



EWTN

Global Catholic
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2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS



BY FR. JOSEPH MARY WOLFE, MFVA
EWTN CHAPLAIN

2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS



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2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Dear Family,

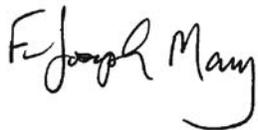
Here we are, approaching Lent once again. Do you look with dread at the coming of Ash Wednesday as I sometimes have? Perhaps this time, we can look at Lent differently. Let's see it as a time to walk with Jesus wherever He goes. In fact, near the end of the Bible, the Book of Revelation says this of those who are redeemed, they "follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (Revelation 14:4).

The journey through Lent is hard when we go it alone. But if we are with Jesus and He is with us, we will know the comfort of His Presence and be strengthened by His words and example as we move through these 40 days.

This year during the Sundays of Lent, we will begin by being led by the Spirit – WITH JESUS – into the desert. We will climb the mountain and witness His Transfiguration – as well as hear His words to the Samaritan woman, see Him heal the man born blind, and watch Him raise Lazarus from the dead.

I hope that you will join me in walking with Jesus through this Season of Lent, as I have prepared Lenten Meditations for you, our EWTN Family. Let's, you and I, "follow the Lamb wherever He goes."

In Christ,



Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA



2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Ash Wednesday February 22, 2023

Reading I	Joel 2:12-18
Psalm	Psalm 51:3-6, 12-14, 17
Reading II	2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2
Gospel	St. Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Today, as our foreheads are marked with ashes, we hear the words, “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Through the wisdom of the Church, we have this annual reminder that we are only given a finite number of years.

Fr. Benedict Groeschel used to talk about the variety of people in New York City, Catholic and non-Catholic, Christian and non-Christian, who would come to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday. Why do you think that would be so?

Perhaps it’s because the topic of our mortality is rarely broached and we often live outside of reality – in the illusion that we will never die and so we can do whatever we want, good or evil. The ashes bring us back to reality – the truth that we are only on this earth for a short time – and how we spend that time matters.

So, for the ways we have misused the time given us, we now repent, turning away from sin/living only for ourselves and turning toward Jesus with sorrow and hope.

Jesus, we want to be more worthy to walk with You this Season of Lent, and so we must begin by turning away from our sins and doing some penance so that we might join you on this cleansing path. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.



2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

First Sunday of Lent February 26, 2023

Reading I	Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7
Psalm	Psalm 51:3-6, 12-13, 17
Reading II	Romans 5:12-19 or 5:12, 17-19
Gospel	St. Matthew 4:1-11

As I said at the beginning of this series, the journey through Lent is hard when we go it alone. But, if we go with Jesus and He is with us, then we can go with Him into the desert on this First Sunday of Lent.

What is the desert? The desert is a place of little comfort, few distractions, great silence, and a place where one is more keenly aware of their own weakness. That is where the Spirit led Jesus – and walking this Lent with Jesus, let us go there with Him. With Jesus, we can embrace the discomfort of the sacrifices we have taken on willingly, as well as those we have not chosen but are part of our life today. Sacrifice isn't so hard when our hearts are full – when our gaze is fixed on the Master who is Himself fasting.

Imagine, if you will, sitting with Jesus in the desert on some large rocks where there is a little shade from the heat – being there with Him in silence. And during this week, finding a quiet place just to be with Him – perhaps going to a still and dark church or chapel where He is present in the Blessed Sacrament. Learning to hear the “still small voice” within.

Finally, in the desert, we experience our weakness – sometimes our inability to change – and so we learn to “lean on the Lord,” finding in Him the strength we need for the journey. So, let's, you and I, continue to follow the Lamb wherever He goes.



2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Second Sunday of Lent March 5, 2023

Reading I	Genesis 12:1-4
Psalm	Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22
Reading II	2 Timothy 1:8-10
Gospel	St. Matthew 17:1-9

Today on this second Sunday in Lent, we go with Jesus up the mountain to pray with Him. Imagine yourself being next to Him as He prays. You pray, too, but you feel yourself drawn to watch Him as He prays. St. Thérèse said that she only had to watch her father pray in order to understand how the Saints pray. Even more so, you are captivated and caught up in the intensity and depth of Jesus' prayer – and the love and joy become so palpable that you say to yourself how good it is to be there.

As you look once more at Jesus, you notice that He seems to be radiant – and the radiance becomes more and more intense until His clothes are whiter than white and His face shines as bright as the sun.

Dear friends, we need these moments of enjoying the warmth and light of the Lord. Do not leave your soul in empty darkness, but this week bask in the light of Christ – perhaps attending a weekday Mass or spending an hour in Eucharistic Adoration.

It is this spiritual solace that will enable you to go down the mountain with new courage and, with Jesus, to lovingly carry your daily crosses. Yes, even now, you can have a foretaste of His heavenly glory – and, one day, He will bring you to its fullness in Heaven.

So, let's, you and I, continue to follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Third Sunday of Lent March 12, 2023

Reading I	Exodus 17:3-7
Psalm	Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9
Reading II	Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
Gospel	St. John 4:5-42 or 4:5-15, 19-26, 39-42

Today on this third Sunday of Lent, let us reflect upon the words Jesus said to the Samaritan woman in today's Gospel: "Give me a drink."

St. Thérèse wrote:

This is all our Lord claims from us. He has need of our love – He has no need of our works. The same God, who declares that He has no need to tell us if He is hungry, did not disdain to beg a little water from the Samaritan woman. He was athirst, but when He said: "Give me a drink," He, the Creator of the Universe, asked for the love of His creature. He thirsted for love. And this thirst of Our Divine Lord was ever on the increase. (*Story of a Soul*, Chapter XI)

St. Teresa of Kolkata wrote:

[Jesus] thirsts for you. He loves you always, even when you don't feel worthy. When not accepted by others, even by yourself sometimes – He is the one who always accepts you. My children, you don't have to be different for Jesus to love you ... only open your heart to be loved by Him as you are. He will do the rest.

This week, dear friends, let us open our hearts and allow Jesus to love us and strive to satisfy His thirst for our love, too. One way we can do this in the Season of Lent is through works of charity, helping anyone in need, beginning with those who are close to us – for what we do to the least, we do to Him.



2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Fourth Sunday of Lent March 19, 2023

Reading I	1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13
Psalm	Psalm 23:1-6
Reading II	Ephesians 5:8-14
Gospel	St. John 9:1-41 or 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

Let us continue to walk with Jesus on this fourth Sunday of Lent as He goes to the Temple in Jerusalem. We see in the distance a man who is seated near the entrance holding out his hand and saying something to those who pass by. Some keep on walking, others pause, reach into their pockets and drop a couple of coins into his hand. As you get closer you realize that the man's eyes are glazed over and white with blindness. You later learn that he has never been able to see – he was blind from birth.

What will Jesus do? You watch Him closely as He stoops down and says to the man, "I am the light of the world." And while He is saying this He makes clay with His spittle and smears it on the man's eyes. You say to yourself, "What on earth is Jesus doing?"

But then you watch as the man is led to a pool where he washes. You are shocked as you see him rejoicing and telling everyone that he can now see.

Dear friends, the Sacraments are ways in which Jesus, today, continues to touch and bring healing to our human lives, touching our bodies and our souls. During this week, trust that for whatever is sick in you – that Jesus is THE remedy. Meeting Him changes everything. If you are away from the Sacraments or haven't prayed for some time, this is THE time to return. Let us follow the Lamb wherever He goes.



2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Fifth Sunday of Lent March 26, 2023

Reading I	Ezekiel 37:12-14
Psalm	Psalm 130:1-8
Reading II	Romans 8:8-11
Gospel	St. John 11:1-45 or 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45

On this fifth Sunday of Lent, we walk with Jesus to the tomb where His friend Lazarus is buried. We are moved to tears ourselves as we see Jesus weeping. People nearby whisper, "See how he loved him." Yet we know that Jesus always changes things. Hope always is ignited when He is around and we anticipate that something new will happen here, too.

We stand in silence with Jesus in front of the stone-covered cave. Jesus breaks the silence, saying, "Take away the stone." Some nearby wince at the thought of the odor of a decomposing body.

We continue to watch, wondering what will happen – sensing that something wonderful is coming. Jesus raises His eyes upward and prays to the Father. Then, with authority He says, "Lazarus, come out!" We cannot believe our eyes as Lazarus walks out still bound by the burial cloths. This is too good to be true!

Dear friends, is our faith too good to be true? The answer is that our faith is so good because it is true. Our hearts given grace from above, see that, rejoice in it, and marvel in God's amazing love.

When Jesus wept, those nearby said, "See how He loved him." That is true, not only of Lazarus, but for you, as well. "See how He loves you." This week, place all of your hope in that truth – you will not be disappointed. Let us continue to follow the Lamb wherever He goes.



2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion April 2, 2023

At the Procession with Palms	St. Matthew 21:1-11
Reading I	Isaiah 50:4-7
Psalm	Psalm 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24
Reading II	Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel	St. Matthew 26:14–27:66 or 27:11-54

On this Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, let's reflect on the Seven Last Words of Our Lord on the Cross. With each one of these phrases, we can enter into this great mystery of the Passion.

- "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." – Luke 23:34
- [Jesus] replied to [the criminal on the cross], "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." – Luke 23:43
- [H]e said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." – John 19:26-27
- "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" – Matthew 27:46
- "I thirst." – John 19:28
- "It is finished." – John 19:30
- "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." – Luke 23:46

First, we see Jesus' Mercy, as He asked the Father to forgive those who were killing Him – and in His words to the criminal, "today you will be with me in Paradise."

In the words, "Behold, your mother," we see His incredible love for His Mother and that she became the mother to us all.

And in the often-misunderstood words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" we see the fulfillment of Psalm 22, as Jesus quotes its first line.

In the simple words, "I thirst," we see Jesus' thirst for our love and for souls.

And with the final two phrases – "It is finished" and "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" – we see Jesus' complete acceptance of the Will of the Father and that we, too, are to finish the work the Father has given us to do.

I hope that, by meditating upon each of these words, you will draw closer to the Lord this Holy Week. May God bless you.



2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Easter Sunday April 9, 2023

Reading I	Acts 10:34, 37-43
Psalm	Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
Reading II	Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
Gospel	St. John 20:1-9

Happy Easter, Family! On this Easter Sunday, we remember the greatest news in history. At every tomb, we find the words "Here lies so and so." But at the tomb of Jesus, something else is proclaimed, "He is not here. He has risen as He said!"

Throughout this Lenten Season, we have walked with Jesus – first to the desert and then up the Mount of the Transfiguration. We encountered the Samaritan woman and the man born blind, as well as visited the tomb of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead. It was there that He said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live." Then He asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" To which she responded, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God."

Dear friends, today and throughout this Easter Season, let us confess with Martha, "Yes, Lord, I believe! You are the Christ! You are my Lord!" Let us say with the blind man, "I do believe, Lord." And finally, with the Samaritans, let us say, "We know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

I hope that the journey we have taken with Jesus during Lent has drawn you ever closer to Him. If we have followed Him on earth, He will lead us to be with Him in Heaven and to share in His Easter glory forever. I pray that you may experience the Risen Lord's Presence with you today and always.



2023 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Dates in Lent and Easter Triduum 2023

Ash Wednesday	February 22
First Sunday of Lent	February 26
Second Sunday of Lent	March 5
Third Sunday of Lent	March 12
St. Patrick's Feast Day	March 17
Fourth Sunday of Lent	March 19
St. Joseph's Feast Day	March 20
The Feast of the Annunciation	March 25
Fifth Sunday of Lent	March 26
Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion	April 2
Holy Thursday	April 6
Good Friday	April 7
Holy Saturday	April 8
Easter	April 9

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