



## A FRANCISCAN'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE HOLY LAND

Lenten Devotional 2024

Based on the journal and poetry of Father Bob Mitchell, Franciscan Friar at Mount Saint Francis Retreat Centre in Cochrane, Alberta. It is meant to supplement the daily lenten videos found on the St. Peter's website: <https://saintpeters.ca> beginning February 12, 2024  
Elaine Knudtson, Editor

**A Franciscan Friar's Walk with Jesus  
Through the Holy Land  
February 12, 2024**

**Invocation:**

*My soul is longing for your peace near to you my God.*

**Opening Prayer:**

*We offer God our spirit, our reason, our mind, our whole being. Then our spirit will possess that precious freedom of souls, far removed from tension, sadness, depression, constraint, and small-mindedness. We will sail the sea of abandonment, being freed from ourselves to attach ourselves to him the infinite.*

*Amen*

**Conclusion:**

*Praise be Jesus Christ now and forever. Amen*

**Let us begin. . .**



Robert Thomas Mitchell was born in North Bay, Ontario in 1930 to a Welsh tenor and a Canadian concert pianist. His father emigrated to Canada in the early 1920s. Unable to find a Plymouth Brethren congregation in the area, he joined the Baptist church and was a faithful member until he met Robert's mother.

She was the daughter of his manager, and he quickly formed a bond with her, even though she had been severely handicapped in a tragic accident as a child. Their mutual love of music and devotion to Jesus Christ resulted in their marriage, and Robert's father took catechism in the Catholic church.

Their home was a place where their six children lovingly entered into daily worship, prayer, and music. At an early age Bob felt the call to join a religious order, and he entered the Congregation of the Resurrection in

London, Ontario while he attended University. In his third year, his father suffered a severe stroke leaving the family without a bread winner. Bob left the order, returning home to provide for his parents and younger brothers and sisters. During these twenty years he taught high school and worked with mentally and physically handicapped children. For two years he taught at the University of Toronto training teachers to work with special needs students.



When his parents died, he was faced with a decision—live alone and continue working as a teacher, or return to a religious order. After much prayer and reflection, he was led to the Franciscan order in Lumsden, Saskatchewan where he completed his novitiate. He took further training at Newman Theological College in Edmonton where he received his Master's of Theology degree. In 1975 he was ordained as a priest in the Catholic church.

In 1972 he began his work as a Spiritual Director. In that role he has mentored hundreds of seekers from all walks of life and theological persuasions. Director and Directee meet around scripture and prayer to discern God's direction for their lives.

Thirty years ago, Father Bob was sent to the Mount St. Francis Retreat



Centre in Cochrane, where he has actively preached, performed the sacraments, led retreats, and written six books of poetry and reflection. Even in his nineties, he continues his work as

a Spiritual Director, meeting with twenty-two different Directees each month.

In 2023, Father Bob discerned that his Lenten devotions should focus on the ministry of Jesus in Holy Land as recorded in the first three gospels. Each day he would reflect on a passage, asking, “Lord, what would you have me learn from this?” His thoughts and insights were recorded in his spiritual journal which forms the basis of this devotional.

This devotional is meant to supplement the daily videos which feature scenes from the Holy Land, the poetry of Father Bob, scripture, reflection and a discussion of the question for the day. In November 2023, Father Bob fell down the stairs and broke his neck. As he convalesces, his mobility is limited, however, he continues to be involved with the project through the readings.

*Thanks to Gary and Elaine Buss for the use of their pictures from the Holy Land.*

### **Spiritual Direction Tuesday, February 13, 2024**

Show me your ways, LORD,  
teach me your paths.  
<sup>5</sup> Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Savior,  
and my hope is in you all day long. (Ps. 25:4,5)



The quality of a tour is dependent upon the knowledge and skill of the guide. When going on a spiritual journey, it is important to understand who is leading and what will be expected of us along the way.

Father Bob sought the Lord in prayer before choosing the direction of his Lenten experience.

Much as he guides his spiritual directees to discern God’s will through the use of scripture, prayer and quiet reflection, he engaged in his own discernment. By placing himself in the footsteps of Jesus, he was able to gain new insight into familiar scriptures that provoked questions, challenged presuppositions, and confirmed his faith.

“Of all persons who ever walked this earth Jesus was the most free. His freedom poured forth from him because he was rooted in love and compassion. He was so free he was able to heal lepers, to speak the truth against injustice, to cause havoc in the Temple, to save an adulteress from being stoned and to speak about the kingdom with authority. We recognize his freedom and know he was free because he was deeply rooted in the love of God. Because of his love and freedom he was also humble. He was so free and humble he could die as a criminal on the cross. And in Jesus’ freedom, God’s freedom of love was revealed.” (Father Bob, “Freedom”)

**February 14 – Ash Wednesday**  
**Bethlehem – Day 1 of Lent**

**Place:** Bethlehem  
**Action:** Jesus is born  
**Scripture:** Luke 2:11-12:

“Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”



**Insight:** I adore, praise, glorify God who today took on our humanity so that through his suffering love he could redeem and save us. The simplicity and poverty of his birth spoke into my heart and he said to me, “Live in like manner.”

## **“The Humble God”**

*(All poems in this series are used with the express permission of Father Bob)*

The Son of God  
With the Father was  
In company with the Spirit  
From all eternity.

A majesty they shared  
As three in One  
They lived in love and  
In self-giving humility.

This loving Father  
His Son besought  
To give up all his riches  
For the sake of men.  
Then the mystery of Incarnation  
Came to be in time  
When the Son in humble  
submission  
Gave himself for us.  
The Father spoke,  
The resurrection-  
The mystery profound-  
Revealed that majesty again  
In him was found.

He the humble God,  
Had stooped to man  
A rupture to repair  
And loving humility reigned.

This humility of God  
An invitation is

The Son replied and  
Into time he came  
As the humble God-man.

His birth in a stable  
A humbleness portrayed  
So that no man  
Would fear to approach him.

His life of service  
In healing, forgiving, loving  
Revealed again and again  
The humble God.

His death upon a cross-  
A total self-giving-  
Revealed the depth of love  
Of a humble God.

For us to be emptied of self  
So he can enter in.

Then humility becomes  
His life and death,  
And resurrection too,  
All over again  
In us.

**Thursday, February 15th**  
**Jerusalem to Bethlehem – Day 2 of Lent**

**Place:** Bethlehem

**Action:** Magi adore Jesus

**Scripture:** Matthew 2:1-12

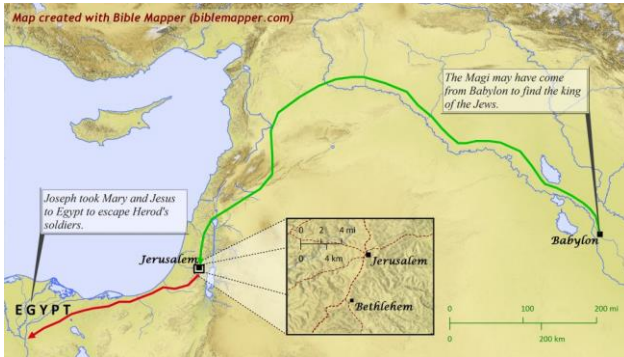


After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed,

*The Road to Bethlehem*

and so was the whole of Jerusalem. Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.

'Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward, and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.



## Infant Glorious – By Father Bob

Stillness grips the earth-  
 And shadows lengthening  
 Foretell the coming of the sun-  
 And the beginning of a new day.

Profound silence hovered over  
 the stable  
 And angel's voices sang  
 Telling of the coming of the Son  
 And the beginning of the eternal  
 day.

Jesus, tender and loving infant  
 In the manger lay,  
 Wrapped about in swaddling  
 clothes,  
 And resting in sweet innocence.

Bethlehem town, cold and  
 drear-  
 No place offered to him-

Implacable its attitude,  
 And so no love settled here.

The elements, created things,  
 Did more for him indeed,  
 Offering the human facts  
 To this King of Kings.

The sun does rise!  
 So too the Son!  
 With stillness all about,  
 Our fetters break.

The infant innocent,  
 The little Prince of Peace,  
 Born into our midst in stillness  
 Is the holy Infant glorious.

**Insight:** Three star gazers saw the star of Bethlehem denoting the birth of a King and they travelled many miles to come to honor him and present gifts. How far am I willing to travel to worship him and give him my heart? Jesus move in me with great love. There can be no freedom without love.



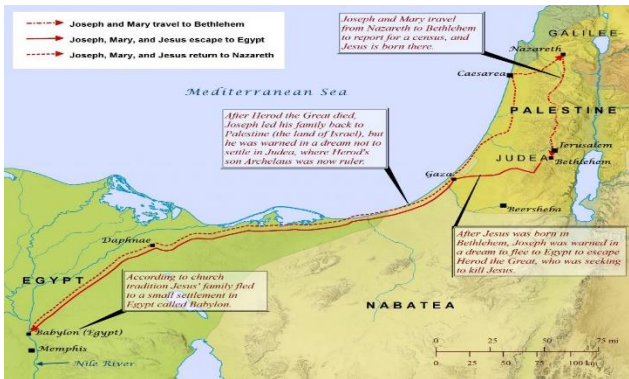
Friday, February 16th  
Nazareth – Day 3 of Lent



**Place:** Nazareth  
**Action:** Jesus returns after a time in Egypt  
**Scripture:** Matthew 2:13-15; 19-23

The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and

stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him'. So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod was dead. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: I called my son out of Egypt.



After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead. So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel. But when he learnt that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of Judaea he was afraid to go there and being warned in a dream he left for the region of Galilee. There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way the words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled: 'He will be called a Nazarene.'

**Insight:** Joseph was obedient to the voice of God and it saved Jesus' life. In the same way, Jesus's obedience to his parents spoke to me. For thirty years he was subject to Mary and Joseph. I must examine my own life of obedience and ask for forgiveness for times I was not obedient.

## The Word Made Flesh – *By Father Bob*

Jesus, the second Person of the  
Trinity

Became one of us.

He is the Word of the Father,  
“And the Word became flesh”.

He came as an infant,  
In the womb of Mary.  
He had all the vulnerability  
Of every other child.

He cried out for help,  
For the protection of his parents,  
His only real security,  
In this his created world.

The creator becomes the  
creature,  
While remaining the Maker of all  
things,  
Yet his life is in danger  
Of being terribly overwhelmed.

A fear of death at Herod’s  
hands.

Fear, a terrible fear, he faces.  
He had become a helpless child  
So that we do not fear to  
approach him.

Yes, Jesus became one of us  
Facing every tribulation of  
humanity.  
He remains always the word of  
the Father  
He simply became flesh and  
dwells among us.



*Modern Nazareth*

### **Saturday, February 17** **Jordan River – Day 4 of Lent**

**Place:** Jordan River

**Action:** Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus appeared: he came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him. ‘It is I who need baptism from you’ he said ‘and yet you come to me!’

But Jesus replied, ‘Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands’. At this, John gave in to him. As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens

opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice spoke from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him'.



**Insight:** What moves us in regard to this scene is the great humility of Jesus. He had no need to be baptized because he was sinless but he wanted to be an example for others and so in absolute humility he came to John and was baptized there by him. John preached the requirements of the messianic kingdom. Don't be afraid of the truth, even though the truth may

lead to your death. How deep are your convictions? In our lives we are more prone to pride than to imitate this marvelous humility of Jesus. What Jesus reveals in his humility is true freedom.

### **Word of Life – By Father Bob**

Welcome the Word of Life-  
Eternal life.

Listen, with open mind and heart.

Do not delay

God reveals himself now

Tangible, made visible

Audible and near,

Thus allowing us to see

His divine life thus communicated

It is thus that we humans

Receive and welcome him.

Listen and be ready



## Sunday – February 18th Christ as Centre

Do we really believe that Christ gives meaning and purpose to creation? If we do believe this, then what are the connotations that follow from this. Surely it touches on our understanding of the Incarnation, It follows then that we will see the Incarnation as more than taking away our sins. The primary purpose involved in God's becoming man is his deep desire to love

to express his love outside himself; to his creation and especially to human beings created in his own likeness. His great desire is to be our beginning and end, to be "God with us". He wants us to live in the presence of the divine and thus he enters into his creation.

### **"Glorifying God" – By Father Bob**



His dearly beloved Son, the  
Word,  
Through whom all was created.

His glory is reflected as well  
By men and women created to  
glorify  
The eternal, loving God.

The splendor of his creation  
Is revealed in the majestic mountains  
Standing everywhere to show beauty

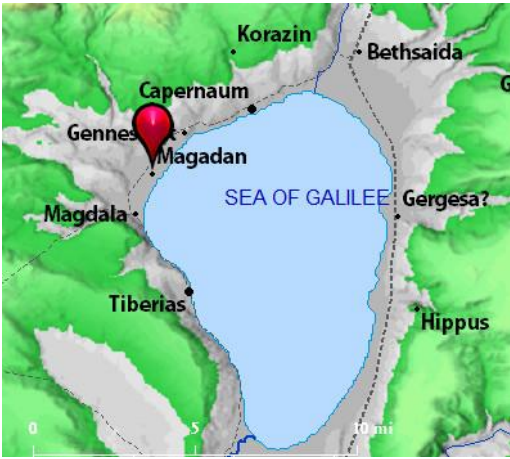
Also glorifying God is the sky  
And the verdant earth  
Covered with manifold trees

Multitudes of animals and birds  
Each according to its kind  
And crawling things of many  
kinds

Fish in the magnificent waters  
Providing food for the many.  
And all the created world  
Is called upon to glorify the Creator.



**Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**Sea of Galilee – Day 5 of Lent**



**Place:** Sea of Galilee  
**Action:** Jesus calls his first disciples  
**Scripture:** Matthew 4:18-20  
As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men'. And they left their nets at once and

followed him.

**Insight:** Jesus also calls each person to leave all and to follow him, to live in his Word, to witness to his presence and teachings. To follow him, in fact, is the sweet path to salvation. Often we stumble and fall only to be picked up and restored by God's grace. How thankful are we for his call to us? We were not created for slavery but to be the lords of creation.

**The Disciple – *By Father Bob***

Lord, you beckon us forward  
By your call to life,  
Sustained by your presence  
And ever abiding love.

You, with yearning heart, invite  
us  
To imitate you thoroughly,  
By entering into a depth  
Of communion with your life.

As we deepen our life  
In this common life with you,  
We are sent among the People  
of God  
As loving servants to be.

We stand warned beforehand  
By your ever-living Word  
To count the cost  
Before we follow and enter in!

Each event of life,  
Its crucial moment contains,  
If the moment is missed  
It will be lost forever.

Jesus urges with great intensity  
That we act at once,  
When our hearts are stirred  
So that the moment is lived.

As the ploughman cannot  
plough  
Straight furrows  
with a backward glance  
Neither can we progress  
Unless our eyes look forward.



*"Calling of Apostles" by Duccio di  
Buoninsegna*

**Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**Galilee – Day 6 of Lent**



*Galilean Countryside*

**Place:** The whole of Galilee  
**Action:** Jesus preaches and Heals  
**Scripture:** Matthew 4:13, 23-25

Leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people. His fame spread throughout Syria, and those who were suffering from diseases and painful

complaints of one kind or another, the possessed, epileptics, the paralysed, were all brought to him, and he cured them. Large crowds followed him, coming from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea and (Perea).



**Insight:** Through his loving and encouraging preaching, Jesus touches our hearts and enables us to be free in him. We feel his presence when we read his words which inspire us to be good. Only his love then can satisfy us. How we long for this.

**The Lord – By Father Bob**

Majestic and peaceful  
 Is the Lord, our Saviour.  
 He came to this earth  
 The Father's Love to reveal.  
 Healing and preaching  
 everywhere  
 Was the life-style he chose.  
 Humbly He walked and  
 submitted  
 To all things human, save sin.  
 Tired and dusty many times  
 He continued to speak words of  
 cheer.  
 Hungry and thirsty himself  
 He quenched the thirst of all.

In sublime love he surrendered  
 To His Father's will in all.  
 He trod the path to Calvary's  
 top;  
 There He was pinned to a tree.  
 He died there, out of love  
 For all persons, weak and  
 strong.  
 The end of the story this is not,  
 The Father raised Him to new  
 life.  
 The Lord, resurrected, lives  
 forever  
 And we, too, live eternally with  
 Him

**Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**The Hills of Galilee – Day 7 of Lent**

**Place:** Hillside in Galilee  
**Action:** Teaching the Beatitudes  
**Scripture:** Matthew 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, he went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:



5:3 'How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:4 Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.

5:5 Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.

5:6 Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.

5:7 Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

5:8 Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.

5:9 Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God.

5:10 Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:11 'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account.

5:12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the

prophets before you.

*Site of the Preaching of the Beatitudes*



**Insight:** What a blueprint for our lives, an invitation to walk the divine pathway. We long to be able to fully embrace these marvelous teachings from the lips of Christ. In our modern world we so often lose track of the real meaning of being followers of Christ. These words of his are reminders of his love for us by giving us these reminders. We must give ourselves to God totally.



*Church of the Beatitudes*

**God's Word – *By Father Bob***

In gentle but commanding  
  words  
The Lord does us invite,  
To open the ears of our minds  
And of our hearts and bodies  
  to  
To the Word of God.  
We are encouraged to let it  
enter

Taking root deep inside  
There to flourish and bloom  
Reflecting the Glory of God  
Which definitely it is,  
Reflecting outwardly generously  
Inviting the many  
To come to the Father

**Thursday, February 22**  
**Feeding of 5,000 – Day 8 of Lent**

**Place:** A deserted place in Galilee

**Action:** Feeding the 5000

**Scripture:** Luke 9:12-17

When evening was approaching, the Twelve came to Jesus and said, “Send the people away now so that they can go to the villages and farms in the area and obtain food and lodging, for we are in a deserted place.”

He replied, “Give them something to eat yourselves.” They said, “All we have are five loaves and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all these people.” For there were present about five thousand men.

Then he instructed his disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of about fifty.” They did so and made them sit down. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples to distribute among the people. They all ate and were satisfied. Then they gathered up what was left over—twelve baskets of fragments.

**Insight:** Wherever Jesus went he was followed by a crowd who wanted to see him and listen to his gracious words. On this occasion he was

surrounded by thousands of people, many of them had travelled many miles to be near him. Jesus was conscious of their tiredness and hunger and worried some of them would collapse on their return home. What is revealed here--the great love and compassion of God toward people even in their physical needs. Most importantly it is the prefiguring of the Eucharistic miracle which nourishes millions of people around the world every day in this great Sacrament of Love.



**Friday – February 23<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Plains of Galilee – Day 9 of Lent**

**Place:** Synagogue

**Action:** Jesus teaching

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:15-20

‘Beware of false prophets who come to you disguised as sheep but underneath are ravenous wolves. You will be able to tell them by their fruits. Can people pick grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, a sound tree produces good fruit but a rotten tree bad fruit. A sound tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a rotten tree bear good fruit. Any tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown on the fire. I repeat, you will be able to tell them by their fruits.

**Insight:** Here Jesus is pointing to us that we must be good in order to have any influence on others and the world. He uses the example of a tree bearing fruit. A good tree bears good fruit. A bad tree bears rotten fruit. What kind of fruit do I bear? How do I reveal my influence on others by living God’s commandments.

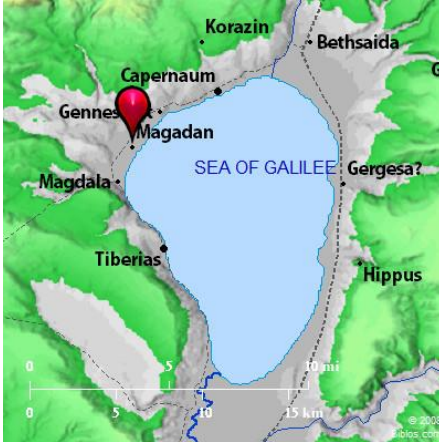


**“Prayer One” – By Father Bob**

Lord,  
You are the reader of hearts.  
You know all that is in there,  
Yet, your anger is slow in coming,  
And you judge not harshly,  
But with generous mercy.  
Come, Lord,  
Examine us and wash us clean

So that we may serve you faithfully.  
Amen

**Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**Galilee – Day 10 of Lent**



**Place:** Galilee  
**Action:** Healing the leper  
**Scripture:** Matthew 8:1-4

After he had come down from the mountain large crowds followed him. A leper now came up and bowed low in front of him. ‘Sir,’ he said ‘if you want to, you can cure me.’

Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said, ‘Of course I want to! Be cured!’ And his leprosy was cured at once. Then

Jesus said to him, ‘Mind you do not tell anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest and make the offering prescribed by Moses, as evidence for them’.

**“Jesus and the Leper” – By Father Bob**

Rejected!  
Dejected!  
Lonely!  
Afraid!

Rejected by society.  
Dejected because of loss.  
Lonely without friends.  
Afraid of all these things.

He came—  
Humbly,  
Simply,  
Hopefully.

He came to Christ;  
Humbled by his life.  
Simply begging  
Hopeful of receiving.

He was a leper,  
Disfigured and defaced  
By the disease itself  
Yet, totally human—by his  
standard.

Eaten by the sickness  
His body a mass of pain;  
Yet deep within  
Hope reigned supreme.

“Lord”, he said respectfully,  
“If you want to  
You can cure me”.  
What words these are!

Jesus, seeing all,  
Within and without,

Spoke gently and firmly,  
"Of course, I want to".

Reaching out to him,  
Jesus touched him.  
"Be cured", he said,  
And hope and faith  
were fulfilled.

From the well of his love  
Jesus cured  
The rejection, dejection,  
loneliness, fear,  
As well as the leprosy.

In faithful gratitude  
The leper follower Jesus  
To witness always and  
everywhere



That the Word cured him—

Accepted,  
Uplifted,  
Befriended,  
Encouraged  
By the Word, Jesus Christ!

**Insight:** Recognizing our own leprosy and our need of the loving forgiveness of God. Do we ever come humbly and kneel before Jesus and ask for healing and forgiveness? Am I a sinner ready to acknowledge this need? We cry out to be free.

### **Sunday – February 25<sup>th</sup>** **Teaching on the Meaning of the Sabbath**

**Place:** Cornfield

**Action:** Picking corn on Sabbath

**Scripture:** Matthew 12:1-8

At that time Jesus took a walk one sabbath day through the cornfields. His disciples were hungry and began to pick ears of corn and eat them. The Pharisees noticed it and said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing something that is forbidden on the sabbath'. But he said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry—how he went into the house of God and how they ate the loaves of offering which neither he nor his followers were allowed to eat, but which were for the priests alone?

Or again, have you not read in the Law that on the sabbath day the Temple priests break the sabbath without being blamed for it? Now here, I tell you, is something greater than the Temple. And if you had

understood the meaning of the words: What I want is mercy, not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the blameless. For the Son of Man is master of the sabbath.'

**Insight:** The Pharisees criticize the disciples of Jesus for breaking the Law of Sabbath and Jesus responds to them by declaring that the Son of Man is the Master of the Sabbath. Do we observe the Sabbath properly by doing only what is necessary on Sunday?



**“Our God” – By Father Bob**

Jesus revealed God, His Father,  
As a loving, compassionate,  
forgiving God;  
Not a God of anger,  
Not as a judge.

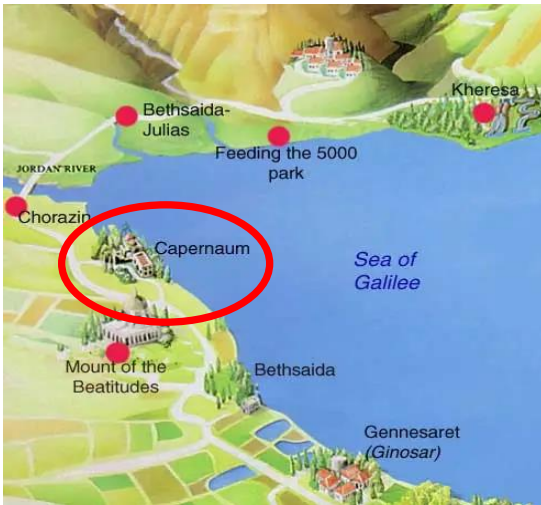
God never spies on us,  
Never pounces upon us,  
Ready to punish.  
He simply loves us.  
God gave us a law  
To establish a healthy direction.  
It is a loving law

Set to heal and abolish fear.

Jesus gave us the true picture,  
The true face of God,  
The God of Love, Truth and  
Light,  
Intensely concerned with each  
of us.

Jesus' Father is the God,  
Who is in love with each one,  
Regardless of our lowly status.  
He is the God of Life.

**Monday, February 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**Synagogue in Galilee – Day 11 of Lent**



**Place:** The Synagogue

**Action:** Healing a man with a withered hand

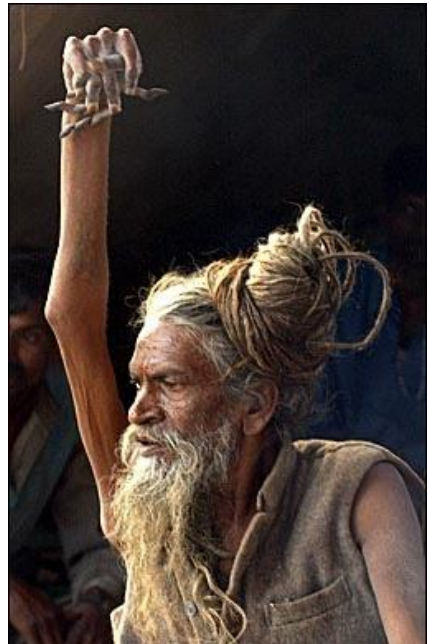
**Scripture:** Matthew 12:9-14

He moved on from there and went to their synagogue, and a man was there at the time who had a withered hand. They asked him, 'Is it against the law to cure a man on the sabbath day?' hoping for something to use against him. But he said to them,

'If any one of you here had only one sheep and it fell down a hole on the sabbath day, would he not get hold of it and lift it out? Now a man is far more important than a sheep, so it follows that it is permitted to do good on the sabbath day.'

'Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand'. He stretched it out and his hand was better, as sound as the other one. At this the Pharisees went out and began to plot against him, discussing how to destroy him.'

**Insight:** Jesus is pointing out the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders and reminisces of the loving acts they should be performing instead of criticizing. Do we ever wrongfully judge others or refuse to come to the aid of the sick and poor?



## Encounter – By Father Bob

My God, my Lord, my Lover,  
You acknowledge me,  
Smile upon me,  
As I raise my hands in prayer.

My God, my Lord, my Lover,  
With care you train me.  
Look upon me  
As I raise my hands in prayer.

My God, my Lord, my Lover,  
With strength you protect me.  
Dwell with me  
As I raise my hands in prayer.

My God, my Lord, my Lover,  
With love you encompass me.

Hide me in yourself.

As I raise my hands in prayer.

My God, my Lord, my Lover,  
You are my all.  
Face to face I stand  
As I raise my hands in prayer.  
My God, my Lord, my Lover,  
You prepare a place for me.  
To yourself take me  
As in death I lift my hands to  
you.

Be my eternal love and life.  
Lift me to your everlasting  
embrace.

To yourself lift up your child  
For the eternal encounter,  
My God, my Lord, my Lover.

## Tuesday, February 27 Nazareth – Day 12 of Lent



**Place:** Nazareth  
**Action:** Jesus rebuffed  
in his hometown  
**Scripture:** Matthew  
13:34-38; 54-58

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak to them except in parables. This was to fulfill the prophecy: I will speak to you in parables and expound things hidden since the foundation of the world.

Coming to his hometown, he taught the people in their synagogue in such a way that they were astonished and said, 'Where did the man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? This is the carpenter's son, surely? Is not his mother the woman called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? His sisters, too, are they not all here with us?'



So where did the man get it all?’ And they would not accept him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is only despised in his own country and in his own house’, and he did not work many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

**Insight:** Jesus returns to his own town and taught the people in the synagogue. Familiarity closed their minds to what he was saying. They were astonished at his words but said, “Surely this is Mary’s Son.” Do we ever allow familiarity to cloud our vision and hearing so that one cannot grow spiritually?



*Nazareth village*

### **A Prophet – By Father Bob**

A prophet arises,  
And is not  
received,  
Especially in his own  
environment,  
Even in his  
home.  
The prophet always presents  
something new.  
Often it appears  
startling,  
disturbing.  
Yet, it is really not new at all,  
But the  
reaffirmation of  
something old.  
The prophet opens up a new  
way,  
One that is so  
simple,

People see it as a trick  
And openly  
reject it  
immediately.  
He reveals to people  
The darkness of  
their minds;  
Their refusal to move beyond,  
And hence  
remain mired  
down.  
What he reveals is revelatory  
Of our lost trust,  
Of our fear of our own poverty,  
Which could  
lead us into  
God’s  
Presence.

**Wednesday – February 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**Shores of Galilee – Day 13 of Lent**



**Place:** In a boat by the shores of Galilee  
**Action:** Parable of the Sower  
**Scripture:** Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23

That same day Jesus went out

of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying:

“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Therefore listen to the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart; that is the seed sown on the path. As for the seed sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. But such a person has no deep root, and he endures for only a short time. When some trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, he immediately falls away. “The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but worldly cares and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit.

However, the seed sown in rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

**Insight:** Sacred Scripture reminds us: The whole earth is full of God’s knowledge. The whole earth is full of God’s wisdom. The whole earth is full of God’s goodness. Each bit of creation is an unique revelation that

holds us spellbound filling us with wonder and delight. We need to be converted to see it, to make connections.

*"The Sower" by Vincent Van Gogh*



**"Transformation" By Father Bob**

We need to be transformed  
By allowing our eyes to be blessed by what we see  
By taking moments throughout the day  
To give our Creator our fullest attention;  
By allowing the things we see to parade before our inner vision;  
By allowing those same things to touch our hearts  
By resting in the faith that God transforms our seeing;  
By relishing with joy the wonder God creates in our inner being.

**Thursday – February 29<sup>th</sup>  
Sea of Galilee – Day 14 of Lent**

**Place:** Sea of Galilee  
**Action:** Calming the storm  
**Scripture:** Matthew 8:26-27

And he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened, you men of little faith?'  
And with that he stood up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and all  
was calm again.  
The men were astounded and said, 'Whatever kind of man is this? Even  
the winds and the sea obey him.'

**Insight:** Jesus speaks to us of our response to fear. The story asks us to look at the area of trust in our lives, especially trust in God. When the going gets tough to whom do we turn? Are we like the apostles or do we turn to Christ our Saviour. He can calm even the most disturbing of our interior life. Jesus says trust in me. Do we?

**Fear – By Father Bob**

Disturbing, destructive,  
Unnerving, paralyzing,  
Cloying fear attacks.

More binding  
Than forged chains  
It tightens the bonds.

Weakening its victim  
Into simpering  
insensibility  
It securely imprisons.

Terror and anxiety  
Its other names  
Wrecks havoc in mind  
and heart.  
Danger impending  
Its source so often is  
Inhibiting breathing,  
functioning.

There is nothing  
worse  
To detract from  
normalcy  
Than dreadful cloying  
fear.

Suffer it once  
And you will understand  
The damp hands and hair.

Solicitude, kind and true  
Its conqueror is  
Restoring restful calm.



*Rembrandt - "Christ in the Storm"*

**Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**Country of the Gerasenes – Day 15 of Lent**



**Place:** Country of the Gerasenes

**Action:** Power of Jesus over demons

**Scripture:** Luke 8:26-37

They came to land in the country of the Gerasenes which is opposite Galilee. He was stepping ashore when a man from the town who was possessed by devils came towards him; for a long time the man had worn no clothes, nor did he live in a house, but in the tombs.

Catching sight of Jesus he gave a shout, fell at his feet and cried out at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, son of the Most High God? I implore you,

do not torture me.'

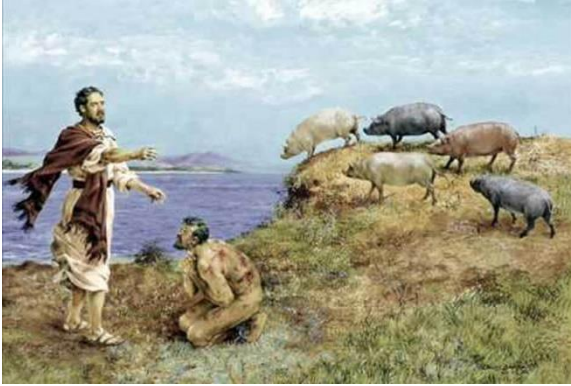
For Jesus had been telling the unclean spirit to come out of the man. It was a devil that had seized on him a great many times, and then they used to secure him with chains and fetters to restrain him, but he would always break the fastenings, and the devil would drive him out into the wilds.

'What is your name?' Jesus asked. 'Legion' he said-because many devils had gone into him. And these pleaded with him not to order them to depart into the Abyss.

Now there was a large herd of pigs feeding there on the mountain, and the devils pleaded with him to let them go into these. So he gave them leave. The devils came out of the man and went into the pigs, and the herd charged down the cliff into the lake and were drowned.

When the swineherds saw what had happened they ran off and told their story in the town and in the country round about; and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus they found the man from whom the devils had gone out sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his full senses; and they were afraid.

Those who had witnessed it told them how the man who had been possessed came to be healed. The entire population of the Gerasene territory was in a state of panic and asked Jesus to leave them. So he got into the boat and went back.



**Insight:** Jesus drives the demons out of a possessed man. His very words were enough to set the man free from bondage. We are not likely ever to be an exorcist but we all have the power to pray over someone who appears to need

deliverance. A group of people praying in the Spirit can break the bonds of possession. In some ways we all need deliverance.

**“The Mystery of Transformation” – By Father Bob**

Let us be aware—  
     And precisely so, O  
 God!  
 To enter into the double  
 darkness,  
     The abyss that is  
 fathomless—  
 The infinity of God  
     And our very own  
 nothingness.

It is our willingness,  
     In our yes to this  
 darkness,  
 That our prayer and song  
     Will ascend more  
 perfectly  
 And give glory and praise to  
 God.  
     We ourselves become  
 this song.

This song of praise to the  
 Almighty

    Gives him laud and  
 glory.  
 Yet, even so, the abyss remains  
     In double form  
 Drawing us ever deeper  
     Into its yawning depth.

The ineffable otherness of God  
     Becomes more clearly  
 discernible  
 Revealing the infinite distance  
     Between Creator and  
 creature  
 As the Almighty communicates  
 himself  
     In love to his creatures.

Yet, at the same time, this God  
 of love  
     Closes the gap, and the  
 distance  
     Is forgotten,  
 As he clothes his creatures

With himself in splendour  
And divinizes us and draws us gently

Into sublime unity with himself.

The mysterious mercy of God  
Is visited upon his creatures,  
And raises us up from despondency

And separation from him

To enfold us in a tremendous joy

Of intimate exchange of love

His otherness remains  
In the heart of unity.

He transforms through love  
And draws us into his own life,

Through his Spirit, and into  
The life of the Trinity.

### Saturday, March 2 Caesarea Philippi – Day 16 of Lent



**Place:**  
Caesarea Philippi  
**Action:**  
Peter's profession of faith  
**Scripture:**  
Matthew 16:13-16

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do

people say the Son of Man is?'

And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets'. 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?'

Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said 'the Son of the living God'.

**Insight:** In today's world and culture we very much need to ask ourselves, "Who is Jesus Christ?" What kind of relationship do we have with him? Do we allow his words and practices to enter fully into our lives? Do his miracles astonish us? Do we allow his love to penetrate us and change us? Do we really love him or is it only a charade?

It was at Caesarea Philippi that Peter first confessed that Jesus was the Messiah before he was taken up with Jesus, James and John to the Mt. of Transfiguration. It is also where Jesus met him after the resurrection and called him to feed his sheep.

### **Peter's Growth – By Father Bob**

Furrowed cheeks  
Portrayed the sorrow;  
Denial thrice of one he loved  
Caused havoc within—and  
change.

The Lord  
One searching glance did give;  
Conversion deep and lasting  
This look effected.

"I do not know him;  
No, he is not my friend;  
He is not known to me;"

The words of denial were.

Now, before this loving Lord,  
In the presence of the six  
The Lord another searching  
glance did cast upon his friend.

"Do you love me?  
Do you really love me?  
Do you even care for me?"  
Jesus asked his friend.

Deep humility learned before  
in the agony of denial  
Made him more honest,  
More true to Love.

"You know I love you  
You know I love you, Lord—  
You know all things  
You know that I do love you."

His security no longer  
In himself is found  
But rather in the Lord  
Is placed his dependence.

Thus in answer sadly  
He had to say,  
"You know Lord



*Peter at Philippi*



You know that I care for you.”  
In loving response  
To this proclaiming  
The Lord commissioned him—  
“Feed my lambs and sheep.”

From denial to real love  
Thus did he grow

In humility sure  
The Lord alone his ground.

When all was said and done  
The Lord said simply—  
“Follow me,”  
This did Peter do full boldly.

**Sunday – March 3<sup>rd</sup>**



**Place:** In the town  
**Action:** Teaching  
**Scripture:** Matthew 5:13-16  
“You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, what can be done to make it salty once again? It is no longer good for anything, and thus it is cast out and trampled underfoot.

“You are the light of the world. A city built upon a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor would someone light a lamp and then put it under a basket; rather, it is placed upon a lampstand so that it may afford light to all in the house.

**Insight:** What kind of salt are we. Salt is a symbol of peace which we keep in our heart. Is there any fear in us that we may lose its savour? How well do we listen to this teaching of Jesus?

**“Our Destiny” – By Father Bob**

We are called to be  
True followers of Jesus,  
Each in his own way.

A love lived in purity of heart.  
A life fashioned by obedience.

What does such a call denote?  
What is expected of the  
                        follower?  
How, in fact does he follow?

The path to be tread  
Is one of deep humility  
Lived out in simplicity  
Jesus says: Follow me.  
We say either yes or no  
And thus seal our destiny.

The journey is one of love.

**Monday – March 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**Mt. Hermon – Day 17 of Lent**



**Place:** A high mountain  
**Action:** Transfiguration  
**Scripture:** Matthew 17:1-8

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone.

There in their presence he was *Mount Hermon* his transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.'

He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' When they heard this the disciples fell on their faces overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

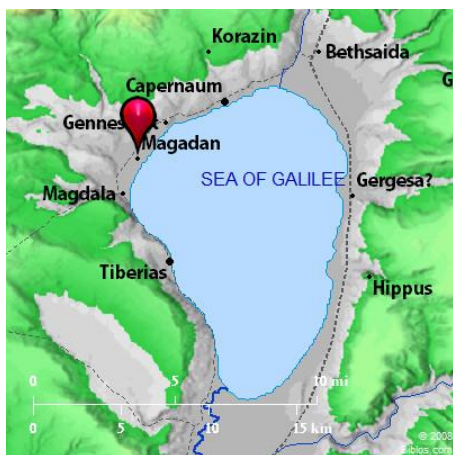
**Insight:** We all desire to stand in the great glory of God. Jesus took his three disciples up a high mountain and there he revealed his divinity in a glorious blaze of light. Do you ever imagine what that must have been like? Can you picture yourself with Peter, James and John experiencing this Theophany?

**“The Mystic”** – *By Father Bob*

In wonder  
    And awe-filled expectancy he  
Awaited  
    The marvellous revelation of God Himself.  
His eyes  
    Opened wide to the  
mystic experience  
He underwent  
    When he perceived God  
as total Love.  
No one  
    Can in any way force the  
Lord  
To reveal  
    Himself as He really is.  
He must  
    Learn and understand  
clearly  
To be  
    Utter receptivity awaiting  
the Lord.  
God chooses  
    To whom He will reveal  
Himself;  
He decides  
    In his own good time to  
come.  
The mystic  
    Learns that to pray is to  
listen  
To God  
    Who speaks gently, tenderly.  
The Lord  
calls him aside to be still  
And there  
    Speaks to his heart loving words.  
It is  
    In this communion of hearts that  
The mystic  
learns gently the art of arts.



## Tuesday – March 5th Capernaum – Day 18 of Lent



**Place:** Outside Capernaum  
**Action:** Healing by speaking a word

**Scripture:** Luke 7:1-10  
When he had come to the end of all he wanted the people to hear, he went into Capernaum. A centurion there had a servant, a favourite of his, who was sick and near death. Having heard about Jesus he sent some Jewish elders to him to ask him to come and heal his servant.

When they came to Jesus they pleaded earnestly with him. 'He deserves this of you' they said 'because he is friendly towards our people; in fact, he is the one who built the synagogue.'



So Jesus went with them, and was not very far from the house when the centurion sent word to him by some friends: 'Sir,' he said 'do not put yourself to trouble; because I am not worthy to have you under my roof; and for this same reason I did

not presume to come to you myself; but give the word and let my servant be cured. For I am under authority myself, and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man: Go, and he goes; to another: Come here, and he comes; to my servant: Do this, and he does it.'

When Jesus heard these words he was astonished at him and, turning round, said to the crowd following him, 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found faith like this'.

And when the messengers got back to the house they found the servant in perfect health.

**Insight:** Here we have an example of the effectiveness of the prayer of petition. A centurion trusted Jesus even though he was an unbeliever. His prayer was answered. He had asked that his servant be healed, not asking anything for himself. Healing follows on the heels of faith. Do we trust thus?

**“Waiting in Prayer” – By Father Bob**

As life unfolds in its daily rhythm,  
We learn to wait and pray,  
Until, in fact the waiting becomes prayer.

Waiting is the deepest form of prayer.  
Waiting becomes a way of life,  
Touching absolutely everything.

We wait for life.  
We wait for death.  
We wait for joy.

We wait for sorrow.  
We wait for forgiveness.  
We wait for reconciliation.

We wait for everything.  
Waiting is transformed to hope  
And is lifted up into Love.

**Wednesday, March 6th  
Nain – Day 19 of Lent**



**Place:** Nain  
**Action:** Restoring Life – The Graciousness of God  
**Scripture:** Luke 7:11-17

Now soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people.

When he was near the gate of the town it happened that a dead man was being carried out for burial, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a

considerable number of

the townspeople were with her. When the Lord saw her he felt sorry for her. 'Do not cry' he said. Then he went up and put his hand on the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, 'Young man, I tell you to get up'.

And the dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Everyone was filled with awe and praised God saying, 'A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people'. And this opinion of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.



*The Gates of Nain*

**Insight:** Outside Nain Jesus comes upon a funeral procession. It is for the only son of a widow. Jesus not only sees her grief but also her situation – no one to care for her. Jesus raises the son to life and gives him back to his mother. How do we reset in such a situation? How gracious and supportive are we?

### **“Death” – By Father Bob**

Death is a profound mystery.  
It is simply an invitation  
To let go all we are grasping  
To be embraced by God's love.

Death is the embarking  
On the most important journey  
We will ever take and  
So we must embrace it.

Death is not to cause fear.  
Rather it is to be joy-filled  
As we embark on its journey  
Into the fullness of real life.

Death is that which frees us  
From all earthly chains.  
Free to see God face to face.  
Happiness forever and ever.  
Again—death is an invitation

**Thursday – March 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**Tyre – Day 20 of Lent**

**Place:** Near Tyre

**Action:** Healing for all

**Scripture:** Mark 7:24-30

He left that place and set out for the territory of Tyre. There he went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there, but he could not pass unrecognised.

A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him straightaway and came and fell at his feet. Now the woman was a pagan, by birth a Syrophenician, and she begged him to cast the devil out of her daughter.

And he said to her, 'The children should be fed first, because it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs'.

But she spoke up: 'Ah yes, sir,' she replied 'but the house-dogs under the table can eat the children's scraps'.

And he said to her, 'For saying this, you may go home happy: the devil has gone out of your daughter'. So she went off to her home and found the child lying on the bed and the devil gone.

**Insight:** A real repartee takes place between Jesus and the woman who holds her ground, and this pleases Jesus. Do we ever have this kind of discussion with Jesus? The woman went home happy and her daughter was healed. What is the lesson for me?



**“Jesus”** – *By Father Bob*

Jesus  
Came to the poor and lowly  
To love them into wholeness.

His words  
Were spoken to the oppressed and suffering,  
And to all who have no voice.

He moved among  
Those who felt lost and abandoned,  
And to those excluded from society.

He touched  
All those who were disgraced,  
And in anguish and imprisoned.

He said to all, “do not be afraid,  
Because I love and forgive you”.

He saw every person as of great value,  
And precious in His sight.

Jesus  
Called us the beloved of God,  
The chosen ones.





**Friday – March 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**On the Road to Jericho – 21<sup>st</sup> Day of Lent**



*Road to Masada*

**Place:** Jerusalem to Jericho  
**Action:** Compassion of the Good Samaritan  
**Scripture:** Luke 10:29-37

A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving

him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him and passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said "and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have."

Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?

'The one who took pity on him' he replied. Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself'.

**Insight:** A Samaritan fulfilled the law of compassion and love by stopping to give to a young man who had fallen afoul of thieves. The young man would most likely have died without the ministrations of the Samaritan. Who are we like? Do we resemble the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan? When is the last time you came to the aid of someone in distress?

**"Unconditional Servant" – By Father Bob**

Naked, bruised, bleeding,  
abandoned,  
All his possessions stolen,  
The young man unconscious lay  
In the sand, in the ditch.

All his plans so carefully prepared  
For nought, or so it seemed.  
How gaily he had set out upon  
This new adventure scheme.

Youthful, anxious, ambitious,  
His years not yet  
Laden with wisdom deep  
He set out joyfully.

Suspecting nothing in his naivete,  
He joined a group of men  
Appearing so friendly indeed  
His heart was warmed.

Desolate part of the road attained  
His friends, so called,  
Abused him surely, cruelly.  
Taking all he had.

His life they spared unknowingly.  
Adventure seemed so dim  
As in his state so sad  
He bled, colouring the sand.

A priest and levite passed that way,  
His plight they did perceive  
They hesitated not, nor looked  
Because unclean they would be.

No time had they  
For this "brother dear"  
No care, no concern  
Too busy for charity.

His youthful, curly hair matted,  
His handsome face and body  
broken—

Yet not a glance had they  
For him as he lay exposed.  
(Have we not ourselves  
Been this lad in the ditch  
Our lives all torn and  
Life ebbing away,  
We unloved, rejected  
No-one to care?)

Then upon the scene  
A stranger came  
He had all the time

The care, concern needed.

He stopped, he stooped, he  
touched

He found life  
In the torn frame  
Of this young man.

The oil of compassion  
The wine of charity  
He used to patch and mend  
To love – giving life.

Upon his mount alone  
He placed this youth.  
A nearby inn was the design  
To help the lad rest and heal.

Nothing at all did he ask  
Of the sometime luckless youth  
But he paid for his keep  
Giving of his own totally.

Giving him a new life!

Gratitude the young man  
Expressed later by steering  
His course more deftly and  
Aiding others like himself.

This is the story of love  
Unconditional and caring  
The story of God's concern  
For all of us.

It is the story of death—  
resurrection!

(Are we ever this Good Samaritan  
indeed?  
Are we the lover unconditional,  
the servant?)

God calls us  
This to be.

**Saturday – March 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**Synagogue – Day 22 of Lent**



**Place:** Synagogue with Pharisees

**Action:** Story telling – Prodigal Son

**Scripture:** Luke 15:11-32

He also said, ‘A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, “Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me”. So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

‘When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything.

Then he came to his senses and said, “How many of my father’s paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants.”

So he left the place and went back to his father. ‘While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly.

Then his son said, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.”

But the father said to his servants, “Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.” And they began to celebrate.



**Insight:** This is the tender loving forgiveness for a wayward son. There is no greater love. Do we ever consider ourselves to be a prodigal child? Do we run to our loving Father seeking his life-giving, loving forgiveness? How

grateful are we?

### "I, The Prodigal" – By Father Bob



*"The Prodigal" by Rembrandt*

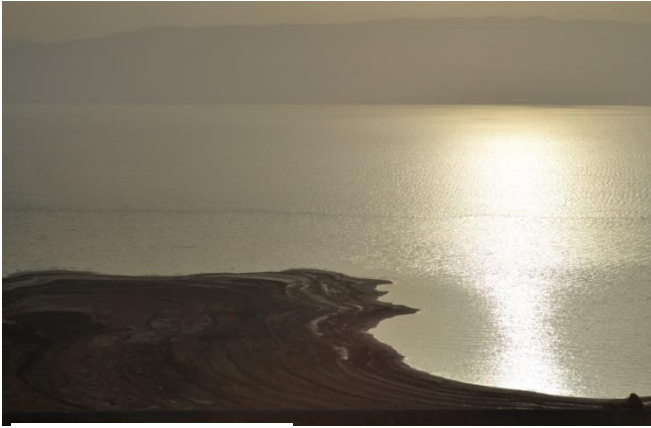
Today, I the prodigal son want to view God from a totally different vantage point from yesterday, namely, my brokenness. I want, as the fruit of this day, the courage to enter into the dark areas of my life. I want to know with St Paul there is sin in my members (Rom.7:23)

I want to experience sin as a cancer that shoots through my whole being and in all my relationships, I want to see sin as my oneness with the brokenness of the whole world that groans in travail (Rom. 8:22)

I beg also for the grace to realize in my brokenness

that Jesus is the incarnate, healing, mercy of God. As I fear my locked-in-enslavement and inability to set myself free, I cry out in hope for Jesus's healing love. I can be healed by God's mercy.

**Sunday – March 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**Confession and Forgiveness**



*Dead Sea from Masada*

**Luke 17:1-4:** Jesus said to his disciples, “Scandals are bound to occur, but woe to the man through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were fastened around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. Be on your guard! “If your brother should sin, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. Even if he wrongs you seven times a day, and comes back to you seven times to say, ‘I am sorry,’ you must forgive him.”

**Insight:** Have we ever been guilty of leading others into sin? Jesus spells out the punishment which follows upon such acts—but do we take this teaching seriously?

**“Forgiveness” – By Father Bob**

God is Love,  
Infinite, eternal Love.  
In the depths of this eternal  
Love  
    Is found forgiveness.

God touched man  
Man responded to God.  
In this salvatory action of love  
    Man is forgiven

God became man,  
Yet remained god.  
In this union he brought  
salvation  
    Through his  
forgiveness.

Forgiveness is of the essence of  
God,  
Hence it is of the very fibre of  
Love.  
God loved mankind so intensely

The the rupture he  
repaired.

Jesus on the Cross  
Cried out, "Father, forgive them"  
And we, each one of us,  
Was forgiven!

Do you believe?  
Do you receive?  
Do you live?  
Do you love?  
Do you forgive?

Christ Jesus showed us how.

**Monday – March 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**In Solitude – Day 23 of Lent**

**Place:** A certain place

**Action:** Teaching on Prayer

**Scripture:** Luke 11:1-4

Now once he was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples'. He said to them, 'Say this when you pray:

Father, may your name be held holy,  
your kingdom come;  
give us each day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our sins,  
for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us.  
And do not put us to the test.

**Insight:** Jesus taught his disciples to pray as he prayed. He gave them and us the "Our Father" or "Lord's Prayer." It is full of wise instructions and invitations. Do we listen closely to what Jesus teaches here? It is a way of life. Am I and you willing to live this prayer every day?



**"Solitude" – By *Cave of Dead Sea Scrolls* Father Bob**

What is solitude-  
 If not essentially  
 Both the interior  
 And the exterior  
 Condition of being alone with  
 God?

Is it not somewhat-  
 The same as,  
 One who in love  
 So seeks to be alone  
 With the Beloved, who loves in  
 return?

Would it not be-  
 Through this loving  
 union,  
 That the fruitfulness of grace  
 Is carried along  
 To become the universal love  
 that is mercy?

Solitude!  
 Interior, exterior  
 Fulfilment in silence  
 Fruitful  
 Merciful!

**Tuesday – March 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**Samaritan Village – Day 24 of Lent**

**Place:** Samaritan Village  
**Action:** Rebuke  
**Scripture:** Luke 9:54-56

Now as the time drew near for him to be taken up to heaven, he



resolutely took the road for Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him. These set out, and they went into a Samaritan village to make preparations for him, but the people would not receive him because he was making for Jerusalem. Seeing this, the disciples James and John said, 'Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?' But he turned and rebuked them, and they went off to another village.

## Rejection” – By Father Bob

A searing pain gripped my  
heart-  
It burned inwardly  
Fiercely  
Unendingly.

It touched every fibre of my  
being  
Tossing aside  
protestations  
Vehemently  
Uncomprehendingly  
Uncompromisingly.

It engulfed my whole life  
Encompassing body,  
soul and mind

Slavishly  
Violently  
Intolerably.

Ripping through sinew, bone  
and corpuscles  
Leaving only breathlessness.  
The agony drowned my person  
I was, or so it seemed only pain.

It was rejection!  
Tossed aside, discarded!  
Oh can one live  
In such a state?

The heart amazes—  
It withstands torrents all  
Even this—  
Yes, even this.



**Insight:** Do we ever act before thinking and make rash decisions or very quick decisions? Jesus rebukes James and John and simply suggested they go on to

another village. Again Jesus reveals his wisdom in knowing how to deal with difficult situations. How do we usually react to such incidents



## Wednesday – March 13th Synagogue – Day 25 of Lent

**Place:** Synagogue in Perea  
**Action:** Healing – Do we believe?  
**Scripture:** Luke 13:10-13

One sabbath day he was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who for eighteen years had been possessed by a spirit that left her enfeebled; she was bent double and quite unable to stand upright. When Jesus saw her he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are rid of your infirmity' and he laid his hands on her. And at once she straightened up, and she glorified God.



**insight:** How eager are we to join our neighbours from all over seeking healing from Jesus. Do we trust that he will be willing? Listen and reflect on this story and know when we come in faith something always happens; but we must believe in faith and trust. Do we?



**“Broken and Healed” – By Father Bob**

Bent, broken,  
Folded over in pain!  
Creases left over  
From former strain.

Crying and moaning  
Given little surcease  
To the razor sharp agony  
Of my chipped life.

Soul in severe travail  
Losing sight of its goal  
Joins the body’s complaint—  
Why me, O Lord?  
No bruised reed is crushed,  
No wick is extinguished.  
Then why, o why

Do I continue to wail?

Does the Lord of all  
Not observe from above,  
That my crushing burden  
Needs his loving support?

Bent back for sure  
But not for long  
For the infinite Lord  
Smooths out the folds  
Touching my life  
And setting me free.

Bent and broken I may surely be  
But the Master lovingly heals  
me.

**Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>  
In the countryside – Day 26 of Lent**



*“Jesus Blessing the Children”  
Lucas Cranach the Elder*

**Place:** Village on way to Jerusalem  
**Action:** Blessing children  
**Scripture:**  
Matthew 19:13-15

People brought little children to him, for him to lay his hands on them and say a prayer. The disciples

turned them away, but Jesus said, ‘Let the little children alone, and do not stop them coming to me; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs’.

**Childlikeness:** Jesus said, “unless you become like one of these little ones you cannot enter the kingdom.”(Luke 18:15-17) What did he mean by the words become like a little child? He meant our willingness to accept oneself as being of little account; to be regarded as unimportant. Jesus uses the child as an image of the kingdom. A child is a symbol of those in lowest places in society. These are: the poor oppressed, beggars, prostitutes, marginalized. They are the little ones of society in the eyes of Jesus. So often in our world they are dispersed and ignored. They are filled with feelings of shame and inferiority. Jesus acknowledges them as important to him. In compassion we too must see these little ones as having great value as Jesus did. He allotted them a privileged place in his kingdom. How do we see these people?

**“Jesus Speaks” – By Father Bob**

My child, my friend  
Your desire I can see  
Is to follow after Me.

Of love enduring  
To enter into the eternal  
Kingdom.

Walk in my footprints sure  
Surrendered and penitent,  
With obedience true;  
Poverty of spirit alive  
In the love of my Father.

Walk in love, my little one,  
In humility and simplicity.  
In my hand place yours,  
Allow me your guide to be  
To life and love eternally

Choose, choose the way

**insight:** The trust and simplicity of children drew from Jesus his loving response. He prayed with them and blessed them and told the disciples not to send them away. What does this say to us? Surely we want to imitate Jesus by caring lovingly for all children. In imitating Jesus we foster the proper growth of the little ones, protecting them from abuse and above all to respect their dignity.

**Friday – March 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**Jericho to Jerusalem – 27<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**



**Place:**  
Just outside  
Jericho  
**Action:**  
Healing Two  
Blind Men  
**Scripture:**  
Matthew 20:29-  
34

As they left  
Jericho a large

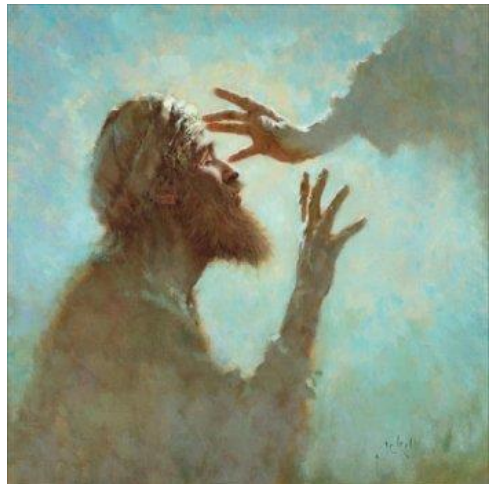
crowd followed him. Now there were two blind men sitting at the side of the road. When they heard that it was Jesus who was passing by, they shouted, 'Lord! Have pity on us, Son of David.'

And the crowd scolded them and told them to keep quiet, but they only shouted more loudly, 'Lord! Have pity on us, Son of David.'

Jesus stopped, called them over and said, 'What do you want me to do for you?'

They said to him, 'Lord, let us have our sight back'. Jesus felt pity for them and touched their eyes, and immediately their sight returned and they followed him.

**Insight:** Once again we see the compassionate mercy of Jesus as he responds to their plea to be cured. In our day many of us are blind and do not recognize the fact. Perhaps our blindness is the lack of faith, or we are so caught up in worldly affairs we fail to see the God-given realities all around us. What do I intend to do—cry out to the Lord.



## Bartimeus – *By Father Bob*

Bartimeus—  
A blind beggar was he  
At Jericho's gate.

Clothed only in rough  
Homespun cape  
His nakedness to cover,  
Stood in the ditch  
His pleas to make.

Bartimeus—  
A blind beggar was he  
At peoples' mercy.

He heard an unusual  
Noise one morn  
And asked who went by.  
Jesus, the rabbi  
Was the reply.

Bartimeus—  
A blind beggar was he,  
At once cried out.  
Jesus, Son of David,  
Have mercy on me.

The passerby annoyed  
Silenced him,  
But he called loudly.  
Bartimeus—  
A blind beggar was he,  
Then listened attentively.

Come to me Jesus said.  
Stripping off his cloak,  
And running naked,  
He knelt before Jesus.  
Heal me, please.

Bartimeus—  
A blind beggar was he,  
Saw miraculously.

The lesson we learn  
Is to let go all,  
And stripped and humbled  
We kneel and pray,  
And we, too will  
"see" miraculously.

## Saturday – March 16<sup>th</sup>

### Teaching in the Synagogues – Day 28 of Lent

**Place:** In the synagogues

**Action:** Generous giving

**Scripture:** Luke 18: 9-14

'Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, "I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get."



The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner".

**Insight:** This little parable speaks eloquently to today's culture. God calls us to simplicity of heart. This means living humbly and in poverty of spirit. Which of the two men do we most resemble? Be honest.

**"Prayer" – By Father Bob**

Prayer is the soul speaking to  
God  
In words soft and  
gentle,  
Permeated with love and peace.

Prayer is the uplifting of mind  
To praise and adore,  
The everlasting God in Heaven.

Prayer is the petition of a sinner,  
Broken on the wheel of  
life,  
Seeking divine forgiveness.

Prayer is deep gratitude,  
Offered simply, by one  
Totally dependent upon God.

Prayer is remembrance  
Of God's ongoing goodness,  
To one in need of His love.

Prayer is an explosion of the  
heart,  
Seeking to rightly say, in love,  
Thank you—for evermore.

**Sunday – March 17th  
The Greatest Commandment**



**Place:** Near Jerusalem  
**Action:** Instructing on the greatest commandment  
**Scripture:** Matthew 22:36-40

'Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?'

Jesus said, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

This is the greatest and the first commandment.

The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'

**Insight:** The Pharisees wanted to disconcert Jesus but could not. A lawyer asked him a question and Jesus gave him the perfect answer which he was not able to dispute. He gave the ruling process for our living. How do we handle difficult questions, especially when asked by people who desire to distress us or to put us down?

**"Love One Another" -By Father Bob**

He stood before me  
    A certain dignity his.  
He was crushed and broken.  
    But in his heart was  
hope.

I glanced timidly,  
compassionately  
    A fear in my heart  
That he would reject me;  
    But in my heart was  
hope.  
In my heart, deep in myself  
    I made no distinction.  
In his heart of hearts  
    This was his  
expectation.

Poor indeed, he was  
    But, oh, so rich;  
He was powerless  
    The gift supreme.

Love is what matters.  
    Love is vulnerable.  
Love is giving and free.  
    Love demands dignity.

This is what we exchanged;  
    This our fears allayed  
And expectations met.

He was rejected,  
    I was the accepted.  
He was defenceless,  
    I was secure.

What made the difference,  
    A difference glaring?  
Was it not that he was poor  
    And I was secure?

    This is what makes us  
free.

Only when crushed can we  
    In love, give ourselves  
To the powerless  
    And accepted be.  
Corn meal, which we are  
    Cannot be crushed  
forever  
Only until, at last

    It becomes food for  
others.

Christ stands before us  
    Bruised beyond  
compare  
Our nourishment, He.  
    Can we be less?

He is our hope,  
Our security too.  
He was rejected,  
And powerless too  
He is Love,  
He rules all.

No distinction he makes.  
He accepts us all.  
He is our exchange  
Our expectation true.  
"Love one another  
As I have loved you."

**Monday – March 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**Teaching on Humility – Day 29 of Lent**



**Place:** House of a Pharisee  
**Action:** Teaching and Revealing  
**Scripture:** Luke 14:7-11

He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, 'When

someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, "Give up your place to this man". And then, to your embarrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place.

No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, "My friend, move up higher". In that way, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

**Insight:** Here Jesus is pointing out to us the proper way to choose a place at table. It is a lesson in humility. We choose the lowest place and the host may summon us and move us higher. Humility is the truth about who we are. Choose wisely.



## “Simplicity” – By Father Bob

True greatness is found  
In the heart of simplicity.  
A heart which vaunts not  
What it has received;  
A heart, which in reality,  
Sees all it has as gift.

Pride holds no place in one  
Who is truly simple and poor.  
Never seeking glory for itself,  
A simple heart reflects to God  
All the glory it receives,  
Seeing all it has as gift.

No axe to grind; nothing to  
prove,  
The simple heart accepts openly  
Rebuff, correction, praise.  
Seeking only what is truth.

Eliminating all falsehood  
It sees all it has as gift.

Beloved of God the simple are  
Reflecting his own humility.  
Filled with integrity sincere  
Such a one seeks not its own  
But preference for all others  
Seeing all it has as gift.

Simple  
Honest  
Open  
Poor

The heart of the simple one  
Sees God as its al

## Tuesday – March 19th Teaching on Giving – Day 30 of Lent



**Place:**  
Synagogue  
**Action:**  
Generous  
giving  
**Scripture:**  
Luke 21:1-4

Looking up,  
Jesus saw  
wealthy  
people  
putting their  
offerings  
into the

treasury, and he also noticed a poor widow putting in two copper coins. He said: “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has given more than all the rest. For the others have all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has given all that she had to live on.”

**Insight:** Jesus gave everything including his life for us in order to save us. This was a supreme and eternal generosity. How do we see this giving reflected in our daily lives? Are we willing to make sacrifices so that we can be generous?

**“Humility” – By Father Bob**

Being humble,  
 Little,  
 Surrendered,  
 Is the truth of humility.

It means to climb down the ladder  
 Rather than climbing up the ladder.  
 Also, to have the willingness  
 To take the lowest place.

It means to wash the feet of others

In the stance of a slave,  
 As Jesus did for his apostles  
 After the Last Supper.

It means serving in love,  
 Being little before all.  
 To be real servants  
 Taking the last place.  
 The power of God’s glory is found

In Jesus,  
 In the little ones,  
 In the positively surrendered.

**Wednesday – March 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Day 31 of Lent**



**Place:** Bethany  
**Action:** Anointing Jesus’ feet  
**Scripture:** Matthew 26:6-13

Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, when a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of the most expensive ointment, and poured it on his head as he was at table. When they saw this, the disciples were indignant;

'Why this waste?' they said. 'This could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.'

Jesus noticed this. 'Why are you upsetting the woman?' he said to them. 'What she has done for me is one of the good works indeed! You have the poor with you always, but you will not always have me.'

When she poured this ointment on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. I tell you solemnly, wherever in all the world this Good News is proclaimed, what she has done will be told also, in remembrance of her.'

**Insight:** The disciples criticize the action and the generosity of this woman. It is because they fail to understand the true meaning of poverty. When we fail to understand, it is easy to judge the actions and words of other. What is your reaction to this story? Would you act differently today? How do we regard poverty in light of the Gospel?

### "Listening" – By Father Bob

We kneel before the altar

And breathe in the melody  
Of silent, praying sounds  
Of adoration psalmody.

We listen ever so keenly

To the voices raised  
In common utterances to God,  
Who hears His Name praised.

There is a stillness here,  
And in it, the words flow  
Freely, from the hearts of those  
Who kneel in silent glow.

Listening hearts enfolded in love,  
Raise songs, which are benign,  
And psalms, poured forth  
In absolute glory to God.



**Thursday – March 21**  
**Near Jerusalem – Day 32 of Lent**



*"Hulda gates of temple"*

**Place:** Near Jerusalem  
**Action:** Agents Testing  
**Scripture:** What is our answer? Luke 20:20-26

So they waited their opportunity and sent agents to pose as men devoted to the Law, and to fasten on

something he might say and so enable them to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor.

They put to him this question, 'Master, we know that you say and teach what is right; you favour no one, but teach the way of God in all honesty. Is it permissible for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?'

But he was aware of their cunning and said, 'Show me a denarius. Whose head and name are on it?' 'Caesar's' they said. 'Well then,' he said to them 'give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar-and to God what belongs to God.'

As a result, they were unable to find fault with anything he had to say in public; his answer took them by surprise and they were silenced.

**Insight:** The agents posed the question. Jesus answered masterfully. When we are asked such a question what kind of answer do we give. Would we be aware of the trap within the question itself? The agents were defeated.

**"The Word" – By Father Bob**

The Father one Word spoke-  
Jesus Christ His Son!  
Through the Word time and  
space

And all creation came to be.  
The Word became flesh  
And set up His tent among men.  
Jesus, the Word of the Father,

Was visible for all to see.  
His gentleness was His strength  
His tenderness was His  
                                compassion.  
Love was the tenor of His ways

As He moved among men.

He healed and set free  
Men of all kinds—good and bad.

He raised men to life.  
He championed the weak;  
Challenged the mighty to share.  
He was the light among men.

Men, full of pride, refused to  
                                listen

They put the Word to death  
But He rose to remain among  
                                men.

**Friday – March 22<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Overlooking Jerusalem – Day 33 of Lent**



**Place:** Hill overlooking Jerusalem

**Action:** Jesus prepares his disciples for his death

**Scripture:** Matthew 20:17-21

As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves and said to them, “Behold, we are now going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death. Then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and on the third day he will be raised to life.”

**Insight:** Of all persons who ever walked this earth, Jesus was the most free. His freedom poured forth from him because he was rooted in love and compassion. He was so free he was able to heal lepers, to speak

the truth against injustice, to cause havoc in the Temple, to save an adulteress from being stoned and to speak about the kingdom with authority. We recognize his freedom and knew he was free because he was deeply rooted in the love of God. Because of his love and freedom he was also humble. He was so free and humble he could die as a criminal on the cross. And in Jesus' freedom, God's freedom of love was revealed.

**“Obedience” – By Father Bob**

Jesus, the obedient Son, Surrendered totally to the Father, The father's will to obey Always and everywhere Came to glory.	They are alive to the New And come to glory. Renouncing the Old Law Has but one purpose— To find a deeper obedience To the Law itself And thus come to glory.
In His obedience Jesus nothing did destroy: His life, indeed, did fulfil All that went before Thus He came to glory.	We die to the Old Law So that alive we may be, In total obedience to something new A law which is higher— And thus come to glory.
His death on Calvary Was ultimate obedience. In accord with the Father His life He gave for us And He came to glory.	The higher law— What may it be? It is the Law of Faith The Law of the Spirit By which we come to glory.
Obedient Christians of every age Are crucified with Him. With Christ they are dead, Dead to the Old Law And thus with Him come to glory.	We are dead to the Law of Old So that we can live for God. We die with Christ in obedience So that He lives in us And thus we come to glory.
Those who die with Him Will also rise with Him; Dead to the Old Law,	Obedience to the Father's will, Surrender to Him always Leads to everlasting Glory.

**Saturday – March 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Holy Week – Day 34 of Lent**

The events of the last week of Jesus's life are at the centre of our Christian faith and theology. In the last week the following events took place:



Holy Week Prayers from Crosspoint Church

**Saturday Prepare:** Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

**Palm Sunday:** Father, thank you for Jesus our King. Thank you for sending Jesus to be our PEACE. Prepare our hearts this week to SEE Him and KNOW Him greater. Let us see the great cost of our salvation. Thank you for knowing our greatest need and providing the only solution to that need.

**Monday Cleansed:** Pray like this: Father, we ask for you to forgive us of our sin. We confess of any known sin and ask you to reveal any unconfessed sin in our lives. We thank you that your Son was offered as a sacrifice for this sin that we confess.. And that by His blood we can find forgiveness. As we draw nearer to celebrating the empty tomb, Father, may we approach it with clean hands and pure hearts. Search our hearts and know them, Lord.

**Tuesday Questioned:** Father, thank you for the Lamb. Thank you for the Lamb that was without spot or blemish. Thank you that He who knew

no sin, became sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Your word says, “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” Let us remember that it is for OUR sin that the Lamb was slain.

**Wednesday Patient:** Father, thank you for your Word. Thank you that you are patient with me and my “not-getting it”. Continue to transform my heart, mind, and life. I yield to your conforming me into the image of your Son. Your kindness is meant to lead to repentance. So today I repent of my slowness to get it and trust in You.

**Thursday Remember:** Father, thank You for the body that was given and the blood that was shed. Thank you for your servant, Jesus, who loved us until the end. We know that nothing can separate us from your love that we find in Christ Jesus. As we prepare to take of Communion tomorrow, may we remember the blood and the body of our Lord. Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to feel.

**Friday Crucified:** Father, thank You for the cross. Thank you for the perfect Lamb of God. We remember today, the pain and suffering of the cross, and all that Jesus was willing to endure, so we could be set free. He paid the price, such a great sacrifice, to offer us the gift of eternal life. Help us never to take for granted this huge gift of love on our behalf. Help us to be reminded of the cost of it all. Forgive us for being too busy, or distracted by other things, for not fully recognizing what you freely given, what you have done for us. Thank you Lord that by your wounds we are healed. Thank you that because of your huge sacrifice we can live free. Thank you that sin and death have been conquered and that your Power is everlasting.

**Saturday Wait** Lord, waiting is hard. We as humans struggle not being in control or even knowing what is going on. Teach us to wait. Teach us to be still. Teach us to trust you. We thank you that the story doesn't end here.



**Sunday – March 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**Palm Sunday**



*North Gate of Jerusalem*

**Place: Jerusalem**

**Action: The Real Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem**

**Scripture: Matthew 21:11**

When they drew near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent off two disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village directly ahead of you, and as soon as you enter you will find a tethered donkey and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell them, ‘The Lord needs them.’ Then he will let you have them at once.” This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the prophet:

“Say to the daughter of Zion:  
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ”

The disciples went off and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their cloaks on their backs, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that preceded him and those that followed kept shouting:

## Hosanna to the Son of David!



Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest!”

**Insight:** The kings and potentates arrive at the gates of Jerusalem in all their rich splendour, sitting on a festooned elephant or camel. They come in pride and power. The people are forced to gather and cry out a welcome most do not mean. The whole thing is a spectacle. It is not a real triumphant entrance, but a sham.

The very real triumphant entry into Jerusalem is when Jesus enters. He does not come in pride and power fastened in glittering jewels with trumpets blaring. On the contrary, he comes with the followers of love and humility. His mount is a lowly colt. He sits astride it; his legs hanging down in reverential silence. He is in a contemplative stance because he knows all that is to follow. But the people gather to greet him along the way with the sung and shouted alleluias, waving their palm branches in salutation. No trumpets blasts are heard. Some of the people even throw their robes on the road in front of Jesus and the colt. Such an entry is real because it portrays the very reality of God’s poverty and humility and compassionate love.

**Monday – March 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**Cleansing the Temple – Day 35**



**Place: Temple in Jerusalem**  
**Action: Cleansing the Temple from money-changers**  
**Scripture: Matthew 21:12-17**

And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple,

and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read,

"Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies  
you have prepared praise?"

And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

**Insight: (Taken from a Lenten message delivered by Pope Francis-March 8, 2015)**

"Does the Lord feel at home in my life? Do we allow Him to 'cleanses' our hearts and to drive out the idols, those attitudes of cupidity, jealousy, worldliness, envy, hatred, those habits of gossiping and tearing down others?"

"Jesus cleanses with tenderness, with mercy, with love. Mercy is His way of cleansing. Let us, each of us, let us allow the Lord to enter with

His mercy – not with the whip, no, with His mercy – to cleanse our hearts. The whip of Jesus with us is His mercy. Let us open to Him the gates so that He would make us a little cleaner."

"Let us build for God a temple of our lives. If we are witnesses of this living Christ, so many people will encounter Jesus in us, in our witness."

"His body, destroyed on the Cross by the violence of sin, will become in the Resurrection the universal meeting place between God and men. His humanity is the true temple where God is revealed, speaks, is encountered. Let us allow Him to enter into our lives, into our families, into our hearts."

**"Father Forgive Them" – By Father Bob**

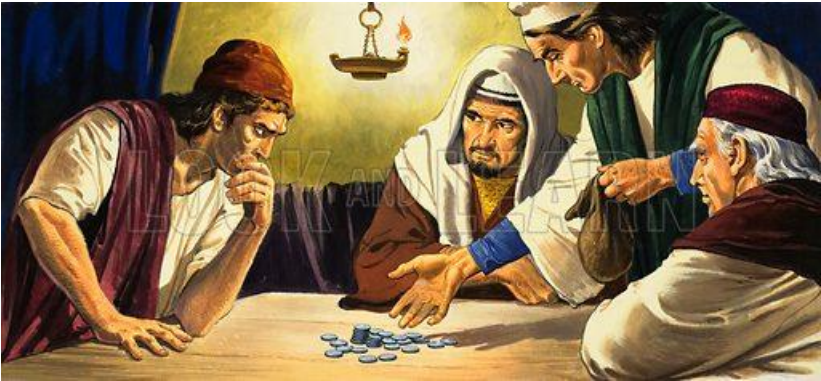
Jesus came to forgive-  
Our pride,  
Our envy,  
Our hatred,  
Our jealousy.

He invites us to let go—  
Our lust,  
Our prejudices,  
Our indifferences,  
Our glutton

Jesus hanging from the cross  
In absolute agony  
Showed us how to forgive,  
And calls us to do the same.

We, like Jesus before us,  
Need to say, "Father forgive  
them' for they know not  
What they are doing!"

**Tuesday – March 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**Judas' Role – Day 36 of Lent**



**Place:** Jerusalem  
**Action:** Jesus is Betrayed  
**Scripture:** Luke 22; Matthew 26, 27

**Luke 22:1-6 – The Plot**

Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

**Matthew 26:17-25 – The Betrayal**

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"

Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.

"Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?"

Jesus answered, "You have said so."

**Luke 22:47-53 – The Kiss**

While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”

### **Matthew 27:1-10 – The Final Solution**

When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. “I have sinned,” he said, “for I have betrayed innocent blood.”



*Field of Blood bought with 30 pieces of silver*

“What is that to us?” they replied. “That’s your responsibility.” So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.” So they

decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

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### **Wednesday – March 27<sup>th</sup>** **The Last Supper – Day 37 of Lent**

**Luke 22; Matthew 27; John 13** -Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

“Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the

Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.”

They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”



### John 13 – Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet



Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

**Thursday – March 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**The Trial – Day 38 of Lent**

**Luke 22, Matthew 26**  
**The Garden of Gethsemane**

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."





Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

### **Jesus Arrested; Peter Denies Him**



Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.

A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with him.”

But he denied it. “Woman, I don’t know him,” he said.

A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” “Man, I am not!” Peter replied.

About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.”

Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

### **Jesus’ Trial**

At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. “If you are the Messiah,” they said, “tell us.” Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me, <sup>68</sup> and if I asked you, you would not answer. <sup>69</sup> But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”

<sup>70</sup> They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?”

He replied, “You say that I am.”

<sup>71</sup> Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.”

## **Friday – March 29<sup>th</sup> The Death of Jesus – Day 39 of Lent**

### **Luke 23; Matthew 27**

Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.



Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered. "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"

Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

**Saturday – March 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**The Stations of the Cross – Day 40 of Lent**



The Stations of the Cross or the Way of the Cross, grew out of imitations of the ViaDolorosa in Jerusalem, which is a traditional processional route symbolising the path Jesus walked to Mount Calvary. (*Wikipedia*)

The stations are based on a combination of scripture and tradition dating back to the 1600s.

**Opening Prayer:**

Lord Jesus we kneel before you  
Filled with sorrow at your plight.  
We offer you our humble love  
To assuage your suffering  
Which we know is done in love  
For each and everyone. Amen



*Church of the Flagellation*

**Station One: Jesus is Condemned to Death**

Although totally innocent Jesus is sent to his crucifixion—death in all its horrors. He submits like a lamb to the slaughter.

Lord Jesus crucified have mercy on us.



### **Station Two: Jesus Receives His Cross**

Every criminal must carry his own cross to Golgotha. Being extremely weakened by his scourging at the pillar, Jesus is forced to carry it anyway.

Lord Jesus

crucified, have mercy on us.



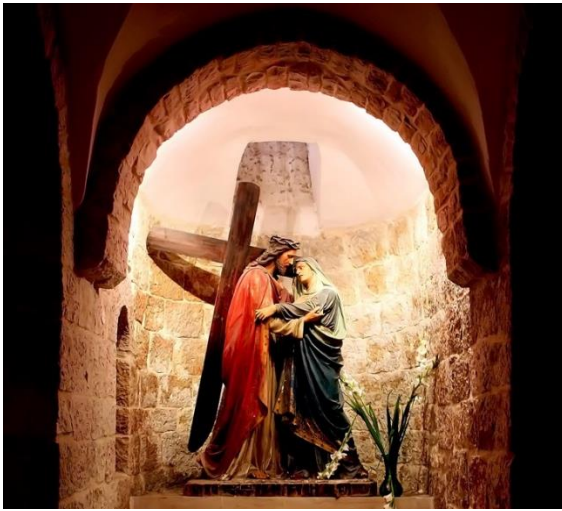
### **Station Three: Jesus Falls the First Time**

Jesus's tremendous weakness and great pain of bearing the cross, causes him to lose his balance and he falls, causing even more excruciating misery. The soldiers force him up.

Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.

Chapel in 3rd Station (Via Dolorosa)

### **Station Four: Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother**



What an extraordinary meeting this must have been. Both of them in extreme pain and sorrow. They looked into each others' eyes and found loving comfort.

Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.

Chapel in 4th Station  
(Via Dolorosa)



### **Station Five: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus**

Simon, a robust farmer from the countryside, coming into the city, was forced by the soldiers to help Jesus carry. His cross. Do you suppose he recognized the great privilege it was?

Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.

Chapel in 5th Station (Via Dolorosa)

### Station Six: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

A young woman in the crowd felt great sorrow over Jesus' condition and moved forward, removing her veil, and wiped his face. The image remained on the veil blessing Veronica.

Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.



Chapel in 6th Station (Via Dolorosa)

### Station Seven: Jesus Falls the Second Time



Very much weakened by the whole ordeal, Jesus collapsed to the ground under his cross and the soldiers beat him and dragged him up brutally. Jesus is exhausted.

Lord Jesus crucified, have

mercy on us.

Chapel in 7th Station (Via Dolorosa).

### Station Eight: Jesus Meets the Daughters of Jerusalem



These faithful followers of Jesus are grieving at what was happening, and Jesus does acknowledge them by saying, “Weep not for me but for yourselves and your children.” Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.

Eighth Station. Via Dolorosa



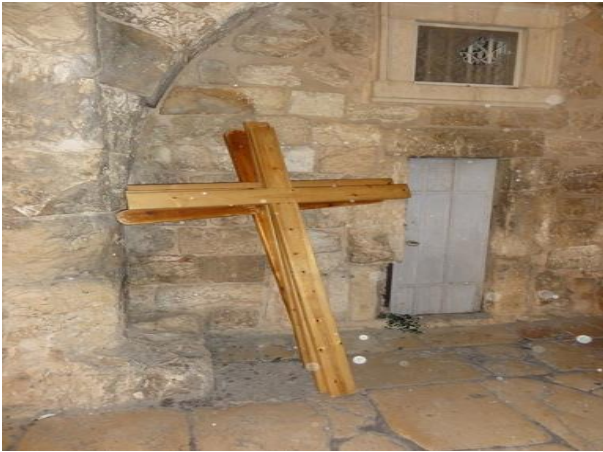
### Station Nine: Jesus Falls a Third Time.

By now completely exhausted, Jesus falls down and once again is forced roughly to his feet by the soldiers to take the last few agonizing steps.

Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.

Jerusalem Holy Sepulchre



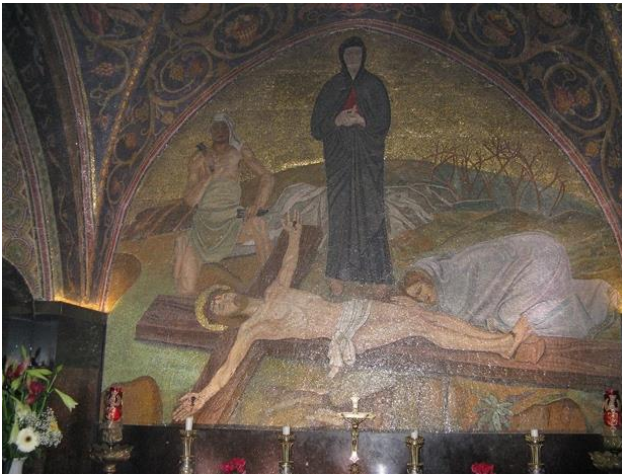


East Jerusalem Batch

**Station Ten:  
Jesus is Stripped  
of His Garments**

This innocent lamb of God is stripped naked for all to see and onlookers make fun of him and curse and mock him. Innocence is help up to scorn.

Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.



**Station Eleven:  
Jesus is nailed  
to the Cross**

Can you even begin to imagine the agony as the nails tore through his flesh; the surging pain which ripped through body. Hands and feet pierced for your sake.

Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.

Holy Sepulchre

### **Station Twelve: Jesus Dies on the Cross**

Here we must be silent. We see the divine Son hanging for three long hours of suffering so that you and I might have the opportunity of entering his eternal Kingdom. He died for you, he died for me.

Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.



### **Station Thirteen: Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross**



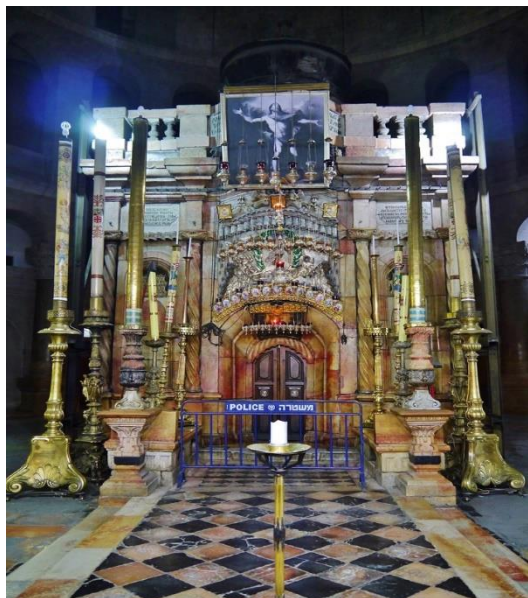
Jesus is dead! His friends gently take him down and lay him in his mother's arms, so completely loved by her *Stone of the Anointing*

and her agony was one with him.

Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.

### **Station Fourteen: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb**

Carried by his friends, Jesus is placed in a new tomb owned by Joseph of Aramathea who had once spoken to Jesus at night for fear of the Jews. A stone was placed over the entrance to seal it. Mary and the others left silently with heavy hearts.



Lord Jesus crucified, have mercy on us.

*Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, Israel*

**Closing Prayer:**

We thank you, Lord, for your great teaching of love in your crucifixion and suffering. Please grant us the grace to fully walk the path you designed for each of us. Amen

**Sunday – March 31  
Easter and Beyond**



**Place:**

Garden

**Action:**

Resurrection

**Scripture:**

Mark 16:9-20

Having risen in the morning on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary of Magdala from whom he had cast out seven devils. She then

went to those who had been his companions, and who were mourning and in tears, and told them. But they did not believe her when they heard her say that he was alive and that she had seen him.

After this, he showed himself under another form to two of them as they were on their way into the country. These went back and told the others, who did not believe them either.

Lastly, he showed himself to the Eleven themselves while they were at table. He reproached them for their incredulity and obstinacy, because they had refused to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

And he said to them, 'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned.

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

**Insight:** Alleluia! He is Risen. Jesus appears to his friends and speaks with them. What he told them beforehand has come to pass and they believe him and his word. What does this Resurrection mean to us today. It is the supreme mystery of our faith. Praise be Jesus Christ! Alleluia!

In the mystery  
Of the Trinity  
The  
Journey  
Of  
Faith  
Has its  
Origin  
And its  
Final goal.  
When at last  
Our eyes  
Will contemplate  
The face  
Of  
God  
Forever. Amen