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THE FLOOD AND THE DESERT THE MEANING OF LENT'S 40 DAYS

Forty Days, the duration of Lent, is one of the most symbolically significant periods of time in the Bible. The forty-day length of Lent is rooted in the biblical usage of the number forty. Forty is typically indicative of a time of testing, trial, penance, purification, and renewal. In the New testament, forty days is the length of time of Jesus' time of trial in the desert in preparation for his public ministry proclaiming the Gospel. The forty-day period of Jesus' trial in the desert echoes a number of events in the Old Testament:

- The face of the earth was cleansed and purified during the promised period of days and nights that rain poured down during the great flood receded.
- Moses spent forty years as a shepherd in the desert before God called him to lead the Israelites out of slavery.
- Moses fasted for forty day and nights on Mount Sinai before receiving the tablets of the covenant.
- The Israelites spent forty years wandering in the desert, as a time of testing, trial and purification of the people, before reaching the Promised Land.
- The prophet Elijah spent forty days in the desert before encountering God on Mount Horeb.
- The Ninevites were given forty days before God was going to destroy the city, allowing time for repentance and conversion.

Forty is a number of punishment and repentance, testing and resting, and, above all else, absolute dependence on God. Whenever God wants to do something significant, He does it in forty days, or years. Forty is pointed out as one of the significant numbers in scripture, especially associated with almost each new development in the history of God's mighty acts, especially of salvation.

In the New Testament, the disciples are granted a forty-day taste of their future life of glory: forty happens to be the amount of time Jesus remained on earth after His Resurrection.

Scripture calls us to embark on our own forty-days exodus, and it equips us with many models for these spiritual sojourns. Lent is the time for spiritual action and passion – knowing ultimately that it is Jesus who journeys with us, who acts within us, and suffers for us and with us.” #

A Message From Father Fabio

CELEBRATING CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Do you remember how you felt at the end of a Palm Sunday Mass? You may not have noticed, but there is an abrupt shift in tone in that liturgy. The Mass begins with great joy, as we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to the acclamation of the crowds. But then the mood shifts to sorrow, despair even, when the Passion Gospel is read, for we hear the shouts of "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" from those same crowds a few days later.

Palm Sunday, of course, is the beginning of Holy Week, the most important week in the Christian year. The confusion of conflicting moods is spread throughout the week, especially during the Easter Triduum – from sundown Holy Thursday to sundown Easter Sunday.

Holy Thursday offers us the glorious Mass of the Lord's Supper celebrating the institution of the Eucharist before we pass to the sadness of the betrayal and arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The next day brings us the Good Friday Liturgy of the Passion with our recognition of what our sins did to the incarnate Son of Man. Then, after a day of waiting, as we mourn Jesus' burial and repose in the tomb, we celebrate His victory over sin, Satan, and death at the Easter Vigil on Saturday night or at the Easter Masses the next day. If we have participated in all the main services of the Triduum, we arrive at Sunday evening exhausted but *joyful*.

The Easter season is a period filled with joy and thanksgiving. Our gladness comes not only because Christ rose from the dead, but also because we benefit from it. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church (654) puts it, "The Pascal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life."

In other words, Christ's Resurrection is the source of our own future resurrection. St. Paul wrote about it to the Romans in the following words (Rom 6:5): "For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection."

Eternal life in union with Christ – a hope for a new life beginning now and extending on into heaven – is the result of Jesus' Resurrection. What greater grounds for thanksgiving can there be than this Easter hope? We should sing with joy about this promise from God!

How do we show our joy and our gratitude to God for this amazing gift He has given us? We join in worship and praise God by word and song, and we share the Good News of Jesus' victory over death with our family and friends. This Easter message that we share in is the ultimate foundation for all Christian discipleship.

The Lord is risen, alleluia!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Fabio Refosco, C.O.





JOURNEY WITH CHRIST THROUGH THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Do you ever wonder what it was really like to be at the Passion of Jesus? The Stations of the Cross are one of the most simple, yet powerful ways to prayerfully walk alongside Jesus and encounter Him like never before.

For Roman Catholics throughout the world, the Stations of the Cross are synonymous with lent, Holy Week, and especially, Good Friday. This devotion is also known as the Way of the Cross, the Via Crucis, and the Via Dolorosa. It commemorates 14 key events on the day of Christ's crucifixion.

The Stations originated in medieval Europe when wars prevented Christian pilgrims from visiting the Holy Land. Later, for the many who wanted to pass along the same route, but could not make the trip to Jerusalem, a practice developed that eventually took the form of the 14 stations currently found in almost every Catholic church. It was St. Francis of Assisi who devised the list of stations and started the tradition of reciting it as a type of devotional service. European artists created works depicting scenes of Christ's journey to Calvary.

In 1761, St. Alphonsus Liguori wrote: "The pious exercise of the Way of the Cross represents the sorrowful journey that Jesus Christ made with the cross on His shoulders, to die on Calvary for the love of us. We should, therefore, practice this devotion with the greatest possible fervor, placing ourselves in spirit beside the Savior as He walked this sorrowful way, uniting our tears with His, and offering to Him both our compassion and our gratitude."

Praying the Stations of the Cross is one of the most popular devotions for Catholics and is often performed in a spirit of reparation for the sufferings and insults that Jesus endured during His Passion. The object of the Stations is to help us make a spiritual pilgrimage of prayer through meditating upon the chief scenes of Christ's sufferings and death.

This devotion may be conducted personally, by making your way from one station to another and saying prayer, or by having the celebrant move from station to station while the congregation make the responses.

A plenary indulgence may be gained by praying the Stations of the Cross. If, for some reasonable cause, the Stations are interrupted, a partial indulgence may be gained for each station. 🙏

PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

For an online guide to praying the Stations below, visit www.catholic.org/prayers/station.php

Opening Prayer

Station 1: Jesus is Condemned To Death

Station 2: Jesus Carries His Cross

Station 3: Jesus Falls The First Time

Station 4: Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother

Station 5: Simon Of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Station 6: Veronica Wipes The Face of Jesus

Station 7: Jesus Falls The Second Time

Station 8: Jesus Meets The Women of Jerusalem

Station 9: Jesus Falls A Third Time

Station 10: Jesus Is Stripped Of His Clothes

Station 11: Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross

Station 12: Jesus Dies On The Cross

Station 13: The Body Of Jesus Is taken Down From The Cross

Station 14: Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb

Closing Prayer

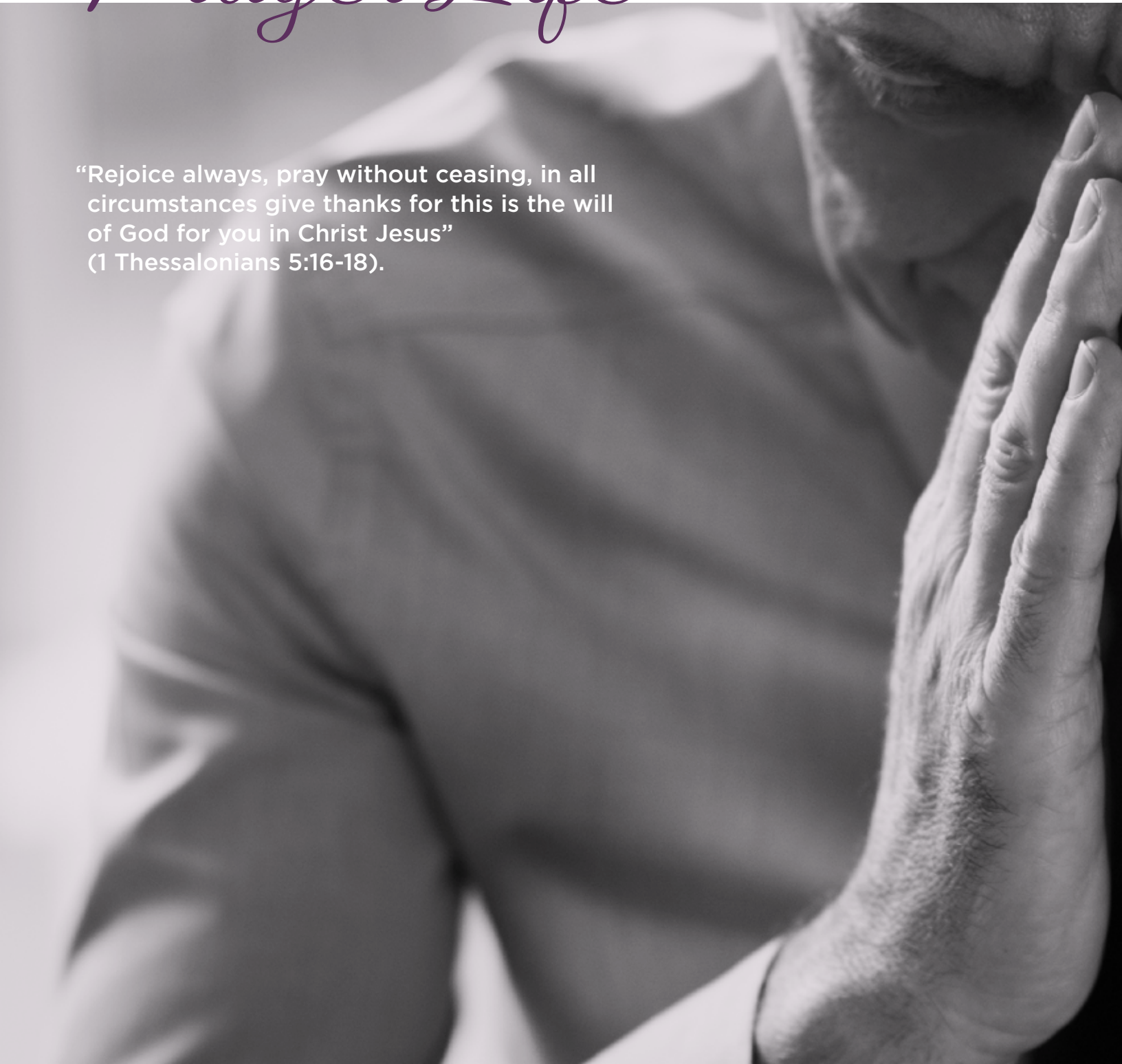
JOIN US FOR STATIONS OF THE CROSS

**Every Friday during Lent after 9:30am
Mass for The Divine Mercy Stations of the
Cross & at 7:00pm.**

**Friday, February 16th through March 22nd
and Good Friday, March 29th.**

DEVELOPING A DAILY *Prayer Life*

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in all circumstances give thanks for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus”
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).





We all know the importance of prayer, but when we hear Bible verses such as the ones quoted from 1 Thessalonians, the concept of prayer can feel overwhelming. How can someone who is not a cloistered nun live out praying without ceasing? Even then, cloistered nuns have to leave the adoration chapel sometimes! What does pray without ceasing look like for lay people like you and me? At a more basic level, what does having a regular prayer life look like? These two questions have plagued every Catholic Christian at some point, and they are worth addressing as we take the opportunity during Lent to grow our personal and communal prayer life.

The first myth we need to discuss is the idea that praying without ceasing is an unattainable goal. One of the beautiful things about our Catholic Faith is that we believe that God and our Faith are within everything. This means every act can be an act of prayer.

For instance, you can turn off your morning alarm and say, “God I offer this day to you.” As you start the dishes, “God, I offer this chore up for my friend who is suffering right now.” When your children are grinding on your nerves, “Father, I offer up my frustration for the holy souls in purgatory.” That one line, “God, I offer this up,” transforms the moment into a powerful prayer. In this way, you can pray without ceasing.

In addition to “offering it up,” the other two pieces of the

1 Thessalonians verses help us enter a little more deeply into the act of praying without ceasing. Rejoicing and giving thanks, these two simple acts can transform our lives, our relationship with God, and how we show Jesus to those around us. A practical tip for increasing gratitude in your life would be to find a pocket-size notebook and turn it into a gratitude journal where you list, every day, things that you are thankful for.

Now, what about having a daily prayer life? Building a habit of daily personal prayer can be difficult, but it will transform your life. When you are establishing a habit, it is always best to pick a time, and place, and be specific about the activity. There is a rigidity required in habit development, but for the habit of prayer, you must also allow for some flexibility. Some seasons of life will look very different than others. Perhaps attending daily Mass and regular Adoration may be an integral part of your personal prayer life. Maybe your prayer time is getting up before everyone else in your house, sitting in your chair, sipping some coffee, and saying the Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours.

Another one of the beautiful things about our Faith is the many different spiritualities within it. We are all uniquely made which means God wants to relate to us uniquely.

Take the time to discern what form of prayer God is calling you to at this time. It could be a time in silence and stillness, daily Mass or Adoration, a devotional, lectio divina, parts of Liturgy of the Hours, or prayer journaling.

Once you have established what your prayer time will look like, decide where it will happen. Do you have a family altar or prayer space? If not, now is the time to create one that points your heart and mind toward Jesus. Finally, when will this prayer time occur? Be flexible with yourself, but for at least the first 30 days, pick a time and stick to it. You will find that you are a better version of yourself because of that dedicated time of prayer. Once you have experienced the fruit of the habit, you will be able to change your time, if need be, without being tempted to give it up altogether.

No matter your current season of life, remember to pray without ceasing, rejoice always, and give thanks, for it is through these actions that you will take one step closer in your relationship with the Lord. Your prayer time and your relationship with God are beautiful, unique, and ready to grow. 🌈



Holy Week

Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024

We begin the Holy Week with Palm Sunday, and the day on which we read the first account of the Passion of Jesus. This begins our first meditation on the sufferings of Jesus for Holy Week. These days of Holy week are called our own High Holy days.

Schedule: 4:30 pm - Saturday Vigil Mass (Procession and Solemn entrance with incense). 8:00 am, 9:30 am and 11:30 am Mass. Following 11:30 am Mass, there will be Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction, then people leave in silence. 5:30 pm Mass.

Monday, March 25, 2024

Even Jesus in his humanity experienced great anxiety and discomfort at the knowledge of what He would have to undertake in order to fulfill the will of his Father. Perhaps we can take some comfort in that. Jesus is aware that the pathway of healing leading to wholeness is often very difficult and painful before we find relief. This is a paradox we are invited to reflect upon during the Holy Mass and the Divine Mercy Stations of the Cross.

Schedule: 9:30 am - Daily Mass. 10:00 am Divine Mercy Stations of the Cross followed by Confessions

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

The Scriptures reveal the betrayal of Jesus, emphasizing on "one of the Twelve" and the fact that the betrayal came from among the closest associates of Jesus. We take this opportunity to cling to Mother Mary in the communal recitation of the Sorrowful Mysteries.

Schedule: 9:30 am - Communion Service. Father Fabio will attend the Chrism Mass and Blessing of the Holy Oils at the Cathedral in Charleston. 10:00 am - Rosary recitation of the Sorrowful Mysteries led by the Legion of Mary

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

The Scriptures direct us to those many times we consciously weigh God in a scale against something else and find that something preferable. We may take this opportunity to prepare for confession..

Schedule: 9:30 am - Daily Mass; 10:00 am - Father Fabio will lead "Walk Alongside Christ", a Reflective Stations of the Cross in the place of the homily. Confessions will follow.

Thursday, March 28, 2024 (Morning)

We pray the Psalmody of Lauds from the Hours of the Office, then journey together in the virtual Pilgrimage of the Seven Churches of Rome.

Schedule: 9:30 am - Psalmody of Lauds morning prayer. 10:00 am - Pilgrimage of the Seven Churches of Rome.



Holy Triduum

The season of Lent ends at sunset on Holy Thursday, and the Church begins the three most important days of the Liturgical Year with the Mass of the Lord's Supper (The Passover). These days are called the Triduum, a latin word meaning "three days." The three days, all part of the single saving action of the Pascal Mystery, are the days Christ gave himself up to death on the cross, the day Christ lay in the tomb, and the day Christ rose from them dead.

Holy Thursday, March 28, 2024 (Evening)

The Holy Triduum begins at sunset with the celebration of the institution of the Eucharist as the true body and blood of Jesus Christ and the institution of the sacrament of the priesthood. And as a sign of our service towards and communion with those in need, we bring canned and non-perishable food to be given to the poor.

Schedule: 7:00 pm - Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Supper with incense. The Sacred Oils to be presented and the Washing of the Feet after the homily. Adoration to last until midnight.

Good Friday, March 29, 2024

On Good Friday, we begin our day praying the Liturgy of the Hours morning prayer. Then we gather in the afternoon for the Celebration of the Lord's Passion. This is not a Mass but a liturgy where we focus our prayer on the Cross of Christ that symbolizes so much of the struggle of life and death, but also represents our salvation. We continue the fast, and our waiting in prayer and silence in anticipation of the joys of Easter.

Schedule: 9:30 am - Psalmody of Lauds morning prayer. 3:00 pm - Celebration of the Lord's Passion (Procession and Solemn Entrance in silence). 7:00 pm - Stations of the Cross.

Holy Saturday, March 30, 2024 (Morning)

On Holy Saturday morning the Catechumens (Elect) gather with their sponsors in the Daily Chapel for the Preparation Rites. This morning we will have the Blessing of the Easter Meal basket.

Schedule: 10:00 am - Preparation Rites (RCIA); 11:00 am - Blessing of the Easter Meal Basket.

Holy Vigil Saturday, March 30, 2024 (Evening)

*In the evening we gather for the Great Easter Vigil. We begin outside of the church near a charcoal brazier, representing the first vigil. The priest then leads the faithful into the church where the pascal candle is lit, the Mass is held, and the Initiation Rites and Eucharist follows. **Schedule: 8:00 pm - Holy Vigil Mass.***

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024

On Easter Sunday we celebrate and rejoice in the splendor of a new day of resurrection. During this liturgy we will be sprinkled with water from the font that was blessed the night before. By this we remember our own baptism through which we share in Christ's own death and life. And so begins the fifty days of rejoicing and Hallelujahs! Christ has risen!

Schedule: 6:00 am Sunrise Mass; 8:00 am Solemn Mass (no incense). 9:30 am Solemn Mass with incense, choir and brass. 11:30 am Solemn Mass with incense, choir and brass. 5:30 pm NO MASS.

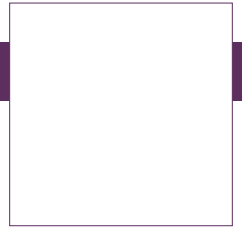


St. Philip Neri

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SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Wednesday, March 20th
10:00am to 8:00pm