

LENT | 2022

LENTEN Odyssey

Our Human Calling
in Christ Jesus

Liturgical Resources for Lent 2022

The Scripture readings for the five Sundays of Lent keep reminding us of our amazing calling in Christ Jesus. This resource draws from those readings. Parishes and schools can use this resource to help in Lenten reflection and prayer. The readings speak of God actively present in creation and every human being, of life renewed and being transformed. Those baptised into Christ Jesus proclaim this truth.

We are not aimless wanderers in this world; we are linked to the ongoing work God began at the dawn of creation. God is near, embracing each stage of our human journey. God feels our limitations and trials, sustaining each of us in our *human odyssey with God*.

Making choices is a key phrase during Lent. It is a time when we choose to turn back to the way to God. God works in every culture to create peace in individual hearts and within the human family. Christ Jesus shows the way. It is up to us to unite with our brother Jesus by living out our baptismal calling. It is our choice to embrace the human journey.

During Lent, the focus is often on 'giving up things'. This can be misleading. Lent is the season to remember that God empowers us daily to grow fully into the dream God has for us. We are also empowered in the self-giving love of Christ Jesus to move beyond self-absorption and help others grow.



There is a Christian tradition of fasting during Lent. While fasting is not an end in itself, it reminds us of our need and that God is the Giver. God is interested in our individual journeys and the journey of all humanity. God has cared for every atom and creature since time began, and we have our own particular place in that evolving human odyssey.

There is also a Christian tradition of giving to the less fortunate during Lent. Organised Lenten programs like Caritas mirror the kindness of God. Such programs help our self-reflection and evaluation of the way we live and challenge our lifestyle choices.

The Gospel of Mathew tells us to put on a happy face when we fast or care for the poor (Mt 6:16-18). The way we act is important. Jesus brought joy to those he helped – he gave new meaning to the Samaritan woman at the well; he spent time with the Centurion worried about the health of his servant.

Water is a powerful Lenten symbol of new life. Baptism is the Christian symbol of Easter re-birth in Christ Jesus. Caring for the Murray Darling River Basin (MDB) is a practical way of honouring God's gift of water in Australia. An ABC radio series aired from 3rd to 6th of Jan 2022 explored the historical use of the MDB, water allocations and trading, and its wetlands. The MDB is twice the size of France and supplies 60% of the nation's food and fibre. The Fitzroy and Burdekin rivers, the Eyre Basin, and coastal rivers are the focus of action by local Landcare groups. They know the impacts of increasingly rapid climate change. They act to change their habits to show more respect and care for waterways. In 2022, such commitments can be a way for individuals and communities to turn back to God.





First Sunday of Lent

YEAR C

The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God ... all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God. -LS#83

God near in every life cycle

Scripture: Deut 26; Ps 90; Rm 10; Lk 4.

Prayer: Creator God, you were present at the beginning of an evolving universe and in every event of human history. May we be open to your presence in our lives so that we are not wandering and perplexed. Enliven the Spirit of Jesus within us so that we are not deceived by distractions and can choose pathways that are life giving. We ask this ...

Prayers of the Faithful

1. Tested – Holy Spirit, you led Jesus into the wilderness where the evil one tempted him with promises of wealth, power, and status. May our future journeys be bound to the vision God has for each of us. We pray ...
2. Purpose – God of Abraham, you blessed his family as it wandered in the desert. May we look to the gifts and opportunities God gives us in life and, in prayer, discern life-giving pathways for ourselves and others. We pray ...
3. Homeless – God of Israel, you led the People to live in a land of milk and honey. May we be thankful for the gifts of this land and be open to share its riches with the less fortunate. We pray ...
4. Baptism – Father of Jesus, through the sacrament of baptism you unite believers in the one body of Christ Jesus. May we reclaim the gifts of our baptism and identity with those preparing for baptism this Easter. We pray ...
5. New Creation – Creator God, you inspire people of science to explore all that exists and treat it with respect. May we live in wonder at your gifts and learn to love them so we can join your Son in a new creation. We pray ...

Saintly Companions: The lives of holy women and men that have gone before us in church communities offer examples for us to follow. Some, like Thomas Berry, helped open up the mystery of the world with a New Story. Some, like Joan Chichester, continue to speak of a church of integrity which better fulfils its mission to proclaim Good News, especially to the hidden pockets of society. Lent is a time for us to seek out the saintly companions who surround us.

Ecological Insight: That religion and science are incompatible is a false idea. The roots of modern scientific theories began in the monastic-universities of Europe in the Middle Ages. Ideas about earth's solar system began with a Polish cleric. Gene theory began with experiments with peas in a monastery. In the 1880s and 1890s, many articles in the Australian Catholic Record discussed how to read Scripture in the light of Evolution – *the Why of religion and the How of science*. Fr Josh Kureethadam in the Roman Office of Integral Human Development wrote *Creation in Crisis; Science, Ethics, Theology* (Orbis Books NY 2017).





Second Sunday of Lent

YEAR C

All the goodness present in the realities and experiences of this world are 'present in God eminently and infinitely, or more properly, in each of these sublime realities is God'. –LS#234

God forever faithful

Scripture: Gen 15; Ps 26; Phil 3; Lk 9.

Prayer: God, you ordained humanity as knowing co-creators in the unfolding of the universe. In the strivings of many cultures, humanity embarks on an odyssey to find a home on earth. May your light open us to the secret vision of your will. Grant us the power to journey towards the delights of an eternal home with you. We ask this ...

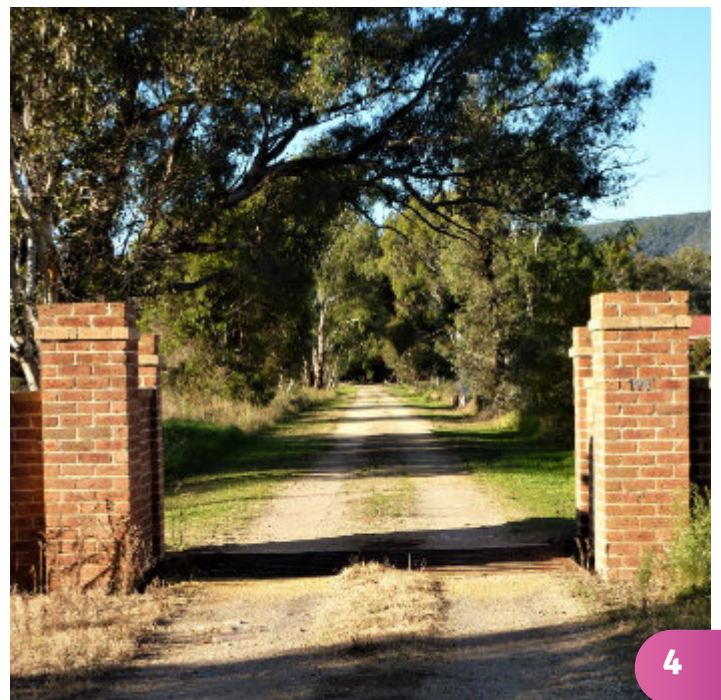
Prayers of the Faithful

1. Peoples – God of Abraham, you promised that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. May every people grow to become one with the place where they live as unique images of your own self. We pray ...
2. Children – God of Israel, in its Scriptures you made future generations a sign of blessing. May we both rejoice and be humble in the birth of a child, promising to love each one while looking with care on all the world's children. We pray ...
3. Loyal to Promises – God of Covenants, you promised to be with the descendants of Abraham, even when they were unfaithful. May we be honest in keeping our promises to each other, always willing to forgive and start again. We pray ...
4. Transformation – God, you have travelled with Israel and the Church through many historical transitions. COVID-19 and accelerating climate change challenge the shape of life on earth. May we be open to you transforming our hearts and minds. We pray ...
5. Earth Speaks – Spirit of God, you speak to us in earth's natural cycles and physics, in its biology and animal life. May we thank the media and artists who reveal its secrets as we listen to the earth as the voice of God. We pray ...

Saintly Companions: Holy women and men offer

examples of engaging with local cultures at particular times in the light of the Gospel. Cyril and Methodius engaged with the Slavic peoples, helping to create faith-filled languages. The diocese of Townsville engaged with reef and climate scientists to enhance school and adult education goals. The diocese runs a dedicated environmental education centre, 'Gumburu', to serve these goals.

Ecological Insight: The International Protocol on Climate Change (IPCC) has held many COP meetings. The 2021 gathering was in Glasgow. Member nations agreed to strengthen efforts to build local and global resilience, curb greenhouse gas emissions, and help finance developing countries. Aspiring to limit global average temperature increases to 1.5 degrees, nations at COP pledged to reduce coal power and subsidies for fossil fuels. It called for local laws to curb greenhouse gas emissions by 50% before 2030. Pope Francis asked French entrepreneurs in a 2022 audience to link vision and reality.





Third Sunday of Lent

YEAR C

Sunday is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world ... the "first day" of the new creation. -LS#237

God overcomes our weakness

Scripture: Ex 3; Ps 102; 1 Cor 10; Lk 13.

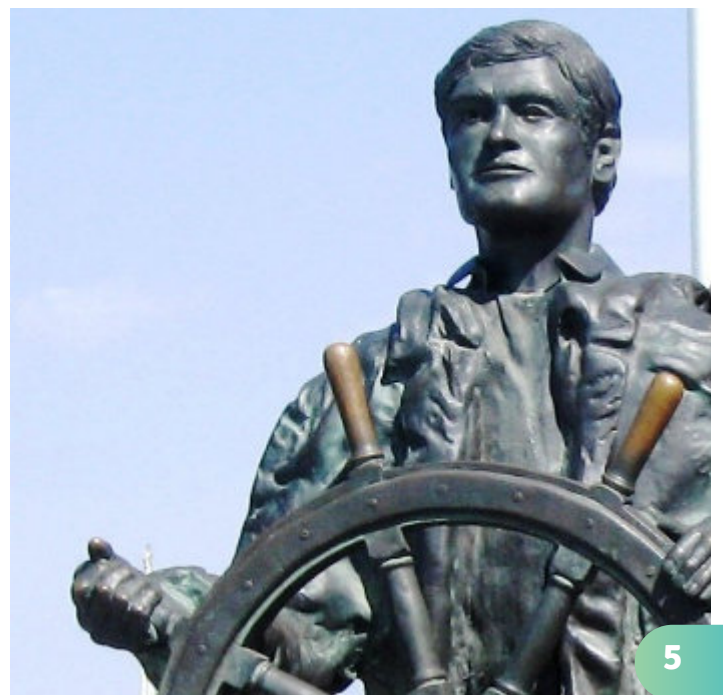
Prayer: God, mysterious yet close, you revealed your inner nature by the way you shepherded the People of Israel. You forgave them when they hankered after the security of Egypt or the spoils of war under kings. Often, we are fickle and weak like them. Have mercy on us so that we turn back to you to live in the hope of bearing fruit like the fig tree in the Gospel. We ask ...

Prayers of the Faithful

1. Awe – Eternal God, you appeared to Moses in the burning bush, proclaiming '*I am who am.*' May we know that you are interested in our existence. To your glory, may our lives proclaim this truth. We pray ...
2. Suffering – Your Son Jesus truly saw those living in trauma, reaching out to them with the will to heal. May our busy lives not distract us from seeing the twin suffering of earth's systems and people around us. We pray ...
3. Water – Christ Jesus is like the rock flowing with living water in the desert. Father Creator, may images of misusing the waters of the Murray Darling Basin urge us to change our ways of living with the systems of this land. We pray ...
4. Patience – Loving Father, Jesus spoke of your patience in the parable of the barren fig tree. May we not be ruled by having to produce results, but instead be patient with others and ourselves when we make mistakes or are slow to change. We pray ...
5. Pride – Thinking that they did not need a Creator God was the first sin recorded in Genesis. Free us from believing that success depends solely on human efforts, and allow us to turn with humility to the mercy of you as the One Who Is. We pray ...

Saintly Companions: Catholic Earthcare has been operating throughout Australian dioceses since 2002. The phrase *ecological conversion* is central to its mission. The focus of Lent is conversion: turning back to God; repenting; changing to new ways; bathing in the mercy of God; being re-baptised in Christ Jesus; becoming the first born of a new creation. Striving to act with justice and compassion during our physical life on this planet is the way we find a transcendent God. The divine present in the physical is the meaning of incarnation.

Ecological Insight: Every human action has an impact on the physical systems of the planet. Ecological language helps us understand this reality - *tipping point*, the moment when change becomes unstoppable, such as the melting of the Arctic Permafrost, or *extinction*, a species ceasing to exist because of habitat loss. A sign of progress in human understanding is changing language – jungle becomes *rainforest*, swamp becomes *wetland*, nature becomes *earth's cycles* and *eco-systems*, competition becomes *mutualism*, and more.





Fourth Sunday of Lent

YEAR C

We come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us ... we journey through this land seeking God. –LS#244

Renewing the human family

Scripture: Joshua 5; Ps33; 2 Cor 5; Lk 15.

Prayer: God of the People of Israel, you removed their shame as landless slaves and led them to taste the produce of Canaan. May we grow in respect for the place you gave us and care for it as our common home. Baptised and made a new creation in Christ, sinners no more, may we live as sisters and brothers in the one human family of God. We pray ...

Prayers of The Faithful

1. Shame - God of liberation, you freed your people from a life of slavery, taking away its shame. May we never hide our heritage, and thank God for guiding the paths travelled by our ancestors with their many turns and twists. We pray ...
2. Manna – Creator God, all the earth belongs to you. We receive its gifts like manna in the desert. May we pull back from exploiting nature or the work of others and learn to live where we are content as children within the family of God. We pray ...
3. Defacing beauty – God of Israel, their Scripture writes of the beauty of God revealed in creation and human creativity, inspiring poets and artists. May we not reduce earth to utility and deface your beauty that is revealed there. We pray ...
4. Ambassadors – God of all, you have given humanity power as co-creators, forgiving mistakes and refreshing its role as ambassadors. May we live out this calling in humble obedience and confidence. We pray ...
5. Generous spirit – Generous God, in the parable of the loving Father and the Prodigal Son, Jesus tells of your nature. May we shun a grasping and mean way of life and be ever ready to share our wealth and skills with the less fortunate. We pray ...

Saintly Companions: Every generation sees groups pushed to the fringes of society, but they also see saintly people committed to heal and help forge new ways forward. The colonial exploitation of natural resources and vulnerable peoples has modern equivalents – the slavery of workers on ships and in factories, in restaurants and aged care facilities, trying to earn a living to raise their children. Modern piracy flourishes in the monopolies and opaque banking systems that manipulate tax laws and undermine regulations. They push ecosystems to breaking point and so do they undermine cultures. Good people using science to grow a sustainable future are modern saints.

Ecological Insight: Modern humanity has the knowledge and technology to begin creating a sustainable world. Nations have created a set of 17 goals: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>. Pope Francis sets goals in *Laudato Si*. Welcoming UN leaders, he focused on human lifestyle: on the importance of simplicity and soberly living, of saying ‘enough’. Goals 16 and 17 include values, vision, and commitment. Faith communities are well placed to help deliver on these goals. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333366882_Religion_and_the_Sustainable_Development_Goals





Fifth Sunday of Lent

YEAR C

Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. –LS#1

Embrace the world given us

Scripture: Is 43; Ps 125; Phil 3; Jn 8.

Prayer: Kind and loving God, many times you corrected the People of Israel. Forgetting their past, you set the nation on new pathways. As a new People of God, may church communities be ever alert and search for the new deeds you are doing in our time. May we know Christ Jesus more deeply, running with him to finish the race of life in a new creation. Let us pray ...

Prayers of The Faithful

1. Baptism – God of Israel, you led your people through the Red Sea in a type of baptism. Convert us this Easter so we can renew our baptism into Christ Jesus and the community of his followers. We pray ...
2. Happy – God of Freedom, your people sang and rejoiced when you led them out of bondage. Free us from any addiction and its deceptions so we can be happy in following your Son. We pray ...
3. Searching – Jesus searched to find and do your will as his Father. May his life, death, and resurrection draw us on in our search for you in our daily lives on earth. We pray ...
4. Gift of Faith – God of life, you created us with the gift of freedom. May we freely respond in faith, trusting in the choices for goodness you inspire in us. We pray ...
5. Starting again – Forgiving God, your Son refused to condemn the woman caught in adultery, telling her only to ‘sin no more.’ May we refrain from judging others, knowing we all need new starts in life. We pray ...

Saintly Companions: Group retreats are a common way to evaluate our lives and make a new start. While the Holy Spirit is the prime director of any retreat, participants gift each other with insights and encouragement by sharing experiences and prayer. Every believer takes a personal journey with God. Solidarity, a favourite word of Pope Francis, calls us to find the work of God revealed in a variety of personalities. Dioceses, religious orders, and faith movements offer group retreats to help believers in their odyssey with God.

Ecological Insight: Australian housing developments build ‘wide and flat’ rather than ‘high and green’. This creates heat bubbles and eats up country. Management must evaluate the impact of developments and be willing to say no. New models of housing development help address these issues. They consider the evolving nature of climate change, including temperature, energy, wild weather, floods, and fire. They consider consumer demand such as social services, job proximity, transport, and proximity to nature be it bush or water. Practical, achievable targets require long-term planning.

