

Jubilaem



A call to conversion!

[TO TRANSFORM MY LIFE, TO RENEW THE MISSION]

17 February

Ash Wednesday

Forty days to leave your comfort zone.

Prayer Guide

Gospel Text

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW (Mt. 6:1-6, 16-18)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples:

Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father.

When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you."

The gospel of the Lord.

What can you do for yourself?



Pray with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience

Desert Castellazzo

Lent 2021

Meditation and text of St. Paul of the Cross

(FROM HIS SPIRITUAL DIARY)

Once again we prepare to celebrate the liturgical time of Lent in which we are invited to be challenged by the Word of God in our lives in order to be renewed as we move toward Easter. Forty days of Lent, I walk the way to the cross. Fifty days of Easter, I walk in the fullness of the Spirit following in the footsteps of Christ.

Forty days of grace: like the forty days of Moses at the summit of Mount Sinai, preparing the Covenant; like the forty years of the pilgrimage of the Israelites through the desert, the way to the promised land; like Elijah's forty days, on the way to his encounter with Yahweh on Mount Horeb; like Jesus' forty days in the wilderness, before starting his messianic mission.

The greatest refrain of Lent is "*metanoia*", that is, a change of mindset, so that the "*old self*" who still subsists in us with all that it entails of counter-gospel, counter-Easter, and sin, will give rise to the "*new self*", that is born to full life according to the way of Jesus. Lent will call us to intensify our prayer, to listen more attentively to the Word of God, to renew our baptism and to celebrate our reconciliation with God, with our brothers and sisters, with ourselves and with creation.



Prayer Guide

Pray with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience



The Lenten journey begins with the sign of the imposition of ashes in which we hear one of these expressions: "*Repent and believe in the Gospel*" (Mk. 1:15) and "*Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return*" (Gen 3:19). A sign and words that express well our ephemeral nature, our need for conversion and acceptance of the Gospel, and the newness of life that Easter wants to impart to us. Something must be burned or destroyed in us - the old self - in order to give rise to the newness of Easter life in Christ. Lent ends at the Easter vigil with fire, light and water, symbols of the new existence of the resurrected.

In today's Gospel, Jesus highlights three areas or aspects that our lifestyle must assume during this Lent-- God (prayer), neighbor (alms) and ourselves (fasting). In each of these three areas we must internalize, not merely remain on the superficial level of routine and hypocrisy in order to gain prestige, power or privilege, but to place ourselves in intimate communion with the Father, who knows us in the depths of our being and allow ourselves to be challenged in our relationship with our brothers and sisters.

Therefore, concerning almsgiving: "*do not blow a trumpet before you*" so that others acknowledge you; rather "*do not let your left hand know that your right is doing*" and the Father will reward you. With regard to our neighbour, we must offer charity that is not ostentatious, but springs from true and selfless love.

In prayer: do not pray "*so that others may see [you]*"; rather, "*go to your inner room [...] and pray.*" The Father will repay you. Face to face with God,

Jubilaem

we must pray in a way that does not remain in external words and gestures, but that springs from the heart.

As for fasting: *“Do not look gloomy”* so that others may know that you are fasting, rather *“anoint your head”* and the Father will reward you. For us, fasting is self-knowledge, self-control, the ability to renounce secondary values in favor of the values of the Kingdom of God.

In the Passionist Family we are living this Lent as part of the Jubilee Year for the third Centenary of the founding of our Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ. We are inspired by the motto: *“Renew our mission: gratitude, prophecy and hope”*, from the memory of the Passion of Jesus. We do not celebrate our greatness and our successes, our self-sufficiency; rather we celebrate the blessings of God during these three centuries and the faithfulness of countless Passionists who, by their life and mission, and despite their human weakness and fragility, have maintained the grateful memory of *“the Passion of Christ, the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love”* (St Paul of the Cross).

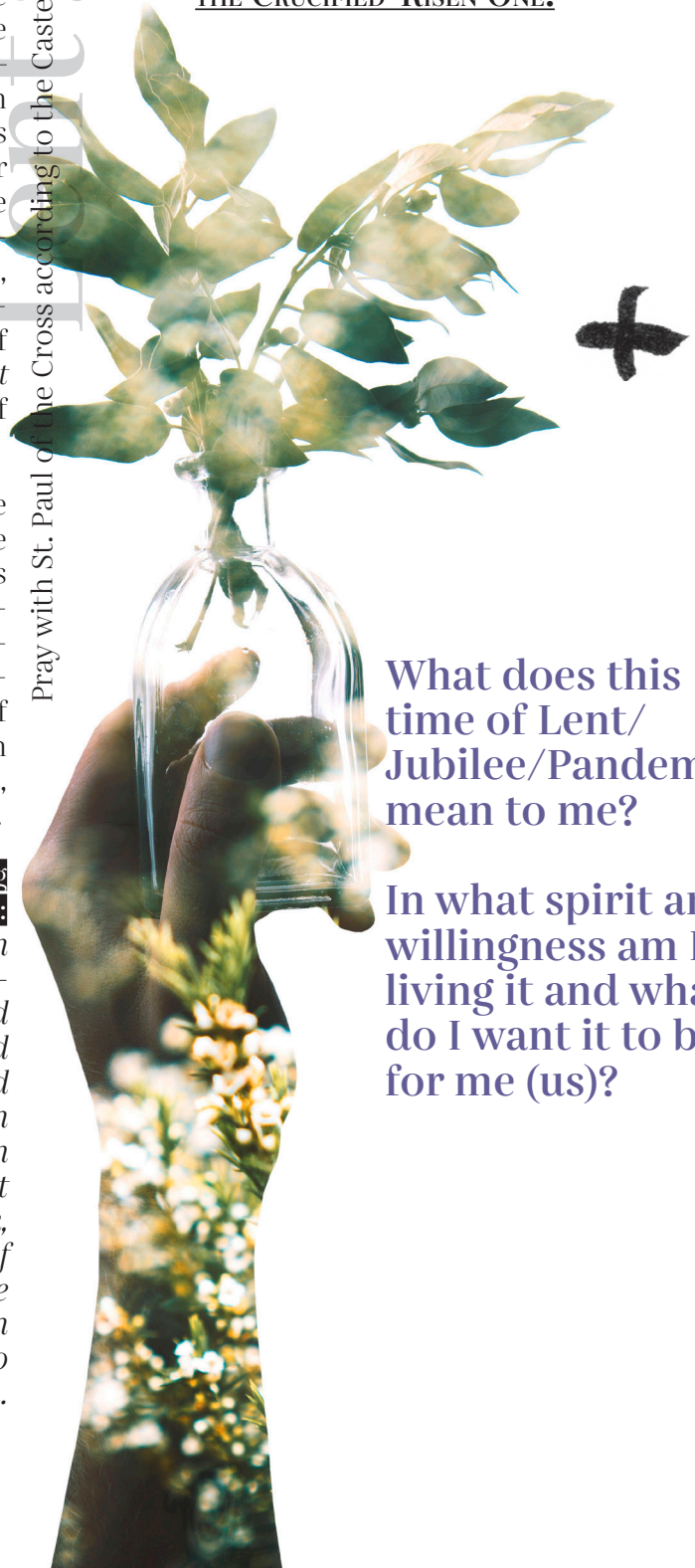
In fact, three hundred years ago Paul Danei (of the Cross) made forty days of retreat in the solitude and silence of the cell of the sacristy of San Carlos in Castellazzo, from 23 November 1720 to 1 January 1721, during which he wrote the Rule of the future Congregation (2-7 December). This desert retreat experience helped him to distance himself from reality, and to listen to what was going on in his own heart, and, from there, discover God, others, the world, and history in its true essence.

In his Spiritual Journal that he wrote during those days, his entry on November 23, 1720 reads: *“[This] was the first day of my retreat at San Carlo. Though unworthy, I went to Holy Communion. I was neither particularly recollected nor distracted. The rest of the day I was afflicted [...] it is a certain interior suffering in spirit and heart, mingled with hidden temptations which are hardly recognized as such. For this reason they afflict the soul very much. One does not know whether one is here or there, so to speak, the more so because there is no sensible sign of prayer at this time. I realize that God enables me to understand that they purify the soul. Through the mercy of God, I know that I do not desire to know anything else nor to taste any consolation. I desire only to be crucified with Jesus.”*

Prayer Guide

Pray with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience

THIS LENT AND THIS JUBILEE CONVERGE ON THE PATH WE ARE ALSO TRAVELING WITH ALL HUMANITY IN THIS PARTICULAR TIME OF THE PANDEMIC DUE TO COVID 19 WITH ITS AFTERMATH OF DISEASE, DEATH, UNCERTAINTY, AND ECONOMIC CRISIS. THE THREE REALITIES CALL US TO CONVERSION, TO RENEW OUR LIFE AND MISSION, TO PUT BEFORE OUR EYES WHAT IS FUNDAMENTAL, TO RETURN TO OURSELVES, TO OUR ROOTS AND IDENTITY, FROM OUR FOLLOWING OF THE CRUCIFIED-RISEN ONE.



What does this time of Lent/Jubilee/Pandemic mean to me?

In what spirit and willingness am I living it and what do I want it to be for me (us)?



Gesture

[INTERIOR GAZE]

Prepare ashes or soil on the floor of the place where you are praying. When the time comes, the participants, one at a time, approach the ashes or earth and spread it out. They write with their finger the answer to this question, or another similar question that they may want to ask:

What DO YOU WANT to happen within you, during this Lent, with the aim of renewing your life and with it, the mission in keeping with the Jubilee?

Once the person has written it, and owned it personally, he erases it, leaving the material as it was so that the next individual may do the same.

Lent

Jubilaecum

Prayer

Ash Wednesday:

A time to make a bonfire of my selfishness and foolishness.

A time to level my absurd tower of Babel to ashes and get down to earth and start to offer a helping hand.

A time to quiet the noise within me and be still in order to be able to hear You.

Ash Wednesday:

Like ashes, I must enter the furnace of your Spirit and be transformed into the object you want.

Although I am ashes, I know I can renew myself. And I want to do it with your help.

Ash Wednesday:

Forty days to let me find you, and to realize you are waiting for me at my doorstep.

Forty days to ask forgiveness and to fast from so many things that are superfluous for me and which others need.

Forty days to listen more attentively to your Word, and let it be the Bread that satiates me and your forgiveness that restores me.

Ash Wednesday:

A bit of ashes on my forehead can really get me on track: there is no way other than God.

Today I begin the journey back to your home.

