

Oblate Lenten Reflections

2010

Week 1

“I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word.”

-The Book of Common Prayer,

Ash Wednesday Service

The above invitation certainly parallels St. Benedict’s invitation from Chapter 49 of the Rule, *The Observance of Lent*. Benedict believes that we ought to live as if it were Lent all the time. The Church’s repetitive cycles of Advent and Lent from year to year are celebrated for a reason: **to wake us up, to re-energize us, and to renew us in the real purpose of life- to become God’s Word.**

As we begin the season of Lent, the Ash Wednesday readings call us to reconciliation: From **Joel 2:12-18**, we hear of God’s mercy and kindness and the plea to return to the Lord with our whole heart. There is a call to gather all peoples together in this process. **Psalm 51** reflects our intent to ask God for a clean heart and steadfast spirit of renewal. **2 Corinthians 5: 20-6:2** exhorts that **now** is the day of salvation.

The Gospel, **Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18**, has an aura of humility about the Lenten observances: *“take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; when you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you; when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your father in secret.”*

Joan Chittister, OSB, in her book *The Rule of Benedict*, states that *“Benedict tells us that Lent is the time to make new efforts to be what we say we want to be.”*

**Take time today to ask the question:
What do I want to be?**

**How can Lent help me to be what I am called
to be?**

Each week in Lent I will be sending you the Scripture readings we use for Eucharist during that week and will include a quote or reflection for you to ponder. Feel free to use any other readings you want. But plan extra time during Lent for lectio and journaling.

Thursday, February 18

Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Luke9: 22-25

“Choose Life...If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

We are often blessed in ways we can’t imagine. Instead of getting what we want, we get what we need. The problem is that it takes longer to understand that what we didn’t want is precisely what, in the end, was best for us.” Joan Chittister, *Listen with the Heart*

Friday, February 19

Isaiah 58:1-9, Matthew 9:14-15

"This is the fasting I wish: setting free the oppressed, sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed, clothing the naked..."

Pray especially for the people of Haiti today.

Saturday, February 20

Isaiah 58:9-14

Luke 5:27-32

"I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."

"Whoever finds Jesus finds a rare treasure, indeed, a good above every good. Whereas one who loses him loses more than the whole world. The one who lives without Jesus is the poorest of the poor, whereas no one is so rich as the one who lives in his grace."

-Thomas A Kempis

Sunday, February 21

Deuteronomy 26:4-10, Romans 10:8-13, Luke 4:1-13

We see Jesus being tempted in the desert, but the nearness of God is so real.

Think of a lonely, desert time in your own life when you thought God was so far away, yet you came to awareness of God's loving Presence right beside you and within your very heart. Thank God for this experience.

Monday, February 22

The Chair of St. Peter, Apostle

1 Peter 5:1-4, Matthew 16:13-19

"Tend the flock of God in your midst." "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church..."

Do we, like Peter, hear God's call? Benedict proclaims "Let us open our eyes to the divine light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from heaven that every day calls out this charge: If you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts" (RB Prol. 9-10)

Tuesday, February 23

Isaiah 55:10-11, Matthew 6:7-15

The Our Father teaches us that prayer has a relationship with God and others. It is Jesus' prayer. What words strike you as you pray the Our Father?

Wednesday, February 24

Jonah 3:1-10, Luke 11:29-32

Can you think of a time in your life you have felt like Jonah?

What sign are we called to portray as Oblates?

Thursday, February 25

Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25, Matthew 7:7-12

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

"Asking the proper questions is the central action of transformation..."

Questions are the keys that cause the secret doors of the psyche to swing open."

-Clarissa Pinkola Estes

Friday, February 26

Ezekiel 18: 21-28, Matthew 5: 20-26

*These readings might remind us of Chapter 4 of the Rule, The Tools of Good Works.
Read Chapter 4 of the Rule and do an examination of conscience.*

Saturday, February 27

Deuteronomy 26:16-19, Matthew 5:43-48

“And today the Lord is making this agreement with you: you are to be people peculiarly his own, as he promised you.” “So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

What a tall order!! How can Lent renew my efforts at this intent?

“Into each of our lives Jesus comes as the bread of life- to be eaten, to be consumed by us. This is how he loves us. Then Jesus comes in our human life as the hungry one, the other, hoping to be fed with the bread of our life, our hearts loving, and our hands serving. In loving and serving, we prove that we have been created in the likeness of God, for God is love and when we love, we are like God. This is what Jesus meant when he said, ‘Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.’”

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