



Introduction to Lenten Prayer Services

Lent kind of snuck up on me this year, probably because of my roommate's passing to her eternal reward and my life being turned upside down a bit. Perhaps things in your own life have had some twists and turns. Well Lent might just be the time to slow down a bit, take stock of ourselves and our spiritual lives. The Scriptures always tell us it is the "acceptable time" to consider this God of love in our lives individually and in our society and its needs.

As followers of Jesus we want to integrate his values into our own, live the beatitudes more fully, listen with the ear of our hearts to the words of Scripture this Lenten season. When we do this we have an immense potential for knowing God. When we learn how to deeply listen we can hear the voice of our Provident God speaking to us. This is the God who has called us as His own, who has redeemed us, and who wants to fill our life with graced possibilities for the future.

Beatrice Bruteau said in her book: *The Easter Mysteries*: "We are following Jesus as our archetype, as well as our teacher and our friend, the one who exemplifies the very transformation we are facing...we are going deeply into ourselves, dying to our former way of seeing, feeling, thinking, acting, in order to discover our secret self and be reborn into a new way of seeing, feeling, thinking, acting; and we are going deeply into Jesus, the exemplar, as he invites us deeper and deeper into himself as the Loving Way."

Once again the WPC offers six prayer services, one for each week of Lent and a brief reflection for Ash Wednesday. We will be using quotes from our various publications and writers over the years. Use them individually or with local communities, or faith sharing groups...whatever you deem best.

May our Lenten journey be one of listening with the ear of our heart, and experiencing our Provident God in grace-filled transformations.

Happy Lent!

Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC Executive Director





Ash Wednesday

Opening Song: (your selection)

Leader: Provident God we stand at the **threshold** of our Lenten journey, ready to listen deeply to Your Voice with the ear of our heart.

All: May we accept your invitation to walk with You, abide in You, and set our hearts on belonging to You. *Amen.*

Reading: Joel 2:12

“Return to me with your whole heart, with fasting and weeping, and mourning, says the Lord.”

Providence Quote: Mary Kaye Nealen, SP

“Chaos and its creative possibilities lie in hope and profound openness to God’s drawing us beyond the present to be ambassadors for Christ.”

Reflection: Jeannette Filthaut, SP

“As we begin our Lenten journey with ashes, I am reminded of how I am being called to be a public ambassador for our Christianity. Wearing the ashes is one way to begin, but then I have to reflect more seriously on how I am going to bring to life the message of God’s sacrificial love for each one of us.

What service of loving Providence am I witnessing to the immigrant with whom I come into contact? Or my colleagues at work? How am I an ambassador to the clerk in the store or the grocery line companion? Anywhere I go, I am called to be an ambassador for Christ. “Where and in what ways am I being called to live with the passion and joy of the gospel? This Lenten journey reminds each one of us to trust in our Provident God and to become “ambassadors of hope for the future, for now is the acceptable time.”

Reflection question:

◆ In what ways am I or can I be an ambassador for Christ this Lent?

Closing Prayer:

Provident God, help us to listen to Your voice with the ear of our heart and be ready to accept your invitations to be your ambassador of love and joy this Lenten season. May we welcome this time as one for inner growth and transformation. We pray in Jesus’ name. *Amen.*





Lenten Prayer Service Week One

Opening Song: (your selection)

Leader: Provident God we stand at the *threshold* of our Lenten journey, ready to listen deeply to Your Voice with the ear of our heart.

All: May we accept your invitation to walk with You, abide in You, and set our hearts on belonging to You. *Amen.*

Reading: Romans 5:17

“...for if by the transgression of the one, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.”

Providence Quote: Michele Bisbey, CDP

“The abundant nature of God invites us to be generous, to risk in giving ourselves away in self-gift, to witness to God’s abundance.”

Reflection: Lucy Bethel, SP

“Traditionally, the season of Lent offered us an invitation to ‘give up something.’ Let me suggest that our faith tradition invites us, not, calls us, to reflect God’s perspective/God’s call to ‘be generous and risk in giving ourselves away in self-gift’, ‘to witness to God’s abundance.’ Lent then, we might say, is a season that reinforces our call to continue the work God began with the Incarnation; the immersion of God’s own Self into our wounded world in and through the person of Jesus. We continue God’s work just as Jesus did, by the way we live and, I dare say, by the way we die. What a different face of Providence this would present to our wounded world...a true transformation and Transfiguration!” Such faces of love can be seen when there are mass shootings, or several people are killed in a crash. Our news programs often show us how true human beings care and protect others in times of disasters or crises. “Our Lenten call is, in the words of musician Jan Novotka, “Wake up and be what you are! Be Love, soft and true. Love conquers.

Reflection questions:

- ◆ What are some of the abundant graces God has bestowed on me?
- ◆ In what ways am I being called to risk in giving myself away?

Closing Prayer:

Provident God, You know how much we yearn to strengthen our relationship. Please continue to show us ways we can give ourselves away for your sake and for your people. Give us a compassionate heart for all those we meet along the way, that we may be the face of Providence to them. We pray in Jesus name. *Amen.*





Lenten Prayer Service Week Two

Opening Song: (your selection)

Leader: Provident God we stand at the **threshold** of our Lenten journey, ready to listen deeply to Your Voice with the ear of our heart.

All: May we accept your invitation to walk with You, abide in You, and set our hearts on belonging to You. *Amen.*

Reading: Matthew 17: 1-9

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord it is good for us to be here."

Providence Quote: Marie McCarthy, SP

"The mystery of Providence is the mystery of God's creative dynamic involvement with and in the moments of our lives and history."

Reflection: Associate Sylvia Resha

"This gospel calls us to reflect on the mountains in our lives up which Christ leads us; dealing with our confusion in recognizing his presence and, sometimes, who He is; and our call as His disciples to "Listen to Him." We sometimes feel we have been stranded on an insurmountable "mountain" of pain, confusion, and doubt and never realize we have been led up that mountain to experience our own transformation in faith. Our commitment to God's providence, His divine care and direction, is ever present in our journey through the struggles and joys of life's events and situations; it sharpens our senses and makes visible His presence. Let us believe without confusion or fear that ..."it is good for us to be here" embraced by the love we have experienced in the Cross." As Providence people we know this mystery of the cross in our lives and embrace it.

Reflection questions:

- ◆What are some moments in your life where God's creative, dynamic involvement was present?
- ◆What "mountains" in your life might seem insurmountable at present?

Closing Prayer:

Provident God, You are aware of our limitations and wrongdoings, as well as our essential goodness. Help us to see your creative involvements in our lives; to recognize them and be grateful for them. May we see the possibility of transfiguration in our own lives, with your grace. We pray in Jesus' name. *Amen.*





Lenten Prayer Service Week Three

Opening Song: (your selection)

Leader: Provident God we stand in the *middle* of our Lenten journey, still ready to listen deeply to Your Voice with the ear of our heart.

All: May we accept your invitation to walk with You, abide in You, and set our hearts on belonging to You. *Amen.*

Reading: John 4: 5-15

“If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” ...“the water I shall give will become a spring of water in

Providence Quote: Alba Letelier, SP

“Life requires emptying myself to allow Providence to guide God’s work within all the newness shown me. Community is essential; relationships fostered through respectful and contemplative dialogue as well as discernment become fundamental elements of life in “the hands of providence.”

Reflection: Associate Lori Strawn

“Some people consider Lent a “desert time.” But any journey—whether through desert or garden, woods or city streets—involves a departure. We leave behind what is not serving God. We allow ourselves to be emptied of our own selfish desires, habits and wills, and in doing so, we will find a fullness we never knew. By letting go, we are filled up, renewed. Not do we make this journey alone. Unlike the apostles in the garden, our community is not asleep! As God works in us, we work with others to find focus and purpose. Take advantage of community worship opportunities, like Mass or penance services, to remind yourself that you are not alone. As we journey in Providence, we walk together...and God walks with us.” God offers us this same living water as he offered it to the Samaritan woman. Is it welling up in us?

Reflection questions:

- ◆How have you emptied yourself to provide space for God to enter and renew your life?
- ◆How have you allowed companionship within your community groups to strengthen you on your Lenten pilgrimage?

Closing Prayer:

Provident God, like the woman at the well, we must face the truth when we encounter You and come to a deeper awareness of who You are in our lives. Help us in these conversion moments to trust in your power of love and forgiveness. Make of us true believers who give witness to others of Your life giving water. We pray in Jesus’ name. *Amen.*





Lenten Prayer Service Week Four

Opening Song: (your selection)

Leader: Provident God we stand in the *midst* of our Lenten journey, listening deeply to Your Voice with the ear of our heart.

All: May we continue to accept your invitation to walk with You, abide in You, and set our hearts on belonging to You. *Amen.*

Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

“You were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.”

Providence Quote: Mary Kaye Nealen, SP

“Providence takes our very weakness and sin, forgiving and transforming them like shards of glass fashioned into brilliant stained glass through which the light of God’s work glows.”

Reflection: Carmen Therese Lazo, MCDP

“Self-awareness is being attuned to our inner stirrings and outer realities. It is a great gift to possess and cultivate in our spiritual journey. Lent is a perfect time for us to foster this attentiveness. We can deepen our consciousness that enriches our lives as we become aware of our fragmented realities by reflecting on the perils that face us at every level of human and spiritual existence. Dichotomies in our ideologies often times hamper dialogue and threaten to destroy the very fabric of our human existence. But to place ourselves in the Spirit is to allow the work of Providence to bring forth life-giving relationships that spark hope and peace in ourselves, our Church, families, communities, and our world. As people of hope, let us be mindful that God yearns for us, constantly inviting us to a deeper relationship. Let us ponder on our human frailties as opportunities God provides to heal us. The words of St. Irenaeus, “The glory of God is the human person fully alive,” let us be ALIVE, humbly accepting God’s mercy that strengthens our hope. As shards of hope, together we will transform our world!”

Reflection questions:

- ◆ When have you experienced God’s light in others this week?
- ◆ What opportunities of healing has God gifted you with this week/this Lent?

Closing Prayer:

Provident God, be my Faithful Guide, and teach me how to see the light in myself and the light in others. Let me not forget or quickly set aside memories of when your mercy freed my own soul’s burdens. Help me to see clearly and listen deeply—always. We pray in Jesus’ name. *Amen.*





Lenten Prayer Service Week Five

Opening Song: (your selection)

Leader: Provident God we stand *almost at the end* of our Lenten journey, listening deeply to Your Voice with the ear of our heart.

All: May we continue to accept your invitation to walk with You, abide in You, and set our hearts on belonging to You. *Amen.*

Reading: Ezeckiel 37:12-14

“Thus says the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel. ... I will put my spirit in you that you may live.”

Providence Quote: Ruth McGoldrick, SP

“We are waking up to the fact that we were created for dialogue and relationship and not for control and alienation.”

Reflection: Diane Langford, CDP

“Most of us grew up in a time when we were led to believe that we had to earn our salvation. I don’t remember any lessons on “the gift of faith”—a gift that cannot be earned, no matter what we do. I don’t remember being taught that salvation was an unearned gift. I was brought up in the days when Protestants flung at us that “by faith alone are we saved” and we tossed back “faith without works is dead!” Those words divided us for five hundred years. And now our God is so immense that our little idiocies are basically of no account. Realizing that we are all saved through faith by grace, all that is left for us is to allow our egos to deconstruct and let God continue to arrange for our salvation. Once that hurdle has been cleared, it is amazing how things change. People whom I disdained or scoffed at are suddenly beacons of salvation for us all! The poor have so much to offer that I look for opportunities to simply hang around them! My enemies are not outside myself; rather, they are my own demons which demonize others who reflect my own frailties. ...So let us embrace the mercy of God every single day. When we live from the mentality that God’s generous, unending grace is saving us all along, the world blooms with the Providence of God!”

Reflection questions:

- ◆ What struggles do I need to let go of in order to fall into the merciful, embracing arms of our Provident God?
- ◆ When have I experienced times of dialogue and relationship instead of control and alienation and how have these helped me to grow?

Closing Prayer: Free us from disturbing situations that cause worry and anxiety. Help us to trust in your promised care that we may take refuge in You. Release what wants to stay unmovable in us that we may walk in your life and see beyond external appearances. Call forth new life in us! We pray in Jesus’ name. *Amen.*





Lenten Prayer Service Week Six

Opening Song: (your selection)

Leader: Provident God we stand at the *close* of our Lenten journey, still ready to listen deeply to Your Voice with the ear of our heart.

All: May we continue to accept your invitation to walk with You, abide in You, and set our hearts on belonging to You. *Amen.*

Reading: Matthew 26: 14-27:66

“On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, ‘Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?’ He said, ‘Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, The teacher says, ‘My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples.’”

Providence Quote: Myra Rodgers, CDP

“Often one is not aware that they mystery of the provident God can be found in the darkness even in the midst of strife and discord at the deepest level of the human heart.”

Reflection: Associate Suzanna Harland

“The disciples walked with Jesus into Jerusalem and throughout the coming days not understanding the events of the entire week, until after Jesus was glorified. The week was amazing and confounding. (as being in the dark often is). Jesus attempted to prepare his followers for his leaving. He shared the great supper with the disciples, which continues to nourish us with His living, life-giving presence still today. For most of us it is often in hindsight that we allow the Spirit to reveal the true meaning and impact of an event. A disappointment, a defeat, even death of family or friends may eventually lead us to paths and results beyond far better that what we had imagined. However, our personal Lenten journey and times of reflection serve no purpose unless we are able to focus on our heart’s deepest longing—unity with Christ. As Providence people our concerns are many. Joining with others we are speaking out about wars, uncontrollable violence and death, immigration, prison reform, climate crises, hateful rhetoric, and religious freedom. We are daring to live our charism in this evolving world. In everything we do, the love of Christ compels us to respond to the cry of the poor and the vulnerable. Blessings for all, as we journey together through this most sacred week.”

Reflection questions:

- ◆ As I end my Lenten journey and begin Holy Week, what graces have I received for which I am most grateful?
- ◆ What is one thing I might do to respond to the cry of the poor and vulnerable?

Closing Prayer:

Provident God, Courageous One, you entered Jerusalem even though death seemed imminent. You stepped into the impending peril (darkness) to be true to the voice of the Spirit nudging you forward. When suffering comes to us, help us rely on You as our strength and give us courage. Expand our compassion to self and others. We pray in Jesus’ name. *Amen.*

