

Lent with Pope Francis

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT ✦ WITH REFLECTIONS BY PAUL CANAVESE

SUNDAY
MARCH
22

The Gospel of the man born blind tells the story of one person who takes a road from blindness to light, and others who take a road to greater blindness. The Pharisees were so convinced that they already had the light in their possession, and did everything possible to close their hearts and deny the light of Christ. (3/30/14)

Is your heart fully open to Christ's light? Where might Christ be showing up in your life, perhaps unexpectedly?

MONDAY
MARCH
23

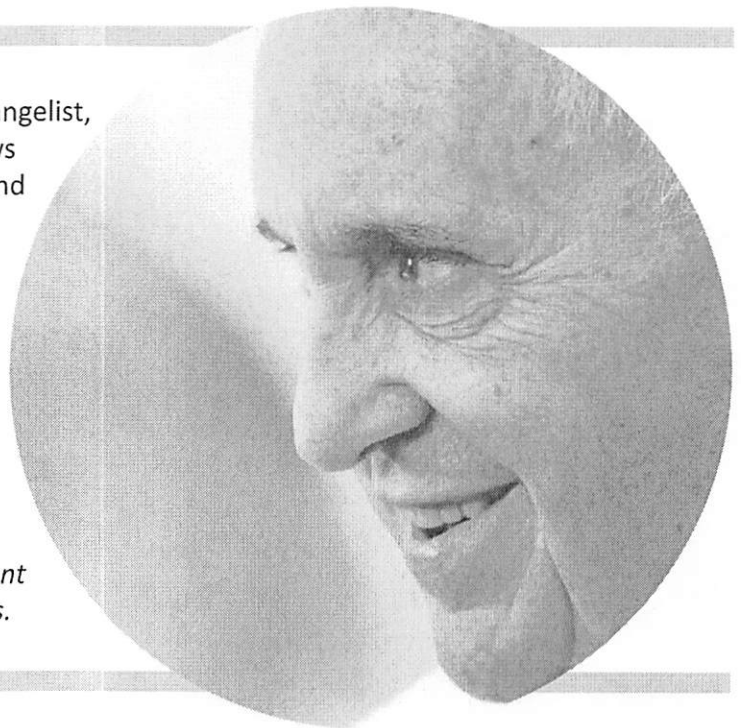
In reflecting on the sinfulness and corruption that overtook King David, Pope Francis stressed that when we are most secure, powerful, comfortable, and/or successful, we can be the most vulnerable to falling away from God and ultimately to "corruption." It is in these times that we need to remain humble and remember our dependence on God. (1/29/16)

Do you need God in your life, or do you think you can go it alone? How might you take a step toward humility and recognizing your dependence on God?

TUESDAY
MARCH
24

Pope Francis is the ultimate evangelist, wanting to share the Good News with everyone he encounters and "stir up enthusiasm" for all Christians to do the same with "fervor, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love, and attraction!" This excitement comes from the Holy Spirit when it burns in our hearts. (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 261)

Challenge yourself to be a little (or a lot) less tentative or hesitant in sharing your faith with others.



**WEDNESDAY
MARCH
25**

The Gospel is not just about our individual relationship with God or a bunch of small actions of service we perform over time. It is really about the kingdom of God: transforming the society we live in to be as God intends. It is about “every aspect of human life” and all of us should participate. (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 180)

How are you called by God to truly influence the society you live in and the larger world?

**THURSDAY
MARCH
26**

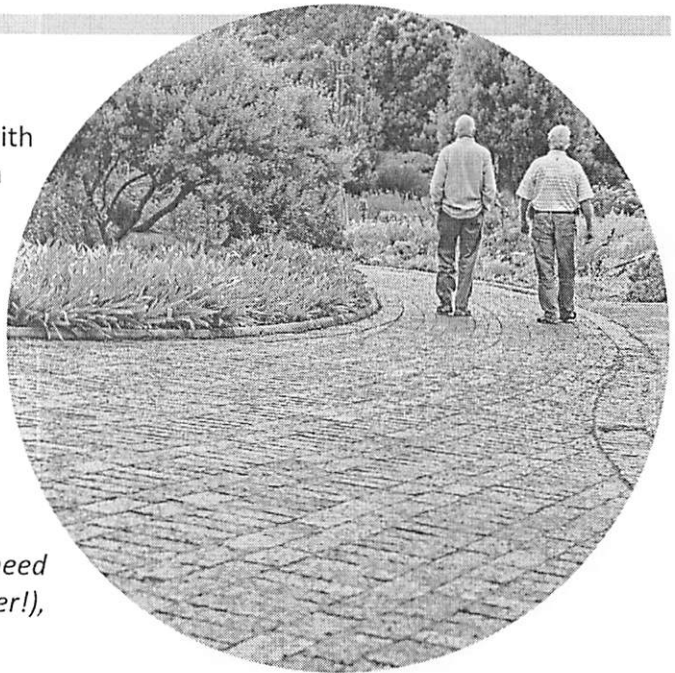
Jesus challenges us to always look below the surface, especially when looking at people. We should focus on a person’s heart, as God does. God’s mercy is offered to everyone, and the Church—God’s house—is a place where everyone is welcome, doors wide open. Our sins will never push God away, but only make him seek us out more urgently. Don’t forget: “God forgives all, and God forgives always.” (3/13/15)

How can you open your own doors wider to those who are in need of mercy in your life?

**FRIDAY
MARCH
27**

The dynamics of interpersonal conversations have been changing with the rise of electronic communication and social media. Technology now allows us to terminate relationships “on a whim” and distance ourselves from the messy emotions and reality of “real relationships.” As Christians, we should be concerned about how we connect with others in deep and meaningful ways. (*On Care for Our Common Home*, 47)

Is there a relationship in your life in need of a phone call, written note (on paper!), or in-person conversation?



**SATURDAY
MARCH
28**

The tradition of Sabbath—obeying God’s command to regularly rest, practice gratitude, and reconcile our relationships with God and others—is now a very counter-cultural action. In our achievement-based culture, we can feel irresponsible taking a break (Americans wasted 658 million paid vacation days in 2015). But, Pope Francis teaches, “Rest opens our eyes to a larger picture and gives us renewed sensitivity to the rights of others.” (*On Care for Our Common Home*, 237)

On this weekend as we enter Holy Week, take a full Sabbath break. How can you ensure that you build more Sabbath into your life?