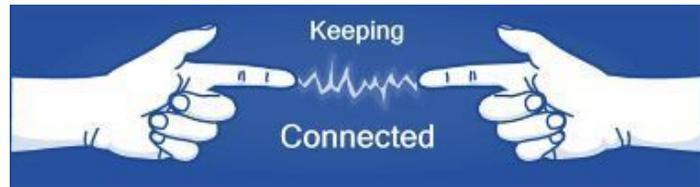


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For Sunday March 21 2021

Lent 5

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Next Sunday, March 28, is Palm and Passion Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week



Prognostication from the Editor

Although we will not hear definitively whether we can return to church for Palm/Passion Sunday and Holy Week, given that our Health Unit area has experienced an upsurge in Covid cases, and that it appears that Ontario is likely to move into the Red zone very soon, it seems inevitable that we will continue virtual only through Holy week and Easter. Just sayin" ...

A Message from Rev. Jonathon

All About Lent - Part 6

In Western Christianity (which consists of churches belonging to the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant traditions), Lent lasts for forty days. This period of forty days includes six days per week from Monday to Saturday but does not include Sundays. Sundays have always been considered "Feast Days" in the Church's calendar because they are the day when we celebrate the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, fasting, abstaining from eating meat or drinking alcohol, or avoiding entertainment (all traditional Lenten practices) are permitted on Sundays during Lent.



The tradition of Lent lasting for forty days is something that developed over time. But the number forty is very significant in both Judaism and Christianity. The most obvious reason for Lent lasting forty days is that Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in the wilderness before beginning His public ministry.

Interestingly, this period in the wilderness is only mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). In the Gospel according to John, Jesus begins his public ministry by calling His first disciples immediately after His baptism.

By engaging in Lenten practices such as prayer, fasting, and self-denial, the Church has traditionally taught that we are following Jesus' example, showing solidarity with Him and with all those who suffer, and are building our own spiritual self discipline.

By one count, the number forty occurs 146 times in the Bible. It is associated with many key biblical events. For example, it rained for forty days and nights during Noah's flood. Moses' life was divided into three periods of forty years. The people of Israel were in the desert for forty years before arriving in the Promised Land. Moses spent two periods of forty days on Mount Sinai. Many kings (Saul, David, and Solomon) and judges (Deborah, Gideon) of the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible served for forty years. The prophet Jonah warned the people of Nineveh (then the capital of the Assyrian Empire) for forty days before they repented. There were forty days between Jesus' resurrection and His ascension.

Some biblical scholars believe that the number forty is associated with periods of testing, trial, or probation. Others believe that the number forty represents a clear division or break, during which time God is working in the lives of men and women to create something new. Another interpretation is that the forty years represents the time it takes for a new generation to be born and reach maturity, or the time it takes for an individual person or society to truly change. Given the above examples from the Bible, each of the interpretations does make sense.

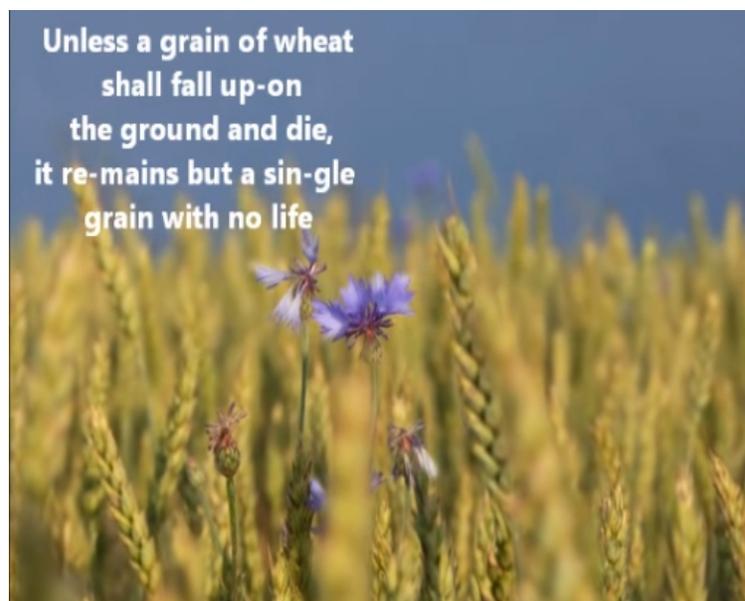
Although Sundays during Lent are days when Christians can take a one-day break

from their Lenten practices, another notable exception has occurred in more recent times. Many Christians of Irish descent (and indeed many Christians without Irish ancestors) have taken a break from Lent to celebrate St. Patrick's Day today, on March 17. Patrick was responsible for bringing Christianity to Ireland. He is celebrated as the patron saint of Ireland on this day.

While many people spend the day drinking beer laced with green food colouring, watching parades, and partying, that wasn't the original intention of the day. Today is ultimately a day about honouring someone lived a life of service to the Church, leaving their own country to share the message of Christ with people, resulting in an entire nation converting to Christianity. Now that is something worth celebrating!

***Unless a Grain of Wheat* by Bernadette Farrell**

Click on this picture for a choral setting of our Gospel reading for Lent 5 taken from John 12.



The Seven Homecomings **A meditative practice for Lent**

The Seven Homecomings, a practice taught by Tibetan Buddhist Lama Rod Owens, invite us to recognize and honor our own personal "circle of care." These instructions are just a template; let this practice change to meet your needs. Pause briefly between each section.

- **Begin contemplating the first homecoming of the guide.** Reflect on any being who has been a guide, a teacher, a mentor, an adviser, or an elder for you. Reflect on the beings in your life and those you've gone to for guidance and support. . . . Invite them to gather around you in a circle and say welcome. Relax. Inhale. Exhale and come home to being held by your guides.
- **The second homecoming is your wisdom texts.** Reflect on any text that has helped you to deepen your wisdom. These texts can include any writing, books, teachings, sacred scriptures . . . that have helped you to experience clarity, openness, love, and compassion. . . . Say welcome to your texts. Relax. Inhale. Exhale and come home to being held by your wisdom texts.
- **The third homecoming is community.** Begin by reflecting about the communities, groups, and spaces where you experience love or the feeling of being accepted and supported in being happy. . . . Where do you feel safe to love? Where are you being loved? . . . Say welcome to your communities. Relax. Inhale. Exhale and come home to being held by your communities.
- **The fourth homecoming is your ancestors.** Begin by reflecting on those ancestors who have wanted the best for you, including wanting you to be happy and safe. You don't need to know who those ancestors are. . . . Also reflect on the lineages you feel connected to, like the lineage of your spiritual tradition, or tradition of art or activism. . . . As you invite your ancestors, remember that you too are in the process of becoming an ancestor. . . . Say welcome to your ancestors and lineages. Relax. Inhale. Exhale and come home to being held by your ancestors and lineages.
- **The fifth homecoming is the earth.** Begin by reflecting on . . . how the earth sustains your life and the lives of countless beings. . . . Coming home to the earth means touching the earth, acknowledging the earth . . . and allowing it to hold you and, as it holds you, understanding that it is loving you as well. . . . Say welcome to the earth. Relax. Inhale. Exhale and come home to being held by the earth.
- **The sixth homecoming is silence.** Begin by reflecting on the generosity of silence as something that helps you to have the space to be with yourself. . . . Reflect on how you can embrace silence as a friend and/or lover invested in your health and well-being. . . . Say welcome to the silence. Relax. Inhale. Exhale and come home to being held by the silence.
- **Finally, the seventh homecoming is yourself.** Begin by reflecting on your experiences of your mind and body. Consider how your experiences are valuable, important, and crucial. Invite all the parts of yourself into your awareness, including the parts of yourself that seem too ugly or overwhelming. . . . Say welcome to yourself. Relax. Inhale. Exhale and come home to yourself. . . .

Now imagine that your circle of benefactors begins to dissolve into white light, and gather that white light into your heart center. Rest your mind and relax.

You can [experience a version of this practice](#) through video and sound.

*From The Center for Contemplation and Action. [Communion of Saints - weekly summary and practice](#).
March 13 2021.*

READINGS FOR THIS SUNDAY

Lent 5

Click on a reading to see the text from the
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) on the Bible Gateway

- **First reading:** [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)
 - **Psalm:** [Psalm 51:1-12](#) or [Psalm 119:9-16](#)
 - **Second reading:** [Hebrews 5:5-10](#)
 - **Gospel:** [John 12:20-33](#)
-



God of justice, your word is light and truth. Let your face shine on us to restore us, that we may walk in your way, seeking justice and doing good. God of compassion, you know our faults and yet you promised to forgive. Keep us in your presence and give us your wisdom. Open our hearts to gladness, call dry bones to dance, and restore to us the joy of your salvation. Amen.

In the World. The Church of England. In our Companion Diocese of Jerusalem and The Middle East, we pray for Saviour Church, Kufr-Yasif, Israel.

In Canada. The Rt. Rev. Mary Irwin-Gibson, Bishop, and the people and clergy of the Diocese of Montreal.

In our Diocese. The Rt. Rev. Shane Parker, our bishop and Michael Bird, our assisting bishop; Christ Church, Bells Corners and their clergy - The Venerable Kathryn Otley, Maj. The Reverend Michael Gibbons, and Deacon Tamara Connors. Pray for the Rev. Ken MacLaren and the staff, volunteers and clients of Ottawa Inner City Ministries.

In Our Community. We ask God's blessing on local faith communities and on their ministries and, we pray for the people and leaders of this town of Almonte and the surrounding communities that the Lord will help us contribute to its well-being. We pray for the non-profit organization, for its staff, volunteers and clients. We pray for the health, safety and well-being of our neighbours in the face of increased numbers of covid-19 cases in our area.

In Our Parish. We pray for Jonathon, our priest, for ourselves and for each other. We ask for God's healing hand to cover our members who are struggling with health issues. We ask for God's blessing on our members Brenda Beaubien, Lynda Bennett, Jane

Scanlon and Daniel Berg, Christy Bindhardt and Garland Best, and Ann Bird.
We remember our neighbors, especially Assad, Alsit, Lana and Elias.

Wanted: Content for this weekly newsletter

Do you have something to share with the community of St. Paul's?
Poetry? Book recommendations? Interesting web site? Photography?
Reminiscences?

Contact the editor, Deane Zeeman, through St Paul's office by email
(office@stpaulsalmonte.ca) or phone (613-256-1771 - leave a message)



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