

1st Sunday of Lent (Year C)

Overview

God's immense love is the foundation for Lent, encouraging a response of penance. The "How to Lent" video series can help us as we pursue sanctity.

Main Points

- **God's Unshakable Love:** God loves each person fiercely and unconditionally, as seen in His actions throughout salvation history and in sending Jesus to save us.
- **Penance as a Response:** Lenten sacrifices and turning from sin are not about earning God's love but responding to it with gratitude and a desire to live for Him.
- **Practical Help with "How to Lent":** The "How to Lent" video series is recommended as a simple, inspiring resource to guide parishioners through Lent, regardless of their experience level.
- **Living Sanctity:** Holiness isn't perfection but trusting God's love to transform daily choices—resisting temptation and offering acts of love, prayer, and mercy.
- **Mary's Role:** The Blessed Mother accompanies and prays for us, modeling how to receive and respond to God's love during Lent.

Scripture Connections

- **Deuteronomy 26:4-10:** Moses recounts God's love in delivering Israel from Egypt and providing a bountiful land, prompting a response of gratitude with firstfruits. This mirrors Lent's call to offer our best to God out of love.
- **Psalms 91:1-2, 10-15:** God's promise to be with us in trouble, guarding us with angels, reflects His loving presence, encouraging trust during Lenten struggles.
- **Romans 10:8-13:** Paul's assurance that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" highlights God's universal love, accessible to all, which Lent invites us to embrace.
- **Luke 4:1-13:** Jesus' resistance to temptation in the desert, rooted in trust in God's love and Word, serves as a model for our Lenten journey of saying "no" to sin and "yes" to God.

Catechism Connections

- CCC 1427-1433 (Conversion and Penance): The homily's focus on penance as a response to God's love aligns with the Catechism's teaching that conversion is a turning of the heart toward God, especially through Lenten practices like fasting and confession.
- CCC 2012-2016 (Call to Holiness): The call to sanctity reflects the universal vocation to holiness, where God's grace enables us to grow in love and virtue, as Jesus did in the desert.
- CCC 2709-2719 (Prayer): The encouragement to pray, supported by resources like "How to Lent," connects to the Catechism's emphasis on prayer as a vital encounter with God's love.
- CCC 969-971 (Mary's Role): Mentioning Mary as our companion ties to her role as Mother and intercessor, helping us respond to God's love as she did.

Reflection Questions

- How have I experienced God's love in my life, and what's one way I can respond to it this Lent?
- What temptation do I face most often, and how can Jesus' example in the desert help me resist it?
- How might the "How to Lent" series deepen my prayer, fasting, or almsgiving this season?
- What small daily choice—like a kind word or a confession—could I make to grow in sanctity?
- When I feel troubled this Lent, how can I turn to God and trust His promise to be with me?

Rhyme Summary

In desert trials, Jesus stood firm and true,
The devil pitched, but Christ's firm "no" broke through.
Now we worship here at Lent's new start,
Knowing God's love beats strongly for every heart.
Moses brought gifts, and Paul preached grace for all,
Penance is our reply to God's great call.
"How to Lent" helps us, and sanctity's our goal,
So with Mary, we'll seek to love God with all of our soul.

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
- 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/>