

IMPERFECT YET LOVED

Lent is the traditional forty-day season of penitence and repentance that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter Eve. The Lenten season is a time set aside for growth in Christian faith and life. During Lent in the early church, candidates intensely prepared for Baptism, leading to new life in Christ.

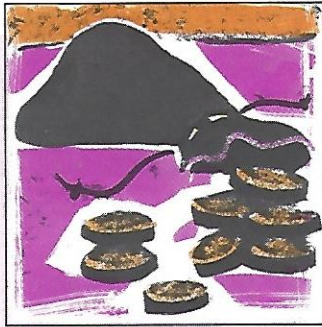
During this season of repentance, which means "turning around," we think about our sinfulness in light of God's gracious love. On Ash Wednesday we focus on human vulnerability and mortality. The season continues with the themes of human temptation, weakness, and rebelliousness, and ends in Holy Week with God's action for us: Jesus Christ's suffering and death on the cross.

DEVOTIONS FOR LENT

The biblical passages listed below reflect these themes which run throughout Scripture. During your daily devotions, think not only about what the text says regarding human pain and sin, but also and especially about God's grace and power to restore the faithful to life. Consider how your own life is in need of God's restorative healing.

On my heart imprint your image, blessed Jesus, king of grace, that life's troubles nor its pleasures ever may your work erase; let the clear inscription be: Jesus, crucified for me, is my life, my hope's foundation, all my glory and salvation. Amen (Thomas H. Kingo; translated by Peer O. Strömme)

God of mercy, thank you for the tenderness and protection you give to your people, even when we rebel and act in sinful ways. Continue to encourage us and guide us so that, as we journey through life, we might trust in your never ending love and live in the peace which only you can give, through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen



Money bag and silver coins: Emblem of the treachery of Judas in his betrayal of Jesus (Matt. 26:15).



Cockle: A weed that often grows among planted grain. It symbolizes wickedness that may spring up among Christians.



Nails: Driven through Jesus' palms and feet, three nails symbolize the poignancy of his physical suffering (John 19:17, 18).

Gracious God, we pray for all people who suffer: those who are hungry, lonely, ill, grieving, dying, homeless, or hurting in any way. Use us, as instruments of your love, to bring your comforting presence to them, through Jesus, our Savior. Amen

ACTIVITIES FOR LENT

1. After reading the Scripture suggested for the day, think about or discuss what it means for your own human struggles and for you as a loved child of God.

2. Begin a tradition of sending cards or making phone calls to neighbors, family members, friends, co-workers, or classmates. Simply tell them of your love and concern as well as God's deep love and care for them.

3. Take a walk through your neighborhood, looking for signs of suffering within creation; pollution, decay, neglect. Consider your role in the suffering and/or healing of God's creation.

4. Remember the hungry each day in your prayer before meals.

5. Save your loose change in a special cup on your dining room table during Lent. Decide early in the season to whom this offering will be given—people who are hungry, homeless, refugees, elderly.

6. Strengthen your recycling efforts to support the earth's healing. Make a list of what or how you recycle now. Identify new efforts you can undertake.

7. Create a collage for Lent and tape it onto your refrigerator. Use pictures, magazine articles, and cartoons that symbolize human shortcomings, temptations, and rebelliousness. Remove the collage on Maundy Thursday, the day before Good Friday.

	◆ Week 1	◆ Week 2	◆ Week 3	◆ Week 4	◆ Week 5	◆ Week 6	
S	Exod. 2:23-25	Rom. 5:6-11	1 Cor. 1:26-31	Heb. 2:14-18	1 Pet. 1:3-8	Luke 19:37-42	
M	Exod. 14:30-15:3	Rom. 6:12-14	1 Cor. 10:13	Heb. 3:7-14	1 Pet. 4:1-6	Luke 22:1-6	
T	Exod. 16:1-5	Prov. 1:8-19	1 Cor. 15:54-57	Heb. 4:14-16	1 Pet. 5:6-11	Luke 22:14-23	
W	Gen. 3:16-19	Exod. 32:7-10	Rom. 7:15-20	2 Cor. 4:7-12	Heb. 5:1-5	Luke 12:15-21	Luke 22:39-54a
T	Ps. 51:1-9	Exod. 32:11-14	Rom. 8:9-11	2 Cor. 5:1-5	James 1:2-4	Luke 18:9-14	Luke 22:63-71
F	Ps. 25:11-21	Prov. 3:11-12	Rom. 8:26-27	2 Cor. 12:7-10	James 1:13-15	Luke 18:31-34	Luke 23:32-43
S	Ps. 139	Ps. 131	Ps. 46	Ps. 81	Ps. 121	Ps. 22:12-21	Luke 23:44-49