

REPENT

Meditations for the
Season of Lent

AND BELIEVE

Out of the Temple

John 2:13-25

When Jesus saw the moneychangers, merchants, sheep, oxen, and doves at the Temple, he became angered, not because of what they were doing, but because of where they were doing it. The old law required animal sacrifice, so the availability of the proper animals for purchase wasn't at issue. But making the act of worship into a commercial, for-profit enterprise by selling those animals within the Temple itself made a mockery of a sacred duty.



Bottom right: The Crosiers, AdobeStock, Above: Thinkstock

Although we no longer purchase animals for sacrifice on the steps of our churches, the temptation to turn faith into profit is still with us. Today, as in Jesus' time, there is wealth to be made in religion and spirituality. But even for those of us who don't profit directly from our faith, there is a pull to make it into just another thing we do every week, instead of a true act of worship.

When we come to Mass, we can be distracted by worldly affairs, more concerned with what we (or someone else) is wearing, even slipping out early so that we can get on with "real life." In today's Gospel, Jesus is showing us that the time we give to God needs to be given freely and fully — without being compromised by anything else. This Lent, let us make the time we spend at Mass a highlight of our week.

POINTS TO PONDER

- When I attend Mass, am I fully aware that I am in the presence of God during that time?
- When was the last time I went to confession?
- As we enter the third week of Lent, what progress have I made spiritually? Do I need to make a "course correction" for the remaining weeks?

“Renounce yourself in order to follow Christ; discipline your body; do not pamper yourself, but love fasting.”

— St. Benedict





SIGNS OF THE SEASON *The Scrutinies*

This week and the two following weeks, we celebrate the Scrutinies. Their purpose is “to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good” (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, 141).

While specifically designed for those who are entering the Church, all of us can benefit from the Scrutinies by examining our hearts and consciences for both healing and strengthening.

CATHOLIC INSIGHTS Works of Mercy

Along with prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we are encouraged to perform both corporal and spiritual acts of mercy during Lent. During the next few weeks, try to do at least one act of mercy.

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

The Corporal Works of Mercy

- Admonish the sinner
- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive all injuries
- Pray for the living and the dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

FamilyActivity

Crown of Thorns

To encourage children to perform good deeds and make small sacrifices during Lent, make a “crown of thorns.” Twist a rope of tan modeling clay into a circle and then stud it with toothpicks. Each time someone in the family makes a sacrifice or does a good deed, pull one of the toothpick “thorns” out of the “crown.” Try to remove all the “thorns” by Good Friday.



Catechism CONNECTION

“In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path (cf. Ps 119:105), we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord’s Cross.”

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1785



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LENT PRAYER

Unto to you, I cry, my God!

“As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God.”
— Psalm 42:1

My Lord, as we enter into the third week of Lent, help me to put aside worldly concerns and focus more deeply and completely on you.