

## Email Guidelines

### 1st Week of Lent (2nd-6th of March)

#### Monday

##### Philippians 3:8-14 & Matthew 5:13-16

Why lent? Why every year? Reading what St. Paul says about Christ, he reminds us that everything we do that seems a little (or a lot) different to our normal life (as giving up on things, Lenten resolutions, fasting...) has a reason; to know Christ better is worth lots: it is better to know him than to have all that we want (or can have).

Lent is a time for coming back to Christ. He is our goal. He is the companion of our lives; He wants us to become more aware of him. God is within us, to experience him does not make him more present, it rather opens our eyes so we can see more clearly his presence.

Why is it worth to know him more? In biblical times, to know meant to experience, to know Christ better means to have a greater experience of his presence, love... it means to get closer to him. It is this relationship with Christ what for Paul makes everything else *“as filth if only I can gain Christ”*

It is this experience of Him what makes possible for us to be this light that cannot be hidden. The Love of God spreads even though we do not realize. Let this Lent be a time to come back

to Him and letting his love come through us and reach others as the light does through the window.

#### Tuesday

##### Matthew 6:7-15 & Isaiah 55: 10-11

Sometimes the danger in wanting to get closer to God is to forget that God wants us closer to Him a lot more, and from much before than us. Lent has not been our idea. The conversion of heart has always been God's idea not ours. The people of Israel had to be told also that God did not want sacrifices but “broken hearts”! It was His word that “watered the earth” of your heart and made it long for more. It is His desire that everything He tells you gives fruit by fulfilling your life.

I read the Our Father under this light. Your Father knows. He knows better than anyone what is that you long for; He knows your pains, your hungers, your daily needs... He knows that some things you can provide for yourself, but some are impossible for you to have if He does not intervene. This is why Christ teaches us this prayer; it is God telling us what to ask Him, how to speak to Him.

#### Wednesday

##### Jonas 3:1-10; Matthew 7:3 & Luke 6:36

*Fast from Judging others; feast on the Christ dwelling within them!...*

What is fasting? Is it only about food? I think that this term could also be applied to everything that “nourishes” us. Everything that gives us strength to continue, feelings of satisfaction... It is also to renounce –voluntarily- to what you would normally have. Maybe we could read Matthew and Luke under this light. There is a habit in many of us of looking at others with this magnifying lens that makes everything look bigger. Everything that is not good, *obviously*. We are able to notice even the smallest mistake or bad habit in some people. And Jesus asks: why? What does it give us? Is it because it nourishes and makes stronger an idea of the person that we already have, or a prejudice against someone? Does it make us stronger in our position? If it is thus, then it makes sense that we also fast from this. And feast, instead, on the good in the other, making it look bigger. So we can arrive to Easter Vigil being as compassionate as our Father in heaven. And follow Christ with the same feelings He had for each one on His way to the Cross.

## Thursday

### Matthew 7:7-12 & Esther 4:17

Lent is a time of conversion, but conversion is a gift from God; it is a grace that is freely given. No one wants to turn back to Him by his or her own initiative; there is, as a previous step, the Love of God drawing us closer to Him. For this, we can ask, with confidence that we will have it, for whatever we think we need in order to answer the call in our hearts.

Is it strength for you r live as a Christian? Is it love? Is it patience, or a heart more able to welcome others? Is it maybe the healing of that wound in your heart that keeps reopening every now and then and makes you suffer? What do you need this lent? *Which one is that longing in your heart that you know can only come from God and His Love?* Ask, because who asks receives. And if you do not know how to ask, the prayers of Esther or Mordecai are wonderful examples of how to pray to God. The prayers of people that are included in the Word of God are always the Word of God because is what God has put in the mouths of human beings for them to say.

## Friday

### Romans 12:3-4; Eph 4: 1-16 & Mt. 5:20-26

*Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on the unity of all life!...*

A lesson on humility that makes possible unity: “think of yourself dispassionately recognizing that God has given to each one his measure of faith.” Paul has a gift to say things clear. Today we could pray about *fasting* on seeing the differences between us and *the others*, whoever these others are for you. As Christians, we are part of the Body of Christ, this means that we are different but one. This means that if we were all the same there would be neither the possibility of growth in love nor the capacity to walk towards God. This means that the one that is different to me, in culture, or habits, or backgrounds, or past... is my possibility to grow, in the same way that I am his (or hers). This makes that person a very good gift for me; someone for whom to give thanks to God.