



March 2020

Greetings in this Holy Season.

What do you imagine when you think of Lent? The Scripture passages we contemplate during Lent lead us to begin by considering the ashes of our human brokenness. The first passage we read in Lent is chosen from the Book of Genesis. It is a vision of humanity beginning to yield to temptation and sin. As a result of that sin, God does not destroy humanity. God instead calls us to repent. Most of our Lenten psalms lament our human wrong and rejoice in God's mercy and goodness in forgiving us.

Our first and probably best-known Lenten Gospel reading follows Jesus as He is being led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. We listen to this passage about Jesus in His wilderness experience, not yielding to any sin or temptation, and we consider our own times of trouble, worry and painful self-examination.

We sometimes liken this process to a metaphorical wilderness experience. We compare ourselves to the example Jesus has set for His followers. Lent is about following in Jesus' footsteps through the wilderness. He rejects the temptation to change the stones into bread. He refuses to jump from the temple. Bowing down to Satan is out of the question.

We all find ourselves in spiritual desert wilderness at sometimes in our lives. Financial stress, flickering faith, illness, death or loneliness can all be named as wilderness experiences. The whole world may feel like a desert or wasteland. In those experiences, sacrifice and penitence can be spiritually helpful. But that is not the goal of Lent. The goal of Lent is to allow the grace of God to transform us more and more into God's image.

As we begin this journey into Lent, we look to Scripture and to the saints for those models of people who have shone with the brilliant love of God even in the darkest times of their lives. During Lent, we hear about Abraham and his great faith, Sarah who relied on God even when her faith seemed futile, Nicodemus who secretly wanted to know more about Jesus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the man born blind who was healed, and Lazarus. These figures were not perfect, but they nourish our hope and give us reason to continue our quest to seek justice, love, mercy and walk humbly with God.

As Lent move toward Holy Week, we are led through the depths of discouragement and heart break. To the first followers of Jesus, Good Friday seemed like the end, the Light of all hope seemed to be extinguished. They did not know the end of the story, but we do. Easter! The Resurrection of Jesus.

Because of the Resurrection, Jesus experiences new life. We are given a new path and new way of life as the Kingdom of God breaks into our broken world. All because of the miraculous Resurrection of Jesus. Death is not the end. Through the miracle of Easter, humanity can once again live fully into the Image of God. At Easter, because of Jesus' Resurrection, we are given new life to imagine, a life that is not just getting by or trying to make it through. We are given life and choice, both as individuals, and as the body of Christ, the Church. We support each other, dreaming and imagining and exercising love and courage in life through Jesus. We acknowledge the burdens we carry; but God has showered us with grace and love. Easter shows us that we can rely on those precious gifts. Our mission is to share that Good News with each other and the world.

Filled to overflowing with God's abundant grace and love, we can dare to work to transform the world around us, from wilderness to garden of joy and hope.

You are always in my prayers. Please pray for me too.
Joan

Our song at Easter is Alleluia, Alleluia,
Jesus is risen.
The Lord is risen indeed.
Alleluia!!! O come let us worship. Alleluia.

Our Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday: Sunday, April 5, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

Easter at Bridlewood Retirement Home: Monday, April 6, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday: Thursday, April 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. (**Joint Service at All Saints Greely**)

Good Friday: Friday, April 10, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

Easter Sunday: Sunday, April 12, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

Other Spring Events

Irish Kitchen Céilí dinner: Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. (at the Gloucester South Seniors' Centre, 4550 Bank Street) followed by Irish music

Doors Open: Saturday, June 6 and Sunday, June 7, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Blessing of the Animals Service: Sunday, June 7, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

Wood's Cemetery Memorial Service: Saturday, June 13, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Strawberry Social and Yard Sale: Saturday, July 4, 2020 starting at 8:30 a.m.