

ASH WEDNESDAY AND THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW

Adapted from <https://www.westview.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/LentenDevotions2012.pdf>

THE FAST LIFE

Fast from judging others;
Feast on Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from fear of illness;
Feast on the healing power of God.
Fast from words that pollute;
Feast on speech that purifies.
Fast from discontent;
Feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger;
Feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism;
Feast on hope.
Fast from negatives;
Feast on encouragement.
Fast from bitterness;
Feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern;
Feast on compassion.
Fast from suspicion;
Feast on truth.
Fast from gossip;
Feast on purposeful silence.
Fast from problems that overwhelm;
Feast on prayer that sustains.
Fast from anxiety;
Feast on faith. - Author Unknown

The Lenten season began on Wednesday, 17 February 2021 and the first week of Lent begins on this Sunday. We begin this week's devotions with this half-week following Ash Wednesday, the questions explain the traditional Lenten practices of fasting, repenting, and almsgiving and then ask you to decide how you want to interact with those practices. As we're starting this devotion after Ash Wednesday, you're encouraged to embrace some or all of those practices, by starting with the devotions for this half-week.

~17 February 2021~Ash Wednesday

Scripture: Joel 2:15-16

Prayer: Lord Jesus, as we enter into Lent, may we be mindful of You, remembering Your great gift of life for us. Amen.

Question: Today is the first day of Lent, the season when we prepare for Easter. Many Christians fast during Lent. Fasting is when we choose not to eat a certain food or participate in a certain activity, so that we can focus on Jesus instead. What might you and your family fast from during Lent?

~18 February 2021~Thursday

Scripture: Joel 2: 12-13

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are a God of steadfast love. May we turn to you whenever we do something wrong and seek your forgiveness. Amen.

Question: Today is the second day of Lent, the season when we prepare for Easter. One of the things that many Christians do during Lent is repent. "Repent" means to turn around from doing wrong things and to go in a different direction, toward what is right. Let's think of one thing that each of us can repent of during Lent.

~19 February 2021~Friday

Scripture: Matthew 6:2-4

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are a generous God. Help us to be generous with others. Amen.

Question: Today is the third day of Lent, the season when we prepare for Easter. One of the things that many Christians do during Lent is to give to people who have less than they do. Who can we give to? What can we give?

~20 February 21~Saturday

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-21

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us this Lent to learn to love You more, so that we might lay up treasure in Heaven. Amen.

Question: Today is the fourth day of Lent, the season when we prepare for Easter. During Lent, Christians fast, repent, and give to people who have less than they do. Let's remind each other: What is our Lenten fast? What are each of us repenting of? Who are we giving to? What are we giving?

FIRST WEEK OF LENT: INTO THE WILDERNESS

The stories for the first week of Lent are of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness and His calling of the first disciples. Though the passages may not seem related at first glance, the theme of faithfulness to God's call unites them. As you ask the questions for each day, you may also want to encourage one another in your chosen Lenten disciplines.

~21 February 2021~First Sunday of Lent

Scripture: Matthew 3: 13, 16-17

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are the beloved Son of the Father. Please help us to know that we are God's beloved children, too. Amen.

Question: Why do you think Jesus needed to hear the voice of God telling him he was God's beloved Son?

~22 February 2021~Monday

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-2

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you know what it feels like to fast. When our Lenten fast becomes difficult, help us to be strong as you were. Amen.

Question: Lent is 40 days long. Based on today's reading, why do you think we fast for 40 days to get ready for Easter? Why do you think Jesus fasted for 40 days?

~23 February 2021~Tuesday

Scripture: Matthew 4:3-4 (This is a continuation of yesterday's story, so you'll want to review that before reading.)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, even though you were hungry, you did not give in to the devil's temptation. When we are tempted to do something we know we shouldn't, help us to resist the temptation as you did. Amen.

Question: What is something you were tempted to do today that you knew you shouldn't do? Did you give in to the temptation or did you say no to it? How do you feel about that decision?

~24 February 2021~Wednesday

Scripture: Matthew 4:5-7 (This is a continuation of yesterday's story, so you'll want to review that before reading.)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, when we wonder whether the Father loves us, remind us that He does love us, and that You love us always and forever. Amen.

Question: What do you think would have happened if Jesus had listened to the devil and thrown Himself off of the temple? Why?

~25 February 2021~Thursday

Scripture: Matthew 4:8-11 (This is a continuation of yesterday's story, so you'll want to review that before reading.)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you refused to worship anyone but God alone. Help us to worship only God, too. Amen.

Question: Why is it a bad idea to worship the Satan? What about other things—why is it bad to worship them? How do you think Jesus felt after He told the devil to get lost?

~26 February 2021~Friday

Scripture: Matthew 4:18-20

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you call us to follow You, just as You called Peter and Andrew. Help us to listen to You and do what You ask us to do. Amen.

Question: Why do you think Peter and Andrew just left their nets and followed Jesus? Do you think that was a good idea? Why or why not?

27 February 2021~Saturday

Scripture: Matthew 4:21-22

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you called Peter and Andrew and James and John, and You call us, too. Help us to be willing to follow You wherever You lead us. Amen.

Question: How do you think James and John felt when Jesus called them? How did their father feel when they left him sitting in the boat?

A LENTEN PRAYER CALLED THE PASSION

Dear Lord Jesus,
by Your Passion and Resurrection
You brought life to the world.
But the glory of the Resurrection
came only after the sufferings of the Passion.

You laid down Your life willingly
and gave up everything for us.
Your body was broken and fastened to a Cross,
Your clothing became the prize of soldiers,
your blood ebbed slowly but surely away,
and Your Mother was entrusted to the beloved disciple.

Stretched out on the Cross,
deprived of all earthly possessions and human aid,
You cried out to Your Father that the end had come.
You had accomplished the work given You,
and You committed into His hands,
as a perfect gift, the little life that remained to You.

Lord, teach me to accept all afflictions
after the example You have given.
Let me place my death in Yours
and my weakness in Your abandonment,
Take hold of me with Your love,
that same foolish love that knew no limits,

and let me offer myself to the Father
with You so that I may rise with You to eternal life.

(<https://www.catholic.org/lent/story.php?id=73813>)

Talking to Our Heavenly Father - *If we have faith, our prayers will be answered.*

You're Not Alone, Let Us Pray with You & For You

- Prayers for the safety and well-being for the state of Texas as they experience loss of power and frigid winter weather.
- Bro. Martin Martinelli, healing and restoration after Ischemic stroke due to bacteremia; 659 South 14th Ave. West Bend. WI 53095
- Ms. Mary Rogge on the passing of her sister, Ms. Joan E. Milde; 4436 Magna Vista Dr. Jackson, WI 53037
- Mr. Ted Meilahn, restoration of strength and courage as he lives into his "new normal"; 1085 Fondu du Lac Ave., Box 23, Kewaskum, WI 53040
- Ms. Vivien Loomis, healing and strength after surgery; 1119 Schmidt Road, #1, West Bend, WI 53090
- Ms. Julia Stettler, strength and ability to meet the challenges and changes that will occur during the next few months; 107 Cedar Ridge Dr. #N313, West Bend, WI 53095
- 5th Avenue UMC's Laity, Laity Leadership, Pastor & Bro. Martin – Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.
- The welfare and security of the United States of America and democracy itself.
- Bro. Bob Krell, recovering from surgery; 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090
- Mr. Roger Sacia, prayers for healing; Mrs. Nobi Sacia words of encouragement and prayers for healing; 502 Crocus Court, West Bend, WI 53095
- Ms. Nancy Whitson, healing and strength after hospitalization; 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095
- Ms. Sandy Abuya, strength and continued healing; 328 East Washington Street, #1, Slinger, WI 53086
- Mr. William (Bill) Hornung, in inpatient rehabilitation; Mrs. Ginger Hornung, strength and courage; W193 N16339 Lea Fon Circle, Jackson, WI 53037
- Ms. Betty Felt, the passing of her sister, 2130 Continental Dr. #211, West Bend, WI 53095.

Prayer: "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." – Jeremiah 29:11

Dear Lord, we are now in the holy season of Lent. We begin to realize anew that these are the days of salvation, these are the acceptable days. We know that we are all sinners. We know that in many things we have all offended Your infinite majesty. We know that sin destroys Your life in us as a drought withers the leaves and chokes the life from the land, leaving an arid, dusty desert. Help us now, Lord, in our feeble attempts to make up for past sin. Bless our efforts with the rich blessing of Your grace. Make us realize ever more our need of repentance and of forgiveness. Help us to see, in our ordinary difficulties and duties, in the trials and temptations of every day, the best opportunity of making up for past infidelities. Every day we are so often reminded in the beauty of your creation, in sky and stream, of Your own boundless generosity to us. Help us to realize that You are never outdone in generosity, and that the least thing we do for You will be rewarded, full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and flowing over. Then we shall see, in our own souls, how the desert can blossom, and the dry and wasted land can bring forth the rich, useful fruit that was expected of it from the beginning. Help us to bear witness to You by following His example of suffering and make us worthy to share in His Resurrection. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son. Amen.

With passionate hope and love, *your humble Pastor-servant leaders, Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin*