

Inspire

ST JAMES & ST BONIFACE,
MID DEVON PARISH,
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THE EIGHTH WEEK OF ORDINARY TIME & FIRST FOUR DAYS OF LENT

On the **Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time** in **Luke** we hear Jesus give us some important teaching. He challenges "blind guides." He warns against seeing the splinter in someone else's eye without noticing our blindness. Jesus tells us that it the fruit we produce that is important. "For every tree is known by its own fruit."

In the last days of Ordinary Time this year, our gospel is the story of the young man who turns away from following Jesus because his possessions were great. When Jesus warns his disciples, and us, about the danger of riches, they wonder how anyone can be saved. Jesus reminds us that "All things are possible for God." Jesus affirms the rewards that will be given to those who follow him.

Tuesday is the **Feast of St David, Patron of Wales**. Friday is **The Women's World Day of prayer**

BEGINNING OF LENT

The **Season of Lent** begins with four days that serve as an introduction to the four Lenten practices of Prayer, Fasting, Repentance and Almsgiving.

Ash Wednesday is a day of fasting and abstinence. We wear ashes on our foreheads to remember who we are and express our desire to turn away from sin and to believe the Good News. The Prophet **Joel** helps us begin our journey: "return to me with your whole heart." "Rend your hearts, not your garments," reminds us that this is an interior journey. The **Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 51**, has the antiphon: "Be merciful, O Lord, for we have

sinned." Paul, in his **First Letter to the Corinthians** says, "be reconciled to God ... we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain ... now is a very acceptable time; now is the day of salvation." In **Matthew's Gospel** Jesus gives us a guide for our Lenten practices, "Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them."

On Thursday we read in **Deuteronomy** how Moses urges his people to turn away from sin. "Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him."

Friday and Saturday: It is the long tradition of Lent to prepare us for our journey by having us reflect on **Isaiah, Chapter 58**, as we begin. "This is the fasting that I wish" gives us the true picture of fasting: letting God's Spirit transform us. It is a call to conversion. Jesus confirms his desire to help us, "I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."

DAILY PRAYER THIS WEEK

For the first four days of Lent, it will be a great help to set aside some time, even if it means getting up earlier each morning, to read about what Lent can mean and to let that soak into our hearts. The key is not to be sombre or severe in any way, but to know that this is a time of great grace so that we can be attentive to it. The first thing to remember is that these 40 days are a **gift** to us. We are not trying to save ourselves by our Lenten practices. God has already saved us. We are only trying to let God get our attention and to give grace a chance to work in us. These days are critically important for choosing to establish some Lenten patterns. Depending upon our age or health, we will want to do some fasting and abstinence, in regard to food. But each of us can choose what else we can fast and abstain from during Lent. What practices of mine get in the way of my being open to hearing God's Word and responding freely? That's what needs transforming. Giving up needing to be right, fasting from my impatience, totally abstaining from escapist fantasies will open our hearts to God's grace. None of that takes extra time. It just takes desire.

Adding new acts of kindness, gratitude and love each day for family and friends will open our hearts to the greater acts of charity and generosity for the poor.

Finally, Lent is the perfect time to choose to grow in gratitude. Every night, before going to bed, let us be faithful to giving thanks to the Lord who has given us so many blessings and offers us new graces each and every day.

The Daily Prayer and Resources on our [Praying Lent](#) site may be helpful as well. See "Weekly Guide for Daily Prayer" on the Creighton University's Online

BROTHER JESUS

Your presence is interwoven through each day of our lives. As we journey with our companions, touch our hearts and open our eyes that we may recognise you walking beside us.

Lead us to live in such a way that we discover you in the quietness and in the spaces, as well as in the busyness of our lives each day.

Continue to call us your friends and accompany us to where we shall see our Father face to face.

Loving Lord, it is good to be here beside you and listen to the Scriptures unfold as you speak.

The healing work that you bring begins with the calling of my name, and I hear you say that you are my brother and my friend.

I rejoice that I am dear to you and that you want to listen to what I would like to say.

And so I thank you that my prayer can be a close sharing between friends.

You go beyond words, and your hand upon my shoulder enfolds me in your love and encourages and comforts me.

I pray that nothing but your love will ever overwhelm me, so that I may grow as the extraordinary person you call me to be.

I pray, too, for other pilgrims, that we may

strengthen one another on our common journey.

Teach me; my Brother and my Friend, to remain faithful.

And when I arrive home, you will be there beside me still and, together, we will know the welcoming embrace of our father.

Nicholas Hutchinson - De La Salle brother "Praying Each Day of the Year"

LETTING GO

"What must I do for Enlightenment?"

"Nothing."

"Why not?"

"Because Enlightenment doesn't come from doing—it happens."

"Then can it never be attained?"

"Oh yes it can."

"How?"

"Through non-doing."

"And what does one do to attain non-doing?"

"What does one do to go to sleep or to wake up?"

from One Minute Wisdom – Anthony De Mello

Take, Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will, All that I have and possess.

You have given all to me, to you, Lord, I return it. All is yours; do with it what you will.

Give me your love and your grace, that is enough for me.

From the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola
