Son of God?
3. How can I help another person to seek the light of truth?

Christ Healing the Blind by El Greco, c. 1570. Credit: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Public Domain



Fifth Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you in this beautiful season of Lent with hearts open to receive every grace that you want to give us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be filled with gratitude to your Son for the sacrifice that He made for our salvation. Let us bow down before Him in adoration as He gives Himself to us with the words: *this is My Body, given for you.*

Gospel of St John 11:3-7,17,20-27,33-45

Mary and Martha sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.' Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.' On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.' Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept; and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said: 'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.' When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.' Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

Gospel Reflection

By Terrie Yule

The scenario that John presents in his Gospel is a familiar one which focuses on some of humanity's great questions such as life, death and Resurrection.

Martha, Mary and Lazarus are dear friends of Jesus. Though Jesus receives word that Lazarus is unwell, He does not come to them but remains where He is. Why?

No one can deny that the relationship between these friends is characterised by deep faith, love and trust; yet in their hour of need, Jesus does not go to them.

Martha and Mary love Jesus; they trust Him and have faith in His ability to save their brother. Both are shown as women of great faith. Martha demonstrates the depth of her faith when, late as it is, she has confidence that Jesus can make the impossible,

possible by raising her brother to life. Central to this event is the power of faith. Martha has faith and believes in Jesus. And Jesus believes that God the Father will answer His prayer.

We are called to believe that the death and Resurrection of Jesus has redeemed us and can bring us to eternal life.

Perhaps we can identify with Martha and Mary in their reaching out to Jesus. Through prayer and petition, we too may call on Jesus to make the impossible, possible.

The promise of eternal life gives us hope. We come with our own desires, struggles, hopes and shame, and we place them at the foot of the Cross. We unite these to the sacrifice of Jesus with the hope that we may share in His Resurrection.

“Perhaps you can identify with Martha and Mary in their reaching out to Jesus. Through prayer and petition, we too may call on Jesus to make the impossible, possible.”



Closing Prayer

Eternal Father, thank you for your tender love for me. Grant me the grace to desire deeper communion with you. By the power of the Holy Spirit, help me to detach from anything that will prevent me sharing in the Resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. When has Jesus answered a prayer of mine that seemed impossible?
3. How can I encourage others to hope in the promise of eternal life?

Raising of Lazarus by Giotto di Bondone, c. 1320a Credit: Frans Vandewalle/Flickr, CC BY-NC 2.0



Palm Sunday

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you in this beautiful season of Lent with hearts open to receive every grace that you want to give us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be filled with gratitude to your Son for the sacrifice that He made for our salvation. Let us bow down before Him in adoration as He gives Himself to us with the words: *this is My Body, given for you.*

*Gospel of St Matthew 26:14-32**

Then one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him. Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the passover?' 'Go to so-and-so in the city' he replied 'and say to him, "The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my disciples." The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover. When evening came he was at table with the twelve disciples. And while they were eating he said 'I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me.' They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn, 'Not I, Lord, surely?' He answered, 'Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me, will betray me. The Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!' Judas, who was to betray him; asked in his turn, 'Not I, Rabbi, surely?' 'They are your own words' answered Jesus. Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take it and eat,' he said 'this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them. 'Drink all of you from this,' he said, 'for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.' After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all lose faith in me this night, for the scripture says: I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered, but after my resurrection I shall go before you to Galilee.'

** Abridged (full text: Mt 26:14-27:66)*

Gospel Reflection

By Bishop Tony Percy

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) once said: "Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire." This magnificent insight is on display in this passage of the Passion Narrative of St. Matthew's Gospel: "One of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand Jesus over to you?'" Jesus is 'handed over' by Judas to the mob. They carry out the brutal murder. Little did they know that the Passion and death of Jesus was the sublime act of salvation that pours out mercy, forgiveness and healing upon the world.

The word that is used for this act of betrayal is tradition. It comes from the Latin language: the word is 'traditio.' Christians took this word and employed it to describe what we do when we 'hand over' Jesus in our preaching and teaching—and most especially in the Eucharist, whereby Jesus is

"We would do well, as Lent reaches its crescendo in the 'handing over' of Jesus, to deepen our understanding of our rich spiritual tradition."

handed over to us. What appears as bread and wine is not. The reality is we are receiving the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ. And so, we 'hand over' Jesus in our Creed, Sacraments, moral teaching and practice of prayer. These four means of 'handing over' are used to form the sections of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,

which provides easy access to our rich 4,000-year tradition—from Abraham and Sarah until now. We would do well, as Lent reaches its crescendo in the 'handing over' of Jesus, to deepen our understanding of our rich spiritual tradition.

We are noticing the rise of interest in faith, especially by young people. They rightly sense they are living among the ashes of the secular world. They rightly sense that we have preserved the fire of faith and they desire it so that sin can be burnt away, hearts ignited and minds enlightened.

Questions

1. Which word or phrase of the Gospel or the reflection spoke to me, and what might God be saying to me?
2. Every time that I am at Mass and hear these words of Jesus spoken by the priest: "This is my Body, given for you," do I believe them to be true? Do I adore Jesus? Do I accept His sacrifice for me?
3. How can I hand over the truths of the saving power of Christ to someone else this Lent?

The Last Supper by Willem Jacob Herreyns, c. 1790-1800. Credit: KIK-IRPA – Urban.brussels, cliché X134074



Closing Prayer

Eternal Father, thank you for your tender love for me. Grant me the grace to desire deeper communion with you. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may I grow more in love with you and be more intimately united with you every time I receive the Eucharist—the Body and Blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.



Easter Sunday

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you in this beautiful season of Lent with hearts open to receive every grace that you want to give us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be filled with gratitude to your Son for the sacrifice that He made for our salvation. Let us bow down before Him in adoration as He gives Himself to us with the words: *this is My Body, given for you.*

Gospel of St Matthew 28:1-10

After the sabbath, and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to visit the sepulchre. And all at once there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning, his robe white as snow. The guards were so shaken, so frightened of him, that they were like dead men. But the angel spoke; and he said to the women, 'There is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would. Come and see the place where he lay, then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has risen from the dead and now he is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him." Now I have told you.' Filled with awe and great joy the women came quickly away from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples. And there, coming to meet them, was Jesus. 'Greetings' he said. And the women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee; they will see me there.'

Gospel Reflection

By Sister M. Rita Baysari ISSM

The angel's message to those women on that Easter morning is God's message to us today: "There is no need for you to be afraid" for Jesus has risen from the dead. Jesus is alive and He is with us always. Easter makes it possible to live a life not of fear but of hope. Not denying our fears but allowing them to be transformed in Christ.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had every reason to be afraid that morning. A man they admired and loved, and whom they had hoped was their long-awaited Messiah, had died a horrible death. Of course they approached the tomb filled with much doubt, fear, pain, loss and sorrow.

When the women arrived at the tomb the angel told them to not be afraid: "He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would." With these words their fears did not suddenly disappear but rather the women were now filled with a holy fear, the fear of the Lord. They left the tomb

quickly "filled with awe and great joy." Their fears were not erased but instead were transformed. The Resurrection of our Lord fills us with a holy fear and a heavenly joy. A joy that nothing in life can take away, because it is rooted in faith and based on that wonderful Easter miracle.

The great joy of Easter is that the Son of God lives, and He is with us, and we do not have to be afraid. Jesus comes to us in the midst of our fear, dread and despair, to give us renewed courage, hope and joy. He brings new life out of death, new faith out of fear, new hope out of despair,

and new light out of darkness. The end of the Resurrection story is the beginning of our own lives. Wherever we go our risen Lord goes before us just as He promised. The tomb has become the womb of new creation. The Easter miracle is not only that Jesus triumphs over death but also that His triumph offers hope and life to us all.

"The great joy of Easter is that the Son of God lives, and He is with us, and we do not have to be afraid."



Closing Prayer

Eternal Father, thank you for your tender love for me. Grant me the grace to desire deeper communion with you. By the power of the Holy Spirit, help me to receive great peace this Easter, and to go out and share with others the joy of the Resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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 believe in the Resurrection and that Jesus is alive and with me every moment of my life?
3. Whom do I know who struggles with fear, dread or despair, that I could share the joy of Easter with this year?

The women at the grave of Christ by M. and N. Hanhart after J.E. Goodall after Fra Angelico. Credit: Wellcome Collection, CC BY 4.0

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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