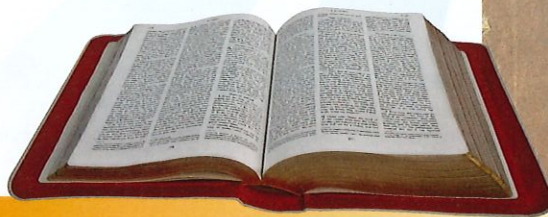


Lent

We begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, the day on which we receive ashes on our foreheads. These ashes, made by burning palms blessed on Palm Sunday of the previous year, are a sign of penance. They remind us to turn our hearts back to God.



Live as
Jesus
taught us.



Prayer

Jesus, give us the strength to follow your example during this season of Lent.

Forty Days in the Desert

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit led him into the desert to fast and pray for 40 days. Living there was difficult, but doing so prepared Jesus for the events to come, including his public ministry, Death, and Resurrection.

Prayer and Fasting

During Lent we follow Jesus by praying and fasting. Each day we set aside time when we can pray or read from the Bible. Fasting means limiting our food and drink. One way to fast might be to eat only foods that are essential for our health and to stay away from treats. We can also fast in another sense by giving up something we enjoy, such as a favorite game.

As Lent progresses we may be tempted to turn away from the commitments we have made. We can persevere by practicing the virtues, reading Scripture, and praying to the Holy Spirit for help.



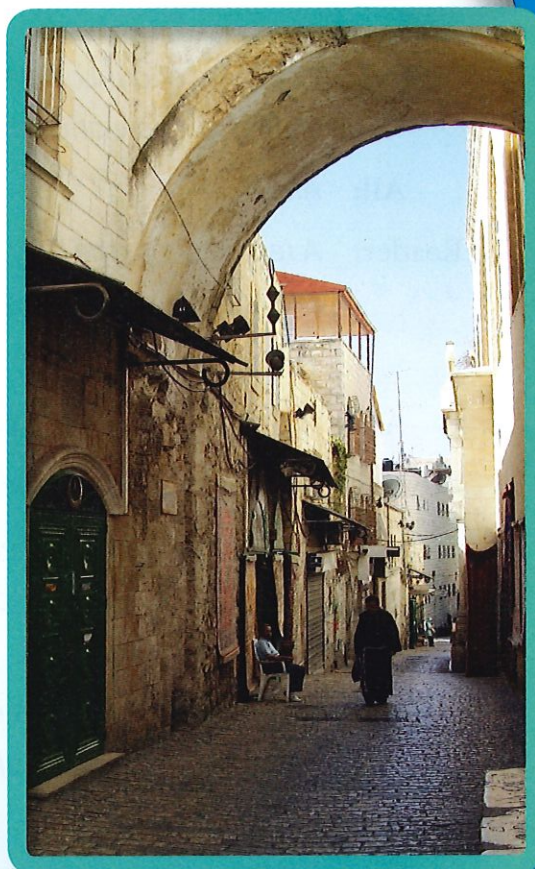
Stations of the Cross

After Jesus died, pilgrims made shrines at special places along the path Jesus walked, from where he was condemned to where his body was placed in a tomb. We call this path the *Via Dolorosa*, which means the “Sorrowful Way” or the “Way of the Cross.” The 14 Stations of the Cross we pray today tell the story of Jesus’ Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

We pray the Stations of the Cross as a way to walk in Jesus’ footsteps. Sometimes we may not be able to pray the Stations of the Cross at church. By praying with a Stations of the Cross prayer book, we can walk in the footsteps of Jesus wherever we are.

Walk with Jesus

Imagine a familiar path. It could be the way to school or to a friend’s house. Think of special places along the way where you might like to stop and pray the Stations of the Cross. The prayers you pray can be your own words. It is not important that you stop at exactly 14 special places. It is more important that you remember Jesus’ Passion and pray to him along the way. On a separate sheet of paper, draw the path and then label the stops you can make as you walk. Write a short prayer you might pray at one of the stops.



Arch at *Ecce Homo* Church, Via Dolorosa, Jerusalem.



Prayer Service

Leader: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all, now and forever.*

All: *Amen.*

Reader: *A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. [Mark 1:12-13]
The Gospel of the Lord.*

All: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

Leader: *Let us offer prayers of petition.
For the discipline to take extra time to pray during this time of penance, we pray to the Lord. R̄.*

Leader: *For the strength to keep our promises to fast during this time of penance, we pray to the Lord. R̄.*

Leader: *For the willingness to give alms and to make an effort to be kind to others during this time of penance, we pray to the Lord. R̄.*

Leader: *Father, thank you for being with us during our time of Lent. Hear these prayers and the prayers of our hearts. We pray through Jesus, your Son, and with the Holy Spirit.*

All: *Amen.*

