

for Lent 2018

SACRED SPACE

from the website www.sacredspace.ie

Prayer from the Irish Jesuits



Contents

How to Use this Booklet	1
February 14—February 17	2
The First Week of Lent	11
The Second Week of Lent	24
The Third Week of Lent	39
The Fourth Week of Lent	52
The Fifth Week of Lent	67
Holy Week	82
Easter	103

The Presence of God

Bless all who worship you, almighty God,
from the rising of the sun to its setting:
from your goodness enrich us,
by your love inspire us,
by your Spirit guide us,
by your power protect us,
in your mercy receive us,
now and always.

SAMPLE

How to Use This Booklet

During each week of Lent, begin by reading the “Something to think and pray about each day this week.” Then proceed through “The Presence of God,” “Freedom,” and “Consciousness” steps to prepare yourself to hear the Word of God in your heart. In the next step, “The Word,” turn to the Scripture reading for each day of the week. Inspiration points are provided if you need them. Then return to the “Conversation” and “Conclusion” steps. Follow this process every day of Lent.

February 14—February 17

Something to think and pray about each day this week:

Preparing for Lent

The preparation before prayer is important. It allows us to physically carve out space in our day for prayer, and it allows our minds to be mentally ready for prayer. The same idea of preparation that St. Ignatius suggests can be helpful in our preparation for Lent.

- Have we physically set aside a prayer space for our Lenten journey?
- What time of day will we pray during Lent?
- What are the “exercises” or prayer methods we will be using during Lent?

In our preparatory prayer, we pray for specific graces. What is the grace we desire to deepen within us during Lent?

- To deepen our understanding of Jesus’ Passion?
- To walk with Jesus through his Passion and Resurrection?
- To work on overcoming a temptation that keeps us from fully entering into life with Christ?
- To foster a new spiritual practice to ignite or inflame our relationship with Jesus?

In this week of Ash Wednesday, I invite us to begin our preparatory prayer. We can turn to Jesus and ask, “What is the grace you desire to deepen within me over these next 40 days?”

—Becky Eldredge on *dotMagis*, the
blog of *IgnatianSpirituality.com*
[http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/15261/
preparation-for-lent](http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/15261/preparation-for-lent)

SAMPLE

The Presence of God

What is present to me is what has a hold on my becoming.

I reflect on the presence of God always there in love, amidst the many things that have a hold on me.

I pause and pray that I may let God affect my becoming in this precise moment.

Freedom

By God's grace I was born to live in freedom. Free to enjoy the pleasures he created for me. Dear Lord, grant that I may live as you intended, with complete confidence in your loving care.

Consciousness

I exist in a web of relationships: links to nature, people, God.

I trace out these links, giving thanks for the life that flows through them.

Some links are twisted or broken; I may feel regret, anger, disappointment.

I pray for the gift of acceptance and forgiveness.

The Word

God speaks to each of us individually. I listen attentively, to hear what he is saying to me. Read the text a few times, then listen. (Please turn to the Scripture on the following pages. Inspiration points are there

should you need them. When you are ready, return here to continue.)

Conversation

I begin to talk with Jesus about the Scripture I have just read. What part of it strikes a chord in me? Perhaps the words of a friend—or some story I have heard recently—will rise to the surface in my consciousness. If so, does the story throw light on what the Scripture passage may be saying to me?

Conclusion

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

Wednesday 14th February

Ash Wednesday

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18

“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. // “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father

who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

- We are entering that season of the Christian year when the church invites us to test our inner freedom. We ask such questions as, “Can I do this, or choose not to do it?” This can be hard to do with gossip, gambling, pornography, or complaining. What habits make me hard to live with?
- Lent is about regaining control of our own lives, especially in those areas that damage other people. We don’t admire those whose appetites or habits lead them by the nose. At the same time, our purifying is to be accomplished, not out in the public eye to impress others but in that private space where we dwell with God alone.

Thursday 15th February

Luke 9:22–25

Jesus said to his disciples: “The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” // Then he said to them all, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save

it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?”

- “Deny yourself and take up your cross daily.” Lord, I used to think this meant looking for mortifications. You have taught me that my cross is myself, my ego, the pains in my body, my awkwardness, my mistakes. To follow you is to move beyond ego trips. It means coping with the business of life without trampling on others or making them suffer. There is a world here to be explored this Lent.
- To deny myself means: to reach a point where my self is no longer the most important thing in the world; to be able to take a back seat comfortably; to be happy to listen; to accept without resentment the diminishment that come to me through time or circumstances; and to see your hand, Lord, in both the bright and dark places of my life.

Friday 16th February

Matthew 9:14–15

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them, “The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

- Lord, when I sense how John's disciples viewed you, I feel relieved. John the Baptist was admirable, but you are my model, and people saw you as a man given to joy and celebration. People were high-spirited in your company, as at a wedding feast. The feast would not last forever; you had no illusion and would not encourage illusions. But long faces do not suit your companions.
- On most days, is my focus joy and celebration of God's gifts?

Saturday 17th February

Luke 5:27–32

After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up, left everything, and followed him. // Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."

- Who are the Levis in our world, hated and despised by the public? Not the tax collectors—it

is quite respectable now to work for the Internal Revenue Service. The tabloid newspapers have different objects of hate today: addicts, drug dealers, rapists, pedophiles. You would sit with them, Lord. They too need your grace.

- Lord, on whom do I focus as I walk through a day? Those who are most like me? Or those who are already judged and found wanting?

SAMPLE

The First Week of Lent
February 18—February 24

Something to think and pray about each day this week:

The Desert—for Jesus and for Us

Desert time is vital to a mature relationship with God. If we are committed men and women of faith, then God is going to bring us to the desert at some point to look deeply at ourselves and see all of us the way God sees us. This means we will have to confront the dark spots of our lives and the things we do our best to hide from God and from the rest of the world.

Jesus was no different. He was “led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil” (Luke 4:1–2). Jesus faced Satan and “then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him” (Matthew 4:11). We face Satan and our own temptations in our desert time, just as Jesus did. And just as Jesus was not alone in his desert battle, we are not alone either.

As we continue on our Lenten journey, let us be led by the Spirit to have the courage to head into the desert as Jesus did. We pray that during these weeks of Lent, God will strengthen us in our weakness the way Jesus was strengthened. As St. Paul reminds us, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Jesus' time in the desert prepared him to begin his public ministry. When we leave our desert time and confront our demons with God's help, we are stronger. It is in the desert time—our time of prayer, solitude, and aloneness with God—that God readies us for our next steps.

—Becky Eldredge on *dotMagis*,
the blog of *IgnatianSpirituality.com*
[http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/20689/
desert-time](http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/20689/desert-time)

The Presence of God

“Be still and know that I am God!” Lord, your words lead us to the calmness and greatness of your presence.

Freedom

“In these days, God taught me as a schoolteacher teaches a pupil” (St. Ignatius). I remind myself that there are things God has to teach me yet, and I ask for the grace to hear them and let them change me.

Consciousness

How am I really feeling? Lighthearted? Heavyhearted? I may be very much at peace, happy to be here. Equally, I may be frustrated, worried, or angry. I acknowledge how I really am. It is the real me whom the Lord loves.

The Word

God speaks to each of us individually. I listen attentively, to hear what he is saying to me. Read the text a few times, then listen. (Please turn to the Scripture on the following pages. Inspiration points are there should you need them. When you are ready, return here to continue.)

Conversation

Do I notice myself reacting as I pray with the word of God? Do I feel challenged, comforted, angry?

Imagining Jesus sitting or standing by me, I speak out my feelings, as one trusted friend to another.

Conclusion

I thank God for these moments we have spent together and for any insights I have been given concerning the text.

SAMPLE

Sunday 18th February

First Sunday of Lent

Mark 1:12–15

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

- What spirit drives me in the things I do? Is my heart a home for the Spirit? Could the Holy Spirit be inviting me to take more quiet space? In the Bible, the “wilderness” is a place of revelation and of intimacy with God. I need to put secondary things aside to meet God. God is found in emptiness as well as in fullness. I can find him in the emptiness of sickness, old age, disappointment, failure, and solitude.
- As Lent begins, I might promise God that I will be faithful to the quiet space and time that Sacred Space offers me. I want the kingdom of God to come near me. I want to believe more deeply in the good news.