



Lent 2023 - Our Journey with Jesus

In his Lenten reflection this year, Pope Francis centres on the Gospel of the Second Sunday of Lent, which is the story of the Transfiguration. The Pope notes that Lent is a journey we take with the Lord, on his way to Jerusalem, just as the apostles did many years ago. However, in this journey we note how the Lord strengthened the apostles with this Transfiguration experience to assist them in continuing the work of the future Church.

Like the apostles, we journey with Jesus during these 40 days of prayer and penance. We join in personal reflection about our lives and our relationship with the Lord and with one another. This journey is personal and sensitive, since we are called to be honest and courageous in our reflection. Pope Francis says: *“Lenten penance is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross. We are to deepen our knowledge of the Master, to fully understand and embrace the mystery of his salvation, accomplished in total self-giving inspired by love, we must allow ourselves to be taken aside by him and to detach ourselves from mediocrity and vanity. We need to set out on the journey, an uphill path that, like a mountain trek, requires effort, sacrifice and concentration.”*

Many people ask, what must I do during Lent to enter into this special state of reflection and self-awareness? The Lenten journey offers us many options. We have daily Mass as a particular option, to unite ourselves more closely to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. We can engage in family prayer; prayer before meals, the family rosary, the Stations of the Cross at home or at church, these are all helps to our reflection. We can make sure we share in the Sacrament of Penance or Confession, seeking mercy and forgiveness for our sins. We can pray the Scriptures and engage in helping the poor by acts of charity, at food kitchens, supporting food banks, helping in missionary appeals. There are many ways to make this Lenten journey one of growth and grace.

We say that the three things that are reflective of Lent, are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We deepen our prayer life especially during this holy time, we share in some self-sacrifice through our fasting, and we reach out to our sisters and brothers in need, especially through our Development and Peace donation.

May our journey with Jesus and the apostles to the mount of the Transfiguration, and to Jerusalem, be a special time for a deepening of our personal relationship with Jesus and for a strengthening of our relationship with one another as Church and as sisters and brothers of the Lord.

Bishop Fred Colli