

PROCLAIMING CHRIST

Meditations for the Season of Lent

“Where is God, if evil is present in our world, if there are men and women who are hungry and thirsty, homeless, exiles and refugees? Where is God, when innocent persons die as a result of violence, terrorism and war? ... These are questions that humanly speaking have no answer. We can only look to Jesus and ask him. And Jesus’ answer is this: ‘God is in them.’ Jesus is in them; he suffers in them and deeply identifies with each of them.”

— POPE FRANCIS, WAY OF THE CROSS AT WORLD YOUTH DAY 2016

When Bad Things Happen

John 11:1–45

In today’s Gospel a friend of Jesus is dying, and Jesus purposely waits before going to him in Bethany. By the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus has died, and his two sisters are distraught. If Jesus had come at once, he could have healed their brother!

Both women profess their faith in Jesus as Lord and their belief that they will be reunited with their brother in eternity, but they are grieving deeply. The painful question that hangs in the balance is: Why did Jesus allow this bad thing to happen to Lazarus? Jesus answers this question earlier in the passage when he said this was all part of a plan to reveal God’s glory.

The story of Lazarus is a precursor to what will happen next week when God allows Jesus to die on the cross and then raises Jesus from the dead. What seems to be a

FOR REFLECTION

- › Do you believe that God will give you the strength you need to get through all things?
- › Can you recall something bad that happened in your life that ultimately resulted in something good?
- › In what ways have you grown stronger because of the trials in your life?

terrible tragedy will be transformed into the greatest miracle of all time. As people of faith, we understand that even in the darkest moments of our lives there is a promise of new life, new hope, new energy, and new possibilities.



LENT TRIVIA

1. How many times does Jesus fall in the Stations of the Cross?
2. Who helped Jesus carry his cross?
3. When does Lent officially end?

Answers on reverse.

What Is Faith?

As Catholics, the essence of faith is believing in Jesus Christ, the son of God, who revealed truths about his loving and merciful Father, about life and death, about our relationships with other people, about the power of the Holy Spirit, and about eternity. But faith is more than just believing. Faith is a lifelong process of growing in our relationship with Jesus Christ, making a personal commitment to follow in his footsteps, and deepening our understanding of what it means to be his disciple.

Catechism CONNECTION

“The Paschal mystery of Christ’s cross and Resurrection stands at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God’s saving plan was accomplished ‘once for all’ by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ.”

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 571

Family Focus

It is not easy to explain to children why bad things happen. Start by acknowledging that everyone has difficulties in life but we know that God will help us. Explain that Jesus died on a cross but three days later God brought him back to life on Easter Sunday. That’s why we believe that even though something bad happens, God can make something good come from it.



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Lenten Prayer

This week’s prayer, by St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, asks for help in difficult times:

“O Lord, we ask for a boundless confidence and trust in your divine mercy and the courage to accept the crosses and sufferings which bring immense goodness to our souls and that of your Church. Help us to love you with a pure and contrite heart, and to humble ourselves beneath your cross, as we climb the mountain of holiness, carrying our cross that leads to heavenly glory. Amen.”

Comforting the Sorrowful



The word “bereaved” has roots meaning “to be torn apart.” When someone dies, bereaved people experience a deep emotional wound. It is no surprise that comforting the sorrowful is a work of mercy. One of the best ways to comfort someone who is grieving is to listen. Don’t try to change the way the person is feeling. Just listen. And while you are listening, pray for the person who is grieving.

Answers: 1. Jesus falls three times. 2. Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry the cross. 3. Lent officially ends at sundown on Holy Thursday.