2022
LEN TEN REFLECTIONS

SHARED BY
LAY DOMINICANS
OF
REGION ONE – PROVINCE OF SAINT JOSEPH
Lay Dominicans are called by a special vocation to be members of the Order of Preachers in the world. As such, we are uniquely positioned to share the fruits of our contemplation as lay people in a world that is thirsting for the Gospel.

As we continue onward in this present Pandemic with patient endurance, we offer the following Lenten reflections that are written by Lay Dominicans all throughout New England. They display the variety of our shared vocation and show the unique way the Holy Spirit speaks in and through each of us.

The disciples were challenged in their own time with difficulties and hardships. When they saw Jesus walking on the water they were astounded. In the story on the feeding the multitude, Jesus seems to expect the disciples to respond to the challenges on their own. He said, “Give them food yourselves” (Mk 6:37). Jesus has more confidence in these people than they do themselves. I too have confidence in the reflections presented here to lead us closer to our relationship to the Lord.

We provide these reflections for your own contemplation as an extension of the invitation Christ has offered from the moment of your existence: “Come and see”. Come, accept this as an invitation to drink of the living spring of God’s Word as you enter the wilderness of Lent. Prepare the way so that God can lead you.
My gratitude goes out to all of the generous writers who have shared the fruits of their contemplation in these small pages.

We humbly ask for the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary, of St. Dominic, and St. Catherine of Siena, patroness of the laity, that all who take up and read may be brought into closer union with Christ.

Mr. Malcolm Vakalis, OP
President, Region One
St. Joseph Province

For more information on Lay Dominicans – and how you can become a member of the Dominican Family – visit www.laydominicans.org
ASH WEDNESDAY

March 2, 2022

Jl 2: 12-18 – 2 Cor 5:20-6:2 – Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. Mt 6:6

In our contemporary culture, winning is everything. Be it sports, education or profession, we want to come out on top. We want everyone to know it. Praise and recognition are addictive to our secular society. It is countercultural to hide our accomplishments and good works, but it is just this humility that God asks of us.

We cannot withdraw from the world, and like Elijah, retire into the cave of our souls. For it is only there that we will hear the soft whisper of God. It is only there that we can lift up our Lenten prayers, fasts and almsgiving in the secrecy that God desires.

Jesus always withdrew from His disciples to pray in silence and solitude. Similarly, we need a place apart to create a prayer “cave” – a corner, closet, or even a chair. A place where we can shut out our chaotic, frenzied world and just be with Him.

Let us spend this Lent in a secret, sacred space in our homes – and in our hearts – in communion with God, in solitude with His Holy Spirit, in union with Jesus.

He is waiting.

Mrs. Patricia Owen, OP
Our Lady of Providence/St Thomas Aquinas Fraternity # 106
Providence, RI
March 3, 2022

Deut. 30: 15-20 — Lk 9: 22-25

“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” Lk 9:24

In Deuteronomy and again in Luke we are given what would appear to be a simple choice, follow the world and die or follow God and live. I say it’s a simple choice because it sounds so simple, who wouldn’t choose life over death. Moses tells us that if we follow the commandments, love God, and walk in His ways, we will be blessed. If our hearts turn away from God, if we do not obey, and we allow ourselves to be led astray by the world, then we will perish.

Yet, to choose to follow Jesus and the Father is no simple task, in this case, the devil truly is in the details. Our lives are full of temptation and sin is all around us. We make this simple choice every day in the way we act at work, school, home, and in church. We make this simple choice in how we treat others, especially those less fortunate than us, and in how we spend our time. St. Thomas More said: “The ordinary acts we practice every day at home are of more importance to the soul than their simplicity might suggest.” Each time we decide to follow God’s path we are blessed and every time we follow the world’s path, we rob our souls of a chance to grow in grace. Take time to think about the ways that you have turned away from God today, both big and small.

Mr. Bob Price, OP

Our Lady of Grace Fraternity # 116

Cromwell, CT
March 4, 2022
Is 58: 1-9a – Mt 9: 14-15

“No one patches an old cloak with a piece of unshrunken cloth ...” Mt 9:16

Reflect on your present day practices of Lent. Are they really sacrifices? Would Isaiah approve? What does your fasting consist of? Have you need to forgive somebody or are you enjoying nurturing your grudge? Have you given to the homeless and poor or are you judging them? Do you donate clothing you don’t want any more or are you thinking of the poor’s needs?

Indeed, personal sacrifice is our gift to the great love shown to us by our Savior. Incorporate our personal material sacrifices and also truly sacrifice for those in such deep need of our understanding, compassion, and love. To give not only of ourselves but of what blessings we have and are willing to share with others, both material and spiritual. To overcome hate, prejudice, and tainted opinions and look beyond with the love that He gave to us; to forgive with sincerity, and reach that hand of love out to those who as much a part of God’s family as we are-- to help up the fallen, comfort the sick, and feed the hungry, all from your heart and the blessings He has given us.

Mr. Wayne Healy, OP
Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity # 110
MCI Norfolk, MA
March 5, 2022

Is 58: 9b-14 – Lk 5: 27-32

“If you hold back your foot on the sabbath from following your own pursuits on my holy day...” Is 58: 13

I am old enough to remember that on Sundays, businesses were closed to honor the Lord’s Day. I was taught back then that Sundays are days to, first, attend Mass, second, to be with family, and visit other members of the family. Dad would take us all for Sunday drives which would occasionally include a stop at an ice cream shop.

Today, Sunday is just another day. Society, in general, does not honor or recognize Sunday as the Lord’s Day. It’s sleeping in or doing other things instead of attending a weekend Mass, which may be a mortal sin by the way. It is just another day to mow the lawn, buy some groceries, check out our favorite department store. When I hear my neighbor start up an edge trimmer or lawn mower on Sunday, it can be so hard to bear.

The third commandment states to “remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”. That can be such a challenge when I am surrounded by people who ignore God, and ignore his commandments. Lent is a good time to make that herculean step in changing your life to change your focus from yourselves to God. Do the ten commandments still count in your life?

Mr. Claude Mailhot, OP
St. Margaret of Castello ProChapter # 114
Lewiston, ME
March 6, 2022
Dt 26: 4-10 — Rom 10: 8-13 — Lk 4: 1-13

“And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry” Lk 4:2

As we do every year on the first Sunday of Lent, today we are called to meditate on our Lord’s temptation in the desert. As we contemplate Our Lord’s hunger, let us for a moment consider the goal of our fasting. Our Lenten denials will certainly leave us hungry, but for what?

Our Lord was hungry for food, certainly—we know that in His human nature he was “in every respect tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). But He was also hungry for souls, for our salvation.

He desires for us to be saints with Him in heaven forever. In the same way our penances in this season can leave us physically or emotionally lacking, but we cannot stop there. Does our fasting also lead us to a greater hunger for Him who is the Living Bread? Are we willing to allow Him into the desert of our hearts, to our own places of barrenness and vulnerability, and to be honest with Jesus about our need for Him?

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her” (Hosea 2:14). Only with Christ do we find that the desert of Lent yields abundant fruits for a spiritual feast.

Mrs. Lauren Mary Magdalene Onak, OP
St. Martin de Porres Fraternity # 101
Wayland, MA
MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

March 7, 2022
Lv 19:1-2,11-18 — Mt 25: 31-46

“He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ ” Mt 25:45

In a time when the notion of an eternal judgment is doubted, dismissed, even scoffed at, Jesus reminds us that our judgment is a certainty and that, aligned with that, we must consider our actions. For the faithfully devoted, it is easy in these times to cling to mere spiritual survival, to defending a faith that is threatened daily. It can be overwhelming.

Jesus, in this passage, makes no mention of a purely internal faith, or of a struggle against powers opposed to Truth. He mentions the neediest among us, and the reward for those who help them. Indeed, that reward is not just the promise of His Kingdom at the end of our days, but also relief from the weight of the ongoing fight against our secularized culture. Helping the needy is not just good for them in the here and now. It is good for us.

Mr. Andrew McNabb, OP
Resurrection Fraternity # 109
Windham, ME
We seem to be living in evil times. Worldwide catastrophes — the pandemic, natural disasters, political upheaval, abortion, hatred and violence, famine, war — could easily lead us into discouragement, depression or even despair. Like Job, our faith might be sorely tested. The evil one is lurking everywhere waiting to devour the souls of the just. More than ever, we must be alert and ready to fight temptation.

St. Paul tells us, “Our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with principalities, with the powers, with world leaders of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens.” He exhorts us to “put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day......with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace, holding faith as a shield to quench the arrows of the evil one, taking the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God” (Ep 6:13-17). Thus clad, holding fast to His word we can persevere to meet and overcome the challenges of our times.

As we live our Lenten prayers and penances let us continually pray “Our Father, by Your grace deliver us, in Your mercy deliver us, through Your Son deliver us, from all evil deliver us.”

Mrs. Patricia Owen, OP
Our Lady of Providence / St Thomas Aquinas Fraternity # 106
Providence, RI
What signs do we SEEK in our life?

What signs do we SEE in our life?

What is the difference between “SEEKing” and “SEEing”?

Jonah was a reluctant Jewish Prophet sent by God to warn the Ninevites of impending destruction of their city if they did not repent of their sinful ways. The Ninevites were not Jews. They did not worship God. They had no reason to listen to Jonah and repent – and yet they did. Not only the people went into fasting and lamentation, but they made their livestock join them in repentance. They “saw” in Jonah’s message the truth of God’s call to repentance and took proper action.

The Jews were eagerly awaiting and seeking the signs of the Messiah, but Jesus did not fit their expectations. HE was not what they had fixated their minds and hardened their hearts to believe what “Messiah” meant. In their narrow sightedness, they failed to “see” the very Wonder they sought even though the signs were there to be seen. We know from John’s story of the woman at the well that many Samaritans did “see” Jesus’ signs and realized he was the Messiah. (cf John 4:1-42)

How often do we fail to “see” the signs of God among us in our own lives?

Mrs. Connie Burianek, OP

Our Lady of Grace Fraternity # 116

Cromwell, CT
The defeat of Haman the Agagite in the book of Esther is a curious episode where the God who has parted the seas and stopped the sun in its tracks seems not to act. We read how as the irrevocable royal decree had been signed, Esther was seized with mortal anguish, and lay prostrate praying for courage and God’s blessing. Then she continues preparing the banquet - part of her plan to save the Jews. We are shown a woman of both great worldly action and profound prayer life.

We remember a similar episode in St. Dominic’s life, when one night he too was struck with great anguish at the failure of his evangelical campaign. We can imagine him, like Esther, lying prostrate praying: Put in my mouth persuasive words in the presence of the lion, with cruciform arms outstretched begging for God’s mercy and grace. In both cases we are shown prayer so profound that it includes the whole person: body and mind, like in St. Dominic’s 9 Ways. And yet, these prayers did not merit a miracle then and there; rather, they enlarged Esther’s and St. Dominic’s hearts in order to receive the graces necessary to become God’s instruments in His inscrutable plans.

Mr. Ruben Rui Reginald Diaz-Pacheco III, OP
St. Martin de Porres Fraternity # 101
Wayland, MA
Christ’s New Covenant rejects the old idea that punishment is passed down from generation to generation. But the people in Ezekiel’s time didn’t think it was fair for God to judge people individually. Although we often suffer from the effects of sins committed by those who came before us, God does not punish us for someone else’s sins. We are accountable for ourselves.

Also, if a family has been blessed, their descendants can’t automatically assume righteousness. Each person is responsible for himself. There is no excuse for committing wrong. However, God welcomes back all who repent.

Matthew further explains that God wanted to bring His people closer to Himself. Moses’ laws regulated order to maintain civil law. Jesus perfected Moses’ laws. Jesus implements a new level of covenant righteousness that stretched beyond the Old Laws. The New Covenant includes the world, not just Israel. All nations are invited to share in God’s blessings and become covenant people.

Matthew 5: 20-26 introduces the Beatitudes, which expands on Moses’.

5:21-22 You shall not kill: not only murder but personal anger, will be judged.
5: 23-26 Offerings: have right relationships with others and God.

We should be just as concerned with our personal thoughts and attitudes, as well as our visible actions.

Mrs. Faith Flaherty, OP

Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity #110

MCI Norfolk, MA
Love your enemies... this is not an easy thing to do, but this is what sets us apart as Christians. In John 13:34-35, we see this again, “I give you a new commandment, love one another...This is how all will know that you are my disciples”.

It may not feel good or right to be kind to someone that has hurt us, betrayed us or treated us poorly. God is saying, love them anyway. Who is our “enemy”? Our enemy could be someone that does something against our beliefs or wishes. For example, in the parking lot, when someone steals “your” parking space, how do you react? When someone cuts ahead of us in line at the grocery store, what’s our response to them? Do we curse them under our breath? Rather, we should smile and say “you have a blessed day”. If we can’t bring ourselves to say this aloud to them, at least think it.

This will not be easy, to show love instead of hate. Then we are observing God’s commandment. We can choose to walk the narrow path on our life journey towards holiness. Each time that we love our enemy, we show others that we are the Lord’s special people, set apart, trying to “be perfect, as our Father is perfect”. (Matt 5:48)

Mrs. Dawn Quimby, OP
Mother of Mercy Fraternity # 107
Tiverton, RI
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

March 13, 2022

Gn 15: 5-12, 17-18 — Phil 3: 17-4:1 — Lk 9: 28b-36

“Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. But he did not know what he was saying” Luke 9:33

Sometimes people tease Peter for having this reaction to the Transfiguration. Even though Luke says that Peter didn’t know what he was saying, I’d like to think that deep down, Peter was expressing something profound in those few words. He was saying, I want to build tents and stay here. I want to contemplate your glory. I want to understand the connection between you and Moses and Elijah. I don’t want to go back to the way things were when this is so much better. Does this moment really have to end?

We need those mountaintop experiences like Peter, James, and John had. It’s why we meditate on the mysteries of the rosary, attend retreats, and go to Eucharistic adoration. But it’s not enough. We can’t build tents and stay in the clouds. We have to come down the mountain and get back to reality. Chances are good that as you read this reflection, you’re having at least a brief mountaintop moment, a break from the day. Before getting back to your usual programming and return to reality, how are you going to share your insights with others today?

Mr. Robert Lepage, OP
Mother of God Fraternity # 103
West Springfield, MA
MONDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 14, 2022

Dn 9:4b-10 — Lk 6:36-38

“How easy it is to be self-righteous, and even more so when others act in a similar fashion. When Pilate presented Jesus to the crowd in front of the praetorium, they condemned an innocent man. Pilate had already said: “I find no guilt in him,” but in their self-righteousness they insisted, “Crucify him, Crucify him”, and no one spoke up in defense of Jesus. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent; he even proclaimed it, but the demand of the crowd was too great and his resolve was weak. Appeasing the crowd was the easy thing to do. How difficult it is to speak up in defense of Truth, especially when it is unpopular. How often we know what is right and true, but our resolve is weak. O Lord, how greatly we need your Grace.

What caused you more pain, Lord, the thorns and nails or the words, “Crucify Him”, by those for whom you came to save? The rejection and hatred expressed by those cruel words must have torn at your soul, maybe more than the physical torture you endured. Forgive us when we act self-righteously like the crowd that condemned you and help us realize that we are like those in the crowd when we sin against you.

Mr. Nick Monroe, OP
St. Martin de Porres Fraternity # 101
Wayland, MA
March 15, 2022
Is 1:10, 16-20 — Mt 23:1-12

“Come now, let us set things right, says the LORD: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow” Is 1:18

Today’s readings are a call for us to turn our eyes in the direction of repentance and renewal! “Let us set things right” is the beckoning of a loving and forgiving God. This particular quote continues with: “if you are willing and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land; but if you refuse and resist, the sword shall consume you: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken!” (vs. 19)

Ouch! When I look deep inside, I am prone to resistance. There are times when I am prodded inwardly to do things: like go to Reconciliation — but no – I am proud and the priest will recognize my voice. Prodding continues – what about your morning and evening prayers? “Nah, LORD I am tired or I’m not awake enough to do that” ... and there’s lots more! The Psalmist tells me, “to the upright I will show the saving power of God!” Uh, yeah LORD I want that, but...

Jesus teaches us to listen and to do what we have been taught – even if we have a “beef” with those who are doing the teaching. Do I have a grudge against someone or do I think I know better than they do? Jesus is saying forget all that, forgive, and follow Me. Today.

Mrs. Denise Mailhot, OP
St. Margaret of Castello ProChapter # 114
Lewiston, ME
March 16, 2022
Jer 18:18-20 — Mt 20: 17-28

“...whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mt. 20: 27.

In this little exchange between Jesus and the mother of James and John we see a mother requesting that her sons have prominent places in his kingdom. Jesus replies by asking a question of the sons: " Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?" When they reply in the affirmative the other ten start an argument. Jesus uses this moment to teach them that his kingdom is not a worldly one. What is going to lead to final glory in His kingdom is servanthood and self-sacrifice.

This Lent, let "servanthood" and "self-sacrifice" be our watchwords. Every day we have opportunities to serve others, to sacrifice for others. Let us not allow another day of this Lent to go by without doing some small thing out of love for Christ, and for those we encounter as we go about our daily duties.
March 17, 2022

Jer. 17:5-10 — Lk 16:19-31

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord.” Jer 17: 7

It is easy to dismiss the stories of St. Patrick’s long years of toiling in Druid Eire for the conversion of the Irish people as the stuff of legend. Even the bare facts of his life show that he was a man of prodigious energy and zeal. He spent at least 30 years criss-crossing Ireland—preaching; performing miracles; and founding churches, bishoprics, and cloisters. The trials he endured at the hands of the Druids were so numerous that some early biographers declared him a martyr.

What made it possible for St. Patrick to keep going, to confront hardship day after day and not give up? Today’s passage from Jeremiah tells us: he trusted in the Lord. Through this great trust he became “like a tree planted by water” — his roots reached to the nearby stream of grace, and thus he remained green and bore fruit even in times of drought.

St. Patrick nurtured this trust through constant prayer. The stream of grace that St. Patrick tapped into is available to each one of us, through prayer and the sacraments. May we be one of those of whom the psalmist wrote: “planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God, still bearing fruit when they are old, still full of sap, still green, to proclaim that the Lord is just.”

Mrs. Susan Beck, OP

St. Mary’s Fraternity # 108

New Haven, CT
There are numerous references within the Bible of the vine and the vineyard to express the relationship between God and His people. The Parable of the Tenants is a thinly veiled indictment of the religious leaders of Israel. God is the owner of the vineyard who "leased" it to them. The early Church found in this parable the justification to be the "new tenants of the vineyard." But when Jesus told this Parable, do you think that was solely directed at those Leaders or is it a clarion call for us now?

Are we producing good fruit? The signs of the times are not positive. In 2019 the (in)famous Pew Study showed less than a third of Catholics believe in the Real Presence. Bishop Robert Barron expressed anger not at Pew but at "myself, bishops, priests and anybody responsible for transmitting the faith." He added "It's been a massive failure of the church carrying on its own tradition. We're all guilty." His indictment of "anybody" includes the laity. This Lent - let us all recommit to producing good fruit. We need to "earn the right" to continue tilling the vineyard. Otherwise we should take Jesus at his word that God's vineyard will be given to someone else.
Today we seem to take a break from the sorrows of Lent to celebrate St. Joseph. Think again, do we really pause Lent? I’m not so sure we do. St. Joseph was entrusted as being the foster father of Jesus. It was his duty to provide for and protect his family and he was true to the responsibility that was set upon him by God. Except for that one time when Jesus went missing from the caravan.

St. Joseph had lost that which was entrusted to him by God. For three days his son was missing, only to rejoice in finding Him in the temple. Although St. Joseph was not there for the three days following Jesus’ crucifixion, or the rejoicing in Jesus’ resurrection, he did participate in this foreshadowing of the Paschal Mystery.

This is also the first mention of Jesus’ awareness that He was God’s Son. But even though Jesus knew His Father, He did not reject His earthly parents. Jesus went back to Nazareth under Joseph’s authority.

This day we not only reflect on the Paschal Mystery but also on our family relationships. Let us pray to St. Joseph for his protection as a true father.

Mr. Jeffrey Quimby, OP

Mother of Mercy Fraternity # 107

Tiverton, RI
We all suffer — sometimes from the oppression of others, sometimes because of our own sinfulness, and sometimes for reasons only known by God. Suffering can be redemptive, a powerful grace to turn us and others towards God.

Our 9-year-old granddaughter says her morning offering each day as we as a family unite our sufferings to Christ’s. We can be sure God sees every sacrifice we undertake for Him. Suffering is a gift to those God has chosen in a special way. God embraced Moses’ long-suffering with a “take-your-sandals-off”, “face-to-face” meeting with the Almighty. Chosen, holy and reverent as Moses was, his meeting with the Great “I Am” was tempered by the acknowledgment that he must hide his face before God.

A central Dominican mission is to contemplate and share our contemplation with others for the salvation of souls. When we gaze upon the feet of Christ crucified, abandon all to Him, and LISTEN, he leads us away from what harms us to true freedom of spirit. When we are sent by God, closely united to him, we have the opportunity to bear much good, lasting fruit. May we discern our calling well and trust God that this Lent will be a new opportunity for us!

Mrs. Joan Cuomo, OP
Our Lady of Fatima Affiliate # 117
Trumbull, CT
Fundamental aspects of Jesus’ identity are illuminated in today’s readings. The first reading presents a pre-figurement of two gifts we receive from Christ, Baptism and the call of the Gentiles to Messianic blessings, the second of which is also hinted at in Jesus’ own words from today’s Gospel. Apart from Naaman, whose leprosy is healed, the two protagonists are the prophet Elisha and the king of Israel. It can be easy to forget that kingship was the visible reflection of God’s sovereignty on earth. And as Psalm 2:7 reminds us, kings bore the title of son of God.

Jesus’ encounter with his Nazarene compatriots probably represents His first public proclamation of His own prophetic identity and (Messianic) kingship, the latter aspect being revealed where He had earlier declared upon reading Isaiah 61:1-2: “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:21). The people of Nazareth, more than anyone else, knew Jesus “to be of human estate” (Phil 2:7), and so their rejection of His claims was swift and violent. Little did they or (almost) anyone else at the time know that Jesus indeed had a throne prepared, on Calvary where He would die for them, and for us. And every year at Lent, we are reminded that it is upon the Cross where the abiding Messianic Kingship of Christ rests.

Tarek Abu Hussein, OP
St. Martin de Porres Fraternity # 101
Wayland, MA
TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 22, 2022
Dn 3: 25, 34-43 — Mt 18: 21-35

“Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?” Mt 18:33

This reading is part of the prayer of Azariah In The Furnace. Immediately one notices that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had such strong faith in God and His Providence that they were able to sing songs of praise not only despite the trial, but because of it. They praise, bless, and exalt the Lord and all that God has created. No matter the magnitude of the trial, we must praise and bless The Lord always and in all ways. Sufferings and persecutions are part of life. It is our response that we must continually keep in our minds and hearts. May the Holy Trinity intercede for us now and forever, so that we may be imitators of Christ and instruments of His peace.

Our call to be imitators of Christ continues with this reading. We learn of Jesus’ exhortation to St. Peter “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven”, in the parable of the unrepentant servant. Strengthening the bonds between God’s children is an essential element of living out the Gospels in both known and unknown ways. During this Lent, let us search for Jesus in others so that mercy and forgiveness can become hallmarks of our lives.

Ms KellyAnn Charpentier, OP
St. Mary’s Fraternity # 108
New Haven, CT
March 23, 2022

Dt 4: 1, 5-9 — Mt 5: 17-19

“Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.” Mt 5:19

Today’s readings lay to waste much of the modern rhetoric around religion. It’s typical for fervent believers to fall into one of two camps: the “Rule-Followers” or the “Relationship-Builders.” Rule-Followers find the most comfort when they are meeting their religious obligations, following the rubrics, and living in accordance with God’s law. Relationship-Builders find the most comfort when they feel they are close to Jesus, and typically seek out experiences which deepen their friendship with God.

Unfortunately, these camps will often pit themselves against one another—arguing that it is either more important to follow rules or it is more important to have a personal relationship with Jesus. Moses and Jesus both remind us: these two things are actually the same.

Moses tells the people if they abide by God’s statutes and decrees, other nations will see this as proof that God is close to the Israelites. Jesus likewise affirms that our willingness to follow and observe the law actually determines one’s place in the Kingdom of Heaven for all eternity.

Now we must ask: am I observing this Lent in accordance with the prescriptions to pray, fast, and give alms so that I can draw closer to Christ in this time of preparation?

Mrs. Christina Valenzuela, OP
St. Martin de Porres Fraternity # 101
Wayland, MA
THURSDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 24, 2022
Jer 7: 23-28 — Lk 11: 14-23

“...he who is not with Me, is against Me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.” Lk 11: 23

Jesus has center stage with a tough audience. He has cured a mute man and many are not impressed. Some were amazed. Some in the crowd said He was casting out demons by Beelzebub. There were also those who saw, yet were still skeptical of their own eyes and asked for another miracle or sign.

This Lent, meditate on where you are in Luke’s verses. Have you ever done anything where people questioned your intentions? Even the best intentions can be misjudged. Let us not be like the religious leaders in Jesus’ time, who were always finding fault. Pray for the wisdom to see the best interpretation of what’s happening around us.

Have you ever asked God for a sign? Why? Instead, pray and discern and even ask someone for spiritual direction. It is more important to trust Jesus.

Don’t focus on yourself. Think of disappointments as learning experiences. Rely on Jesus, not other people, or even yourself. Does it really matter what others think? Stay close to Jesus, because He says, “...he who is not with Me, is against Me.”

Mr. Augustin Garcia, OP
Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity # 110
MCI/ Norfork, MA
God chose a seemingly insignificant young woman from an insignificant small town to bring forth the greatest miracle in human history. The Lord shunned the high priest, the authorities and even the temple. Instead, He poured His grace into the soul of this lowly virgin, Mary. Her question, “How can this be?” is neither a rebuff nor a refusal. She simply seeks to understand how this can happen without loss of her virginity. She then humbly offers her consent, her fiat, her complete confidence. Yes, from the time of her Immaculate Conception, God had prepared her to be the mother of His Son but He never impinged on her freedom. Her assent was born of total love, unwavering faith and absolute trust.

Pope St Paul VI tells us that, “Mary is held up as an example for the faithful way in which in her own particular life she fully and responsibly accepted the word of God and acted on it”. Like Mary, we are called to bear the Son of God into our world. In our lives, where, when and to whom is God asking for our fiat? How will we respond? Will we even hear God’s voice? We ask Mary to intercede, that we may have the same docility, humility, faith and love of her fiat that we might also say, “let it be done unto me according to Your word”.

Mrs. Patricia Owen, OP
Our Lady of Providence / St. Thomas Aquinas Fraternity # 106
Providence, RI
March 26, 2022
Hos 6: 1-6 — Lk 18: 9-14

“Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” Lk 18: 14

Today’s Gospel is the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee exalts himself saying that he fasts twice a week and regularly tithes his income. The tax collector simply beats his breast and says “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner” (verse 13). Which one am I? The Pharisee or the tax collector? I find myself being both, depending on the day. Look at me, I am doing God’s work. Am I not a devoted person to God? In times like that I want to be seen in what I do so people will think “He is such a good man of God”.

Sometimes I catch myself being the Pharisee and realize that I have to change my way of thinking. Serving God is not all about me, but all about those whom I serve. That is when I look at the crucifix and pray “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner”. Lent is a very good time for me to get off my high horse and change my attitude to be humble, and be thankful for God’s mercy upon me. With Holy Week coming soon, I have to prepare that frame of mind. What about you?

Mr. Claude Mailhot, OP
St. Margaret of Castello ProChapter # 114
Lewiston, ME
March 27, 2022

Jos 5: 9a, 10-12 — 2 Cor 5: 17-21 — Lk 15: 1-3, 11-32

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” 2 Cor 5: 17

We have now reached the fourth week of Lent. With this in mind, I wish to reflect on the sacrifices we’re making during Lent. Some of us have lost much due to this pandemic. Yet God in his wisdom finds that way of seeking out our heart and comforts us, as the manna, in Jos 5. He supplies the nourishment we need to fill our souls with thankfulness and understanding.

We are coming upon a period of great celebration. We are reminded through Corinthians that with this Easter, a new day is ahead of us. Placing ourselves in the grace of Reconciliation can renew our hearts. Take these steps, Brothers and Sisters, and feel the refreshing energy within your hearts that He alone gives to each and every one of us.

In conclusion, I remind you of the Prodigal Son—the celebration of his return to his father and the great joy it brought. Plus, His wise words to his other son, regarding this return. It becomes the same in the heart of faith. Take a renewed step of faith and move forward to our Lord's love, warmth, and compassion, during your reflection in this period of Lent.

Mr. Wayne Healy, OP
Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity # 110
MCI Norfolk, MA
March 28, 2022
Is 65:17-21 — Jn 4:43-54

*Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.” Jn 4:48*

The poor father was trying to hold himself together, and he said to Jesus: “Sir, come down before my child dies.” I doubt that I would be so restrained if I knew that one of my girls was on the brink of death. Jesus said to him after all... “you people”! How many times have I heard friends or colleagues say, “those people!” when uttering judgments or making sweeping statements about a particular group, age group, cultural group, etc. We make comments like that about others mostly because of hearsay and the judgments of others which we take as fact.

Jesus knew the facts about “those people” — which also applies to “us people”! Do we refuse to believe in God because He did not give us the miracles or the answers that we want? Do we still have faith in Him when the answer is NO?

Why would the answer be NO? We don’t have the inside track on how God thinks. But do you remember that old song inspired by Romans 8:28? “For to those who love God, who are called in His plan, everything works out for good; for God Himself chose them to bear the likeness of His son, that He might be the first of many, many brothers.”

Scripture tells us only to love Him, and BELIEVE no matter how things seem to be going.

Mrs. Denise Mailhot, OP

*St. Margaret of Castello ProChapter # 114*

Lewiston, ME
In today’s Gospel, Jesus heals a man who lays helpless by the healing waters of Bethsaida. The man has been ill for thirty-eight years. Jesus asks him, “Do you want to be well?” The man, not knowing who Jesus is, says, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am on my way, someone else gets down there before me.” Jesus cures him, telling him to pick up his mat and walk.

While most commentary centers around the rest of the story, of the offense that the authorities take over Jesus curing someone on the Sabbath, what of the man who was cured? He breaks the mold of those whom Jesus typically heals. Whereas most of the healed cry out to Jesus for help, this man, in his humility, simply waits, expectantly, day after day — year after year? — watching others around him access the healing waters. Yet he is still there, and thus clearly not without hope. In his patience and acceptance, we know that Jesus found him worthy.

Mr. Andrew McNabb, OP
Resurrection Fraternity # 109
Windham, ME
WEDNESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 30, 2022

Is 49:8-15 — Jn 5:17-30

“... he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” – John 5:24

Isaiah 40-55 contain the “Servant Songs.” Written during the exile in Babylon, they look forward with Hope. In today’s reading, the “servant” himself speaks declaring his task to call people out of desolation, darkness – out from the entrapments of sin. They are reminded: God has not forgotten or forsaken them but desires to lead them into a “full life.”

In the passage preceding today’s Gospel, Jesus heals a crippled man who has been “exiled” beside a “healing” pool for 38 years. Once healed, the man goes to worship at the Temple. The Jews are irate not only because the healing was on the sabbath but because Jesus calls God his Father and takes on God’s “work” in uplifting the “dead” and giving “life.” Not just a minimal life, like the life of the cripple beside the pool – but “full life”.

Life is a gift. We only have “full life” when we hear and believe HIS WORD. To pass from the death of “Sin” into “eternal life” means becoming the “Servant”. Being a servant is to imitate Christ, giving life through works of Mercy instead of death through petty “judgment” and sin. Becoming the servant is to say: “I do not seek my own will but the will of the One who sent me.”

Mrs. Connie Burianek, OP

Our Lady of Grace Fraternity #116

Cromwell, CT
THURSDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 31, 2022
Ex 32: 7-14 — Jn 5: 31-47

“...the Lord said to Moses, they are a stiff-necked people.”  Ex 32: 9

This passage in Exodus has God telling Moses to go down to the people because they have rejected their true Lord and had made an idol, represented as a golden bull. Already the Israelites ignored God’s command not to worship strange gods. How fickle people are! Even today, we may not be making statues of Baal, but we often try to fit God into an image we think He ought to be, molding Him into whatever is expedient to our situation.

This is exactly what the Jews were doing to Jesus in John’s Gospel. Jesus was working on the Sabbath, and worse, He claimed to be equal with God. I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me. (Jn 5: 43) The religious leaders knew their scriptures but failed to see the Messiah before them. They were stuck in the image they thought the Messiah should be. After all Jesus had done: His healings, His teachings, His fulfillment of prophecies. They did not expect the Messiah to come from Nazareth, nor be a carpenter.

The Pharisees prided themselves on being the true followers of Moses. In Jn 5: 45, we see Jesus telling them that Moses himself will accuse them.

Mrs. Faith Flaherty, OP
Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity # 110
MCI Norfolk, MA
FRIDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

April 1, 2022

Wis 2:1a, 12-22 — Jn 7:1-2,10,25-30

“Let us see whether his words be true....” Wis 2:17

As a believer in Jesus, it is so frustrating to read how the people in the Bible acted, how they condemned Jesus to death. In Wisdom, we see the people prophesying Jesus’s Passion. God had a plan that would convert the hearts of people from cold stony hearts to natural hearts as He knew the wickedness of the people. Jesus became the sacrificial lamb, enduring his Passion and taking all of our sins to the cross in order to fulfill the prophesy. In doing so, He brought us eternal salvation and redeemed us, opening the gates of Heaven to those that acknowledge him.

But people are stubborn, they can be unable or unwilling to believe that Jesus is the righteous one, the Messiah, sent to us by God, his Father. How long did the people of Israel wander in the desert? What should have been a brief journey took them forty years. Even after all of those years and all the miracles witnessed, they still did not trust in God and only two of the original Israelite slaves entered the freedom of the Promised Land. Their stubbornness, their unwillingness to believe, their cold hearts prevented them from receiving the blessings of God and reaching the land flowing with milk and honey.

Pray for conversions to the church, for people to embrace Jesus as our Lord and God and open their hearts and minds to the teachings of Jesus.

Mrs. Dawn Quimby, OP
Mother of Mercy Fraternity # 107
Tiverton, RI
April 2, 2022
Jer 11:18-20 — Jn 7:40-53

“Never before has anyone spoken like this man.” Jn 7:46

Someone could submit this passage as a comedic sketch: first, the crowds out in the street arguing using Scriptures. Then, in their effort to understand, they referred to the Scripture scholars, who themselves were in disagreement. The contradiction goes further. Why did you not bring him? *Never before has anyone spoken like this man.* Here we find the imprecise reaction of the guards – they didn’t know how to respond, not what to do. These temple guards couldn’t find a reason to arrest Jesus. As they listened to Him to find cause for arrest, they couldn’t help hearing the light of truth.

Piety, the seed of religion and a daughter of justice, prescribes our duty towards the Divine: it is to give what is due to God. At first, like the temple guards, it may just be a feeling, one that should be trusted. The Holy Spirit is calling. We human beings, between angels and animals, comprehend differently than the animal that wags its tail. The temple guards intuited that Jesus was more than just human. Nicodemus, too, felt and understood that Jesus was the Messiah. He defended Jesus.

We know who Jesus is, and should respond in worship with the highest of our faculties, body and soul.

Mr. Ruben Diaz-Pacheco III, OP
St. Martin de Porres Fraternity # 101
Wayland, MA
A woman caught in the act of adultery is brought before Jesus.

Jesus was in the Temple area but he was not there in the role of “Judge.” He was seated and gently teaching a large crowd. The woman was brought in and forced to stand in the middle of them, and Jesus was asked to be her Judge.

Can you imagine the desolation she must have felt? Her prospects were bleak. She knew the law proscribed her to be stoned to death. In the desert, and to the desolate, Christ makes a way. Jesus came to “do something new.” He doesn’t stand and judge her. Rather, he lowers himself even more and simply writes on the ground. When questioned, he suggests the one without sin cast the first stone and returns his focus to the ground. One by one, the crowd leaves and she is left alone with her “Savior.” Jesus, the one who IS without sin, quietly waits for time to be alone with the woman before telling her he does not condemn her.

Do not judge before the time of Judgment. Do not condemn others. Do not condemn oneself. “Go, and from now on, do not sin any more.”
April 4, 2022


“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

This dispute between Jesus and the Pharisees takes place during the feast of the Tabernacles. On the first night of the feast, it was custom to fill the outermost of the courts, the court of the women, with huge lamps to light up the night sky. This was to remind people of the light that signified God’s presence that led the Israelites out of Egypt.

Light is used many times in the Old Testament to designate the Messiah, including when Isaiah said that the Messiah would not only be the King of Israel but the light of nations. Jesus is the light which enlightens our minds and also our hearts. Jesus also wants us to become little lights, for us to shine light throughout our day casting light into the darkness that surrounds us. How can you shine some light today? What dark corner in your life needs the light of Christ today, and where can you share that light for others?

Mr. Bob Price, OP

Our Lady of Grace Fraternity # 116

Cromwell, CT
“When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am He.” John 8: 28

St. Vincent Ferrer preached against the same moral laxity that the Israelites were punished for in Numbers 21: 4-9. Here the Israelites were traveling across the desert and complaining to Moses. They had forgotten the miracles God had performed to free them from slavery. They weren’t worshipping God devoutly.

St. Vincent Ferrer preached during the papal schism and the plague. These people weren’t trusting God, either. They complained like the Israelites. If we despair and forget the blessings God has bestowed on us our faith will shrink and disappear. This is what happened to the Israelites and the people St. Vincent Ferrer preached to.

Moses held up a pole with statues of snakes to cure the people. Those who looked at the snakes were healed physically and spiritually. St. Vincent Ferrer converted many back to the faith with his preaching. It wasn’t the snake statues, nor St. Vincent Ferrer’s preaching that healed and converted the people, but the people’s own belief that God could heal them. This belief was demonstrated by their turning back to God. In the same way we also should look up to God.

People will die in their sins if they reject Jesus because they are rejecting the only way to be rescued from sin.

Mrs. Faith Flaherty, OP
Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity # 110
MCI Norfolk, MA
April 6, 2022

Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95 — Jn 8:31-42

“Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, ‘If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” John 8:31

In 2016 the Word of the Year in the Oxford Dictionary was “post-truth” - defined as "denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appealing to emotion and personal belief".

What word do you “remain in”? Is it the Good News that God became one of us to break the bonds of sin and death, or is it social media spewing forth from ideological echo chambers designed to provoke intense emotional responses and “clicks”? Is it the Good News that drives repentance, spiritual conversion, and transformative change of heart, or is it the Fake News driving men and women to create their own human-centered transformational vision from their own personal beliefs and desires?

Saint John Paul II warned in Veritatis Splendor that modern thought has gone to exalt freedom to such an extent that it has become an absolute, which would then be the source of values. Freedom defines truth vs. Truth defining freedom. Paraphrasing JPII – the “end state” of “post-truth” personal doctrines with no sense of the transcendent accords the individual conscience with the status of a supreme tribunal of moral judgment, handing down infallible decisions about what is good or evil.

Mr. Bernard Gracy, OP

St. Martin de Porres Fraternity # 101

Wayland, MA
April 7, 2022

Gn 17: 3-9 — Jn 8: 51-59

“Abram fell face down and God said to him: for my part, here is my covenant with you: you are to become the father of a multitude of nations...for I am making you the father of a multitude of nations... This is the covenant between me and you and your descendants after you... “

“Amén, amén, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.” Jn 8: 51

In today’s First Reading, God rewards Abram (later to be named Abraham) for his fidelity by anointing him, “the Father of a multitude of nations,” and promises him and his people they will be His if they “keep my covenant throughout the ages.” In today’s Gospel, Jesus says, “Amén, Amén, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.” It is clear -- God will give us more than we could ever imagine possible—the true peace and true joy of everlasting life—but He has expectations.

In a contemporary world where accommodations are encouraged, where we are told to go it alone, to define our own reality, let us remember His words, His promise, His covenant. We will fail, come up short, but we are loved, and He is mercy. The covenant is kept in our fidelity.

Mr. Andrew McNabb, OP
Resurrection Fraternity # 109
Windham, ME
This past year has been pretty distressing for everyone, because of “the plague” of COVID-19. Everyone knows of someone who has become very ill or may have died because of it. We worry about those we love who might be “immuno-compromised”, or have been surprised by the death of those we thought were fit and strong, some of whom had given of their lives to serve the Church. We wonder what God is thinking! “God, but…but... they served You!”

I really believe that God has a plan and is working deep in our souls. In our distress, we hold on more tightly to our family and look more closely at what is most important in our lives. Some of us are reaching out more to Him, ignoring our fears and trying to minister to His people. Others are allowing themselves to be ministered to, and that’s ok too.

Hopefully as Lent fades and moves toward Easter, we are meditating on our occasionally distressing lives and are calling upon the Lord – all of us! He hears us. He has a plan. Peoples’ lives are changing. Let us pray earnestly for the Church and for each other, have faith and remember that “the LORD is with me, like a mighty champion: (the) persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph”.

Mrs. Denise Mailhot, OP

St. Margaret of Castello ProChapter # 114

Lewiston, ME
“It is better for one man to die for the people than a whole nation perish…” Jn 11:50

The first thought might be to think that none of what Ezekiel prophesized came true: And David my servant will be their prince forever…and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. How can David possibly live forever? What sanctuary?

The Messiah was often called David because He is David’s descendant. Ezekiel’s prophesy goes beyond the physical and geographical location of Israel. The Lord brings people back to life, not resuscitation as Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, or Saint Dominic raising Gutadona’s son. The Lord promises to breathe new spiritual life into his people so that the sanctuary of their souls will be united with him and with one another.

It was the raising of Lazarus that was the last straw. From that moment on, the religious leaders plotted to kill Jesus. They felt that if they didn’t stop Jesus the Romans would levy harsh measures on the Jewish populace. Rome had given the Jews religious freedom as long as they were quiet about it. Jesus’ miracles usually caused uproars and the religious leaders feared that Jesus’ miracles would come to the attention of the Romans.

We know how the story ends. Jesus is our prince forever and He is with us eternally.

Mr. Agustin Garcia, OP

Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity, #110

MCI Norfolk, MA
And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying this colt?” They answered, “The Master has need of it.” Lk 19:33-34

The Palm Sunday Liturgy is perhaps one of the most memorable in the Church year. As children, there is nothing more thrilling than the excitement of palms during Mass: those holy weapons of maximum parent annoyance and sibling provocation. More importantly, it is the day when we juxtapose the elation of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem with the agony of His betrayal, arrest, and death.

Yet we seldom think about the strange way all these events began: with the command to go fetch a colt. Jesus’ disciples obediently do so without questioning, and when the owner of the colt sees them untying his beast, he naturally asks what they are doing. Their reply, “The Master has need of it,” seems a sufficient response...but why? Did the man know who their Master was? No — and yet — he lets them go.

We have been praying, fasting, and giving alms throughout this season, but as we stand on the threshold of Holy Week, we must pay particular attention to the things Jesus may ask of us in the next few days.

Whatever He asks of us this week, let us give it to Him freely, that He may be recognized as King and Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Mrs. Christina Valenzuela, OP
St. Martin de Porres Fraternity # 101
Wayland, MA
MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

April 11, 2022
Is 42:1-7 — Jn 12:1-11

“Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased.”
Isaiah 42:1

Today and tomorrow most dioceses in the United States will celebrate the Chrism Mass. It has two purposes: to bless and consecrate the three oils used in the sacraments throughout the year and for priests to come together with their bishop to renew their promises. If you’ve ever attended the Chrism Mass, you know how inspiring it is to see a bishop surrounded by his entire presbyterate.

This is a good time of year to renew our own commitment as Lay Dominicans and as Christians. As we approach the end of our Lenten journey, we should resolve to pray more fervently the Liturgy of the Hours and the Rosary each day. We should resolve to meditate more assiduously on Sacred Scripture. We should reflect on our apostolates and how we can more fully respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters. We should take the time to evaluate our commitment to our fraternity. Are we Dominican minimalists who do only what is required or do we go the extra mile? Let us thank God for the good he does through us. During this Holy Week, let us resolve, with his grace, to grow daily in our vocation.

Mr. Robert Lepage, OP
Mother of God Fraternity # 103
West Springfield, MA
“He made me a polished arrow, in his quiver He hid me” Is 49:26

Whether the servant whom Isaiah writes of was a prophet of that time or the future Messiah, it is clear that he knew God had formed him in his mother’s womb to play a special role in salvation history. In fact, he knew he had been perfectly formed to play this role: he was a “polished arrow,” sure to fly straight and true. And yet, his special gifts had to remain hidden away until just the right moment.

Similarly, Peter was eager to follow Jesus and give his life for God. Jesus tells him that one day he would in fact do this, but not at this time. Perhaps his faith was not yet strong enough; maybe it needed to be purified by the trial Jesus hinted at. Or perhaps God first wanted him to lead the new church in those difficult early years. God alone knew why a certain moment was the right one for Peter – and He alone knows the right moment for any of us to perform any given role in God’s grand plan.

It is important for us to remember that we each do have a role to play in God’s magnificent plan to redeem the world, and that He is forming each of us perfectly for the role He has assigned us. But just as important, we must wait for God’s cues and trust in His perfect timing.

Mrs. Susan Beck, OP
St. Mary’s Fraternity # 108
Hartford, CT
Have you ever been curious about Jesus allowing Judas to remain with Him until the end? As God’s only Son, all knowing and all powerful, Jesus must have sensed the plotting of men. We can only imagine the intense emotional pain Jesus experienced because of Judas. It seems not much is known about Judas. Perhaps he had an unseen life, a perverse spirit leading him away from Christ and what could have made him holy.

Many are called, few are chosen. Those called and consecrated are challenged daily to examine their consciences. In this “cell of self knowledge”, we do not hide from God. With honestly, simplicity and without guile, we allow Jesus into our souls where we wait upon God’s transforming grace. Sins can be forgiven and healed through Confession and the Most Holy Eucharist as long as we persevere in faith. If we were to dwell on our past, most of us would deal with our enemy – guilt – which can be a stumbling block. It is often said the difference between Judas and Peter, who also betrayed Jesus yet became our first Pope, was that Peter turned back to do the good. Despair is demonic! As we say after each rosary decade, “Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of thy mercy.”
Passover was a holiday to commemorate the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and to remind the people what God has done. Traditions can be important today, too, especially to remind us what God has done for us.

Believers today have experienced deliverance from spiritual death and slavery to sin. The Lord’s Supper which we celebrate in the Evening Mass on Holy Thursday is our Passover remembrance of our new life free from sin. In Corinthians, we learned about the Last Supper through the Church’s tradition, going back to Jesus and His apostles. Paul is confident that divine revelation is safely passed on through tradition.

Christ’s mandate to continue the liturgical action of the Last Supper is linked with His institution of the priesthood. During the meal, Jesus humbled Himself to wash His disciples’ feet. Jesus’ example also teaches His priests how to extend His mission, after He is gone. His priests were to go into the world serving God, each other, and all people to spread His message of salvation. We also, who were baptized into our own priesthood, are to serve all the people we encounter.

Our liturgical traditions will be reminders of what God has accomplished throughout history. He is always with us.

Mrs. Faith Flaherty, OP
Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity # 110
MCI Norfolk, MA
GOOD FRIDAY

April 15, 2022


“So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.” Heb 4:16

The Old Testament foreshadowing of Jesus’ Passion and death demonstrates the value of suffering for the expiation of sin and unclean living, thus breaking the chains of spiritual slavery. In Isaiah 53, we learn about the Suffering Servant himself, Jesus. He is tempted but conquers the temptations. He bears our sufferings to sanctify them, putting the eternal damnation of spiritual slavery to death when He is raised on the cross, then rises three days later. In this way, He is the Great Intercessor, pouring out grace and mercy through His love and compassion.

During all of Jesus’ temptations, He prays, providing for us a model of how to conquer our own temptations and near occasions of sin. In His Agony in the Garden, Jesus offers prayers and supplications not only through the most excruciated moments of His humanity, but also because of them. Here Jesus demonstrates an unwavering obedience to God, Our Father. For those who seek eternal salvation, it is essential that they are obedient to the Will of God always and in all ways.

In John’s Gospel, the Book of Signs leads to the Book of Glory. Nature leads to the Divine. The Eternal High Priest leads to The Father. May we continue to imitate Christ with unwavering love and perseverance.

Ms. KellyAnn Carpentier, OP

St. Mary’s Fraternity # 108

New Haven, CT
“They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.” Lk 24:2-3

Today is the quietest day of the Church’s year. Nothing happens. No services. No Masses. All we have is a simple Liturgy of the Hours to keep us company today. Like Our Lady two thousand years ago, we wait. We know what’s coming. We know he will rise. We know he is salvation. But being creatures of time, we wait.

We know what it’s like to live in expectation but it’s always the unknown that makes it both exciting and nerve-wracking. We’re excited as we wait to open Christmas gifts. We’re nervous as we await the birth of a child. But today’s expectation is very different. We already know the ending.

There are tens of thousands of people at this very moment who are waiting for something extraordinarily special tonight: to receive the sacraments of initiation and to join the family of God. Imagine what today feels like for them! But there are millions and millions of others who haven’t heard today’s Good News yet. As Lay Dominicans and as Christians, it’s our mission to share it. Yes, he is risen! Shout your Alleluias in church tonight! You’ve earned them! Then remember to shout your Alleluias with your life so that others may hear: Yes, he is risen indeed.

Mr. Robert Lepage, OP
Mother of God Fraternity # 103
West Springfield, MA
EASTER SUNDAY

April 17, 2022


“They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.” Jn 20:2

Peter thinking: “On Thursday, I denied knowing Jesus. I am so ashamed of myself. Then on Friday, He was condemned by Pilate and sent off to be crucified! CRUCIFIED. What did I do? NOTHING. I couldn’t even come out of hiding while they paraded Him through the streets. God, I am worthless! I hid. Yesterday I hid more. Why did He ever pick me?”

The women are back and are shouting at us that He’s not there! “What the …? What do you mean He’s not there?” Did the soldiers take Him away?

“Oh, John! We have to stop hiding and go see what happened!” And off we ran!

“Oh my God!” That huge stone was rolled away! The soldiers were nowhere to be found. We looked into the cave and we KNEW. The clothes were off to the side as if He took them off Himself and put them there. Praise our God, He has raised Jesus from the dead! Nothing is impossible with God! Alleluia!

Dear reader: Christ has died and risen. He died in my place because I am imperfect; being imperfect I cannot be in the presence of God. Any and all of my sin will be exposed, but Jesus is alive, took my sin away, and has set me free.

Jesus has set you free as well.

Mrs. Denise Mailhot, OP

St. Margaret of Castello ProChapter # 114

Lewiston, ME
CONVERSION OF A HERETIC BY HIS JOYFUL PATIENCE

A GENERAL debate with the heretics being agreed upon, the bishop of the place wanted to attend in state with a pompous retinue, but St Dominic addressing him, said: 'It is not in this fashion that we ought to meet them, but we should rather strive to win them over by our humility and virtuous example, than by mere show and display or by contentious words: and since the present meeting is not without its fears, let us arm ourselves with humility and go thither barefooted.' On the way they began to have misgivings as to the road, for the place of meeting was some miles off; so they made enquiries of a man whom they met, believing him to be a Catholic, whereas in reality he was a heretic. The man said that he would not merely show them the way, but would himself conduct them to the spot. Then leading them to a wood he spitefully set them astray, dragging them through thorns and brambles so that their feet and ankles became covered with blood. All this the servant of God bore with unruffled patience, breaking forth joyfully at times into the divine praises, and exhorting the others to do the same. 'Be of good cheer, dearest brethren,' he would say, 'put all your trust in God, for our sins have now been all wiped out in our blood, and the victory will surely be ours.' The heretic, seeing his marvelous endurance, and the joyful forbearance of the whole company, and feeling touched by his words, became changed in heart, confessed his cruel deceit, and abjured his errors before them.

MIRACULOUS INCREASE OF WINE

WHILE travelling in that same country with some of his brethren it chanced one day that they had only one small cup of wine for their repast. Now amongst those present that day there were some who had come from a delicate life in the world, and who found it very hard to swallow dry bread. This true servant of God feeling for their want bade them put the little they had into a larger vessel, the bottom of which it barely covered, and then to fill it up with water. This done through holy
obedience, he had the wine drawn and set before them, and all vowed that they had never tasted better in their lives before. Those that partook of it were eight in number, yet they had more than enough. Brother William of Pelisso vouches for the truth of these miracles.

HE BEHOLDS ANGELS GUARDING HIS BRETHREN

A CITIZEN of Bologna, who was a lawyer by profession, joined the Order, but his friends and kinsfolk in the world were bent on having him out again by force. The terrified brothers wanted to call in men-at-arms to guard the enclosure, but the blessed Dominic eased their minds with these words: 'We require no such protection, for at this very moment I see more than two hundred angels ranked round the church and convent who have been sent to guard us.' At the same moment their assailants fled panic-stricken and in confusion, and the novice plucking up heart persevered in the Order.

LUST QUELLED BY THE FRAGRANCE OF HIS HAND

A STUDENT of Bologna was addicted to sins of the flesh, and although he used constantly to confess the same, yet he as often relapsed, until at last he declared it was a hopeless task trying to check his passions. While St Dominic was saying mass in our conventual church this student came in, intending to hear the mass and sermon. He went up with the rest of the people at the offertory, and while presenting his offering, kissed the saint's hand. This done, he became aware of a fragrance exhaling from it such as he had never felt before. It was indeed a truly marvelous perfume, but still more marvelous were its effects, for from that moment he felt all the strife in his members cease, and continency was suddenly bestowed upon him, so that what heretofore seemed impossible became for the future easy and natural; and right fitting it was that the fragrance of a virginal hand should expel the foul odor of lust.

http://www.domcentral.org/trad/brethren/breth02.htm#0219
She was a Dominican but not a religious. She held no leadership position in the Church or society but was one of the most influential persons of the 14th century. She negotiated peace between City States of central Italy. She exhorted Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome after more than half a century of popes being exiled in Avignon. Who would have guessed that this 23rd of 24 children, born to Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa in Siena, would have such a great impact on the world in her lifetime and far more thereafter? All this she did as a lay person.

A Dominican Tertiary

Catherine of Siena was closely associated with the Dominicans, having become a member of the Mantellate, a Tertiary organization that assisted lay members to pursue holiness of life while remaining in the world and strengthened there by the charism, example and counsel of Dominican Sisters and Friars.

In this year of consecrated life, it is good not only to honor men and women religious but also the many laity who are closely associated with their charisms and apostolates. In this regard, followers of St. Francis include more than his Friars, Sisters and the Poor Clare Nuns; there are also lay associates known as secular order Franciscans. Similarly, the Benedictines have their Oblates, Carmelites their Third Order, Passionists their Associates, and so it goes. Moreover, the laity who associate themselves closely with a particular Institute of Consecrated Life are not called to holiness any less than those who belong fully to each Institute. Of this truth, St. Catherine of Siena is a prime example.
St. Catherine of Siena’s feast day is April 29. She is a patron saint of Europe and Italy, and the patron of fire prevention and nurses. (Crosiers/CNS)

**More than being a ‘groupie’**

Tertiaries don’t just tag along occasionally with religious or, when convenient, join them for prayer and days of reflection. They become tertiaries only after a time of formal preparation, often lasting up to five years or more, a time of reading, study and spiritual direction, followed by a formal ceremony of profession which, while not a religious vow, formalizes nonetheless their association with a specific institute.

Wearing a religious habit is not customary for tertiaries, although they may have permission to be buried in one. Sometimes, however, they do wear a distinctive symbol or garb, designed just for them, as was the case of Catherine, who assumed a mantel in which we often see her clad in pictures. Of course, clothes do not make a saint; nor does the tertiary profession insure holiness. Nonetheless, a deep attraction to a unique “way” of Christian spirituality and a daily effort to follow that way, does help one to imitate Christ more closely and to fulfill one’s lay vocation in Him. This was certainly true for St. Catherine, as evidenced in her apostolic endeavors and especially in her intense prayer.

**Drawing life from the Sacred Liturgy**

Catherine lived most of her life, just down the street in Siena from the Church of St. Dominic. There, from childhood on, she spent many hours in prayer, participated in daily Mass, received the sacraments, was instructed through Dominican preaching, and in other ways entered into a close friendship with Jesus.

She was deeply drawn to live a solitary life, away from the world, knowing that Jesus, in a vision, had called her to be His bride. But the Lord made it clear to her that she was to live her vocation in the world, where she would combine prayer and action for the sake of God’s Kingdom.

We know a great deal about this popular Saint from Siena from her own writings, especially her book known as “The Dialogue,” and also collections of her letters and of her prayers. There is such theological and spiritual depth in these writings that she, along with St. Teresa of Avila, became the first women to be declared
doctors of the Church by Blessed Pope Paul VI in AD 1970. Whoever uses her prayers for meditation soon discovers rich food for mind and imagination, soul and heart. A profound theological depth reflects the impact on her life of daily Mass, its biblical readings and the solid preaching that she absorbed like a sponge takes in water. From these liturgical sources her vocation and mission from Christ were constantly nourished. And so it can be for you and me.

In the Church today, also here in our own diocese, we are blessed to have many lay people who, like St. Catherine, draw daily inspiration and support in their love of God and neighbor by closely associating with Religious Institutes. We give thanks to God for each of them in this Year of Consecrated Life, mindful of how their fidelity can inspire the rest of us on our unique path to holiness in Christ.

BISHOP THOMAS J. OLMSTED

The Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted is the bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix. He was installed as the fourth bishop of Phoenix on Dec. 20, 2003, and is the spiritual leader of the diocese's Catholics.

Thank you for allowing us to share our Lenten reflections with you. We hope and pray that sharing them has been as much a blessing for you as they have been for us.

From the Lay Dominicans of St. Joseph Province – Region 1
Lent 2022