

Impact

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

Life can be hard. Walk in faith.

Life can be hard. We all have moments when times are tough. Challenges with health, work or school may bring anxiety. The pace of life may seem unbearable. Our mental and emotional health may be fragile; life may be filled with loneliness and discomfort (the opposite of being settled and comfortable with one's circumstances). We're not only concerned about ourselves and our lives, the state of life for our family, friends, and those in the wider community are on our minds and in our hearts. We may feel helpless and doubt God or our ability to carry on.

Be honest. Sometimes we may feel that being a person of faith means never admitting our challenges or doubts. Surely, we think, if our faith was strong enough, the difficulties of life wouldn't get to us. The witness of the saints who precede us tells us that people of faith do indeed have difficulties. We can learn from them and be honest with ourselves, others, and God when life is hard.

Walk in faith, even when we are tempted to give up. This month, we hear the stories of people who placed their trust in God in their most vulnerable and challenging moments. Job endured trials and voiced his discouragement and weariness, and eventually found the consolation for which he longed. Peter brought his worry for his mother-in-law to Jesus who healed her and the crowds who gathered at her door. The leper knelt at Jesus' feet, declaring his faith that Jesus could heal him and was given more than he could have imagined, healing and forgiveness.

Jesus faced temptation too. He held fast, trusting that the Father and the Holy Spirit were with him. Our Lord understands when we struggle. Jesus knows our human condition in all its frailty and is with us as we seek consolation, light, and peace.

Jesus took his disciples up on a high mountain where he was transfigured before their eyes. They held on to the experience during the profound grief of Jesus' passion and death and in the uncertain days that followed.

Lent is a season in which to draw near to our Lord. Gain new perspective as we re-order our lives in the light of Christ's love. When we feel we are in the desert, alone with little around us in which to find hope, we remember that the Holy Spirit drove Jesus to the desert, where he found the grace to withstand temptation, hunger, and isolation. When we are sick, tired, and afraid, we remember those who have gone before us who experienced similar trials and were consoled by the Lord's presence and peace. When we are just going through the motions in life, we can take a step toward Jesus who knows our every need. When life is hard, grow in trust that through the grace of God, you and all you face may be transformed. Walk in faith this Lent and always.

Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.

Remember that your compassion, O Lord, and your love are from of old. In your kindness remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord, thus he shows sinners the way. He guides the humble to justice, and he teaches the humble his way.

Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

IMPACT THIS MONTH

Take time this month to reflect on the ways you are and are not living as a faithful follower of Jesus. Resolve to turn away from sin and toward God. Embrace the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and giving as you repent, change, and grow as a disciple and steward.

BRING FAITH TO LIFE

Sometimes it is difficult to think about God's will. Our fierce human independence balks at the idea of someone else's will being important, even if it is *God* whose will we are considering. Yet each of us has moments in which we sense what we are called to do: dreams of making a contribution in the life of another; a simple act of kindness that could make a real difference; a sense of purpose or fruitfulness in which we may

find meaning in life; a desire to show compassion, share mercy, forgive another, or give of ourselves in a new and substantial way. St. John XXIII understood these interior promptings that are glimmers of the will of God (see quote below).

This Lent, discern God's will and resolve to live in the way God most desires. Dream boldly and grow as a good steward. Use your talents, resources, time, and presence to make a difference in the life of another. Bring faith to life.

"Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do." - St. John XXIII

MORE OR LESS

We might think of Lent as a season of less and more. Less focus on stuff; more on giving of time or attention. Less time absorbed in self; more in prayer and serving the needs of others. Less of unnecessary things; more on the most important ones, which usually aren't things at all.

We often think of Lent as a time to "give up" something, which leads us to less of a favored food or activity, and which ideally gives us more of an experience of sacrifice, and more time or money for

another. Will your Lenten practice this year lead you to be less distracted, more prayerful, less stressed, and more trusting in God's goodness?



May this Lent be a season of "less is more": as you free yourself from whatever keeps you from following Jesus, may you find more of all that you truly need: grace, forgiveness, mercy, compassion. And may you share these gifts with others. As you do so, you will surely also discover the grace of the Spirit of God within you, empowering you to act as a person of Christ in the world.

This Lent, let us make "less is more" our motto as we repent and change and grow in faith.