

Celebrating the Season of Lent



Theme: Union with God and Others

There is an Aesop Fable about a man and his two quarreling sons. To teach them a lesson about the importance of relationship, he had them bring a bundle of sticks. He asked the first son to take the bundle and break it. The son failed to do so. He asked the second son to do the same, and he also failed. Then he said, “Untie the bundle and take a stick. Break it.” Each proceeded to grab a stick and break it easily. The father said to them, “See my meaning? Individually, you can be easily conquered, but together, you are invincible. Union gives strength.”

Lent is an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with God and with the believing community. Daily, we are exposed to stories in the news that emphasize how fractured our society is and continues to be. It is easy, in the midst of such divisions and rancor, to forget that our strength comes from unity. Lent reminds us both of the centrality of our relationship with God and the importance of the bond that ties us together as a believing community. True, we are members of many different communities. We might be part of an online community, a neighborhood community, or a political organization. The importance of community affirms the centrality of being part of the community grounded in faith, what Saint Paul refers to as the body of Christ. To be part of the body of Christ, to be part of the bundle, makes possible our living an authentic life, turns our thoughts to God, and inspires us to lead a life that reflects the example of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Lent is a time to reflect on what it means to be united with God and with each other. May our celebration of this season renew our appreciation of the need for union with God and the importance of being a member of a community of faith, dedicated to pursuing the mission of advancing the kingdom of God.

Prayers

Monday of the Second Week of Lent

God of strength,

Entering this second week of Lent, we realize that struggle is part of our earthly journey. Though we have been gifted with many talents, those alone do not make us strong. Help us to always know that our true strength comes from you, and that we can rely on your help. For this we pray. Amen.

Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent

God of growth,

During this season of Lent, we are called to growth. Growth in silence, growth in reconciliation, growth in love, growth in our relationship with you. May the seeds of faith we plant during Lent, grow to a fulness that will be celebrated come Easter morning, a fulness that will last until eternity. Amen.

Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent

God of unity,

You love each one of us, wanting us all to be part of your ‘bundle of strength’ in this world. Help us to see and love each other as you see and love us. Together, we can make this world a better place to live, where all know they belong. Through your loving example, we pray. Amen.

Thursday of the Second Week of Lent

God of those who are weak,

Much of our society focuses upon the people who seem to have the perfect life: movie stars, royalty, athletes, musicians. But, we all have struggles and flaws. The key to making us strong is our dependence on you. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians, “Knowing my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” In your grace and our weakness, we pray. Amen.

Friday of the Second Week of Lent

God of love,

The father in the Aesop fable was teaching his sons a lesson out of his love for them. So often in our lives, we feel your love through hard lessons that we have learned, even when we don’t recognize it at the time. Help us to learn from these lessons that we might be beacons of love to others. We ask this in the name of love. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

What concretely do I plan to do to deepen my relationship with God during this Lenten season?

How will my participation in the season of Lent renew my commitment to extend the compassionate ministry of Jesus to others, especially people who are poor and vulnerable?

What role does community play in my life? How might I strengthen my relationship with my faith community?