

### Our Faith: Lenten Prayer

Lent is the time to start new patterns of prayer. Perhaps you haven't been praying much at all. This is a great time to choose to begin, but it is important to begin realistically. You can start by simply pausing when you get up and taking a slow, deep breath, and recalling what you have to do this day, and asking for the grace to do it as a child of God. You might consider going to bed a half an hour earlier and getting up a half an hour earlier to give yourself some time alone to read the readings for the day and listen to what the Lord is telling you through those readings. You may choose to go to Mass more frequently during Lent. You may choose to arrive at church a little earlier on Sunday for a time of prayer and reflection before Mass. Lent may be a good time to start a prayer journal in which you write your prayers intercession – for yourself and others – for which you want to pray each day. Do not forget to build thanksgiving into your daily pattern of prayer. Why not make a note of all the blessings and gifts that God has given you each day? When we count our blessings, we may be surprised at the ways in which God has been active in our lives. Living a life of thanksgiving deepens our relationship with God and opens our eyes to the needs of others.

### From the Fathers:

'In all our actions and in all our circumstances we ought to hold submission to God before our eyes. When that is rooted in the soul, not only comfort, honours and rank, but also slanders, injuries, tortures, in fact everything will produce in us fruits of joy. The roots of a tree are bitter, but the fruit is sweet. In the same afflictions, when they are in accordance with God's will, will provide us with immense joy.'

*From 'To the people of Antioch' by St John Chrysostom (349-407, bishop, theologian)*

### Collect:

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer, and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024  
Third Sunday of Lent



The account of Jesus turning over the tables in the Temple appears in all four gospels, but John places it at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. This stands in contrast to the Synoptics (Mark, Matthew and Luke) who put it near the end of his life. John's style includes the use of enigmatic and symbolic statements that were surely not understood at the moment in which the events happened. By the time the gospel was written, the temple had been destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. The destruction of the temple was a spiritual disaster for Israel and it surely affected the early Jewish Christians. Their loss was eased by John's theology of the Christ-temple. The temple stood in need of purification and its function would be replaced by the risen body of Christ. This saying about the destruction of the temple occurs in various forms in Matthew and Mark: "I can destroy the temple of God. . ." "I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands." This event is symbolic of Jesus' resurrection and the resulting community of the new Covenant. Jesus' cleansing of the Temple should prompt us to cleanse our own hearts.

*Today's Gospel: St John 2: 13-22*