

## **REFLECTION FOR THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT**

*“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”*  
(Matthew 6: 5-7)



Of the three traditional practices of the Lenten season, fasting, almsgiving, and prayer, fasting and works of charity could be seen as two-sides of the same coin. We give up something for Lent in order that we might have either financial resources or time to dedicate to those who lack basic material needs. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan was willing to put aside his plans and take from his own personal funds to assist a stranger who had been beaten badly, actions that the priest and Levite were not willing to entertain. In the early church, while many Christians left the busyness of the city to become monks and nuns in the desert to practice prayer and abstinence, they would still return periodically to the city to perform acts of charity for the poor. Some families, for example, have decided to eat a simple, meatless meal on Friday evenings and donate to charity the money that they would normally spend on Fridays for take-out food or from eating out. During Lent, we are encouraged to perform acts of charity. But being a good neighbour to someone in need requires sacrifice of both time and money. So let us reflect in this season of Lent what we might give up in order to be of assistance to others. In imitation of the Good Samaritan, let us make a difference in the world and take to heart the words of Jesus to “go and do likewise.”

## **THE POWER OF ONE**

One song can spark a moment  
 One flower can wake the dream  
     One tree can start a forest  
     One bird can herald spring  
 One smile begins a friendship  
     One handclasp lifts a soul  
 One star can guide a ship at sea  
 One word can frame the goal  
 One vote can change a nation  
     One sunbeam lights a room  
 One candle wipes out darkness  
 One laugh will conquer gloom  
 One step must start each journey  
     One word must start a prayer  
 One hope will raise our spirits  
     One touch can show you care  
 One voice can speak with wisdom  
 One heart can know what is true  
 One Life can make a difference

---

## **LENTEN PRACTICES**

Healthy penance flows from our relationships, responsibilities and religious convictions. Some examples of this type of penance are the following: to drive more compassionately, to be more patient with coworkers, to be kinder to store clerks, to visit an elderly relative or friend, to be honest in all our dealings, to slow down, to extend forgiveness, to do a favor for a neighbor, to volunteer at the parish, to count blessings.



### **The Beatitudes (Elaborated)**

Blessed are those who are convinced of their basic dependence on God, whose lives are emptied of all that doesn't really matter.

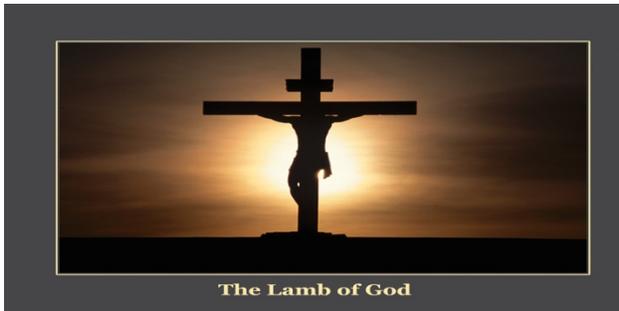
Blessed are those who wear compassion like a garment, those who have learned to love others as they love themselves.

Blessed are those who have learned that all they are is gift from God, who are content with their greatness and their smallness.

Blessed are those who remember how much they have been forgiven, who are able to extend this forgiveness to others.

Blessed are those who build roads that join instead of walls that divide.

Blessed are those whose love has been tried and found to be precious, genuine and lasting. For then, they are salt and light for our world.



### **THE CROSS REFLECTION**

The cross is the hope of Christians  
the cross is the resurrection of the dead

The cross is the way of the lost  
the cross is the saviour of the lost

The cross is the staff of the lame  
the cross is the guide of the blind

The cross is the strength of the weak  
the cross is the doctor of the sick

The cross is the aim of ministers  
the cross is the hope of the hopeless

The cross is the freedom of the slaves  
the cross is the power of the kings

The cross is the water of the seeds  
the cross is the consolation of the poor

The cross is the source of those who seek water:  
the cross is the cloth of the naked.

We thank you, Father, for the cross.

---

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Loving God, you created us to experience communion with you, to love all humanity and to live in harmony with all of your creation. But the busy pace of our daily lives can separate us from you, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life you intended for us. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. Repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of charity – the discipline of Lent – bring us closer to you and help us to focus more on the needs of others.

Lord, we thank you that you have taught us what you would have us believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to keep your Word in pure hearts, that we may be strengthened in faith, perfected in holiness, and comforted in life. Amen.

Prepared By Deacon Dominic Pullano,  
St. David's Parish, Maple, ON.