

# PRAAYER, REFLECTION AND THE LENTEN SCRIPTURES

*Who is Jesus calling me to be?*

St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
43 Gebhardt Road  
Penfield, NY 14526  
[www.stjosephspenfield.org](http://www.stjosephspenfield.org)  
(585) 586-8089

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**Parish Kick-Off  
Sunday, February 14**

***Valentine's Day Celebration!***

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*Suggestions on how to use this workbook:*

- † Prepare for each session by reading the assigned sections of Silf's *The Gift of Prayer*, First Reading, Second Reading and Gospel for the week, allowing time for your own reflection.
- † During the week, spend time with the book and scripture and the reflection questions, using this workbook as a journal for your thoughts.
- † Try to develop a practice of spending quiet time each day reflecting on one or more verses from the scripture or *The Gift of Prayer*.
- † Participate in other parish Lenten opportunities, especially the Tuesday Evenings of Prayer.
- † Reflect on who Jesus is calling you to be—how might you go outside your comfort zone to get involved in service to the community?
- † Faithfully enter into the weekend liturgy.

**Find weekly Scripture ...**  
*At Home with the Word,*  
[www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

## Evenings of Prayer

Every Tuesday during the Lenten season, St. Joseph's invites you to an evening of quiet prayer. These are times of silent contemplation in the context of varied prayer traditions in a candlelight environment. Come as a group, or come on your own. Make it a gift to yourself and a gift of your time spent with God.

*Tuesdays, 7:30PM in Church*

February 23	Taizé Prayer
March 2	Stations of the Cross
March 9	Taizé Prayer
March 16	Evening Prayer with Benediction
March 23	Taizé Prayer

Learn more about  
Taizé Prayer at  
<http://www.taize.fr/en>

## Small Group Session Timeline

### *Gathering—10 mins.*

- † Greetings
- † Assign leader of prayer

### *Opening Prayer—20 mins.*

- † Follow the format for group prayer on p. 5

### *Silent time—5-10 mins.*

- † Try to develop the discipline of spending time together in silence. Sit together, walk to quiet places—whatever works best.

### *Faith Sharing—30-40 mins.*

- † Faith sharing is meant to come from the heart, to take us on a journey inward in the company of other disciples. It requires skills that are acquired over time and need constant nurturing so that as the group matures, so does the process. Studying Scripture or other Church teachings is part of the process but faith sharing is the lifeblood. Here are some guidelines to help keep you and your group on the faith sharing track:
  - Engage in prayerful silence.
  - Share your own personal and spiritual experiences in brief reflections as they relate to your faith, relationship with God and the Gospel.
  - Listen attentively and actively to the sharing of others.
  - Encourage everyone to share.
  - Focus on what Jesus is saying to you, in this moment. Share personal experiences of how God has touched you.
  - Keep all that is shared confidential.
  - Make a separate time and place to discuss “hot” topics (politics, Church issues, etc.).
  - Discern calls to action and service, as a group and individually—make time to plan.
  - Pray together. Pray for each other and each other’s intentions throughout the week. Share how prayer changes things for you.

### *Call to action and service/Business of the group—10 mins.*

- † Brainstorm opportunities for community service or discuss specific personal strategies for integrating scripture and other learnings into our lives.
- † Discuss any organizational needs of the group.

## Gathering Prayer for small groups

*After a time of gathering, all settle in for prayer.*

**Leader says:** Let us pray. We now have permission to turn our attention away from our cares (*pause*) our concrete thoughts (*pause*) and simply experience the presence of God; rooted in love. (*pause*) God is in the stillness of our soul. Be still, and know that I am God. (*pause*)

### Experience of Silence (5 minutes)

*During this silence, allow yourself to see and receive God beyond the ideas and things you're certain of. If, at first, it is easier, feel free to use one of the following phrases or one word of your own to focus on during your silent prayer. Close your eyes to block out visual distraction. Speak the 'mantra' in silence slowly, over and over again. When you find yourself more calm—try continuing without the words.*

“Jesus”  
“Peace”  
“Love”

“All will be well”  
“I will give you rest”  
“Come, Creator Spirit”

**Guided Reflection “Only For Today”** *adapted from the Daily Decalogue of Pope John XXIII. After a full 5 minutes has passed. Each sentence is read with a pause in-between. Either by one reader or taking turns in the group.*

I am happy that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one/  
I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it/  
I will devote 10 minutes of my day to spiritual reading to feed the life of my soul/  
I will not judge others and will not claim to improve or discipline anyone except myself/  
I will seek to live without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once/  
**Only for today**, I will have no fear/  
**Only for today**, I will firmly believe that God cares for me more than I could ever know/

**Leader:** One all-embracing resolution: I want to be kind, today and always, to everyone. Every believer in this world must be a spark of light, a core of love, life-giving leaven to the mass: and the more I am so, the more I will live, in my innermost depths, in communion with God.

**Leader:** In this spirit of goodness, for what do we pray this day? (*all offer petitions*)

**Leader:** Gathering our prayers both silent and spoken into one, let us pray in the words given to us by our Savior. “Our Father...”

**Leader:** God of all time, may we to learn to belong to you, to be still, to listen, to be reflective. May we remember that the gift of prayer is you who lives deep within each one.

**All:** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**“THE BOOKMARK PRAYER”**

St. Teresa of Avila, Doctor of the Church

Let nothing disturb you,  
Let nothing frighten you,  
All things are passing away:  
God never changes.  
Patience obtains all things.  
Whoever has God lacks nothing;  
God alone suffices.

*Named because it was found after her death,  
in her handwriting, tucked in a book.  
She wrote The Interior Castle,  
which offers her theology of prayer,  
ultimately that all prayer should lead to action.  
She had great sympathy for people  
who have difficulty with praying.*

## Week One—What is Prayer?

**Read...***The Gift of Prayer, p. 1-18; readings for the First Sunday in Lent*

### Readings for... First Sunday in Lent

Deuteronomy 26: 4-10

Romans 10: 8-13

Luke 4: 1-13

As Luke claims in the opening paragraph of his Gospel, the one we read in the “C” cycle of the lectionary this year, he offers an ordered account of the life of Jesus. His account is addressed to Theophilus (One who loves God). The order of the Lenten readings might be collected under the themes of Temptation, Transfiguration, Transformation, Integration, and Renewal/Rebirth—go and sin no more. Luke is aided by the account from John of the woman caught in adultery to bring his themes full circle.

#### *Temptation*

In this first week of Lent, Jesus has just left John the Baptist. Luke has offered us an account of Jesus’ lineage in the previous chapter and now, having been filled with the Holy Spirit, he is led out to the desert. The story portrays the devil offering progressively greater temptations. Jesus withstands the tests and affirms his commitment to mission. Linking to our Lenten focus on prayer, it is clear that Jesus entered the desert to make retreat, he has pulled back before he is to set out in his public ministry.

Two key elements in Luke’s account are found in the story beginning and ending with Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit. As we come to prayer, being open to the Spirit is a key aspect of opening ourselves to where God would lead us. As we see in the first reading from Deuteronomy, wandering can be with purpose—purpose known to God for which we are called to give thanks. Paul tells us in Romans that we can live by the spirit and all who call on the Lord will be saved.

As we look at prayer, we are called to recognize the temptations of our lives, not only those that cause us to act contrary to the law and love of God but also those that are not open to the voice of God seeking to enter into conversation with us. We cannot become the people of prayer that we seek to be if there is not an openness to hear the call of God, through God’s Spirit. Just as Jesus in temptation was rooted in Spirit so we seek to sink our roots deep into the grace of the Spirit who can help us to hear the voice of a good and gracious God. Our “temptation” might be to not rely on the grace God offers to us just as he offered it to the Son of Man in the desert.

## Reflection ...

What does prayer mean to you?

### For further learning...

Read *U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults*,  
Ch. 35 God Calls Us to Pray;

About the Gospel of Luke:

<http://usccb.org/nab/bible/luke/intro.htm>

What helps you to listen to God? How do you move past life's temptations and into relationship with God?

How, for you, can prayer be a way of living? How will you stretch yourself this Lent?

What does Luke's depiction of Jesus' temptation in the desert teach us about Jesus' prayer life?

What is the meaning of the desert for you?

What does it say to you when Jesus quotes Hebrew scripture?

**“PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION”**

St. Ignatius, from the beginning of the *Spiritual Exercises*

The goal of our life is to live with God forever.  
God who loves us, gave us life.  
Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into  
us without limit.

All the things in this world are gifts of God,  
presented to us so that we can know God more easily  
and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we appreciate and use all of these gifts of God  
insofar as they help us develop as loving persons.

But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives,  
they displace God

and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance  
before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice  
and are not bound by some obligation.

We should not fix our desires on health or sickness,  
wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or short one.

For everything has the potential of calling forth in us  
a deeper response to our life in God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this:

I want and I choose what better  
leads to the deepening of God's life in me.

## Week Two—Why Would I Pray? Who am I Praying To?

**Read...***The Gift of Prayer, p. 19-49; readings for the Second Sunday in Lent*

### Readings for... Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18

Philippians 3: 17 - 4:1

Luke 9: 28b-36

#### *Transfiguration*

Taking Peter, John and James with him, Jesus walks up Mount Tabor, and there is much that is beautiful there. We are called back to the theme at the end of last week's Gospel: It is the presence of Spirit that helps us. While Spirit is not mentioned here, Spirit is manifest in the acts that take place, particularly in the words, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him."

Like Jesus, as we enter prayer and conversation with God, we can be transfigured, in act and relationship. Like Abram in the Genesis account who allowed himself to be open to God's call and saw his life transformed, so we can open ourselves and be transformed. Just as Paul tells us that our citizenship is secure in heaven, we are secure as we allow ourselves to be transformed and embrace our call to be the imitators of Christ. We can enter into the highly symbolic story of the transfiguration event not as a long ago remarkable event but as a moment into which we can enter now through our prayer life.

We are transfigured people when we pray and embrace dialogue with a God who is waiting to listen and to speak with us and to proclaim the words, "This is my daughter/son in whom I am well pleased."

#### **Enrich your prayer life, get closer to God...**

Consider the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, offered at the Mercy Prayer Center. Call 473-6893 or go to <http://www.mercyprayercenter.org/enews/docs/SpiritualExercises.html>

## Reflection ...

How does your act of prayer transform your daily life?

What grace do you seek from God to sustain yourself so that you can be transfigured?

God said, “This is my chosen Son. Listen to him.” What does that tell you about why you should pray?

Do you feel in “right relationship” with God?

What are the truths of your life that you only share with God?

**PRAYER BY THOMAS MERTON**

From *Thoughts in Solitude*

MY LORD GOD,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think that I am following your will

does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you

will lead me by the right road

though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always

though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear,

for you are ever with me,

and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

## Week Three—When Can I Pray? Where Shall I Pray?

**Read...** *The Gift of Prayer, p. 51-77; readings for the Third Sunday in Lent*

### Readings for... Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 3: 1-8a, 13-15  
1 Corinthians 10: 1-6, 10-12  
Luke 13: 1-9

#### *Transformation*

Luke sends a strong message, repent or perish. He tells a parable of a fig tree, a person and a gardener. We are called to repent, like the people in the first part of the Gospel and like the person and gardener in the parable. Repentance is part of a dialogue. To repent I have to repent of something to someone. The duty of disciples is to repent when we have come up short of the mark and heard less than the entire message.

As in Genesis, God is. “I Am,” God says. Moses rises up and brings “I Am” to the people. So too Paul reminds us not to grumble and fall short like some of our ancestors. The call is to repent and believe. Do not risk perishing over a lack of the ability to relate to God—God who is open to forgiveness.

Seize the duty to repent and allow the gardener to cultivate you when you get stuck.

**Turn away from sin and be faithful to  
the Gospel...**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered every Saturday at 3:30pm near the main entrance of the Church. Or call the office to schedule a private time with one of our priests.

## Reflection ...

Who is your gardener? Who has enough faith in you to help you bear fruit?

What does repentance mean to you?

When have you had a real change of heart that is helped you in your spiritual journey toward discipleship?

What times of the day offer the best opportunities to center yourself in prayer?

Can you give yourself “prayer breaks” throughout the day?

What are your sacred spaces?

Can you name objects or environments that help you to pray?

## **ABOUT PRAYER FROM MOTHER TERESA**

### **THE FRUIT OF PRAYER**

The fruit of silence is prayer  
the fruit of prayer is faith  
the fruit of faith is love  
the fruit of love is service  
the fruit of service is peace.

### **LOVE TO PRAY**

Feel often during the day the need for prayer and pray.  
Prayer opens the heart, till it is capable of containing God himself.  
Ask and seek and your heart will be big enough to receive Him  
and keep Him as Your Own.

### **IF WE PRAY**

If we pray, we will believe;  
If we believe, we will love  
If we love, we will serve.

## Week Four—How Do I Pray?

Read...*The Gift of Prayer, p. 79-127; readings for the Fourth Sunday in Lent*

### Readings for... Fourth Sunday in Lent

Joshua 5: 9a, 10–12  
2 Corinthians 5: 17-21  
Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

#### *Integration*

A father had two sons and he also had a great grasp of the teaching of faith. The father is wise beyond belief and he shares that wisdom in quiet, confident ways with both of his sons. Jesus chooses this *parable* at this moment to challenge his listeners to integrate the teachings they are so familiar with.

The Pharisees and Scribes knew the teaching and they were people of prayer. They can hear the words, but the father in the story not only hears but lives the words. The two sons are also called to integrate the teaching but as young adults the father knows they have to come to this themselves. He can witness the message and live it, but he cannot live it for them. Only they can do that.

Joshua teaches us that there is a time for help and a time to stand for yourself, as the people of Israel did. Paul reminds us that each of us is new creation and we need to remember that reconciliation is always there for us.

When we integrate the teaching, hearing the message becomes far easier for us. We are called to integrate and practice the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel parable.

“The word *parable* (Greek *parabole*) signifies in general a comparison, or a parallel, by which one thing is used to illustrate another. It is a likeness taken from the sphere of real, or sensible, or earthly incidents, in order to convey an ideal, or spiritual, or heavenly meaning. As uttering one thing and signifying something else, it is in the nature of a riddle and has therefore a light and a dark side, it is intended to stir curiosity and calls for intelligence in the listener, "He that has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt 13:9). Its Greek designation (from *paraballein* – to throw beside or against) indicates a deliberate "making up" of a story in which some lesson is at once given and concealed.”

*Catholic Encyclopedia at  
[www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)*

## Reflection ...

The question is the same for us today as it was on the day that Jesus taught the parable: Can you integrate what you have learned? How does pray help you with that?

Who has been the parent who has helped you to integrate the message?

Imagine yourself in the story of the Prodigal Son. Which character are you? How do you react to the situation?

Take time this week to practice the art of being still, relaxing, breathing, listening. Do you notice anything new in your prayer?

When have you felt disconnected from God? What did you do? What would you do now?

### For further learning...

Read *U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults*,  
Ch. 36 Jesus Taught Us To Pray

**PRAYERFUL THOUGHTS OF DOROTHY DAY,**  
*Founder of the Catholic Worker Movement*

“Food for the body is not enough.  
There must be food for the soul.”

“I firmly believe that our salvation  
depends on the poor.”

“Love casts out fear,  
but we have to get over the fear  
in order to get close enough to love them.”

“The greatest challenge of the day is:  
how to bring about a revolution of the heart,  
a revolution which has to start with each one of us.”

## Week Five—Does It Work?

**Read...***The Gift of Prayer, p. 129-135; readings for the Fifth Sunday in Lent*

### Readings for... Fifth Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 43: 16-21  
Philippians 3: 8-14  
John 8: 1-11

#### *Rebirth/Renewal*

The Gospel of John offers us the story of a woman caught in adultery, a story which ends with words Jesus uses often in his ministry after he forgives sins. Jesus says, “*Go, and from now on do not sin any more.*”

This can be thought of as a sort of mini great commandment. Jesus always says to the sinner what he said here. Our human side wants to hear things like, try to do better in the future, keep up the good work, try to do your best. Instead, the God of mercy and love says to sin no more. Building on the idea of practicing what you have learned, Jesus moves on to call the disciples to live the gift they have received. Sins have been forgiven and the woman and us are called to not repeat our acts, to embrace the new way of living and live what we have embraced.

Isaiah tells us God can do anything and implies that we need to strive to do likewise. Paul’s voice urges relentless pursuit of the goal. Keep hope in view and strive with each ounce of energy to look upward at the calling of Christ.

We are all encouraged to keep our minds, hearts and acts focused on living the Christ life to the fullest. Living what we believe is not just a philosophy. It is boldly acting in light of what we believe, knowing that we have received the grace of forgiveness from a God whose love is boundless, unlimited and accessible. It is loving, forgiving and giving of ourselves with great extravagance.

Learn more about the Catholic Worker Movement  
<http://www.catholicworker.org> and link to videos and the  
writings of founder Dorothy Day.  
Read Day’s autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*.

## Reflection ...

When have you heard Jesus say, “Go and from now on sin do not sin any more”?

Place yourself at the Mount of Olives with Jesus, the woman, the scribes and the Pharisees. Who are you in the story? What is Jesus telling you?

What does it mean to have God answer our prayers?

As Paul tells the Philippians, how do you “forget what lies behind and strain forward to what lies ahead”?

What is one new commitment you will make to prayer after participating in this Gift of Prayer study?

How will you work toward better living what you believe? Who is Jesus calling you to be?

## Bethany House Ministry

*You are invited to attend...  
Bethany House Ministry Kickoff  
Sunday, April 11  
3:30pm in the Gym  
Speakers, Success Stories, Sign-ups for Ministries and Training*

As part of our celebration of 150 years as a community of faith and Campaign for a Mission Driven People we, the people of St. Joseph's Church, have made a commitment to expand our ministry to the women of Bethany House:

*The Parish Pastoral Council is pleased to announce  
that in a continued effort to be GRATEFUL for what we have received,  
to be HOSPITABLE to those in need  
and to spread God's word through DISCIPLESHIP,  
our social outreach project to help celebrate 150 years of spiritual growth  
is a continued and greater commitment to Bethany House.*

Bethany House is a Catholic Worker House of Hospitality for homeless women and their children. Many life events can bring a woman to Bethany House; very often it is a recent release from incarceration. Therefore, our expanded efforts will include a focus on justice issues related to prison reform as well as many other ways to get involved, such as:

- Monthly dinners, third Sunday of the month, to introduce parishioners to Bethany House and its guests
- Training for mentoring—walking on-on-one with women as they re-enter the community (April)
- Adopt-a-Need: Items for donation to be determined, such as diapers, formula—item collection ideas welcome!
- Support of specific ongoing costs, such as bus passes
- Transportation to appointments
- Just Matters Prison Reform Small Group Study
- Prison visitation before women are released to Bethany House
- Proceeds of anniversary golf tournament to support Bethany House
- Bethany House Greeting Cards continued (Monday Morning Small Group)

**Come the kickoff on April 11!**  
**Find some part of the Bethany House Ministry**  
**that is a response, for you, to the question:**  
*Who is Jesus calling me to be?*

## Our journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter Season

*Let us pray.*

*Lord, protect us in our struggle against evil. As we begin the discipline of Lent, make this day holy by our self-denial. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen*

from the Roman Missal

### *Lenten Fast and Abstinence*

As to the canonical laws of fast and abstinence: Abstinence is the practice of abstaining from eating meat. This discipline is required on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent, and applies to all Catholics age 14 and older. Fasting is the practice of limiting food to one full meal and two additional smaller meals each day, and then not eating between meals. This discipline is required on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and applies to Catholics ages 18 to 59.

Those who are excused from fast or abstinence: Besides those outside the age limits, those of unsound mind, the sick, the frail, pregnant or nursing women according to need for meat or nourishment, laborers according to need, guests at a meal who cannot excuse themselves without giving great offense or causing enmity, and other situations of moral or physical impossibility to observe the penitential discipline are excused from the obligations of fast and abstinence.

### *Ash Wednesday is February 17*

*(School Break is February 15-19)*

Parish Masses with distribution of Ashes at 8 am, 10 am; 5:30 pm, 7:30 pm

Soup Supper, 5:45 – 7:15pm in the Gym

Ashes will be distributed to Atria, Grand Vie, Legacy (with Mass at 1:30 pm) and Penfield Place

### *St. Joseph's Table – Event of our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Year*

Friday, March 19, 6:00 pm in the Gym

### *Lenten Tuesday Evenings of Prayer 7:30 pm*

*Prayer/Music/Silent time for prayer*

February 23	Taizé
March 2	Stations of the Cross
March 9	Taizé
March 16	Evening Prayer with Benediction
March 23	Taizé

*High School Lenten Prayer and Breakfast*

Join us on Thursday mornings before school for a FREE breakfast and a short Lenten prayer.

6:45-7:15am:

Feb. 25

March 4

March 11

March 18

March 25

*Palm Sunday with outdoor procession and Mass*

March 27-28                      Saturday at 5:00 pm

   Sunday at 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am and 5:00 pm

*Communal Penance Services*

Monday, March 29 at Noon and 7:30 pm

*Holy Thursday is April 1*

9:00 am                      Morning Prayer

7:30 pm                      Mass of the Lord's Supper

11:40 pm                      Night Prayer and Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament

*Good Friday is April 2*

9:00 am                      Morning Prayer

3:00 pm                      Word Service/Veneration/Communion                      (Traditional Service)

7:30 pm                      Seven Last Words Service (Morningstar Youth Choir & Teen Mimes)

*Holy Saturday is April 3*

9:00 am                      Morning Prayer

7:30 pm                      The Great Easter Vigil

*Easter Sunday is April 4*

Masses at 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am and 12:45 pm

*Pentecost Sunday is May 22-23 (end of the 50 Days of Easter)*

## Resources Cited

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Special thanks to Patrick Fox  
for his reflections on the Lenten Scriptures.