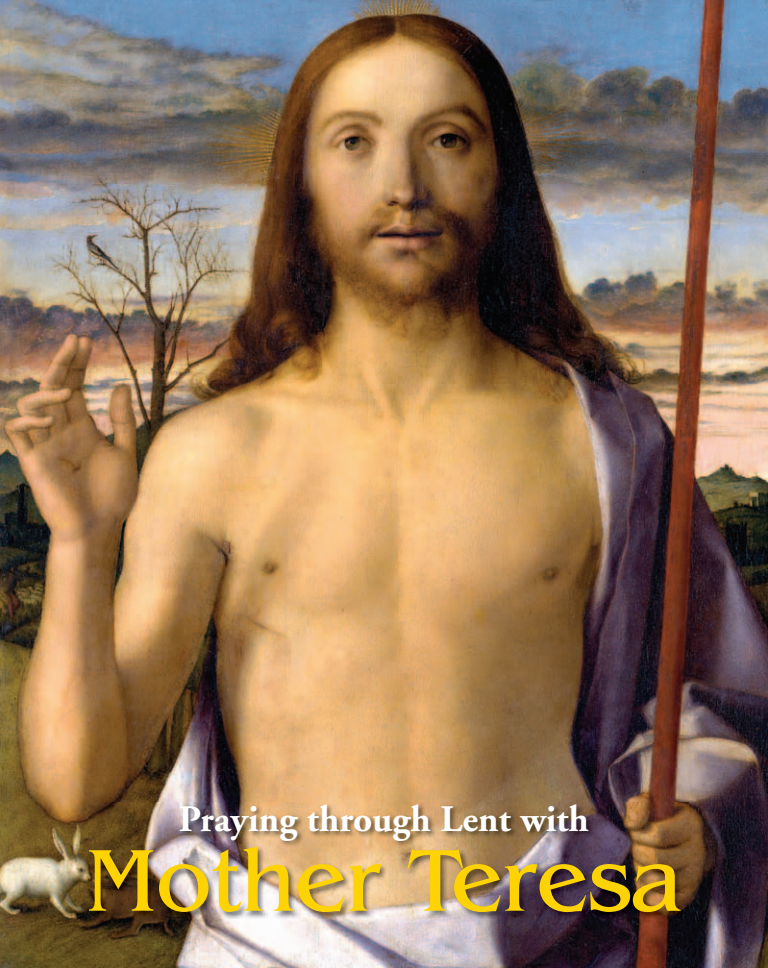


# Prayer, Love and Service



Praying through Lent with

**Mother Teresa**

## Introduction

Lent is the Church's annual season for our renewal as followers of Jesus by examining how we are now relating to God and how we might deepen that relationship through the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, witness and service.

This Lent, our guide for Lenten renewal is Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997), founder of the Missionaries of Charity and the most well known Catholic woman of the 20th century, who was beatified on October 19, 2003. On the train to Darjeering, India, in 1946 she “heard the call to give up all and follow Jesus into the slums to serve him among the poorest of the poor. I knew it was his will, and that I had to follow him.”

In her book, *A Simple Path*, she reveals the key to her way of following Christ by reminding us of the core Christian insight that “prayer in action is love, and love in action is service. The point is to do something, however small, and show I care through my actions.” So during this Lent, we invite you to pray daily with Mother Teresa and the Church's scriptural readings for Mass to grow in your following of Jesus by focusing on her three main themes of prayer, love and service.

—Steve Mueller, Editor

### Acknowledgements:

*A Gift for God* (Harper & Row, 1975); *A Simple Path* (Ballantine Books, 1995); *At Prayer with Mother Teresa* by Eileen Egan (Liguori, 1998); *Come Be My Light* (Doubleday, 2007); *Everything Starts from Prayer* (White Cloud Press, 1998); *In My Own Words* (Liguori, 1995); *In the Heart of the World: Thoughts, Stories, and Prayers* (New World Library, 1997); *Jesus, the Word to Be Spoken* (Servant, 1998); *Life in the Spirit* (Harper & Row, 1983); *Love: A Fruit Always in Season* (Ignatius Press, 1987); *Loving Jesus With the Heart of Mary* (Missionaries of the Blessed Sacrament, 1984); *Praying with Mother Teresa*, ed. Roswitha Kornprobst (Paulist Press, 2011); *The Love of Christ* (Harper & Row, 1982); *The Joy in Loving*, ed. Jaya Chaliha & Edward Le Joly (Penguin Books, 1997); *Total Surrender* (Servant, 1985).

## True Renewal

ASH WEDNESDAY

JOEL 2:12-13

Help me, Lord God, in my good resolve and holy service, and give me the grace to really and truly begin, for what I have done till now is nothing. Renewal does not mean changing a habit and a few prayers but faithfulness to a spirit which seeks holiness by means of a poor and humble life, the exercise of sincere and patient charity, spontaneous sacrifice and generosity of heart.

## I Give You Myself

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

LUKE 9:23-24

O Loving Father, here I am, at your disposal, your child. Use me to continue your loving the world, by giving Jesus to me and through me to others and to the world. Let us pray that we allow Jesus to love in us and through us with the love with which you love us.

## Listening in Silence

FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

ISAIAH 58:6-7

Jesus, you are always waiting for me in silence. In this silence you listen to me and speak to my soul. And there, I hear your voice. Interior silence is very difficult, but I must make the effort to pray. In this silence I find a new energy and a real unity as your energy becomes mine and my thoughts are united with your thoughts, my prayers with your prayers, my actions with your actions, my life with your life.



## Open My Heart

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

LUKE 5:27-28

Jesus, help me listen in silence, because if my heart is full of other things I cannot hear your voice. But when I have listened to your voice in the stillness of my heart, then my heart is filled with you.

## Speak to Me

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

MARK 1:14-15

Let the sound of your voice echo always in my ears, good Jesus, so that I may learn how my heart, my mind, and my soul can love you. Let the innermost recesses of my heart embrace you, my one and only good, my sweet joy, my true friend.

## Lead Me, God

MONDAY, WEEK 1

MATTHEW 25:31-36

O God, help me not attempt to control your actions nor count the stages in the journey you would have me make. Let me not desire a clear perception of my advance along the road, nor know precisely where I am on the way of holiness.

## Alone with You

TUESDAY, WEEK 1

ISAIAH 55:10-11

O God, help me withdraw at certain intervals into deeper silence and aloneness with you. To be alone with you, not with my books, thoughts and memories but completely stripped of everything, to dwell lovingly in your presence—silent, empty, expectant and motionless.

## The Joy of Silence

WEDNESDAY, WEEK I

JONAH 3:6-10

We need silence to be alone with God, to speak to him, to listen to him, to ponder his words deep in our hearts, to be renewed and transformed. Silence gives us a new outlook on life. In it we are filled with God's, which makes us do all things with joy.

## Silence My Heart

THURSDAY, WEEK I

PSALM 138:1-3

O God, help me keep the silence of my heart with greater care, so that in the silence of my heart I hear your words of comfort, and from the fullness of my heart I can comfort Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poor. For in the silence and purity of the heart you speak.

## Make All Things New

FRIDAY, WEEK I

MATTHEW 5:20-22

Jesus, when I look upon you in the Blessed Sacrament, raise me up into deeper union with you, open up the floodgates of your merciful love to the whole world and bring me closer to the day of your final victory.

## Take My Heart

SATURDAY, WEEK I

DEUTERONOMY 26:16-17

O God, take entire and absolute possession of my heart. Let me suffer nothing contrary to enter, and to continually increase in your love by seeking to please you in all things and refusing you nothing, and accept as from your hand everything that happens to me.

## I Belong to You

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

MARK 9:7-9

O God, I know that to be holy does not mean to do extraordinary things or to understand big things, but it is a simple acceptance, because I have given myself to you, because I belong to you. You could put me here or put me there. You can use me or not use me. It doesn't matter because I belong so totally to you that you can do just what you want to do with me.

## Make Me a Saint

MONDAY, WEEK 2

DANIEL 9:4-6



O God, I surrender to you my free will, my reason, my own life in pure faith. My soul may be in darkness. Trial is the surest way of my blind surrender. Surrender is also true love. I ask you to make a saint of me; yet I must leave to you the choice of the saintliness itself and still more the means which leads to it.

## No Limit to Your Love

TUESDAY, WEEK 2

ISAIAH 1:16-20

O God, the more I surrender to you, the more I love you and others. There is no limit to your love. It is without measure and its depth cannot be sounded. How poor I would be if you had not given me the power of giving myself to you. How rich I am now.

## **I Offer You Everything**

WEDNESDAY, WEEK 2

MATTHEW 20:25-28

O God, I give myself completely to you, because you have given yourself to me. If you owe nothing to me and yet are ready to impart yourself to me, shall I answer with just a fraction of myself? Therefore to possess you, I must allow you to possess my soul.

## **My Total Surrender**

THURSDAY, WEEK 2

JEREMIAH 17:7-8

O God, my total surrender to you must come in small details just as it comes in big details. It's nothing but that single word, "Yes, I accept whatever you give, and I give whatever you take." And this is just a simple way for me to be holy.

## **Paying the Price**

FRIDAY, WEEK 2

MATTHEW 21:33-40

O God, help me understand that I cannot expect to become a saint without paying the price, and the price is much renunciation, much temptation, much struggle and persecution, and all sorts of sacrifices. I cannot love you except at the cost of myself.

## **Living the Love of God**

SATURDAY, WEEK 2

PSALM 103:1-4

O God, help me live the love of God in prayer and in my work, through a life characterized by the simplicity and humility of the Gospel. Help me love Jesus in the bread of the Eucharist, and love and serve him hidden under the painful guise of the poorest of the poor.

## I Rely on You

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

I CORINTHIANS 1:22-25

Dear Lord, the Great Healer, give skill to my hands, clear vision to my mind, kindness and meekness to my heart. Give me singleness of purpose, strength to lift up part of the burden of my suffering fellowmen, and a realization of the privilege that is mine. Take from my heart all guile and worldliness, that with the simple faith of a child, I may rely on you.

## The Greatest Suffering

MONDAY, WEEK 3

LUKE 4:24-29

O God, there is much suffering in the world—very much—suffering from hunger, from homelessness, from all kinds of diseases, But I still think the greatest suffering is being lonely, feeling unloved, just having no one.

## Hungry for Your Love

TUESDAY, WEEK 3

MATTHEW 18:20-22

Jesus, you make yourself the hungry one, the naked one, the homeless one, the sick one, the imprisoned one, the lonely one, the unwanted one, and you say: “You did it to me.” You are hungry for my love. Help me hunger always for your love.

## Seeing with the Eyes of Faith

WEDNESDAY, WEEK 3

DEUTERONOMY 4:5-9

O Jesus, give me the eyes of deep faith to see you in the broken body and dirty clothes under which you hide. I shall need your hands to touch those bodies wounded by pain and suffering.



## The Hidden Jesus

THURSDAY, WEEK 3

LUKE 11:17-22

Jesus, you have identified yourself with the hungry, the sick, the naked, the homeless—hunger, not only for bread, but for love, for care, to be somebody to someone; nakedness, not of clothing only, but of that compassion that very few people give to the unknown; homelessness, not only just for a shelter made of stone, but from having no one to call your own.



## Helping Not Judging Others

FRIDAY, WEEK 3

EXODUS 32:11-14

O God, help me not to judge people. If I judge others then I am not giving love. Instead let me try to help them by seeing their needs and acting to meet them. It isn't what anyone may or may not have done, but what I have done that matters in your eyes.

## Forgive as I Am Forgiven

SATURDAY, WEEK 3

HOSEA 6:4-6

O God, even when I sin or make a mistake, let that help me grow closer to you. I know I shouldn't have done this, but even this failure I offer you. I know you will forgive me. Then help me forgive as I have been forgiven.

## To Please You

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

JOHN 3:16-18

Jesus, I feel sometimes afraid, for I have nothing—no brains, no learning, no qualities required for such a work—and yet I tell you that my heart is free from everything and so it belongs completely to you, and you alone. Use me just as it will please you best. To please you only is the joy I seek.

## Not Me But Only You

MONDAY, WEEK 4

ISAIAH 65:17-19

Jesus, help me spread your fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that my life may only be a radiance of yours. Shine through me, and be so in me that everyone I come in contact with may feel your presence in me. Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus.

## Preaching by Example

TUESDAY, WEEK 4

JOHN 4:46-53

Jesus, let me preach you without preaching, not by words but by my example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to you.

## Love Is the Key

WEDNESDAY, WEEK 4

ISAIAH 49:8-10

O God, help me learn that it is not how much I do that is pleasing to you, but how much love I put into the doing. That is what you look for—because you are love and you made me in the divine image to love and to be loved.

## Real Success

THURSDAY, WEEK 4

EXODUS 32:11-14

O God, you see only my love. You do not ask how many books I have read, how many miracles I have worked, but whether I have done my best for the love of you. Nothing is small for you because you are almighty, and therefore each one of my actions done with and for and through Jesus Christ is a great success.

## Loving Those Close By

FRIDAY, WEEK 4

JOHN 7:25-30

Jesus, it is easy to love the people far away. It is not always easy to love those close to me. It is easier to give a cup of rice to relieve hunger than to relieve the loneliness and pain of someone unloved close to home. Help me bring love into my home for this is where our love for each other must start.



## Loving One Person at a Time

SATURDAY, WEEK 4

JOHN 7:40-44

Jesus, help me look at each individual. I can love only one person at a time. I can feed only one person at a time. Just one, one, one. All my work is only a drop in the ocean but if I didn't put the drop in, the ocean would be one drop less.

## What Really Matters

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

JOHN 12:23-33

Jesus, it does not matter what I do or where I am, as long as I bear in mind that I am yours, that you can do with me whatever you want, that I owe you my love, and that I love you. Whether I work for the rich or the poor, among people of high society or among inhabitants of the inner city, what is important is only the love I put into carrying out my work.

## Being God's Kindness

MONDAY, WEEK 5

JOHN 8:1-7

Jesus, help me to be kind and merciful. Let no one ever come to me without leaving better and happier. Help me be the living expression of God's kindness—kindness in my face, kindness in my eyes, kindness in my smile, kindness in my warm greeting.

## Prayer from the Heart

TUESDAY, WEEK 5

JOHN 8:21-23

O God, when you speak to us: we listen. When we speak to you: you listen. You speak in the silence of my heart, and I listen. And then I speak to you from the fullness of my heart, and you listen. My words are useless unless they come from the bottom of my heart.

## The Spirit of Poverty

WEDNESDAY, WEEK 5

JOHN 8:34-36

O God, help me strive to acquire the true spirit of poverty which manifests itself in a love for practicing the virtue of

poverty in imitation of Christ—in imitation of him who chose it as the compassion of his life on earth when he came to live among us.

### **From Prayer to Loving Service**

THURSDAY, WEEK 5

GENESIS 17:3-8

O God, teach me that prayer in action is love, and love in action is service. Help me give unconditionally whatever a person needs in the moment. The point is to do something, however small, and show I care through my actions by giving my time.

### **Joined to Christ's Suffering**

FRIDAY, WEEK 5

JOHN 10:31-33

O Jesus, only love of my heart, I wish to suffer what I suffer and all you will have me suffer for your pure love, not because of the merits I may acquire, nor for the rewards you have promised me but only to please you, to praise you, to bless you as well in sorrow as in joy.

### **True Happiness**

SATURDAY, WEEK 5

JOHN 11:45-53

O God, how wonderful it is to know that you love us. I hope that as many people as possible get to know you, to love you, and to serve you because that is true happiness.

## Serving Jesus in Those Who Suffer

PASSION/PALM SUNDAY OF LENT

MARK 11:7-10

Jesus, my suffering Lord, grant that today and every day I may see you in the person of your sick ones, and that in caring for them I may serve you. Grant also that even in the guise of the fretful, the demanding, the unreasonable, I may still recognize you and say: My suffering Jesus, how sweet it is to serve you.

## Sharing Jesus' Suffering

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

ISAIAH 42:1-4



O Jesus, imprint on my soul and life the sufferings of your heart. Don't mind my feelings, Don't mind even my pain. If my separation from you brings others to you and in their love and company you find joy and pleasure, I am willing with all my heart to suffer all that I suffer.

## The Man of Suffering

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

JOHN 13:31-38

O God, let me find Jesus in the dark holes of the slums, in the most pitiful miseries of the poor, in the God-man naked on the cross, mournful, despised by all, the man of suffering, crushed like a worm by the scourging and the crucifixion.

## Jesus' Suffering Reveals God's Love

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

MATTHEW 26:20-25

O God, help me understand that my suffering is a sharing

in the passion of Christ: a gift and proof of love, because in giving us your Son you showed that you love the world. The suffering in the world is like an enormous Calvary, where the Body of Christ is now crucified once more.

### **Jesus, Bread of Life**

HOLY THURSDAY

I CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

Jesus, into each of our lives you come as the bread of life—to be eaten, to be consumed by us. This is how you love us. Then you come as the hungry one, the other, hoping to be fed with the bread of our life, our hearts loving, and our hands serving.

### **Giving His Life for Us**

GOOD FRIDAY

ISAIAH 53:1-6

Jesus, you want us to love one another as you love each one of us. Let us love you. By giving your life you gave all that you had, your life, for us. You died on the cross because you love us and want us to love one another as you love each one of us. You came to teach us the tender love of God.

### **Loving Others as God Loved Us**

HOLY SATURDAY

ROMANS 6:3-11

Let us thank God for all God's love for us, in so many ways and in so many places. Let us in return, as an act of gratitude and adoration, determine to love God. We all have much to give, to share, to contribute wherever we find ourselves living. Holiness starts in the home, by loving God and those around us for God's sake.

## God's Love Can Change Everything

EASTER SUNDAY

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

O God, touch our lives and show your love for us by pouring peace and joy into our hearts. Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth. Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to truth. Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe—peace, peace, peace!

