

## **8<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year C)**

**Overview:** *As Lent approaches, we are called to reflect on the fruits our lives are producing. Just as Jesus taught that a tree is known by its fruit, we must examine whether our words and actions align with His Gospel. This upcoming Lenten season of repentance and renewal offers us a chance to cultivate good fruit through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.*

### **Main Points:**

- **The Fruits of Our Lives:** Our words and actions reveal the state of our hearts. Are we bearing good fruit or producing thorns? (Luke 6:43-45)
- **Preparing for Lent:** Lent is a spiritual springtime, a time to cultivate the seeds of faith and renew our commitment to Christ.
- **The Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Just as trees need pruning, we need to be cleansed of sin to grow in holiness.
- **Lenten Practices:** Engaging in traditions like prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and the Stations of the Cross helps us focus on Christ.
- **Hope and Renewal:** This Jubilee Year of Hope is an opportunity to deepen our faith and strengthen our witness as disciples.

### **Relevant Bible Verses:**

- **Luke 6:43-45** – “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit... The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good.”
- **1 Corinthians 15:58** – “Be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord.”
- **John 2:5** – “Do whatever He tells you.”

### **Catechism References:**

- **CCC 1435** – “Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice and right, by the admission of faults...”
- **CCC 1438** – “The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice. These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works).”

### **Action Items:**

- Examine what fruits your life is producing—what needs to change?
- Commit to daily prayer, fasting, or acts of charity during Lent.
- Go to confession to prepare your heart for Easter.
- Participate in Lenten traditions like the Stations of the Cross or Lenten Bingo.
- Watch the "How to Lent" video on [Formed.org](https://www.formed.org) or [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) to deepen your understanding of the season.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- What kind of fruit am I bearing in my life? Daily? Yearly?
- How can I make this Lent the most spiritually meaningful yet?
- What sacrifices or commitments can I make to grow closer to Jesus?

### **Rap Summary**

Lent's coming and Stations of the Cross Friday nights, Renew your heart, and walk in the light.  
Reflect on your life, and look real deep. What are the fruits that others will reap?  
Like Mary said, "Do what He speaks," Follow the Lord, seek what He seeks.  
So till the soil and let new life start, Bear good fruit, and give God your heart!

## **Reasons to come to Mass each weekend**

**Hebrews 10:24-25** - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

**Exodus 20:8** - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

**Luke 22:19** - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

**Acts 2:42** - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

**John 6:53-54** - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

**Psalms 122:1** - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

**Matthew 18:20** - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

**Colossians 3:16** - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

## **Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith**

- Check out the resource list available on [www.frmerkley.com](http://www.frmerkley.com)
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>