

SEEKING JESUS IN SACRED SCRIPTURE

ASH WEDNESDAY WEEK

Feb 17 Mt 6:1-6,16-18
Feb 18 1 Peter 5:1-4
Feb 19 Is 58:1-9a
Feb 20 Ps 86:1-6

FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Feb 21 Mk 1:12-15
Feb 22 Mt 25:31-46
Feb 23 Is 55:10-11
Feb 24 Ps 51
Feb 25 Mt 7:7-12
Feb 26 Mt 5:20-26
Feb 27 Mt 5:43-48

SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Feb 28 Mk 9:2-10
Mar 1 Lk 6:36-38
Mar 2 Is 1:10, 16-20
Mar 3 Mt 20:17-28
Mar 4 Jer 17:5-10
Mar 5 Gen 37:3-28
Mar 6 Ps 103:1-4, 9-12

THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Mar 7 John 4:5-42
Mar 8 Lk 4:24-30
Mar 9 Lk 1:26-38
Mar 10 Mt 5:17-19
Mar 11 Jer 7:23-28
Mar 12 Mk 12:28-34
Mar 13 Lk 5:1-11

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Mar 14 Jn 9:1-41
Mar 15 Jn 4:43-54
Mar 16 Ez 47:1-9, 12
Mar 17 Is 49:8-15
Mar 18 Jn 5:31-47
Mar 19 Ps 34:17-21, 23
Mar 20 Jer 11:18-20

FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Mar 21 Jn 11:1-45
Mar 22 Jn 8:1-11
Mar 23 Jn 8:21-30
Mar 24 Jn 8:31-42
Mar 25 Gn 17:3-9
Mar 26 Ps 18:2-7
Mar 27 Ez 37:21-28

HOLY WEEK

Mar 28 Mk 14:1-15:47
Mar 29 Is 42:1-7
Mar 30 Jn 13:21-33,36-38
Mar 31 Mt 26:14-25
Apr 1 Jn 13:1-15
Apr 2 Is 52:13-53:12
Apr 3 Mk 16:1-7

"You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified." - Mark 16:6

This holy time urges us to seek
Jesus through prayer, penance, and
works of charity.



Lent precedes and prepares for Easter. It is a time to hear the Word of God, to turn away from sin, to prepare for and remember Baptism, to be reconciled with God and one's neighbor, and to make more frequent recourse to the "weapons of Christian penance": prayer, fasting and good works (cf. Mt 6, 1-6. 16-18).

The Sacred Liturgy express a mystical aspect of Lent through its great themes or values, such a relationship between "the sacrament of forty days" and "the sacraments of Christian Initiation", and the mystery of the "Exodus" which is always present in the Lenten journey. Popular piety concentrates in a special way on the mysteries of Christ's humanity, and during Lent the faithful pay close attention to the Passion and Death of Our Lord.

In the Roman Rite, the start of the forty days of penance is marked with the austere symbol of ashes which are used in the Sacred Liturgy of Ash Wednesday. The use of ashes is a survival from an ancient rite

"THE NEED TO TURN THE MIND TOWARD THOSE REALITIES WHICH REALLY COUNT"

according to which converted sinners submitted themselves to canonical penance. The act of putting on ashes symbolizes fragility and mortality, and the need to be redeemed by the mercy of God. Far from being a merely external act, the Church has retained the use of ashes to symbolize that attitude of internal penance to which all the Baptized are called during Lent. The faithful who come to receive ashes should be assisted in perceiving the implicit internal significance of this act, which disposes them towards conversion and renewed Easter commitment.

Notwithstanding the secularization of contemporary society, the Christian faithful, during Lent, are clearly conscious of the need to turn the mind towards those realities which really count, which require Gospel commitment and integrity of life which, through self-denial of those things which are superfluous, are translated into good works and solidarity with the poor and needy.

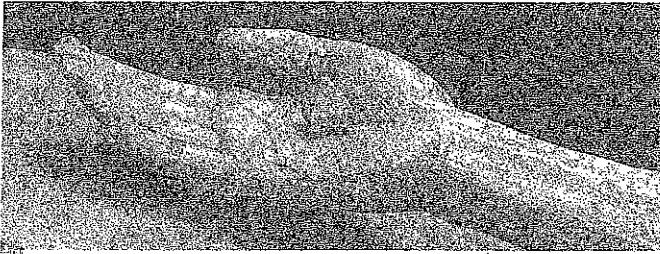
Those of the faithful who infrequently attend the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist should be aware

of the long ecclesial tradition associating the precept of confessing grave sins and receive Holy Communion at least once during the Lenten season, or preferably during Eastertide.

There can be an effective and fruitful interaction between Sacred Liturgy and popular piety during the forty days of Lent.

An example of such interaction is to be seen in fact that popular piety often encourages particular observances on certain days, or special devotional exercises, or apostolic or charitable works which are foreseen and recommended by the Lenten Liturgy. The practice of fasting, characteristic of the Lenten season since antiquity, is an "exercise" which frees the faithful from earthly concerns so as to discover the life that comes from above: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (cf. Dt 8,3; Mt 4, 4; Lk 4,4; antiphon for the first Sunday of Lent).

Adapted from *The Directory of Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 124-126.)



Seeking the Forgiveness of Jesus

During Lent, we approach the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation as the way of returning to the Father who restores for us the dignity of our Baptism and the full privilege of being adopted as His children. An integral confession calls us to spend time examining our conscience, not only remembering those material sins which we have committed, but also allowing God's Spirit to probe the depths of our hearts to uncover our unrecognized wounds and unclaimed motives. Discerning why we commit the sins in our life helps us to be open more



Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. Grant me the grace to be renewed during this observance of Holy Lent. Armed with prayer, penance, and almsgiving, may I lay aside those things which hinder my search for You!

fully to the redeeming work of Christ through this Sacrament. The most important component of Confession is contrition, sorrow for our sins, which comes only when we make a good and honest self-examination before we enter the confessional.

PRAYER

Have I prayed as I ought? Has God been at the center of my life? How I have ignored God and His divine inspiration? Have I listened attentively to God's voice in the Sacred Liturgy? Have I been faithful to my obligation for Sunday Mass and Holy Days? Do I prepare myself and those entrusted to my care for Mass? Am I lazy or complacent in prayer? Do I pray for my loved ones and my enemies? Is my prayer self-centered? Have I explored the rich spirituality of the Catholic Tradition and its many ways of devotion? Do I spend time in prayer before the Most Blessed Sacrament?

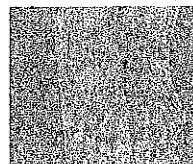
PENANCE

Have I made Fridays throughout the year a day of penance? If I eat meat, do I do another act of penance? Do I fast throughout the year? Do I willingly abstain from those unnecessary things which clutter my life? Does noise make me deaf to others and to God? Am I aware of the ways in which my sins make me unworthy of my wonderful

vocation as a Christian? Am I humbled by the love and goodness of God in my life? Do I see my faith as a gift and not a burden? Do I receive Holy Communion worthily? Do I have a sense of entitlement or superiority? Do I exercise my body and mind? Do I live a healthy lifestyle?

CHARITY

Do I give of myself freely and generously to others? Do I forgive those who have harmed me? Do I give others the benefit of the doubt? Do I judge the motives of others? Am I faithful to my obligations to my family, to my parish, to those in need? Do I give from my surplus or my want? Do I trust that God will reward a cheerful giver? Am I sensitive to the sufferings of others? Do I allow myself to acknowledge the many persons I encounter each day? Do I hold opinions which bring harm to others? Do I make decisions which are contrary to Catholic moral teaching? Do I desire the admiration and praise of others? Do I love myself enough to study and grow in my faith? Have I been a good steward of creation and the created goods entrusted to me?



Seeking Jesus with the Church

The following are the guidelines for the observance of Lent:

PRAYING. Catholics are encouraged to pray more during Lent, especially with Sacred Scripture. Spiritual reading, such as the lives of the saints, and devotions like the Stations of the Cross and the Holy Rosary are helpful to spiritual growth. Lent is also an ideal time to receive properly the Sacrament of Penance in preparation for the celebration of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

FASTING. Catholics aged 14 and older are to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent. In addition, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics aged 18-59 are required to fast, limiting themselves to one full meal and two smaller meals each day not equal to the full meal.

ALMSGIVING. Moved by the sacrifice of Christ and the suffering of humanity, many Christians combine almsgiving with fasting, giving to the poor the money they saved by eating, drinking or buying less as they rely more upon God's abundant grace. The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy provide ample inspiration for other ways to sacrifice time and resources for those most in need of help.