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 PETITION & THANKSGIVING LETTERS
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A Time of Trial - A Time of Growth

On Wednesday, we began the season of Lent. Every year, we try to think of what penance we can do, what we can give up or what sacrifices we can make. It appears that this year, with the outbreak of the Corona Virus, our penance has already been decided. Some places in China are under lockdown. The church in Singapore has suspended all masses and public gatherings. A church in South Korea has been responsible for hundreds of cases. In a sense, this is like the desert that we have been sent into, just as Jesus went into the desert at the beginning of his ministry.

The 40 days of Lent are inspired by these 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert - the story we heard in the Gospel today. Like Jesus, we feel inspired to dedicate ourselves to fasting and prayer, to renew our faith and to bring about a real change in our lives.

What is the change or conversion that God is calling us to at this time? Are we challenged to have more faith and trust in God? Are we challenged to find new ways to pray in community or preach the Good News? Maybe we are being challenged to understand what social responsibility means for a Catholic living in the larger society?

Jesus goes into the desert to discern what his Father wants him to do. There, he faces temptations that distract him, that try to make him deviate from his mission but Jesus overcomes these and remains faithful to his Father's will.

Today we might ask, why is God allowing this to happen? Why isn't God sorting out this problem? From the beginning, we have had to deal with the question of evil, sin and suffering. The Book of Genesis tells the story of Adam and Eve and how they broke their promise to God. They preferred to follow their own will rather than God's will and that was the beginning of all of our human suffering. The Book of Genesis wants to remind us that God does not give us suffering. Nor is any trial that we face a punishment from God. Suffering is a natural part of life. But it is through suffering that we learn and grow. Paul reminds us that the sin of Adam and Eve was not the end. Along comes Christ who brings us salvation and life.

Any suffering and trial is not the end. As Jesus came to a clearer understanding and commitment to his mission in the desert, we too can grow towards a stronger commitment in our faith through this season of Lent. May the Spirit of God lead you just as she led Jesus.

Reflection by Gerard Louis, CSsR

Novena notes



1st Sunday of Lent
 Year A
 1st March 2020

Readings & Responses for the Week

Sun, 1 March	Gen 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-19, Mt 4:1-11 Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.
Mon, 2 March	Lev 19:1-2, 11-18; Mt 25:31-46 Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.
Tue, 3 March	Is 55:10-11; Mt 6:7-15 The Lord rescues the just in all their distress.
Wed, 4 March	Jona 3:1-10; Lk 11:29-32 A humbled, contrite heart, O God, you will not spurn.
Thu, 5 March	Est 4:17; Mt 7:7-12 On the day I called, you answered me, O Lord.
Fri, 6 March	Ez 18:21-28; Mt 5:20-26 If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive?
Sat, 7 March	Deut 26:16-19; Mt 5:43-48 They are happy who follow God's law!

WEEKDAY MASS (MON - FRI)

Time: 6.30am, 12.15pm, 6.30pm

Confession: Half an hour before all Masses except the morning Mass

SUNSET MASS (SAT)

Time: 6.30pm

SUNDAY MASS

Time: 8am, 10am, 12noon*, 5.30pm

*2nd & 4th Sunday - Mass in Tagalog, subject to the availability of priests.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY : 8am, 6.30pm

SATURDAY MORNING MASS

Time: 7am

SATURDAY NOVENA DEVOTION

English: 8am, 9.30am, 11am, 1pm, 4pm, 5.30pm

Mandarin: 2.30pm

Confession: After every Novena Service except after the 11am service.

DAYS OF OBLIGATION

Time: 7pm (Eve of Day of Obligation)
 6.30am, 12.15pm, 7pm

Novena notes

Season of Lent

Lent is the period of 40 days which comes before Easter in the Christian calendar. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebration of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. Lent is marked by abstinence, both from food and festivities.

Whereas Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus after his death on the cross, Lent recalls the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion.

The Christian churches that observe Lent use it as a time for prayer and penance. Only a small number of people today fast for the whole of Lent, although some maintain the practice on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It is more common these days for believers to sacrifice a particular item or activity such as favourite foods or smoking. Whatever the sacrifice it is a reflection of Jesus' own sacrifice on the cross.

Why 40 days?

40 is a significant number in the Jewish-Christian scriptures:

In Genesis, the flood which covered the earth was brought about by 40 days and nights of rain.

The Hebrews spent 40 years in the wilderness before reaching the land promised to them by God.

Moses fasted for 40 days before receiving the ten commandments on Mount Sinai.

Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry.

Most Christians regard Jesus' time in the wilderness as the key event for the duration of Lent.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/lent_1.shtml



Lenten Novena

Our Lenten Novena to prepare for Easter has begun. The Theme for this special Novena is: "A New Spring Time." All are welcome and bring along your family and friends.

29 Feb: Receive Be refreshed by the dewfall of the Spirit

7 Mar: Breathe
May we allow the spirit to breathe forgiveness in our heart.

14 Mar: Change
Be transformed.

21 Mar: Love yourself
Where am I with myself?

28 Mar: Love others
Where am I in my relationship with others?

4 Apr: Hope
Where do I go from here?

The Pope's Monthly Intention for March 2020

Catholics in China

We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

Hygiene Measures

Novena Church has taken the necessary precautionary measures in keeping with the MOH's and the Archdiocese's guidelines. We have sanitised the Church for everyone's safety. Please help us keep the Church and the surrounding areas clean and hygienic at all times. We will be conducting checks and will be applying hand sanitiser for every worshipper before entering the Church. There will be designated doors for entering and exiting. Please cooperate with our Ministers of Hospitality.

RCIA Chinese Programme

We will be starting our new Chinese RCIA Programme. It begins on 20th June 2020, every Saturday afternoon from 3.15pm to 5.15pm.

The application form can be obtained from the Church Office

RCIA English Programme

We will be starting our new RCIA Programme. It begins on 7th July 2020. Those interested in joining the new RCIA journey may collect the application form at the Church Office. The closing date for submission is on the 24th May 2020.