

LINC 5-WEEK VIRTUAL LENTEN SERIES

with Fr. Jim Clarke

Encountering The Paschal Mystery



LENT WEEK ONE VIDEO 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugOJRpv4r24&feature=youtu.be>

LENT WEEK TWO VIDEO 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugOJRpv4r24&feature=youtu.be>

LENT WEEK THREE VIDEO 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wyBoskfpeg&feature=youtu.be>

LENT WEEK FOUR VIDEO 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wyBoskfpeg&feature=youtu.be>

LENT WEEK FIVE VIDEO 3:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4x3sicYk2M&feature=youtu.be>

Fr. Clarke introduces his Lenten series as an invitation to engage in the spiritual introspection of the Paschal Mystery: the transformative experiences of the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

This past year of pandemic has transformed many aspects of our lives and has, in many ways, felt like an extended Lenten journey. The life we experienced prior to the pandemic may never return exactly the way it was. And as we look forward with hope to putting the pandemic constraints behind us, we can look at this last year as transformative and the future as resurrection to a new post-pandemic life.

Compare your entry into Lent 2021 with entry into previous Lenten experiences. Has the stay-at-home environment made this last year feel like an extended Lent? If yes, please share; if no, how have you been able to push through? Have there been positives to the environment as far as your spiritual life?

Ash Wednesday and the signing of the forehead with ashes is typically one of the most widely-engaged rituals among Christians. Social distancing/COVID-19 safety precautions changed the Ash Wednesday experience. What was your entry into Lent 2021? Did you participate in the conferring of ashes? What was the experience of beginning Lent with or without the reception of ashes? What rituals in your daily life keep you connected to your faith?

How are you being invited into the depths of Christ's life? And in your own life this Lent?

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Looking back on our Pandemic Lenten desert experience of 2020, has this protracted experience made you more aware of the resurrection story as you look forward to life again?

Fr. Clarke asks us to consider the transformative aspects of Lent. In the last year, the way we have looked at transformative events that have occurred has been modified... with delays, cancellations, transformation of the rituals traditionally used. Acknowledgements of the transformations of births, deaths, start of school, graduations, marriages, have all looked different. Have you had any life-giving or transformative experiences over this last year? Has the change in traditional ritual caused a different perspective on those experiences?

Fr. Clarke tells the story of the king who misses great treasure in the daily gifts he is given by dismissing those gifts at face value and never being open to going deeper to find the gems. He invites us to use this Lenten experience to dig deeper than the literal level and into the story of our life experiences and rituals. Do you see the ritual/literal aspects of our faith as hiding or revealing the "gem inside the fruit"? Are there fruits in your life that you have thrown away, not recognizing the gem inside?

Where do you find solitude and quiet to be with God?

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Review of elements of spiritual journey-take responsibility and surrender, Passion Sunday (March 28), Holy Thursday (April 1)

·Fr.Clarke identifies the 1st truth in development of spirituality as reaching the level of maturity where we willfully “take up our own cross” as Christ modeled and take responsibility for our own life. Why is it difficult to take responsibility for our own life? Have you found it difficult to pick up your own cross(es)? Please share.

The 2nd great truth that Fr.Clarke identifies is that of surrender... willingly letting go into the full embrace of God’s love. Surrender is a difficult word to accept, we see it as weakness and failure. Jesus promises us that in our surrender we will find new life, Where in your life do you find it difficult to surrender? In your surrender, have you found what Jesus said to be true?

Fr.Clarke invites us to approach the mystery of Paschal transformation of the elements of Lent and Easter by visualizing spokes on a wheel. Being actively engaged with our own life and faith experience, he says, involves adjusting the spokes of the wheel of our lives relatives to our understanding of the elements of Lent and Easter. What are the spokes in your wheel of life that keep you going smoothly? Are there some that need a tune-up?

Fr.Clarke talks about Passion/Palm Sunday as a spoke of the wheel of the liturgical experience that focuses us on awareness of God’s presence in our midst. How and where is God inviting you to take notice of God’s presence? Do we need to adjust our image of where God is to do that, letting go of old understandings of what God is?

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Three main things that Fr. Clarke invites us to do to adjust the spoke of Passion Sunday is to honor the sacred, choose symbols wisely; and remember tradition and apply it in ways that can truly help you to live life with meaningfulness. What symbols in your home give meaning to your life? Are there symbols in your home that enrich your faith?

How are you honoring family traditions, spiritual traditions?

How do you honor the sacred when our traditional rituals are not available to us?

The second theme that Fr. Clarke addresses is Holy Thursday, celebrating with friends a gratitude for life, acknowledging that there is something to celebrate even when things are tough. We encounter Christ by gathering together and giving thanks often--living with an attitude of gratitude.

Where is God inviting you to be grateful? Can you begin your day identifying with 3-5 things for which you are grateful?

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The focus of the liturgical activities of Good Friday can be summarized as “life is lost.” Fr. Clarke describes the essence as respecting human limitations, surrendering to the notion that we cannot have it all or do it all.

In the last year, we have been faced with great suffering and loss at a global, local and personal level. What loss/grief associated with the pandemic do you personally mourn? (Think broadly to include not only lives lost but also to such things as the end of relationship, job, home, friends, school experience). Do you mourn/grieve loss in your spiritual life (e.g., In-person Mass, gathering with friends, parishioners, etc). Can you let them go with a heart full of faith and trust?

Can you identify with Fr. Clarke’s assertion that acknowledging a seemingly small loss triggers grief for many inter-connected grief’s/losses that were bottled up inside of you?

Fr. Clarke asserts that Jesus doesn’t save us by his death, but liberates us by the gift of his YES to his dying process. Does that perspective help you to bring all of the grief’s and losses to Jesus, have you experience grace to help you work your way through that grief?

We also express our belief in the resurrected power of Easter by sharing stories of how we overcame death, experience, about how our life is good, and that new life comes after a death experience. Can you find those positives after this year of so much loss?

Silence and ritual are central to traditional Good Friday liturgies. How/will you do that this year? How do you plan to walk the journey of Holy Week this year?