

The Word



Mary Undoer of Knots,
Bless you today and
forever. Amen!

HOLY FATHER'S INTENTIONS FOR MARCH

Support for Persecuted Christians: That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church.

Liturgical Reflections

The month of March is dedicated to St. Joseph. The entire month falls during the liturgical season of Lent which is represented by the liturgical color purple — a symbol of penance, mortification and the sorrow of a contrite heart.

Lent is a special time of prayer, penance, sacrifice and good works in preparation of the celebration of Easter. In the desire to renew the liturgical practices of the Church, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of Vatican Council II stated, "The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent -- the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance -- should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer" (no. 109). The word *Lent* itself is derived from the Anglo-Saxon words *lencten*, meaning "Spring," and *lenctentid*, which literally means not only "Springtide" but also was the word for "March," the month in which the majority of Lent falls.

Since the earliest times of the Church, there is evidence of some kind of Lenten preparation for Easter. One can safely conclude that by the end of the fourth century, the 40-day period of Easter preparation known as Lent existed, and that prayer and fasting constituted its primary spiritual exercises. Once the 40 days of Lent were established, the next development concerned how much fasting was to be done. In Jerusalem, for instance, people fasted for 40 days, Monday through Friday, but not on Saturday or Sunday, thereby making Lent last for eight weeks. In Rome and in the West, people fasted for six weeks, Monday through Saturday, thereby making Lent last for six weeks. Eventually, the practice prevailed of fasting for six days a week over the course of six weeks, and Ash Wednesday was instituted to bring the number of fast days before Easter to 40. The rules of fasting varied. First, some areas of the Church abstained from all forms of meat and animal products, while others made exceptions for food like fish. For example, Pope St. Gregory (d. 604), writing to St. Augustine of Canterbury, issued the following rule: "We abstain from flesh, meat, and from all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese and eggs."

Over the years, modifications have been made to the Lenten observances, making our practices not only simple but also easy. Ash Wednesday still marks the beginning of Lent, which lasts for 40 days, not including Sundays. The present fasting and abstinence laws are very simple: On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the faithful fast (having only one full meal a day and smaller snacks to keep up one's strength) and abstain from meat; on the other Fridays of Lent, the faithful abstain from meat. People are still encouraged "to do something special" for Lent as a sacrifice. (An interesting note is that technically on Sundays and solemnities like St. Joseph's Day (March 19) and the Annunciation (March 25), one is exempt and can partake of whatever has been offered up for Lent. Moreover, an emphasis must be placed on performing spiritual works, like attending the Stations of the Cross, attending Mass, making a weekly holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament, taking time for personal prayer and spiritual reading and most especially making a good confession and receiving sacramental absolution. Although the practices may have evolved over the centuries, the focus remains the same: to repent of sin, to renew our faith and to prepare to celebrate joyfully the mysteries of our salvation. FR. WILLIAM SAUNDERS

MINISTRY MUSINGS

PRAYING DURING A VISIT

Continued from:

A GUIDE TO VISITING THE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

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Sharing a prayer out loud is very meaningful to many but NOT all people.

If you know that the person expects and wants prayer, offer prayer.

Some people are private and protective, particularly concerning their prayer life.

People have different beliefs about how prayer is effective.

People can be offended by religious language that does not represent their experience of God and understanding of prayer.

People have been wounded by people who have "preyed upon them" rather than prayed for them.

If you do not know someone well, you can ask, "What brings you comfort during this time?"

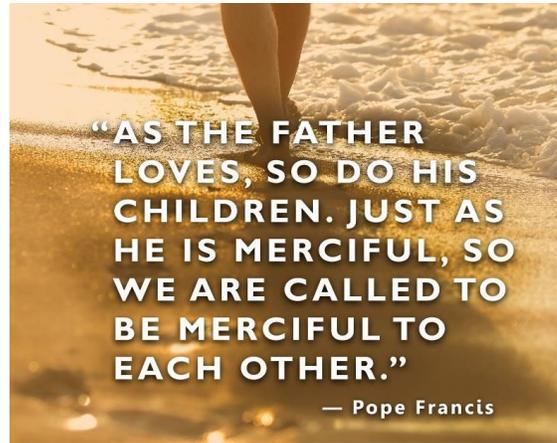
Many people will say prayer or Scripture. You can follow up on what they share as being comforting.

You may ask how they like to pray: alone, together, now or later. They may want to share their own prayer or have you pray with them now.

They may prefer for you to pray later when they are alone. If they want prayer now, you can ask about what concerns they want to address in the prayer.

Sometimes concerns are mentioned that are surprising and have not been addressed in the visit. Leave some time to address those concerns. Keep the prayer short, specific and accurately hopeful.

Share any affirmations that you honestly have, such as how honored you are to witness their story.



Important Items

There are many parish celebrations offered this Holy Season. Encourage someone you know to volunteer and help with these celebrations. We need to reach out to those around us so they may experience the same sense of belonging you cherish.

Take time to be still and know GOD

March 5th

OUTREACH that's us!!!! Come by the gym and enjoy a cinnamon roll and a cup of coffee after the Sunday Masses.

Spring PASTORAL CARE SESSIONS at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton are under way. The next sessions are March 11 and March 25, 2017. Several parishioners are involved in these sessions. Please pray for everyone involved.

A fall series on October 14, October 28 and November 11 will be at a location in the southern sector of the diocese and announced at a later time.

Ministry of Consolation Debriefing is April 1st. at Christ the King

If you haven't picked up your new ID Badge they are in the "cupboard office".

Please continue to pray for the Pilot Bereavement Program.

"Discover your mission and begin to live the life you are supposed to live, and you will discover the beauty and joy of life, even in the midst of the crosses."

JOHN R. WOOD

Taken from *Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Mission.*

