

PRAY THE WORD WITH THE LIVING WORD



Lent 2026

BY THE CATHERINE OF SIENA INSTITUTE

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Please note: citations such as CCD: XI: 359 refer to quotes of St. Vincent de Paul from *Correspondence, Conference, Documents* by volume and page numbers.

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

2....The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life.

4. We have raised the question: can our encounter with the God who in Christ has shown us his face and opened his heart be for us too not just "informative" but "performative"—that is to say, can it change our lives, so that we know we are redeemed through the hope that it expresses?

-Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi

Many mystics have described Lent as a time to enter the spiritual desert, to prepare for Easter. The Lenten readings guide us in our quest. Over the weeks, we will encounter thirsty people in the Scriptures searching for water. They will discover, as will we, that what they need more is a 'living water' that slakes the thirst of the human heart.

Pope Benedict reminds us that what we seek is actually a Who: Jesus. As we journey through Lent, we encounter Jesus in many stories in the readings for Mass. In Holy Week, in particular, we will encounter Jesus on the Cross and, on Easter Sunday, the Resurrected Lord.

This Lent, we will pray with the Second Readings. These draw our attention to the events of Holy Week and call us to reflect deeply upon these words of Pope Benedict XVI in *Spe Salvi*,

"Jesus, who himself died on the Cross, brought something totally different: an encounter with the Lord of all lords, an encounter with the living God and thus an encounter with a hope stronger than the sufferings of slavery, a hope which therefore transformed life and the world from within."

To aid our exploration, we will pray with these Sunday Readings on Days One through Three. You can find those online at the US Bishops' website: [Daily Readings online](#).

On Days Four and Five, we will pray with a passage from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. You can find them at the Vatican website through an internet search or by clicking here: [read Catechism of the Catholic Church online](#).

Our method of prayer each day is explained on pages 3-4.

For those journeying with others, there is a group guide provided on pages 15-17. Your sharing is not limited to your lights, insights and graces on the Scriptures but can also be on the readings for Days 4 and 5.

To paraphrase Pope Benedict, may this Lent bring you into a renewed encounter with Jesus and the hope that can transform your life from the inside out!

PRAYING THE WORD...

Each day, you will pray with a passage of Scripture. We will follow this simple method of *lectio divina* for our prayer:

1. PRAY, IN YOUR OWN WORDS, OR THESE:

Lord Jesus,

I truly believe you are with me when

I read from the Scriptures.

I am open to your presence now in this prayer.

*Help me to listen not only to the words on the page
but also to your voice in my heart.*

*Help me to know you better in my prayer
and in my life each day.*

Amen.

"I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of Lectio Divina... If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church - I am convinced of it - a new spiritual springtime."*

2. SLOWLY READ THE PASSAGE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Note any word, phrase or image that stands out for you. Space is provided in the booklet for notes or you can use a separate journal if you desire.

3. READ THE PASSAGE THE SECOND TIME.

Listen or look for what stood out the first time for you.

4. SPEAK, LORD, YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING...

Ask Jesus: what do you want me to hear or see in this passage? What lesson is here for me today?

5. CLOSE WITH A PRAYER OF YOUR OWN CHOOSING.

Thank Jesus for an opportunity to meet him in his Word.

*Pope Benedict XVI, To The Participants In The International Congress Organized To Commemorate The 40th Anniversary Of The Dogmatic Constitution On Divine Revelation "Dei Verbum" 16 September 2005

WITH THE LIVING WORD.

Once a week, take your prayer before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Each week, try to spend time before him, either in front of the tabernacle in your local church or in a Eucharistic Adoration chapel. Bring your prayers, your thoughts, your questions to him. *Ask him your burning questions!* Ask him to help you understand who he is, where he is and what he is doing *now*.

Greet him when you arrive. Thank him for the incredible gift of his presence: body, blood, soul and divinity, in the Blessed Sacrament.

Some things you can say to Jesus:

- Jesus, let me know you are here right now.
- Jesus, help me better understand who you are who died, rose and ascended for me.
- Jesus, show me what you are doing here today.
- Jesus, help me to be open to your presence today.
- Jesus, show me how you invite me to participate in the building up of your Kingdom where I am right now.
- Jesus, help me say ‘yes’ to your invitation.

Offer any prayers on your heart: these may be your own needs or the needs of those dear to you; or persons or situations for whom you have been asked to pray. Join Jesus in praying to the Father for these needs and any others you may have.

Offer your prayer exercises in this booklet since the last time you met with Jesus. Are there questions you have for Jesus? Do you wish to thank him for an insight, a deeper understanding of the mystery for the week? or...?

And then...*speak, Lord, your servant is listening.*

Listening and meditation are nourished by silence.

Listen to Jesus. Allow him to speak to your heart.

When you are done, praise him and thank him for this time with him.

**Bring your
prayers, your
thoughts, your
burning
questions
about Jesus,
his life, death,
resurrection
and ascension
to him in
Adoration.**



SPEND TIME WITH JESUS

Jesus is really, truly present—body, blood, soul and divinity—to us in every tabernacle in every parish church, every Eucharistic chapel and every cathedral throughout the world!

As Pope Benedict XVI said, ". . . the tabernacle is . . . the place of the “Holy of Holies”. It is the tent of God, His throne. Here He is among us. His presence (Shekinah) really does dwell among us – in the humblest parish church no less than in the grandest cathedral.” The Spirit of the Liturgy

If you are able, consider spending your prayer time, one day each week, before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Not sure what to do? Consider this—

To begin, acknowledge Jesus' presence with you with these words or words of your own:
Jesus, I know you are here with me in the Blessed Sacrament.

I thank you for this gift of your presence and ask for your help.

I declare myself open to your presence, your guidance and your leading, as I pray this day.
I am open to what you desire to reveal to me in this reading today. Amen.

As you pray, stop from time to time and gaze upon Jesus. What do you notice? A word, an image, a consolation? Listen, talk with him, ask him questions—he is there for you!

As you wrap up, thank Jesus for your time together!

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Romans (Rom) 5:12-19 Catechism of the Catholic church (CCC) 2

By sending his own Son in the form of a slave, in the form of a fallen humanity, on account of sin, God "made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 602

NOTES

Day One: Rom 5:12-14

Day Two: Rom 5:15-19



NOTES

Day Three: Rom 5:12-19

Day Four: CCC 602

Day Five: CCC 602

How are you seeking Jesus this Lenten season?



SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

2 TIM 1:8-10 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 602

...God is love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God freely wills to communicate the glory of his blessed life. Such is the "plan of his loving kindness", conceived by the Father before the foundation of the world, in his beloved Son: "He destined us in love to be his sons" and "to be conformed to the image of his Son", through "the spirit of sonship". This plan is a "grace [which] was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began", stemming immediately from Trinitarian love. 602

NOTES

Day One: 2 Tim 1:8

Day Two: 2 Tim 1:9-10



NOTES

Day Three: 2 Tim 1:8-10

Day Four: CCC 257

Day Five: CCC 257

What does it mean for you that the Father destines in love for you to be his child?



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

ROM 5:1-2, 5-8 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1820

...Christian hope unfolds from the beginning of Jesus' preaching in the proclamation of the beatitudes. The beatitudes raise our hope toward heaven as the new Promised Land; they trace the path that leads through the trials that await the disciples of Jesus. But through the merits of Jesus Christ and of his Passion, God keeps us in the "hope that does not disappoint." ... 1820

NOTES

Day One: ROM 5:1-2

Day Two: ROM 5:5-8



NOTES

Day Three: ROM 5:1-2, 5-8

Day Four: CCC 1820

Day Five: CCC 1820

What about Jesus and His Story fills you with hope?



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Ephesians (EPH) 5:8-14 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1216

"...This bath [baptism] is called enlightenment, because those who receive this [catechetical] instruction are enlightened in their understanding"Having received in Baptism the Word, "the true light that enlightens every man," the person baptized has been "enlightened," he becomes a "son of light," indeed, he becomes "light" himself... 1216

NOTES

Day One: EPH 5:8-10



Day Two: EPH 5:11-14

NOTES

Day Three: EPH 5:8-14

Day Four: CCC 1216

Day Five: CCC 1216

What does Baptism mean for you?



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Romans 8:8-11 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 989

...We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day...989

NOTES

Day One: ROM 8:8-9

Day Two: ROM 8:10-11



NOTES

Day Three: ROM 8:8-11

Day Four: CCC 989

Day Five: CCC 989

Why does Jesus' Resurrection matter to you?



SIXTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Philippians (PHIL) 2:6-11 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

2667

This simple invocation of faith developed in the tradition of prayer under many forms in East and West. The most usual formulation, transmitted by the spiritual writers of the Sinai, Syria, and Mt. Athos, is the invocation, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners." ...By it the heart is opened to human wretchedness and the Savior's mercy. 2667

NOTES

Day One: PHIL 2:6-8

Day Two: PHIL 2:9-11



NOTES

Day Three: PHIL 2:6-11

Day Four: CCC 2667

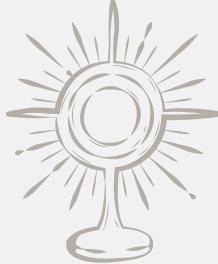
Day Five: CCC 2667

Where do you need the mercy of Jesus in your life today?



GROUP MEETING FORMAT

BEGIN YOUR SESSION BEFORE JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT



Ideally, meet together for this time of silent prayer and meditation. If it is not possible, go at a time when you can and sit before Jesus in the tabernacle or in a Eucharistic Adoration chapel.

1. Pray the following prayer or one in your own words:

Lord Jesus,

As I begin this prayer, I place myself firmly in your presence. I ask for the graces to pray well, to be open to your coming to me this day. Let me know you are personally present to me—body, blood, soul and divinity—in the Blessed Sacrament. Speak to me, Lord, for your servant is listening. Amen.

2. Read the week's passage to yourself slowly.

3. Review your lights, graces, resolutions and actions for the week. Where did you experience God's presence in your prayer? In your days?

4. Read the passage once again. As you ponder the text, ask Jesus: What experience of his presence from your week does he wish you to share?

5. Give thanks to God for the lights, the graces, and the resolutions you have received this week.

Return to your meeting room for the rest of your meeting.



IN YOUR MEETING ROOM

Begin with a brief opening prayer.

Review the ground rules:

- Confidentiality: what is shared in the meeting is not shared outside the meeting.
- When it is your time to speak, only share from your own prayer or response to the questions. Do not comment on another person's sharing, i.e., cross-talk.
- Keep your sharing brief so there is time for all to share.

Share what came up in your prayer:

- What lights, graces, resolutions from your prayer this week would you like to share?
- How did Jesus make himself known to you in your prayer this week?
- **Silence is okay.** When you are ready, feel free to share what came home to you in your prayer.
- Each member shares in this way, whenever they are ready. It is also okay not to share.

Summary. When the sharing is done, one of the group leaders will summarize the sharing and add any other insights they may have.

For what is Jesus prompting us to **pray**?

- Share your personal needs, as well as the needs of your parish, your community and your world.

End with **prayer**.

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Each group meeting has two parts.

The first, if at all possible, is a time of preparation before sharing where the group joins in silent prayer before the Blessed Sacrament together. This is a powerful experience which allows for profound sharing afterward.

The second part is sharing what happened in prayer during the week. The format for this prayer is based upon St. Vincent de Paul's repetition of prayer. Each person has an opportunity to share how they experienced the presence of God during their prayers this past week. This can be in the form of: naming the graces they received, sharing what God revealed to them from the text for them, what did Jesus prompt them to do in response? If they share, and how much they share is up to them.

Central to their sharing is their experience of the presence of God. How was God present in their prayer? To help focus this sharing, the preparation piece at the beginning of each meeting is key.

NOTE: You can read more about St. Vincent's repetition or sharing of prayer here: <http://vincentians.com/en/repetition-of-prayer/>.

HINTS AND HELPS FOR LEADERS

1. Preparation (30 minutes)

- If possible, meet together for 30 minutes of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.
- You can meet in the church before the tabernacle or in a Eucharistic Adoration chapel if you have one.
- If you are unable to meet together, encourage the group to stop in to their local parish and pray before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as outlined in "Begin your session..." in advance of your meeting.

2. Opening Prayer and Ground Rules (10 minutes)

- You or your co-leader can lead the opening and closing prayer but also consider inviting other members of the group to lead prayer.
- Review the ground rules each time. It helps the group stay focused on their shared purpose for these meetings.

3. Sharing (20-30 minutes depending upon the size of the group. If your group has more than 6 members, you may wish to break into smaller groups.)

KEY QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

- What thoughts or insights came home to you during your prayer?
- How did Jesus make himself known to you in your prayer this week?
- What was new or different about your encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist this week?

SHARING HINTS

- No one person is required to share but sharing should allow for each person to have the opportunity. You may want to remind the group, for example, “we have 20 minutes for sharing and there are six of us in the group. Try to keep your sharing to 3 minutes or less.”
- Silence is okay. Especially the first time you meet, you may have periods of silence. Allow the silence to continue for a brief time, to allow others the chance to speak. If the silence becomes uncomfortable, you or your co-leader may need to model sharing, especially if the group is unsure about how to share in this format.
- The leader who will provide the summary should share last.

4. Summary (20 minutes)

SUMMARY HINTS

- While others share, make notes of themes or insights that come from the group sharing. Pay attention especially to any patterns that emerge in the sharing as well as different insights or perspectives people have on the reading for the week.
- When everyone else is done, summarize what you heard. Share 2-3 key points that stood out for you. You should share personally after the summary.
- As part of your summary, you may wish to share a brief quote or insight that relates to the sharing from the writings of a saint or Church Teaching. This should be very, very brief. There are several references grouped by week included in the Bibliography.
- If someone wishes to comment on, or add to the summary, they may do so, time permitting.

5. Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

- Once your sharing time is completed, ask, “for what is Jesus prompting us to pray?” Allow each person to voice their needs but also remind them of our call as disciples to pray for our parish, our community and our world.
- A leader or a group member then closes with prayer. Remember to ask the Lord for his intercession for the needs that have been shared during the meeting.

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Pope Francis, General Audience, March 29, 2017

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Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 120

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Catechism of the Catholic Church 1817-21

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Pope Francis, General Audience, February 15, 2017

WEEK FOUR:

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Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 49, 50

St. John Paul II, Homily, March 14, 1999

WEEK FIVE:

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Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 42, 43

Pope Francis, Homily, April 6, 2014

PALM SUNDAY:

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2667, 2812

Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 2, 3

Pope Francis, Homily, September 18, 2014, Santa Marta

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