

LIVING LENT and TRANSFORMING OUR LIVES

Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:2



During this Lenten time, we pause and remember the sacred and enduring presence of the Holy One in our lives.

We live and move and have our being in Him.

Holy is God, holy and mighty, holy and living forever!

“I ABIDE with you. I rejoice with you. I suffer with you. I heal you. I awaken you. I transform you. I transform through you.”

This is God’s voice speaking not only to the world but also to every part of the world; not only to nations and communities but to every individual; not only to humanity but to every aspect of struggling, evolving creation.

Prayer, Stress and Our Inner Wounds © 1985 by Flora Slosson Wuellner. Published by Upper Room Books.

- We can choose to pray or not. God won’t force us.
- We can choose to live holy lives or not.
- We can choose to rid ourselves of our faults and failings or not.
- We can choose to share our faith with others or just to be secret Christians.

Seven words that will CHANGE YOUR LIFE —

“Not My Will, But Thine Be Done”.

Matthew 6:

“THY WILL BE DONE.” Matthew 6: 9-13

If said sincerely to God daily, choice by choice, this can change our life!

What could be safer than to be in the will of God?

What could be more fulfilling than to be exactly in the center of His will? “Not my will, but Thine, be done.”

“YET NOT MY will, but YOURS be done.”

Luke 22: 41-42

Jesus had His own will: “...remove this cup from me.”

Was Jesus' will here sinful? No; He never sinned.

But if He had followed His desire to escape the cross, we would not be saved!

So it's possible for our will to desire things that are not necessarily sinful, but are not the RIGHT CHOICES.

For example, is it a sin to get very busy and go several days without spending time in prayer and the Word?

Probably not, but is that God's will?

Stopping what you are doing and saying, “THY will be done” would certainly bring changed conduct.

HYMN: DRAW NEAR O LORD

Draw near, O Lord, our God, graciously hear us,
guilty of sinning before You.

O King exalted, Savior of all nations,
See how our grieving lifts our eyes to heaven;
Hear us Redeemer, as we beg forgiveness.

We pray You, O God, throned in strength and splendor,
Hear from Your kingdom this, our song of sorrow;
Show us Your mercy, pardon our offenses.

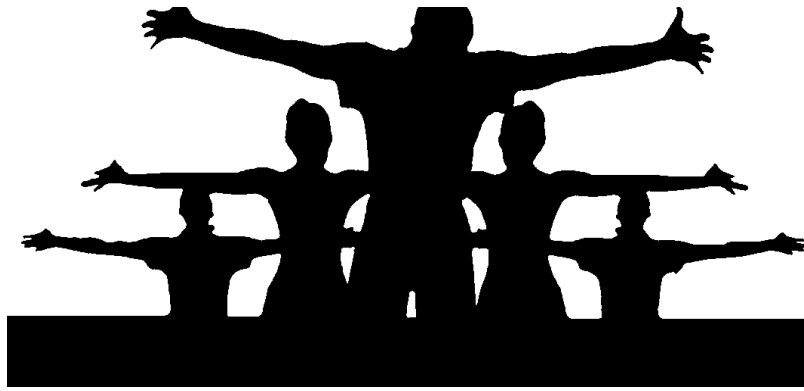
Humbly confessing countless sins committed,
Our hearts are broken, laying bare their secrets;
Cleanse us, redeemer, boundless in compassion.

Innocent Captive, unresisting Victim,
Liars denounced You, sentenced for the guilty;
Once You redeemed us: now renew us, Jesus.

10th century hymn

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-16

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For God is the One Who, for His good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work. Do everything without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like lights in the world.



**Grant to us, O Lord, a heart renewed.
Re-create in us Your own Spirit, Lord.**

GALATIANS 5: 16-26

I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ (Jesus) have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.



PSALM 37

Do not be provoked by evildoers; do not envy those who do wrong. Like grass they wither quickly; like green plants they wilt away. Trust in the LORD and do good that you may dwell in the land and live secure.

Find your delight in the LORD who will give you your heart's desire. Commit your way to the LORD; trust that God will act And make your integrity shine like the dawn, your vindication like noonday.

Be still before the LORD; wait for God.

Give up your anger, abandon your wrath; do not be provoked; it brings only harm.

Those whose steps are guided by the LORD; whose way God approves, may stumble, but they will never fall, for the LORD holds their hand.

Observe the honest, mark the upright; those at peace with God have a future.

But all sinners will be destroyed; the future of the wicked will be cut off.

The salvation of the just is from the LORD, their refuge in time of distress.

The LORD helps and rescues them, rescues and saves them from the wicked, because in God they take refuge.

HYMN: LORD WHO THROUGHOUT THESE FORTY DAYS

Lord, Who throughout these forty days
For us didst fast and pray,
Teach us with Thee to mourn our sins
And close by Thee to stay.

As Thou with Satan didst contend,
And didst the victory win,
O give us strength in Thee to fight,
In Thee to conquer sin.

As Thou didst hunger bear, and thirst,
So teach us, gracious Lord,
To die to self, and chiefly live
By Thy most holy Word.

And through these days of penitence,
And through Thy Passiontide,
Yea, evermore in life and death,
Jesus, with us abide.

Abide with us, that so, this life
Of suffering over past,
An Easter of unending joy
We may attain at last.

REFLECTION: GROWING IN CHRIST



We are in Lent, the time of the year when the church invites us to test our freedom, and to question the notion: I can take it or leave it alone. Try that with grumbling, drunkenness, talking about yourself or others, stealing, gambling, or other habits that diminish our freedom. What habits make you hard to live with? Lent is about regaining control of our own lives, especially in those areas that damage other people. We don't admire those whose appetites or habits lead them by the nose. Nearly all of us have habits, or even

addictions, that keep us from God, and harm both others and ourselves. These weeks before Easter help us to focus our energy on improving. Like the gardener who prunes the trees and shrubs of old and decayed growth, so we too, strip ourselves of all that saps our energy of loving God by imitating Jesus. May this Lenten season be a time for us to root out the old self and put on the new.

Once upon a time an angel entered the storehouse of heaven and announced, "I've run out of the fruits of the spirit — love, joy and peace — can you restock me?"

"Oh no!" said the guardian. "We don't stock fruit here. Only seeds!"

In this day of instant coffee, instant pudding, instant replays, instant pictures, instant loans and instant debt, some Christians want to skip the growth process. We want instant sainthood — not seeds, but fruit! We want to be grown up, but We don't want to grow up.

Other Christians want to skip the growth process in a different way. We prefer to remain in the raw, unprocessed state in which Christ found us.

Christ does not intend that you be saved, sanctified, and petrified. He gives you freedom to be what you are with the hope of becoming what you were meant to be.

You can't even know what you are until you know what you are becoming. You can't know the tadpole unless you know the frog. You can't know the caterpillar until you know the butterfly. You can't know the Christian until you know the glorified saint (1 John 3:1–3).

INTERCESSIONS

Response: Be with us and have mercy on us, we beg You!

Loving God, create in me a clean heart, we pray:

Provident God, watch over all my ways, we pray:

Watchful God, guide me on the path to You, we pray:

Merciful God, give me sorrow for my sins, we pray:

Just God, expect of me true allegiance to You, we pray:

**Abiding God, let me turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel,
we pray:**

Holy God, let me live a life worthy of You, we pray:

**Compassionate God, help me to love You, my neighbor and myself,
we pray:**

PRAYER:

Response: Persistence brings forth transformation.

**Like waves shaping the beach,
Like seeds germinating in the soil,
Like a potter with a lump of clay,
Like a child learning the alphabet,
Like an ant carrying a grain of sand,
Like a bird with the first twig for a nest,
Like the rhythm of the seasons,
Like the turning of the earth,
Like the mind and heart of Jesus,
Like Jesus enduring His passion,
Like us ridding ourselves of our selfishness,**

BLESSING:

May our hands be strengthened for the work at hand.

May our hearts always turn to You, O Lord.

May our eyes see Your promise.

May our ears hear Your invitation to follow You.

May our feet dance in Your light, O God.

**Guided by the love and example of Jesus
and led by the Spirit,**

**may we transform our lives and come to know and love You more
fully.**

Amen.



**We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You
because by Your holy cross,
You have redeemed the world.**

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us in having a true conversion of heart this Lent.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!



**I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them;
I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of
flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my
laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.**

Ezekiel 11:19-20