

PRESENTED BY: FR. CHARLES SMITH, SVD

BOWMAN-FRANCIS MINISTRY

LENTEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY



Table of Contents

MEDITATION	3
CHAPTER 1 – SO IT BEGINS	4
Weekly Applications	6
CHAPTER 2 – TRANSFORMATION	8
Weekly Applications	10
CHAPTER 3 – WOMAN AT THE WELL	12
Weekly Applications	14
CHAPTER 4 – WHO SINNED	16
Weekly Applications	18
CHAPTER 5 – DEAD AND BURIED	20
Weekly Applications	22
CHAPTER 6 – HOLY WEEK	24
Palm Sunday Prayer	25
Monday – Holy Week Prayer	26
Tuesday – Holy Week Prayer	27
Wednesday – Holy Week Prayer and Reflection	28
Holy Thursday Prayer	29
Good Friday Prayer	30
Holy Saturday Prayer	31
Easter Resurrection Sunday Prayer	32
2023 Virtual Lenten Bible Study Feedback Form	33

Meditation



I KNOW ME, I LOVE ME, I ACCEPT ME, I FORGIVE ME, GOD LIVES WITHIN ME!

Oh, Gracious and Merciful God, it is hard to trust in Your words. They seem too good to be true! I know that I am not a perfect being. I am a sinner and don't deserve Your mercy.

Oh, Gracious and Merciful God, I have ignored You for so long. I have felt Your absence in my life. How can You be so good to me and wait for me to come around and turn my heart and soul back to You? I need to seek Your love, Your forgiveness, and Your blessings in my life. I need to believe in Your goodness and justice. Help me Oh God, to have faith and trust in You. Help me to change my life and ways so that I am no longer afraid of You, and I receive Your love unconditionally!

PRAYER is communicating with God, Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

POWER is of will and spirit.

PASSION is for life. Never to give up on your journey of life.

PURPOSE is finding meaning in life.

PLAN is having spiritual strategies that lead to holiness and wellness in life.

PEACE is a state of mental, spiritual, and emotional calmness, with no worries, fear, or stress.

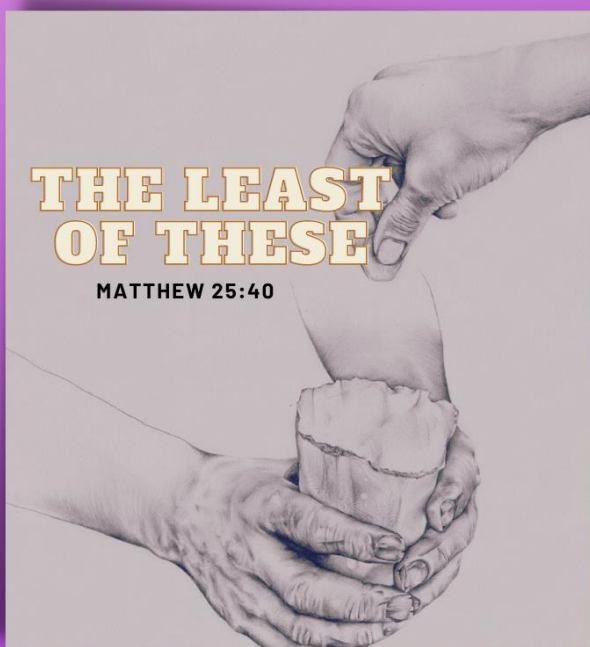
POSITIVE is strategies and advice for Peace of Mind.

1. Minimize the time you spend in reading newspapers or watching the news on tv because most of the news are negative news. You cannot do anything about them. Why should you think about them and feel stressed and anxious?
2. Stay away from negative conversations and negative people.
3. Don't hold grudges. Learn to forget and forgive.
4. Don't spend too many hours working and leaving no time for anything else.
5. Don't be jealous of other people. Jealousy means that you have low self-esteem, and therefore, consider yourself inferior to others. Jealousy and low self-esteem, often, lead to lack of peace of mind.
6. Accept what cannot be changed,
7. Don't dwell on the past. We cannot change the past; but we can live in the now – the present moment.
8. Learn to be more patient and tolerant with family, friends, co-workers, employees, and everyone else.
9. Don't take everything too personal. A certain degree of emotional and mental detachment is very helpful.
10. Learn to focus your mind. When you can focus your mind, you can more easily reject worries and anxieties.
11. Practicing meditation and mindfulness a few minutes a day will make a difference in your life.

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LENTEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY



Week 1
"SO IT BEGINS"

MATTHEW 4:1-11

First Sunday Of Lent

Are Sundays part of Lent? The simple answer is yes. Sundays are included as part of Lent, as explained by Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar. The liturgy of the Sundays of Lent is the base of all the Lenten liturgies building up to Holy Week. Each Sunday shapes the rest of the week’s liturgical focus. For those parishes with a Catechumen Program, the Mass readings are particularly important to us. These readings tie into the three scrutiny and presentations of the Creed and Lord’s Prayer. Even in Lent, Mother Church preserves the primacy of Sunday as a joyful feast commemorating the Resurrection of Christ. The Spirit of Sunday must be considered while evaluating Lenten practices, prayers, and penances on Sunday. Ultimately, a final decision or discernment rests between GOD and YOU.

Prayer:

Walk with us, O God, as we enter the Lenten Season. Remind us of Your presence in all that we do. Help prepare us, O God, for the journey ahead of us. Stay with us through the wilderness, through the towns, and all the way to Jerusalem. Remain aware of our needs and anxieties and comfort us like a mother. When the darkness becomes too much, You, O God, will be our light on the Lenten path. Amen.

<p>SCRIPTURE READINGS:</p> <p>1st Reading ❖ Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7</p> <p>2nd Reading ❖ Romans 5:12-19</p> <p>Gospel ❖ Matthew 4:1-11</p>	<p>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:</p> <p>Take a few minutes to reflect on OR journal through these questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the meaning of Lent? • What would you reflect on during Lent?
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First Sunday of Lent video message titled **“So It Begins”**.

What did you learn from Sunday’s message?

1. What would you like to change about yourself?
2. How would you go about doing it?
3. Think about what it means not only to forgive.
4. Identify a problem you have been procrastinating about. What should your first step be in dealing with it.

WEEKLY APPLICATIONS

“The Word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God.” (Pope Francis)

The goal of Lent is to refocus on the nature of the gospel, remembering the deep sacrifice, the sorrow, and the heaviness leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus.

Daily, we are tempted to move away from the cross. Lent has a beautiful way of putting us in our place—a place where we remember the unavoidable necessity of the cross. *We are hopeless and helpless without the cross.*

Author John Stott said, “The cross is the blazing fire at which the flame of our love is kindled but we have to get near enough to it for its sparks to fall on us.”

Read the daily scripture readings. Answer the discussion questions. Meditate on the weekly message throughout the following weeks.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> Artist of souls, you sculpted a people for yourself out of the rocks of wilderness and fasting. Help us as we take up your invitation to prayer and simplicity, that the discipline of these forty days may sharpen our hunger for the feast of your holy friendship. Wet our thirst for the living water You offer through Jesus Christ. Amen.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> God of the covenant, in the glory of the cross Your Son embraced the power of death and broke its hold over Your people. In this time of repentance, draw all people to Yourself, that we who confess Jesus as Lord may put aside the deeds of death and accept the life of your kingdom. Amen</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> God of the living, through baptism we pass from the shadow of death to the light of the resurrection. Remain with us and give us hope that, rejoicing in the gift of the Spirit who gives life to our mortal flesh, we may be clothed with the garment of immortality, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> Matthew 25:31-46</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Isaiah 55:10-11</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> Matthew 6:7-15</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Jonah 3:1-10</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> Luke 11:29-32</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Why is there poverty and suffering in the world?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Why are so many people depressed?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What are we all so afraid of?</p>

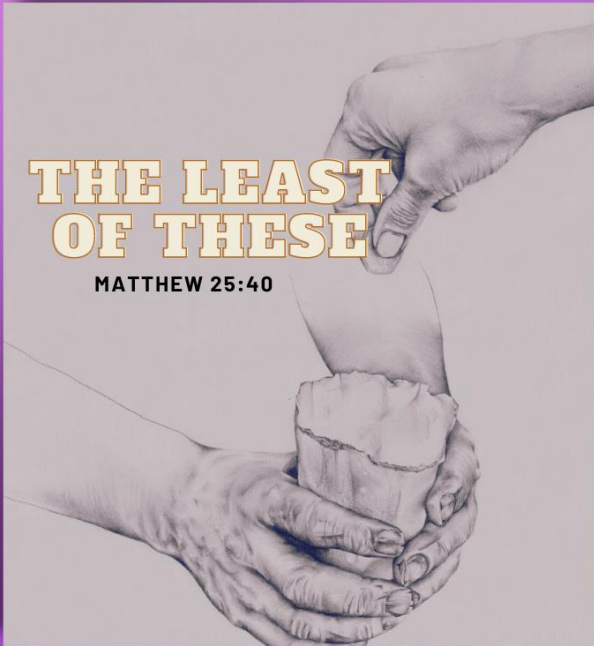
THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> God of wilderness and water, Your son was baptized and tempted as we are. Guide us through this season, that we may not avoid struggle, but open ourselves to blessings, through the cleansing depths of repentance and the heaven-rending words of the Spirit. Amen</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Lord God, Our Father, as we go out into the world today, we remember that Your Son was tempted by the forces of evil but chose faithfulness; rather than popularity; service instead of fame; sacrifice instead of power. These temptations still come to us Lord and we are far weaker, and so we pray for the strength to shun them as He did so that we may be of use to God and to man.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Lord God, we think of the troubled parts of the world, where there is so much suffering, where darkness prevails and where the light of the Lord seems so far away. We pray for people whose humanity is denied by others.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Esther C; 14-16, 23-25</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> Matthew 7:7-12</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Ezekiel 18:21-28</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> Matthew 5:20-26</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Deuteronomy 26:16-19</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> Matthew 5:43-48</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> How would God want us to respond to aggression and terrorism?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> How does one obtain true peace?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What does it mean to live in the present moment?</p>



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**LENTEN VIRTUAL
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Week 2
"TRANSFORMATION"

MATTHEW 17:1-9

Second Sunday Of Lent

Are Sundays part of Lent? The simple answer is yes. Sundays are included as part of Lent, as explained by Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar. The liturgy of the Sundays of Lent is the base of all the Lenten liturgies building up to Holy Week. Each Sunday shapes the rest of the week’s liturgical focus. For those parishes with a Catechumen Program, the Mass readings are particularly important to us. These readings tie into the three scrutiny and presentations of the Creed and Lord’s Prayer. Even in Lent, Mother Church preserves the primacy of Sunday as a joyful feast commemorating the Resurrection of Christ. The Spirit of Sunday must be considered while evaluating Lenten practices, prayers, and penances on Sunday. Ultimately, a final decision or discernment rests between GOD and YOU.

Prayer:

Loving God, there is so much darkness in my life and I hide from You. Take my hand and lead me out of the shadows of my fear. Help me to change my heart. Bring me to Your truth and help me to respond to Your generous love. Let me recognize the fullness of Your love which will fill my life. Free me from the darkness in my heart.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1 st Reading ❖ Genesis 12:1-4 2 nd Reading ❖ 2 Timothy 1:8-10 Gospel ❖ Matthew 17:1-9	Take a few minutes to reflect on OR journal through these questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have a gracious and patient attitude with the people in my life? • Do I look for the best in others, or do I have a judgmental attitude?

Second Sunday of Lent video message titled **“OVERCOME TEMPTATION”**.

What did you learn from Sunday’s message?

1. Give an example of how God led you to recently to a decision or an action by communicating through God’s Spirit or God’s word.
2. Why is attitude important in confronting and acting on difficult situations?
3. Think of an unlikeable person in your life and a specific action you can take to show that you care about him or her.
4. What is the difference between joy and happiness? Why is the former preferable to the latter?
5. When was the last time you led someone to Christ?
6. Why is a more hopeful attitude both valid and effective in dealing with difficult situations?

WEEKLY APPLICATIONS

“The Word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God.” (Pope Francis)

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Daily, we are tempted to move away from the cross. Lent has a beautiful way of putting us in our place—a place where we remember the unavoidable necessity of the cross. *We are hopeless and helpless without the cross.*

Author John Stott said, “The cross is the blazing fire at which the flame of our love is kindled but we have to get near enough to it for its sparks to fall on us.”

Read the daily scripture readings. Answer the discussion questions. Meditate on the weekly message throughout the following weeks.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> Lord, Your commandment of love is so simple and so challenging. Help me to let go of my pride and to be humble in my penance. I want only to live the way You ask me to love; to love the way You ask me to live. I ask this through Your Son, Jesus, who stands at my side today and always.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> God in heaven and in my life, guide me and protect me. I so often believe I can save myself and I always end in failure. Lead me with Your love away from harm and guide me on the right path. May Your Spirit inspire the Church and make us an instrument of Your love and guidance. Thank You for Your care for me.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> God of Love, through this Lenten journey, purify my desires to serve You. Free me from any temptations to judge others and to place myself above others. Please let me surrender even my impatience with others, that with Your love and Your grace, I might be less and less absorbed with myself, and more and more full of the desire to follow You, in laying down my life according to Your example.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Daniel 9:4-10</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Isaiah 1:10, 16-20</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Jeremiah 18:18-20</p>
<p><u>GOSPEL</u> Luke 6:36-38</p>	<p><u>GOSPEL</u> Matthew 23:1-12</p>	<p><u>GOSPEL</u> Matthew 20:17-28</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What is our greatest distraction?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Is current religion serving its purpose?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Describe heaven and how to get there?</p>

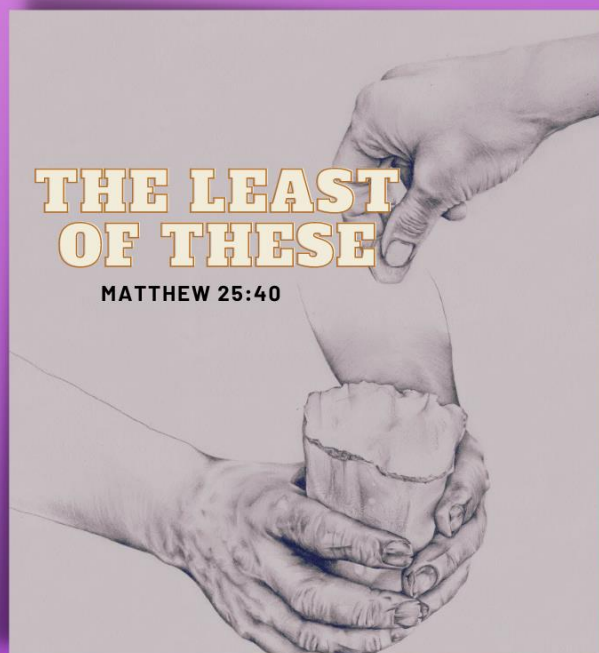
THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> Loving God, I hear Your invitation, "Come back to me" and I am filled with such a longing to return to You. Show me the way to return. Lead me this day in good works I do in Your name and send Your Spirit to guide me and strengthen my faith. I ask only to feel Your love in my life today.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Loving God, caring parent, I am a child who so often turns my back on Your love. Please accept my small acts of sorrow today and help to release me from the self-absorption that closes my heart to You. As I journey through Lent, let me remember the feast You have prepared for me in the resurrection and let me be filled with thanks to You.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> God of infinite love, You shower me with limitless gifts in my life. In my every thought and action today guide me to the bright and loving light of Your kingdom. Help me to be aware of the many ways You allow me to share in Your life so intimately today. Thank You for the gifts You have placed in my life. Let me be grateful every moment of this day.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Jeremiah 17:5-10 GOSPEL Luke 16:19-31</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28 GOSPEL Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> 2 Samuel 7:4-5, 12-14, 16 - Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22 GOSPEL Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Describe God?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What is the meaning of life?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What are the greatest quality humans possessing?</p>



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Week 3 "WOMAN AT THE WELL"

JOHN 4:5-42

Third Sunday Of Lent

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Prayer:

Loving Father, so many times I turn away from You and always You welcome me back. Your mercy and love give me confidence. Thank You for the invitation to share, fast and pray so that You can form a new heart within me. Your powerful compassion for my weaknesses leads me to ask for mercy and await with great hope the Easter joy You share with us.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1 st Reading ❖ Exodus 17:3-7 2 nd Reading ❖ Romans 5:1-2, 5-8 Gospel ❖ John 4:5-42	Take a few minutes to reflect on OR journal through these questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I spending enough time studying His Word and praying? • Do I have a thankful heart, or am I constantly complaining about situations and people in my life?

Third Sunday of Lent video message titled **“WOMAN AT THE WELL”**.

What did you learn from Sunday’s message?

1. When was the last time you just sat still and focused on the Lord?
2. Do you feel that a lot of things in life are beyond your control? What do you do in such situations?
3. What is robbing you of peace today? Is it = guilt, worry, a job change, finances, and/or a difficult person?
4. What kind of peace – spiritual, emotional, or relational – are you lacking most right now? Why?

WEEKLY APPLICATIONS

“The Word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God.” (Pope Francis)

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Read the daily scripture readings. Answer the discussion questions. Meditate on the weekly message throughout the following weeks.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> Merciful God, free Your Church from the sins of this world and protect us from the evil we see and the evil we prefer to ignore. We need Your guidance Lord, for we cannot do this alone. Only with Your help can we be saved. Thank You for Your desire to save us and love us.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> God of infinite love, I thank You for this reminder of Your love and Your call that we be more patient, gentle and compassionate with others. Here in the middle of Lent, I turn to You to beg for Your help. Please soften my heart. Help me to let go of judging others. I ask you this, in Jesus' name.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> God, You love me as Your own child. May I bend my life and will toward You so that I might accept Your teaching and guidance. I am so grateful for Your support in my life, now and in the eternal life You are preparing for me. I beg for Your help and Spirit in my life today.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> 2 Kings 5:1-15</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Daniel 3:25, 34-43</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9</p>
<p><u>GOSPEL</u> Luke 4:24-30</p>	<p><u>GOSPEL</u> Matthew 18:21-35</p>	<p><u>GOSPEL</u> Matthew 5:17-19</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What is it that prevents people from living to their full potential?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What is your one wish for the world?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What is wisdom and how do we gain it?</p>

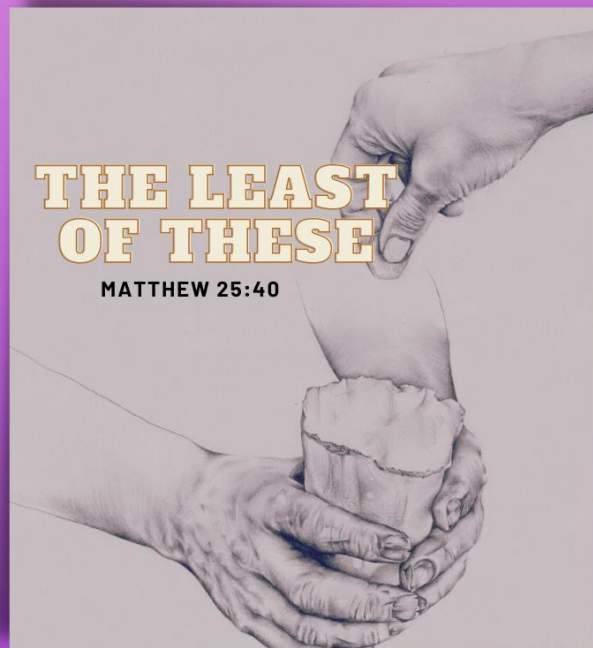
THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> Loving God, I hear Your invitation, "Come back to me" and I am filled with such a longing to return to You. Show me the way to return. Lead me this day in good works I do in Your name and send Your Spirit to guide me and strengthen my faith. I ask only to feel Your love in my life today.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> God of Mercy, I feel my heart overflowing with Your tenderness. I sense Your loving touch deep within my soul. I ask for Your help in my weakness that I might be faithful to Your word, and I am so grateful that Your mercy for my failings is as strong as Your unbounded love for me.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> God of Mercy and Understanding, I know that with help I can open my heart more fully to the mysteries of the suffering and death of your Son. Help me to be humble in this journey and remember that any mercy and compassion I feel is a gift from You. I await the joy of Easter with new longing and patience.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Jeremiah 7:23-28 <u>GOSPEL</u> Luke 11:14-23</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10 <u>GOSPEL</u> Luke 1:26-38</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Hosea 6:1-6 <u>GOSPEL</u> Luke 18:9-14</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What is the relationship between science and religion?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What should be humanity's goal?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What harsh truths do you prefer to ignore?</p>



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Week 4
"WHO SINNED"

JOHN 9:1-41

Fourth Third Sunday Of Lent

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Prayer:

Loving Creator of mine, I feel the pace quicken, the time draw near. I am filled with joy as I move toward Easter and the promised reconciliation with You. Teach me to follow the example of Your Son, to be worthy of being called one of His people - a Christian. Help me to live each day as He did and turn hatred to love and conflict to peace. I await the new life with eagerness, faith, and a deep gratitude.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1 st Reading ❖ 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13 2 nd Reading ❖ Ephesians 5:8-14 Gospel ❖ John 9:1-41	Take a few minutes to reflect on OR journal through these questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the lurking sin problems that still tempt me? • Do I stand up for my Christian beliefs, or do I compromise my faith in order to be politically correct?

Fourth Sunday of Lent video message titled “**WHO SINNED**”.

What did you learn from Sunday’s message?

1. Which test of patience – interruption, inconvenience, irritation, inactivity – is affecting you the most now at this present time?
2. Think of one person with whom you are angry and impatient. What steps will you take to change those feelings?
3. What does it mean to be a kind person? How can we become kinder?

WEEKLY APPLICATIONS

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(Pope Francis)

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Read the daily scripture readings. Answer the discussion questions. Meditate on the weekly message throughout the following weeks.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> God who created me, You offer me new life through Your Son and through the gift of Your sacraments. While I see new life all around me, I don't always recognize the new life You offer me. Help me to grow this Lent in an awareness of the gifts You place in my life and in a greater appreciation for Your care. Give me the courage to ask for help.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Joyful praise in Lent? I'm not sure I always feel that. I ask You to help me prepare to understand and embrace the paschal mystery in my life. I don't always see the beauty and mystery of this season and often I run from the pain. Help me to see how Your saving grace and Your loving touch in my life can fill me with joyful praise of the salvation You have sent to me.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Loving and merciful God, I am so aware of my sins and weaknesses. But as painfully aware of my faults as I am, let me also remember Your tender love, your gentle and limitless forgiveness. I come before You filled with pain and guilt but look into Your eyes and see the forgiving love I so long for in my life. Help me to forgive the same way. Teach me to love as You love.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Isaiah 65:17-21</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> John 4:43-54</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> John 5:1-16</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Isaiah 49:8-15</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> John 5:17-30</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Where does your self-worth come from?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> If you could teach the entire world just once concept, what would it be?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Do you ask enough questions about Christ and your walk with Him, or do you just settle for what you know?</p>

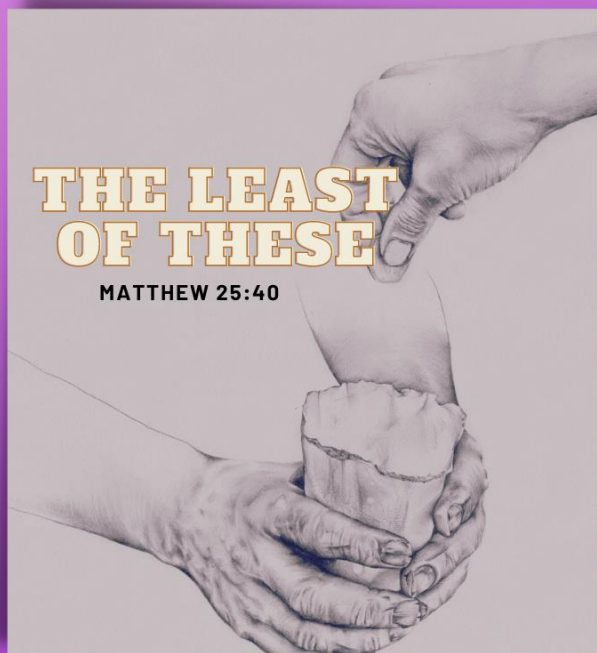
THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> Merciful Father/ Loving Mother, I know that the tiny sacrifices I make this Lent can never serve as a real penance in my life. But help me to make my whole life one of following your Son. I am filled with Your love. Let your love shine out from within me and guide my life in this sacred journey toward the Easter joy You offer me.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Loving God of forgiveness, I come before You humbled and sad in the face of my own repeated failings. I hold out my hands as a petitioner would, asking for mercy. It is then that I feel You reach out and take my hand in Your loving grasp. Thank you for the love You pour out on me so lavishly. Help me to follow more closely in the path You have set for me, the path of Your Son.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Lord, what You ask of my life seems so right. It is how I want to live, following Your Son, Jesus, so closely. And yet I fail so often to stay on that path. I cannot do it alone, loving Lord. I need Your help and guidance. I need to remember Your love for me, and I want to remember how very much I need You in my life.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Exodus 32:7-14 GOSPEL John 5:31-47</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Wisdom 2:1, 12-22 GOSPEL John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Jeremiah 11:18-20 GOSPEL John 7:40-53</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Will religion ever become obsolete?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Is free will real or just an illusion?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> Does hardship make your faith in God stronger?</p>



PRESENTED BY: FR. CHARLES SMITH, SVD

BOWMAN-FRANCIS MINISTRY

LENTEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY



Week 5
"DEAD AND BURIED"

JOHN 11:1-45

Fifth Sunday Of Lent

Are Sundays part of Lent? The simple answer is yes. Sundays are included as part of Lent, as explained by Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar. The liturgy of the Sundays of Lent is the base of all the Lenten liturgies building up to Holy Week. Each Sunday shapes the rest of the week’s liturgical focus. For those parishes with a Catechumen Program, the Mass readings are particularly important to us. These readings tie into the three scrutiny and presentations of the Creed and Lord’s Prayer. Even in Lent, Mother Church preserves the primacy of Sunday as a joyful feast commemorating the Resurrection of Christ. The Spirit of Sunday must be considered while evaluating Lenten practices, prayers, and penances on Sunday. Ultimately, a final decision or discernment rests between GOD and YOU.

Prayer:

My loving Lord, it's so hard to love the world sometimes and to love it the way Jesus did seems impossible. Help me to be inspired by His love and guided by His example. Most of all, I want to accept that I can't do it alone, and that trying is an arrogance of self-centeredness. I need You, dear God, to give me support in this journey. Show me how to unlock my heart so that I am less selfish. Let me be less fearful of the pain and darkness that will be transformed by You into Easter joy.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1 st Reading ❖ Ezekiel 37:12-14 2 nd Reading ❖ Romans 8:8-11 Gospel ❖ John 11:1-45	Take a few minutes to reflect on OR journal through these questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is God dealing with me about right now? • Is there anyone in my life from whom I need to ask forgiveness or pursue reconciliation?

Fifth Sunday of Lent video message titled **“DEAD AND BURIED”**.

What did you learn from Sunday’s message?

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Heavenly Father, O Lord Almighty, hear my prayer. I have a burden on my heart, a sin to confess. For I am human and sinful and don’t always live up to whom You want me to be. I come before You today with a humble heart to confess the mistakes I’ve made - both by what I’ve done and by what I haven’t done. O Lord, hear my prayer and forgive my failings. Lead me to do better and not repeat these mistakes. Help me to live a life that better reflects You. For You are faithful and just, loving, and compassionate. O Lord, in Your mercy, forgive me and purify my heart. Amen

WEEKLY APPLICATIONS

“The Word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God.” (Pope Francis)

The goal of Lent is to refocus on the nature of the gospel, remembering the deep sacrifice, the sorrow, and the heaviness leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus.

Daily, we are tempted to move away from the cross. Lent has a beautiful way of putting us in our place—a place where we remember the unavoidable necessity of the cross. *We are hopeless and helpless without the cross.*

Author John Stott said, “The cross is the blazing fire at which the flame of our love is kindled but we have to get near enough to it for its sparks to fall on us.”

Read the daily scripture readings. Answer the discussion questions. Meditate on the weekly message throughout the following weeks.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> God of love, I know that You are the source of all that is good and graced in my life. Help me to move from the life of sin to which I so often cling, into the new life of grace You offer me. You know what I need to prepare for Your kingdom. Bless me with those gifts.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Loving God, You have heard my complaints and my impatience. Sometimes I become frightened when I move away from You. Guide my heart back to You. Help me to think beyond my own wants and to desire only to do Your will. Thank You for the many blessings in my life and for the ways I feel Your presence.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Loving Creator, I know in Your great love for me, You see the deep sorrow in my heart. Hear my prayers which are offered with such trust in You. Be with me in both mind and heart as I renew my life in Your spirit.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or 13:41-62</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> John 8:12-20</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Numbers 21:4-9</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> John 8:21-30</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95</p> <p><u>GOSPEL</u> John 8:31-42</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> In your opinion, how does one become a Christian?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What are you reading that is strengthening your walk with Christ?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS</u> What is your greatest strength? What are you doing to develop it?</p>

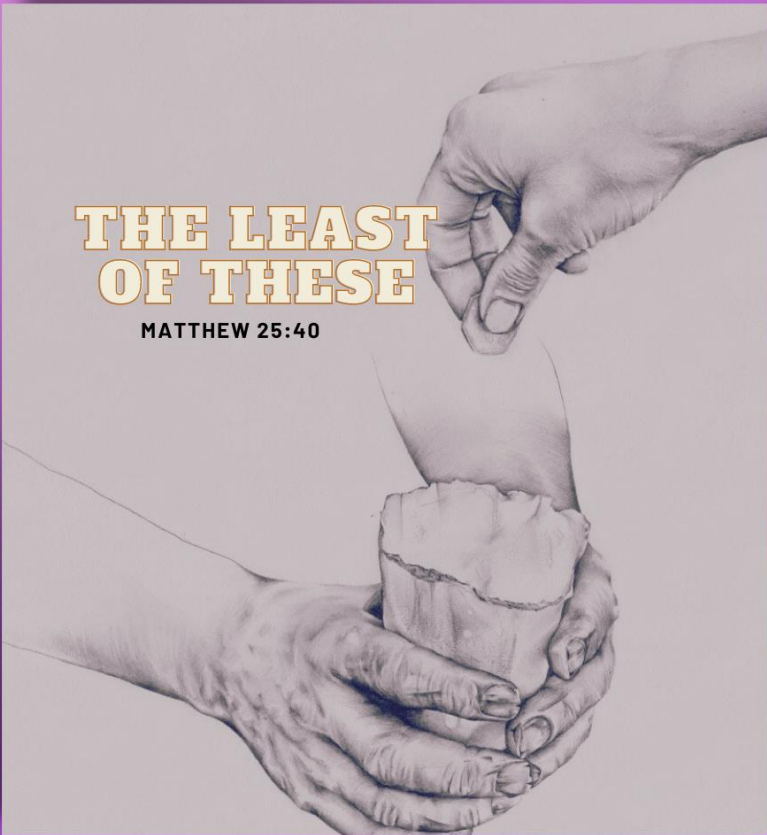
THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><u>PRAYER</u> Lord, all I want is to be faithful to You in my life, but so often I fail. Free me from my many sins and guide me to the life I will share with You. I wait for Your promise to be fulfilled with great hope in my heart and Your praise on my lips.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Most forgiving Lord, again and again You welcome me back into Your loving arms. Grant me freedom from the heavy burdens of sin that weigh me down and keep me so far from You.</p>	<p><u>PRAYER</u> Loving God, Your eternal watchfulness keeps me safe from harm. I am filled with a great happiness when I feel Your endless love for me. Thank You for Your care for me, one of Your children. I ask You to protect from harm those who will soon be Your children, joined in the joy of Your church. Please continue to pour out Your blessings on all of us who have been given the lifegiving waters of baptism.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Genesis 17:3-9 <u>GOSPEL</u> John 8:51-59</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Jeremiah 20:10-13 <u>GOSPEL</u> John 10:31-42</p>	<p><u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u> Ezekiel 37:21-28 <u>GOSPEL</u> John 11:45-56</p>
<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS</u> What is something you consider to be a great personal success? Why was it so significant?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> What is the key to maintaining balance in your life?</p>	<p><u>DISCUSSION QUESTION</u> If you could know God personally, would you be interested?</p>



PRESENTED BY: FR. CHARLES SMITH, SVD

BOWMAN-FRANCIS MINISTRY

HOLY WEEK





Palm Sunday Prayer

Lord God,

I give You thanks, for You are good, and Your mercy is endless. Here I stand, at the start of this Holy Week, this week in which Your church remembers Jesus' passion and death, and I am distracted by many things. Turn my eyes now to the One who comes in Your name. The one who opens the gates of righteousness. The one who answers when we call. I bless You, Lord, for shining Your light upon me, and for sending Your son to us, in human frailty. To walk the road, we walk. Open my eyes that I may see him coming and may praise him with a pure heart. And my walk in the way of His suffering and share also in His resurrection. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Go to www.bowmanfrancis.org to hear Fr. Charles' Palm Sunday message.

Monday - Holy Week Prayer

[Matthew 21:10-17](#); [John 12:1-8](#)

Lord God,

Six days before His death, your son sat with Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, and ate dinner with His friends. Once again, your gospel tells us, Martha served, and Mary knelt at Jesus' feet to anoint them with costly perfume. The disciple who was about to betray Him said that it was a waste. He didn't care about the poor, really – He just wanted to fill his own pockets and make Mary feel ashamed. Lord God, often we cannot discern what is best - when to pour out costly perfume for Your sake, even if the world thinks it a waste. When to be busy serving, or when to rest at Your Son's feet and learn. Give us ears to hear You and eyes to see. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

REFLECTION - Expressing Your Love of God

Then Judas the Iscariot, one of His disciples, and the one who would betray Him, said, “Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days' wages and given to the poor?” [John 12:4-5](#). Jesus was with His disciples at the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. He regularly spent time at their home and was close to them. This meal took place just before Jesus entered into Jerusalem for the first Palm Sunday and Holy Week. It was six days before Jesus would die on the cross. Recall that Lazarus had recently been raised from the dead by Jesus and also that Mary, Lazarus' sister, was deeply devoted to Jesus and is recorded as the one who sat at His feet, while her sister Martha served. During this visit, Mary offered another act of devotion to Jesus when she anointed Him with “a liter of costly perfumed oil.” She offered Him an act of love and devotion. The Scripture passage above records Judas' response as he also was at the meal. Jesus rebukes Judas and defends the act of devotion given by Mary, and the meal continues on.

One clear lesson this teaches us, is that nothing is too good for our Lord. It's true that we must do our part to help care for the poor, but Jesus' response to Judas is quite interesting. He says, “Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.” Jesus was not downplaying the importance of caring for the poor; He was emphasizing the importance of offering acts of love and devotion to Him.

As we enter into this the holiest week of the year, we are given this image of Mary lavishing upon Jesus this liter of costly perfumed oil as a way of inviting us to do the same. Though we serve Christ in others who are in need, we must also seek to regularly offer Him devotion and love directly, even in ways that others may think is excessive. Honoring Him, expressing our love, spending time with various devotions, praying for extended periods of time, and even offering Him our financial resources are all ways in which we give Jesus the glory that is due Him.

Reflect, today, upon ways in which you can imitate this act of loving devotion offered by Mary to Jesus. In what ways can you pour forth in an abundant way your time, money, talents, and energy upon our Lord? How can you best express your devotion to Him this Holy Week? Seek out ways to do this directly for the one and simple reason that you love our Lord and want to express that love this week. *My glorious Jesus, You are worthy of all praise and honor. You are worthy of our deepest devotion and love. As I enter into this Holy Week, I pray that it will be a time in which I may express my deepest love for You. Help me to pour forth that love in abundance this week so as to show You the glory and praise You deserve. Jesus, I trust in You.*

Tuesday - Holy Week Prayer

Matthew 26:36-46; Hebrews 5:7-9

Lord God, the message of the cross is difficult to take. How can death give way to life? How can weakness be strength? Yet Your word says that Jesus, being God, took on human flesh and suffered the worst kind of death. How can this be? This message is indeed difficult to take. But your foolishness is wiser than our wisdom. Your weakness is greater than our strength. Help us to know that none of us can boast before You. It is only in Christ Jesus that we can boast. In his name, we ask You to help our unbelief. That we may love You and walk in the way Jesus taught us. In his name, Amen.

REFLECTION - The Glory of God in All Things

“Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in himself, and He will glorify Him at once.” [John 13:31–32](#) Jesus speaks this line about Himself being glorified immediately after Judas leaves the supper to go forth to betray Him. Jesus had just finished washing the feet of His disciples, and soon He would finish the Last Supper, go to the Garden of Gethsemane, be arrested, beaten, and crucified. And this was to all take place through the betrayal of one of the Twelve. Yet rather than speak of these pending events in a fearful or anxious way, Jesus points to the glory He will receive through them. Everything in life has the potential to become an instrument of the glory of God. Even our sin can end in God’s glory when we repent and receive God’s forgiveness. It will not be our sin that glorifies God, but His mercy poured forth from the Cross upon us that gives Him glory. The same is true with the events of Holy Week. When looked at from a purely human perspective, what Jesus endured was tragic and horrific. One of His closest companions betrayed Him. The religious leaders of the time betrayed Him. The civil authorities betrayed Him. And all of the disciples, except John, fled in fear as Jesus was betrayed. But Jesus did not look at any of this through human eyes alone. He saw it all from the eternal perspective and clearly taught that all of these seemingly tragic events would end in His glory.

When we commit ourselves to the following of Christ, we can be assured that we will also share in His Cross. We will experience the sins of others, encounter mistreatment, and have to endure various sufferings. The question for us all as we have these encounters in life is whether we will endure them in anger and despair or with the hopeful confidence of our Lord. Again, everything in life has the potential to become an instrument of the glory of God. Nothing in life has the power to steal away that glory when we keep our eyes upon the will of God and His power to use all for His glory.

Reflect, today, upon your call in life to see everything from the divine perspective. If you are upset, angry, despairing or confused at times, know that God wants to bring clarity and grace to every situation. He wants to show you how you can share in His divine mission of transforming every evil into God’s glory. Seek out the ways that your life must give glory to God in everything, especially those things that seem incapable of being used for good. The more an experience in life seems incapable of being used for God’s glory, the more that experience is capable of giving true glory to God.

My glorious Lord, You brought forth good from all things. Even the grave evil of Your betrayal was transformed into a manifestation of Your glory. I offer to You, dear Lord, all that I endure in life and pray that You will be glorified in all things, and that my life will continually become a manifestation of the glory due Your holy name. Jesus, I trust in You.

Wednesday - Holy Week Prayer

Matthew 26:27-56; 1 Corinthians 1:18

Lord God, we tremble to think that it was one of Jesus' own friends who betrayed Him. One who sat by Him, who broke bread with Him. Give us strength, we pray, to walk faithfully with Jesus, even when the road we walk is rocky. Even when the message of the cross seems like foolishness and even when we feel betrayed. You, Lord, are always faithful. We stumble; we become lost; but you are steady and sure. Give us the grace to endure our troubles, and reveal to us the glory of Your kingdom, through Your son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

REFLECTION - Rejecting Empty Promises

One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand Him over. [Matthew 26:14-16](#) The desire for money can become a powerful incentive to betray our Lord. In this Gospel passage, it seems clear that Judas' betrayal was based on his desire for money. He most likely had some level of faith in our Lord, or he wouldn't have become His disciple. But even if Judas did have some level of faith, his desire for money appeared to overshadow the faith he may have had. One of the central lessons we can learn from Judas is that the desire for money is a powerful incentive for the decisions we make. So many of the great saints have taught us that the path to holiness consists, first, in a purification of all our disordered affections. And, since one of the most powerful attachments that many struggle with is an attachment to money, this is an important desire to purify in all of our lives.

It's true that material possessions are not evil when they are used for the fulfillment of God's will. But the desire for more, for an excess, will always cloud our ability to see clearly the will of God and live for His glory alone. Once Judas had betrayed our Lord, and Jesus was arrested, recall that Judas "deeply regretted what he had done." And during Jesus' trial, Judas went back to the chief priests and said "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood" in an apparent attempt to stop the trial. But Jesus' death was set in motion and could not be stopped. As a result, Judas returned the money and sadly went off to hang himself (See [Matthew 27:3-5](#)).

The desire Judas had for money clouded his thinking. And his sin did to him what sin always does. As soon as his sin of betrayal was done, Judas saw the consequences of that choice. And the consequences grieved him deeply. He learned that choosing sin ends with an empty promise. He realized that thirty pieces of silver was not worth the value of his soul. But of course, even then Judas could have repented and received the mercy of God. But he didn't. He simply ended his life in ultimate despair.

Reflect, today, upon the witness of Judas. Use him as a source of meditation and self-examination this Holy Week. What is it in your life that you desire more than our Lord? What temptation clouds your thinking and leads you to choices that you know will end in emptiness? Strive to eradicate every disordered desire within you this day and choose wisely the will of God instead. Do not let yourself continue to believe the lies that keep you from making Jesus and His holy will be the one and only focus of your life.

My divine Lord, You and You alone, must become the focus of my life. You and You alone are of the greatest value in life. Help me to shed all earthly desires in life so that I will not fall into the temptations that lead to empty promises and so that I will embrace the true and fulfilling promises that come from You. Jesus, I trust in You.



Thursday (Maundy Thursday) - Holy Week Prayer

John 13:1-17; John 13:34-35

Lord God,
 You sent Your Son into the world,
 And before His hour had come,
 He washed His disciples' feet.

You had given all things into His hands.
 He had come from you, and was going to you,
 And what did He do?
 He knelt down on the floor,
 And washed His friends' feet.

He was their teacher and their Lord,
 Yet He washed their feet.
 Lord God, help us learn from His example;
 Help us to do as He has done for us.

The world will know we are His disciples
 If we love one another.
 Strengthen our hands and our wills for love
 And for service.

Keep before our eyes the image of Your Son,
 Who, being God, became a Servant for our sake.
 All glory be to Him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 One God, now and forever.

Amen.

Go to www.bowmanfrancis.org to hear Fr. Charles' Holy Thursday message.



Friday (Good Friday) - Holy Week Prayer

John 18:1-40, John 19:1-42; Isaiah 52:13-15; Isaiah 53:1-12; Hebrews 10:16-25; Psalm 22

Lord God,
 Jesus cried out to You on the cross,
 “Why have You forsaken me?”
 You seemed so far from His cry
 And from His distress.

Those who stood at the foot of the cross
 Wondered where you were,
 As they saw Jesus mocked and shamed and killed.
 Where were You then?

Lord God,
 We, too, ask where You are,
 When there is trouble and suffering and death,
 And we cry out to You for help.

Be near to us, and save us
 So that we may praise You for Your deliverance.

Lord God,
 We wait, on Friday, for the resurrection of Sunday
 And sometimes our lives seem a succession of Fridays
 And we cannot see what is “Good.”

Teach us to call Your name
 As Jesus did.
 Make us to trust in You like little children.
 In Jesus’ name,
 Amen.

Go to www.bowmanfrancis.org to hear Fr. Charles’ Good Friday message.



Saturday (Holy Saturday) - Holy Week Prayer

Matthew 17:1-6; Lamentations 3:1-9, Lamentations 3:19-24

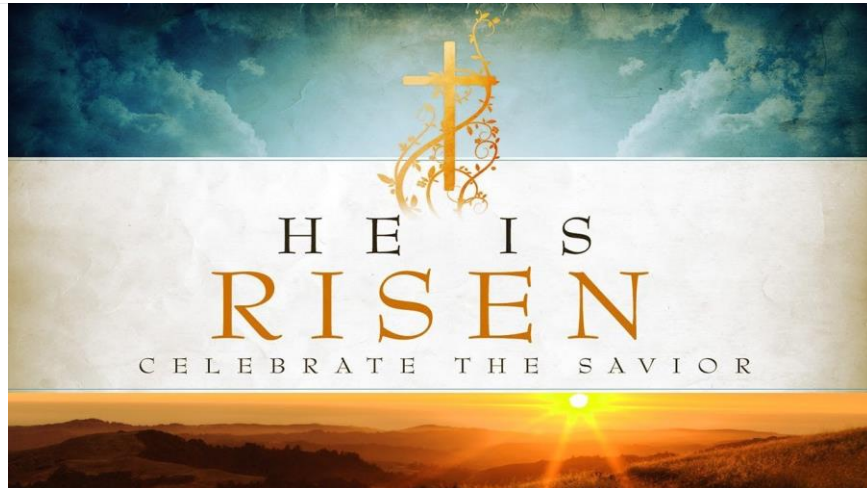
Lord God,
 On the Sabbath,
 Jesus rested.
 He was in the grave.
 He had finished His work.

To most people's eyes,
 It looked as if it were all over.
 He was dead and buried.

But only as a seed dies when it is planted in the earth,
 Not to decay, but to spring to new life.
 Teach us to take refuge in You when we are afraid
 Teach us that death is not our end.

Teach us to hope always in You
 And in the resurrection, the making of all things
 New.
 Through Jesus Christ Our Lord,
 Amen.

We encourage you to spend time with family and friends during the day.
 At night, spend time in silence listening to God and prepare for
 Resurrection Sunday.



Sunday - (Easter/Resurrection Sunday) - Holy Week Prayer

Matthew 28; Revelation 5:11-14; Psalm 118:1-2; Psalm 118:14-24

Lord God,
 You loved this world so much,
 That you gave Your one and only Son,
 That we might be called Your children too.

Lord, help us to live in the gladness and grace
 Of Easter Sunday, every day.
 Let us have hearts of thankfulness
 For Your sacrifice.

Let us have eyes that look upon
 Your grace and rejoice in our salvation.
 Help us to walk in that mighty grace
 And tell Your good news to the world.
 All for Your glory do we pray, Lord,

Amen.

Go to www.bowmanfrancis.org to hear Fr. Charles' Easter Sunday message.

Feedback Form

2023 VIRTUAL LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Thank you for attending THE BOWMAN-FRANCIS MINISTRY 2023 VIRTUAL LENTEN BIBLE STUDY SERIES. We hope you gained as much spiritual gratification out of attending the series as we did in organizing it.

We want to hear your thoughts and opinions so we can keep improving our logistics and content. Please help us evaluate our Bible Study Series by completing this survey. We will use your feedback to determine how we can shape our future events.

Was this your first time at a BOWMAN-FRANCIS MINISTRY event?

YES NO

What were a few key takeaways from the 2023 VIRTUAL LENTEN BIBLE STUDY SERIES?

Overall, how satisfied were you with the 2023 VIRTUAL LENTEN BIBLE STUDY SERIES?

1 = Very dissatisfied 5 = Very satisfied

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How satisfied were you with the following?

	NOT SATISFIED	SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	DID NOT ATTEND
Registration Process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication E-mails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bible Study Guide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Weekly Video Messages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Platform (ZOOM)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music Ministry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional Feedback

Which sessions did you find most relevant? (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

	NOT RELEVANT	RELEVANT	VERY RELEVANT	DID NOT ATTEND
Ash Wednesday Message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Week 1 ZOOM Discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Week 2 Zoom Discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Week 3 ZOOM Discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Week 4 ZOOM Discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Week 5 ZOOM Discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Week 6 ZOOM Discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Palm Sunday Message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Holy Thursday Message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good Friday Message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easter Sunday Message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional Feedback				

How satisfied were you with the weekly session content?

1 = Very dissatisfied 5 = Very satisfied

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any additional comments regarding the weekly sessions or overall agenda?

CULTURAL FAMILY

- Afro-Latino / Afro-Latina – AL
- Black / African American – BAA
- Hispanic / Latino American – HLA
- Prefer not to say.
- Asian and Pacific Islander – API
- European American – EA
- Native American and Alaska Natives – NA

AGE GROUP

- Youth (under 17)
- Young Adult (18-39)
- 40 – 49
- 50 – 59
- 60 – 69
- 70 & Up
- Prefer not to say.

Church Name (optional)

Diocese

Name (optional)

E-mail Address (optional)

City, STATE, Zip Code

The Bowman-Francis Ministry would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses will remain confidential and used to improve our contents, presentation, and audience.

Please mail the survey and any donations to:

The BOWMAN-FRANCIS MINISTRY
8681 JAFFA COURT E. DRIVE APT 31
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46236

You can also complete this confidential survey online at www.bowmanfrancis.org.