

PROCLAIMING CHRIST

Meditations for the Season of Lent

*“Prayer is the encounter
with God, with God who never lets
us down; with God who is faithful
to his word; with God who does not
abandon his children.”*

— POPE FRANCIS



Encountering Christ

Matthew 17:1-9

Today's Gospel reveals a personal encounter with Christ.

Jesus, James, Peter, and John go up the mountain to pray. While they are there, Jesus is transfigured in glory. After Jesus reassures the others, they do not want to leave the mountaintop. This encounter with a transfigured Christ challenges the disciples — and all of us — to embrace the divinity of Jesus, but then to go back down the mountain where we can become more Christ-like in service to others.



Maybe you started your Lenten journey on the mountaintop with Christ. Perhaps you know that your life has to change, but you are not sure how to accomplish that. Don't give up! It's only the Second Sunday of Lent. There is still plenty of time to encounter Christ and transform your life.

FOR REFLECTION

- › In what ways have you encountered Christ in your life?
- › How did your encounters with Christ change you?
- › What would you have to do in order to become more Christ-like?

LENT TRIVIA

1. What color vestments does the priest wear during Lent?
2. What prayer of the Mass is omitted during Lent?
3. What word is never said or sung during Lent?

Answers on reverse.



The Stations of the Cross



Telling the story of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus was an important part of the early Christian's experience. In the late fourth century, people made pilgrimages to Jerusalem to follow the path Jesus took to Calvary. During the Middle Ages, when wars made it difficult to reach the Holy Land, people created a "Sorrowful Way" with paintings or sculptures along a processional route or inside a church. By the middle of the eighteenth century the devotion became known as the Stations of the Cross. Most parishes offer communal celebrations of the Stations of the Cross, but you can also pick up a prayer booklet and pray the Stations on your own or with your family.



Lent is a great time to experiment as a family with new types of prayer. In the morning, give each family member a chance to pray for a special intention. At dinnertime, ask each family member to pray for one person who is in need of prayers. After dinner, turn off the television and spend some quality family reading Scripture or praying the Rosary together. Before bedtime, use holy water to bless each family member.

Prayer

Prayer begins with a desire to encounter Christ and evolves into a loving relationship with him. We give ourselves to Christ in prayer, and he responds by helping us to follow in his footsteps.

If you are finding it difficult to pray, you may be experiencing spiritual dryness. Feelings of spiritual dryness are often God's way of strengthening your faith. It's easy to love the Lord when you feel spiritually connected. When you don't feel anything, it doesn't mean that you don't love God, and it definitely doesn't mean that God stopped loving you!

Even if you don't feel like praying, promise yourself that you will set aside prayer time every day. Prayer provides you with the strength you need to continue your journey through Lent and through life.

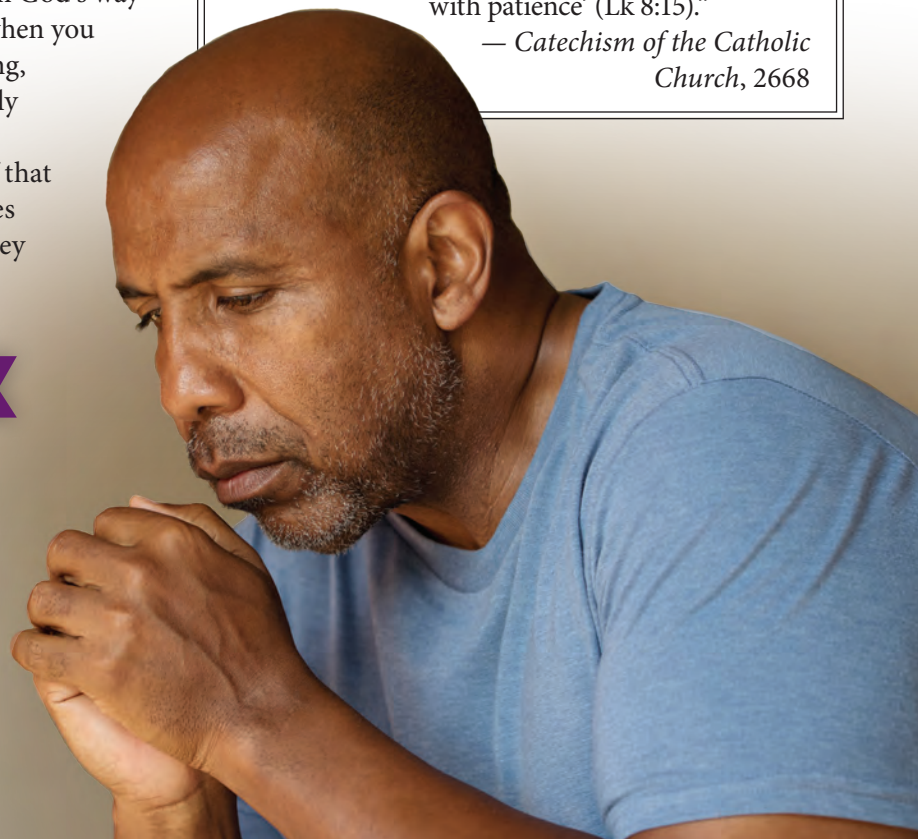
Lenten Prayer

One of the simplest, yet most profound ways to encounter Christ is through the Jesus Prayer. It is an ancient prayer that helps us to focus our hearts and minds as we repeat the words, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."

Catechism CONNECTION

"The invocation of the holy name of Jesus is the simplest way of praying always. When the holy name is repeated often by a humbly attentive heart, the prayer is not lost by heaping up empty phrases, but holds fast to the word and 'brings forth fruit with patience' (Lk 8:15)."

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2668*



Answers: 1. Purple vestments. 2. The Gloria. 3. Alleluia.