

The cover features a central wooden cross with a white rope tied around its intersection. The background is a deep purple with a sunburst pattern radiating from the center. On the left side, there are three stylized palm fronds in a lighter shade of purple. The title is positioned in the bottom right corner within a semi-transparent grey box.

**Lenten
Reflections
2022**



Lenten Reflections 2022

Dear Associates, Sisters and Collaborators,

The Sisters of the Holy Cross share this Lenten reflection booklet for the sacred process of entering into the mystery and reality of Jesus' life, suffering and death, and joyful resurrection.

Jesus models for us a cycle of life and love worth living and dying for, as well as God's faithful, creative love which demonstrates that death is not the end of the story.

In the happenings of each of our own lives, we may find ourselves in a seemingly very different space than the Church calendar cycle. Respect and presence to that life reality gives meaning to life and the lives of those joined in support.

In whatever our circumstances, may this time bring comfort and hope. Jesus, so human, and discovered to be so divine, can hold us in compassionate love and strengthen us in hope and signs of new possibilities, and empower us as part of God's own mission of transforming love for the life of the world.

*Sister Mary Tiernan, CSC,
General Councilor*

Ash Wednesday

March 2, 2022

Joel 2:12–18; 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18

Today we are drawn into this gift of opportunity called Lent.

It starts with a ritual with ashes, a reminder that we have finite bodies that may be off-center right now. Perhaps we are feeling the human limits fasting and abstaining awaken.

We are given a chance to repent, to think differently about who we are and how the passion, death and resurrection rhythm of life is fully revealed in Jesus in his life of discovery, love, relationship, pain, hope, death and glory.

How can we think about coming from dust, ashes?

Imagine that dust as stardust, dust formed in and by our families of origin.

Imagine their life cycles of birth, meaningful experiences, death and eternal life.

Recall their welcome, love, their trust and doubts, their connectedness to the world and events around them. Think about the cultural comfort foods they might have enjoyed: morning toast, tortillas, chapati, fufu, matooke, eggs, porridge or the times they lacked food.

Migrations, draughts and wars, celebrations, discoveries and confusions over centuries.

The energy of God's creative Spirit working in them. Their core values, hopes and skills. Fears and mistakes, reconciliations, experiences of rejection, success and God's mercy and love.

Pause a few moments in silence to absorb the thoughts, insights and feelings within you.

Put on a lens of wonder, mystery, learning, of the wiser, more experienced person you are today. Look on, as one precious in God's eyes, to ancestors also embraced and accepted in God's empowering outpouring of love in all their humanness and grace.

During these weeks of Lent, imagine the life, the dust your life can be passing on in understanding of hope, of scars and of healing, of doubt and of faith. Understanding of relationships to persons, to the Earth, the stardust. God is with us in this Lenten/Life journey.

—*Sister Mary Tiernan, CSC*



First Sunday of Lent

March 6, 2022

Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

In the first reading we hear about God's faithfulness to the people from Moses. He recalls God's help for the Hebrews during their mistreatment by the Egyptians. "God heard their cries, saw their affliction, toils, and oppression. ... God provided signs and wonders and gave them a land flowing with milk and honey."

In the second reading we hear, "No one who believes in God will be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same God is God of all."

The Gospel tells us of Jesus' journey to the desert, where he needs to find in God his inner strength. He is tempted to feed himself, to seek power, and to be rich, but he is resilient and faithful to God's word and God's promises.

During our Lenten journey we are invited to examine our inner resilience and to remember the faithfulness of our loving God. We are also encouraged to help others in need—refugees,

migrants, and those who are mistreated, judged and rejected by society—and to care for our Earth.

God continues to work in and through us. May we join Jesus in trusting in God's faithfulness during this Lenten season.

Reflection questions

- How has God been faithful to you in your life journey?
- How do our corporate stands invite us to do small things to make great changes in the world and support those in need during this Lenten season?
- How are you living out one of the Laudato Si' Action Platform goals in your local community during Lent? Take time to discuss this and encourage one another to live them out daily.

—Sister Verónica A. Fajardo, CSC

Second Sunday of Lent

March 13, 2022

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 9:28-36

"And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed"

In the Gospels, Peter, John, and James, were invited by Jesus to go up to the mountain to pray. While praying, they connected with Jesus and were able to see Jesus as he was, in all his glory, as human and divine.

Today, Christ is also inviting us to go up to the mountain, to be transfigured. Transfiguration is a word that speaks to me about being transparent, and presenting ourselves as we are, without masks, vulnerable.

Sometimes, it is hard to show Jesus to others, especially to those we consider to be different. Fears, like prejudices and insecurities, are what we show most of the time to those we think are not like us.

Thoughts, words, even actions don't reflect our Christianity.

Accepting those fears, we recognize our humanity. And by dealing with them, through prayer, we connect with our divinity. Jesus cannot be put in a tent; he must be seen by all. Christ, once again, is inviting us to care for others, to show, with our whole being, hope and compassion, especially to our brothers and sisters in need. In the way we live the Gospel, we reveal the glory of God, we are fully Christians.

Reflection questions

- What are those fears that don't allow me to show Jesus to others?
- How am I called to be transfigured?

—Sister Patricia Rodríguez Leal, CSC

Third Sunday of Lent

March 20, 2022

Exodus 3:1-8a,13-15; Psalm 103:1-4, 6-8, 11; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

In the first reading, we learn that God makes himself present to Moses in his ordinary life and knows what the people of Israel are experiencing: "... I have witnessed the affliction of my people, I know well what they are suffering. Therefore, I have come down to rescue them." He comes with a message of hope for everyone. Even in the most difficult and daunting situations, God is present to rescue and liberate us.

In the Psalm we see a God rich in compassion and mercy who gives relief to the suffering and forgives our failures and weaknesses. He is true to his promise and wants the good for everyone.

In the Gospel of Luke, God again shows us his great love by asking for one more opportunity to bear good fruit. "... I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future." Each time we feel aridity in our soul, we must stir and

water the soil. May we seek the source of life, which is God, to revive our spirit and bear abundant fruit.

This Lent, let us take time to walk with Christ and be part of the redemption of so much suffering in the world. Let us open our hearts to listen deeply and accompany those who hope to see the tender and loving face of God.

Reflection questions

- **What actions can I take to alleviate someone's suffering?**
- **Knowing that God is compassionate and merciful, do I really allow myself to be loved by God?**
- **What do I need to remove in myself to make my soil more fertile and bear better fruit?**

—Sister Areli Cruz Hernández, CSC

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 27, 2022

Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32



"His father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him."

Luke's Gospel shares the familiar story of the prodigal son. I imagine we can identify with each person in the story, the father, prodigal son and elder son. Like the father, we celebrate the return of dear loved ones. Maybe we are the son/daughter who left, realized our mistake and returned home. Or, perhaps, we relate to the elder son, who is self-righteous and thinks he deserves better for all his hard work. This passage allows us to reflect on how we experience sin, forgiveness and compassion in our lives.

The father's attitude grabs my attention. I picture him more as a caring mother, like mine. When I was a teenager out at parties, my mother stayed awake until I came home. Even now, when I come home my mother welcomes me with my favorite food, a clean room and anything I need to feel comfortable. This

made me wonder, where is the prodigal son's mother? What might she have done to welcome her son? Have we questioned her presence in this passage? And, can we see God as a compassionate and forgiving mother?

Reflecting on these questions, I realized that this parable teaches us about reconciliation. But it can also prompt us to consider how women promote compassion in our Church and societies. This story is also a reminder of our need to experience the divine feminine, who lovingly accompanies us in our journeys.

Reflection questions

- **Who are the women in my life who have taught me about compassion, mercy and forgiveness?**
- **How do I experience the divine feminine in my life?**

—Sister Laura Guadalupe Tiburcio Santos, CSC

Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 3, 2022

Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:8-14; John 8:1-11

The first three readings invite us to look forward, to leave the past behind, forgive what has happened to us, and walk in the presence of the love of God who is father and mother to us. Are we ready to look ahead?

John tells us: “The scribes and Pharisees brought to [Jesus] a woman who had been caught in ‘sin’ and, putting her in the midst of all, said, ‘Master, this woman has been caught in adultery. Moses, in the law, commanded us to stone her. And you, what do you say?’”

Reflecting on this last passage, I recognize we have not changed very much since the time of Jesús. We continue to think that we do not sin. We feel empowered to judge those close to us and those we do not even know. Sometimes we feel that we know the law, so what we know or say is the absolute truth. Regarding our migrant brothers and sisters, we often reject them forgetting that they are sons and

daughters of God. Perhaps it’s because deep down the migrant reminds us of our own vulnerability.

It is time to let go of the stones and open our hands, to take the hand of God and the hands of others. It is time to stop stoning others with our beliefs and fears and to embrace their pain, which is also our pain. Let us embrace our migrant brothers and sisters who long to hear the words Jesus spoke to the woman: “I do not condemn you.”

Reflection

Merciful God, we entrust our past to your mercy, our present to your love, and our future to your providence. Jesus, we ask you for peace, prudence, strength, wisdom and humility.

—*Sister Nieves Lidia Ortiz Galván, CSC*

Palm Sunday

April 10, 2022

Luke 19, 28-40

It is easy for me to identify with the story of Jesus because, for most of his life, common things happened to him. This Palm Sunday narrative is no exception. Jesus experienced a common situation for any human being: one day people followed him and the next day no longer. This is the way we human beings are—we go from joy to anger, from acceptance to rejection, from love to hate. Today, as then, it is not easy for us to recognize God in those who think, act or do things differently from us. So, even 2,000 years later, we continue to reject God.

Like the followers described in today’s Gospel, we also fall into the temptation of following Jesus only in his triumphs. When suffering comes, we seek God. But rather than trusting God to guide us through the situation, we ask for quick solutions to avoid pain and suffering. However, as Jesus demonstrated and Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau attested, “The cross is our only hope.”

Pope Francis reminds us that Jesus’ suffering is a priceless expression of love. “He did it to touch the most intimate part of our human reality, to experience all our existence, all our evil. To draw close to us and not leave us alone in our pain. To recover us, to save us. Jesus went up to the cross to descend into our suffering.”

Trusting in this infinite love, let us discover Jesus in those who are closest to us and in those who are rejected, alone and vulnerable. May we ask for the courage to accept them and serve them, as we would God.

Reflection questions

- How do you praise God?
- How do you recognize God on a daily basis?

—*Sister Esperanza Jacobo Acevedo, CSC*

Easter Sunday

April 17, 2022

Luke 24:1-12

It takes time. Even with Jesus' closest contacts, it took time to trust the two men at the tomb; to remember what Jesus had already told them; to gain credibility among the disciples; to move from fear and doubt to discover and accept their humanity and the inner strength Jesus gave them to go out to others so they could also find life in the GOOD News.

This is a moment to express sincere gratitude to the six sisters who offered their reflections for this booklet, sharing unique expressions from their Hispanic roots and diverse life experiences. They are Holy Cross Sisters Verónica A. Fajardo, Patricia Rodríguez Leal, Areli Cruz Hernández, Esperanza Jacobo Acevedo, Laura Guadalupe Tiburcio Santos and Nieves Lidia Ortiz Galván. By examining their

humanity and resistance to those who are different, each of them acknowledges vulnerability. Doing so, accompanied by Jesus' faithful love, has opened them to experience inner strength, compassion, love and mercy as they encounter the vulnerability and suffering of at-risk children, migrants and marginalized persons.

For the world, may we model gratitude and commitment to hope—actions that support, empower and affirm others as instruments of God's presence and love. Working together in a mission larger than ourselves, new life and transformation of life will be visible and available for people of all places and ages.

—*Sister Mary Tiernan, CSC*



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