

The Lenten Gospels

Lent 2021

Bible Study, Faith Sharing, Reflection and Prayer

Schedule

All the sessions will begin at 7:00pm

For journal faith sharing come a little early, gather at 6:40

- February 10, Week 1, Look at Ash Wednesday Readings (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/021721.cfm>)
 - Joel 2:12-18
 - Psalm 51 Be Merciful of Lord, for we have sinned
 - II Corinthians 5:20—6:2
 - Matthew 6: 1-18 (6:1-6, 16-18)

Joel

At the time of Joel there was an infestation of locust and a plague that all of the people were called to lament. How are we called to lament in our time of pandemic?

Yahweh does not act because of ritual offerings but because of his kindness and mercy. If God is showing mercy because that is “who God is” why do we need to employ the disciplines of Lent, fasting, praying and almsgiving?

Joel calls for fasting. When we fast we become keenly aware of our hunger. Aside from food, what is it that you hunger for?

Psalm 51

In this psalm we acknowledge our utter guilt before God. God not only forgives our sin but restores our relationship with God. How is

that an invitation for you to restore broken relationships? Is there an invitation for you today?

II Corinthians

Jesus became the very sin he came to destroy. Jesus is the ultimate gift of grace. How is it possible to thank Jesus for this gift? How do you show thanks for the gift?

Matthew

What was Mathew trying to say to his community? How is that invitation reaching through the ages to you? Are you ever ostentatious? In what way?

When we employ the disciplines outlined in the gospel our actions must be lit by integrity The light in us must be Christ's light. How would anyone know you're a Christian?

How has this gospel stretched you and called you to grow?

Name one concrete thing you can do to respond to this gospel.



- February 17, Week 2, Look at First Sunday in Lent (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/022121.cfm>)
 - Genesis 9:8-15
 - Psalm 25 Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant
 - I Peter 3:18-22
 - Mark 1:12-15

Genesis

All of Genesis attempts to answer the question, “where did evil come from?” Where do you see evil in our world? Can you help to alleviate evil? Is it difficult to imagine you fighting evil on your own, with a community, hand and hand with God?

Why did the rest of the natural world have to suffer for the sin of humanity? In our time are there other instances of the natural world suffering because of humanity?

The flood was a cleansing of the earth, a kind of new creation, a kind of reboot. Are we in a reboot situation with the corona virus?

Noah put into the ark both clean and unclean animals. The Ark was sanctuary. Where do we have people in this kind of sanctuary, clean and unclean gathering together?

Although we do not know what wickedness caused a need for a cleansing, what wickedness do you see today?

Some suggest the rainbow is a reminder that we as inhabitant of the earth are called to be good stewards of the earth. How are you a good steward?

Psalm 51

This psalm extols Yahweh's love, truth and the covenant. What about covenant do you find comforting?

I Peter

Peter suggests that Baptism doesn't just wash away dirt and sin, but an invitation to metanoia, the conversion to God. How are you deepening your conversion this Lent?

Mark

In all three of the synoptic temptation stories, the devil is defeated by Jesus. How are you attempting to defeat evil in your life?

The Spirit drove Jesus to the desert and this encounter with Satan. This was the first encounter but not the last. Was this a test of Jesus, will he be strong enough to face the cross?

The pericope from Mark's gospel is rich in Old Testament metaphors and symbols. Name the ones you see.

In the Bible a great number of things happen in the desert, both holy and dangerous. Look for parallels from other Bible passages where the desert was a rich place for learning more about our God.

How do you feel about Jesus' combat with evil?

How has this gospel stretched you and called you to grow?

Name one concrete thing you can do to respond to this gospel.



- February 24, Week 3, Look at Second Sunday in Lent (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/022821.cfm>)
 - Genesis 22:1-18 (22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18)
 - Psalm 116 I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.
 - Romans 8:31b-34
 - Mark 9:2-10

Genesis

How comfortable are you placing your entire life in the hands of God?

If you have more than one child, do you favor one more than another? Please explain.

What are the parallels between this action of Abraham and Isaac, and that of God the father and Jesus?

Psalm

This Psalm speaks of a just person; how are you a just person?

Romans

The wisdom of God is the topic for this pericope. Where have you considered the wisdom of God, both in favor and also the opposition?

Mark

How does Peter's misunderstandings help us the readers?

Capital Punishment at the time of Jesus helped to keep order? Does it have the same function today?

There are seven characters at the transfiguration. Which one would you like to be?

All effective prophets have the same destiny. Do we have the courage to listen to such prophets?

In what way have you experienced the light of revelation in your life?

What have these scriptures stirred up in you?



- March 3, Week 4, Look at Third Sunday in Lent (Cycle B) (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/030721.cfm>)
 - Exodus 20:1-17
 - How do you understand the Mount Sinai event?
 - What do you consider the most serious, important, and or meaningful, commandment at the time of Moses, and in our time, why?
 - Are the Ten Commandments equal to both men and women?
 - Psalm 19 **Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

- I Corinthians 1:22-25
 - Paul's favorite sign is the cross. How is the cross a paradox?
- John 2:13-25
 - In the Bible the temple is an image of the presence of God in the midst of the people. How does that compare and contrast to our Catholic Tabernacle?
 - If you were a witness to this gospel would you have ponder Jesus' authority?
 - Why do you suppose John place the cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus's Ministry?
 - This pericope of John's gospel suggests that Jesus truly understood human nature. What do you think John was referring to?



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- March 10, Week 5, Look at Fourth Sunday in Lent (Cycle B)
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/031421.cfm>

Where is your holy place in the home? How would anyone know it's that special place? What things do you have there, a bible? What else?

- II Chronicles 36:12-13 (II Chronicles 36: 14-16, 19-23)
 - It has been said that God hates sin but loves a sinner. When you have sinned do you continue to believe that you are loved by God?
- Psalm 137 Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

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- Where is your hometown, where you grew up? Do you long to return there or has the current area where you live now your real home?

- Ephesians 2:4-10
 - Salvation History is a way for us to understand our relationship with God. When the Hebrew people were obedient things were good. When the Hebrew people disobeyed, they were punished. Have you ever felt punished by God?

 - When was the last time you got a surprise gift?

- John 3:14-21
 - Are we really people of Light as we claim to be?
 - Nicodemus visited Jesus at night, perhaps he did not want others to see him visiting this rabbi. Have you ever hidden your beliefs or curiosities?
 - Nicodemus needed to be reborn, to see in a new way. Where might you need to take a second look?
 - John says that people prefer darkness, and not just the absence of light. How is that true?



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- March 17, Week 5, Look at Fifth Sunday in Lent (Cycle B)
 (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/032121.cfm>)

- Today's readings are all about conversion. How has this year's Lenten disciplines helped in your conversion to Jesus Christ?
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- **Jeremiah 31:31-24**
 - Jeremiah is concerned that the Hebrew people's hard hearts have turned to stone. This condition seems to roll down the ages. Have you observed leadership with hardened hearts? How's your heart?
- **Psalms 51 Create a clean heart in me, O God.**
 - Today's psalm suggest that when hearts are changed, sins will be forgiven. How can you change your heart?
- **Hebrews 5:7-9**
 - Jesus is not a Levite, that means that he is not heir to the priesthood. But the author of Hebrews says that Jesus has all the qualities of a high priest. What do you consider the qualities of a good priest?
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 - The author of Hebrews says that Christ became perfected through suffering. After you experienced suffering what changed in your life?
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- **John 12:20-33**
 - Jesus freely takes up his cross. It is not imposed upon him. It is a choice. How have your choices led you to a cross and resurrection experience?
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 - The crowd went out to see Jesus because they heard he had raised Lazarus from the dead. Who would not follow a messiah who could raise someone from the dead?
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 - We called Jesus's death a sacrifice. What kind of a God would send his son to be tortured, murdered, and sacrificed in the most hideous, shameful fashion known to the world?



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- **March 24, Week 6, Look at Palm Sunday (Cycle B)**
(<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/032821.cfm>)
 - **Mark 11:1-10**
 - **Isaiah 50:4-7**
 - **Psalm 22 My God, my God why have you abandoned me?**
 - **Philemon 2:6-11**
 - **Mark 14:1—15:47**

Mark 14:ff

The apostles had three choices: Stand with Jesus defending him and facing the same fate, denying him be honored by the Jewish leadership, or running away. You know what that chose. What is the value of each of the choices?