

Dear Padre,

Our deacon was preaching about Lent and mentioned that the Church calls us to *metanoia*. What did he mean?

Most of us think of Lent as a time of penance. We receive our ashes and take up some traditional practice of giving up something or doing something for Lent. But there's more to Lent than just practices of piety or acts of penance and mortification. Your deacon is correct. In Lent, the Church calls us to *metanoia*, a Greek word meaning "a change of mind and heart."



We begin a new way of thinking and acting. We take a long, hard look at our lifestyle and compare it to the values Jesus offers. Then we change our lives to match the values of the Lord. This, of course, is difficult to do alone. The Church asks us to pray during Lent that the Lord's power will enter our lives and give us the wisdom to see a new direction and the courage to move in that direction. The Church suggests we strengthen our resolve through acts of personal mortification and sacrifice for others. This will tighten the belt of our discipline and

train us for the more sweeping changes that we must make.

The Scripture readings for the first three weeks of Lent center on *metanoia*. The readings direct us to understand what is involved with "changing our hearts" and seeking a new life direction. Listen to them well and they will lead you to *metanoia*.

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A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*



I urge the members of the Church to take up the Lenten journey with enthusiasm, sustained by almsgiving, fasting, and prayer. If, at times, the flame of charity seems to die in our own hearts, know that this is never the case in the heart of God! He constantly gives us a chance to begin loving anew.

LENTEN MESSAGE FOR 2018, NOVEMBER 1, 2017

Calendar

Monday
MARCH 8
Lenten Weekday
2 Kgs 5:1—15ab
Lk 4:24—30

Tuesday
MARCH 9
Lenten Weekday
Dn 3:25, 34—43
Mt 18:21—35

Wednesday
MARCH 10
Lenten Weekday
Dt 4:1, 5—9
Mt 5:17—19

Thursday
MARCH 11
Lenten Weekday
Jer 7:23—28
Lk 11:14—23

Friday
MARCH 12
Lenten Weekday
Hos 14:2—10
Mk 12:28—34

Saturday
MARCH 13
Lenten Weekday
Hos 6:1—6
Lk 18:9—14

Sunday
MARCH 14
Fourth Sunday of Lent
2 Chr 36:14—16,
19—23
Eph 2:4—10
Jn 3:14—21

Our Parish COMMUNITY

March 7, 2021

Third Sunday of Lent (B)
Ex 20:1—17 or 20:1—3, 7—8, 12—17
1 Cor 1:22—25
Jn 2:13—25



*While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of
Passover, many began to believe in his name
when they saw the signs he was doing.*

JOHN 2:23

The Long Arm of the Law

Eventually you're going to get caught. That's what this expression means. And that is pretty much how most people understand law—as something that hems them in and, if disregarded, will get them in the end. But that is not how Israel understood its law. The psalm verses for today insist that the law refreshes the soul, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eye, is more precious than gold, and is sweeter than syrup or honey from the comb. The people cherished the law because it outlined for them how they were to live as God's Chosen People.

People who want to run a marathon, learn to fly a plane, or join a club are eager to take on the directives that will enable them to accomplish their goal. That is how Israel viewed the law outlined in today's first reading. It's as if God said: "If you want to be my people, this is the way you should live."

Whenever the law of Israel seems to be criticized (as is often the case in St. Paul's writings), it is not really the law itself but the inappropriate attitude toward it that is censured. As important and precious as the law might be, it is only a means to an end. It is not the end itself, any more than the directives for flying a plane are what are uppermost. From the Bible's point of view, the long arm of the law is meant to direct and support us, not intimidate us.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

For Reflection

- ✦ *The laws in today's first reading deal with basic living. Which ones seem to be the hardest to live by? Why?*
- ✦ *Which laws give you the most support as you try to live with integrity?*