

**REFLECTION FOR THE FIFTH
WEEK OF LENT:
LENT AND COVID 19**

During this Lenten season, we find ourselves in the midst of a pandemic. We are all socially distancing and self-isolating. We are all wondering where this is all going to end and anxious about the future. How can Lent help us understand these unprecedented times?



Jesus called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? (Mark 8: 34-36)



LENT AND COVID 19

Lent is a time of prayer and reflection. In these difficult times, we need to pray even more. But as we reflect on the meaning of this pandemic, this season of Lent can perhaps give us some perspective on what we are facing. Lent calls us to carry our cross and carrying our cross may be a healthy Christian way to understand these trying times.

One of the challenges that we face with this pandemic is that it brings us face-to-face with our

own mortality. We tend to go through life denying that we will die one day, which is essentially healthy. But with this pandemic, we are reminded that death is a part of life. These difficult times, which remind us of our own mortality, however, has its benefits. Coming face-to-face with our own mortality often makes us reevaluate our lives and helps us to see what is truly important in life. We learn what is truly meaningful in life and what actually makes life worth living. Lent as well is a time of self-evaluation and reflection. One thing that we can do this Lent is reflect on what is significant in life and what we can let go off. And hopefully we can bring these lessons that we are learning into lives, when we return to something resembling normal.

This pandemic has also brought us closer together, as families, as communities, as citizens of the world. During these trying times, we are more conscious of looking after each other, supporting the sick and the elderly, and conscious of the suffering that is occurring throughout the world. Lent is also a time to care for others. In this Lent, may we turn our attention to those in need and keep focused on the suffering of others even in normal times.

During the pandemic, we have more time to prayer and reflect. Unlike previous Lents, where because of all our responsibilities, we found it difficult to find time to pray, we have been given the gift of extra time this year. But with this extra time that have, let us make good use of it and practice spending quality moments with our God. Hopefully, when our hectic lives return, we will have developed a routine of prayer which we will want to continue.

Lent is a time of carrying our cross and this year we have been asked to carry that cross in exceptional ways. But carrying the cross with Christ will in the end save our lives.

**RECOGNIZING OUR BLESSEDNESS, EVEN
IN TRYING TIMES**

Blessed are those who are convinced of their basic dependence on God, whose lives are emptied of all that doesn't really matter.

Blessed are those who wear compassion like a garment, those who have learned to love others as they love themselves.

Blessed are those who have learned that all they are is a gift from God, who are content with their greatness and their smallness.

Blessed are those who remember how much they have been forgiven, who are able to extend this forgiveness to others.

Blessed are those who build roads that join instead of walls that divide.

Blessed are those whose love has been tried and found to be precious, genuine and lasting. For then, they are salt and light for our world.



GOD'S COMPANIONSHIP

Lord, I thank You for being with me through thick and thin, in the best of times and in the most challenging times. You are my rock, my fortress, my everything. With You, I discover complete serenity. You never forsake me. You were with me at the start, and You will be with me at the end. Amen.

THE PROMISE OF LENT

Lord God, as we enter this season of Lent, this period of reflection and refocus, help us to stop, listen, renew.

Help us to let go of the rush and noise.

And wait patiently before God.

Let the busyness of our body rest,

Let the worries of our mind rest,

Let the doubts of our spirit rest.

Let us hear God's call to wholeness.

Let us open the deep places of our hearts

And allow the Spirit to recreate,

Busyness into peace,

Worry into trust,

Doubt into hope.

LENTEN PRAYER

Lord, during this Lenten Season, nourish us with Your Word of life and make us one with You in love and prayer. God of love, bring us back to You. Send Your Spirit to make us strong in faith and active in good works. May our acts of penance bring us Your forgiveness, open our heart to Your love, and prepare us for the coming feast of the Resurrection of Jesus. Amen.

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