

Official Prayer of the Congress

God our Father,
We bless you and give you thanks
For your Son Jesus, the gift of your love
For the life of the world.

Watch over your Church as it celebrates in joy and hope
The 49th International Eucharistic Congress.

Renew our faith in the Holy Eucharist,
The memorial of your Son's death and resurrection.

May your Holy Spirit shed its light upon us
And grant us strength
To serve as faithful witnesses to the Gospel.

Nourish us with your Word and your Bread of Life
So that united with Mary,
The Mother of your Divine Son and Mother of the Church,
We will bear much fruit
For the salvation of the world.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



The Catholic Women's League of Canada



SPRITUAL PROGRAM

As we begin our Lenten Journey



As We Begin Our Lenten Journey

Based on Lent Programs found at www.creighton.edu
Creighton University, A Jesuit Catholic University

Lent offers us a very special opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and to deepen our commitment to a way of life, rooted in our baptism. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, to experience sorrow for what we've done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need.

We began our Lenten journey by placing ashes on our foreheads and reflected on the meaning of death and life. Today, we pray to be blessed with divine grace as Jesus invite us to experience a "change of heart."

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord,
may everything we do
begin with your inspiration,
continue with your help,
and reach perfection under your guidance.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, you Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

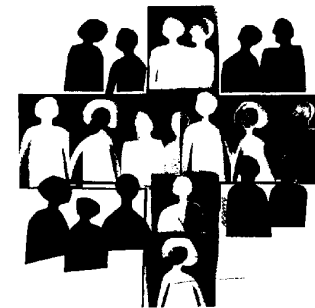


REFLECTION:

This prayer starts by acknowledging that everything begins with God's inspiration. We are reminded of the breath of life that God breathed at the beginning of creation and the driving wind of the Holy Spirit's at Pentecost. The grace for all we will do on our Lenten journey comes from God. We pray to be open to it. We accept that we need God's continuing help. Each day, with every prayer, every sacrifice,

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord,
Let everything I do this day and in this season of Lent
come from you, be inspired by you.
I long to be closer to you.
Help me to remember that nothing is important in my life
unless it glorifies you in some way.
It's so easy to get caught up in the day to day of my life and
keep saying, "Tomorrow, I will spend more time in prayer,"
but now my longing meets your love and I want to do it now.
Help me to rely on you for help.
The prayer asks you that I reach perfection.
Please, Lord, remind me that "perfection" isn't the crazy,
"successful" way I try to live my life, but a perfection of my
most authentic, real self.
My "perfection" might be holding my many flaws in my open
hands, asking you to help me accept them.
Heal me, Lord, and help me to find you in the darkness of my
life.
Let me reach out in this darkness and feel your hand and love
there to guide me. AMEN



part of his statement is important for us: "and follow me."

In the "Way of the Cross" we notice that Jesus accepts the cross, falls three times but also, in the midst of his agony and misery, reaches out to others. He meets his mother, then accepts the solace of Veronica by gracing her with his image on her cloth, and then comfort the woman of Jerusalem.



We need also in the midst of our difficulties to follow Jesus as we take up our cross by continuing to care for and help others and to be willing to accept the gift of help from others - Jesus accepted the help from Simon of Cyrene.

This short gospel today is filled with meaning for us as we all have crosses to bear. At the beginning of Lent let us attend to how we treat others, think about them and judge them. Getting along with others often is one of our chronic crosses. We all have crosses and how well we bear them is based on how we try to follow Jesus.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSIONS:

God has revealed himself in Christ. Let us praise his goodness, and ask him from our hearts:

R: *Remember us, Lord, for we are your children.*

Teach us to enter more deeply into the mystery of the Church,
- that it may be more effective for ourselves and for the world as the sacrament of salvation. **R**

Lover of mankind, inspire us to work for human progress,
- seeking to spread your kingdom in all we do. **R**

May our hearts thirst for Christ,
- the fountain of living water. **R**

Forgive us our sins,
- and direct our steps into the ways of justice and sincerity. **R**
Personal intentions. **R**

every act of generosity, we need God's help. And, we need God's guidance to persevere to the end. There will be tough choices, not only between good and evil, but choices about what is the greater good. We may even be called to do something heroic and self-sacrificing. It is a wonderful prayer that we can easily remember and recite often.

Listen now to the readings. They encourage us to trust in the Lord and his message even though we don't always understand the difficulty of this. The gospel asks us to pray, to fast and to be generous and to do this without the usual positive feedback that we always seem to need.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Moses said to the people:

"Today I have set before you
life and prosperity, death and doom.

If you obey the commandments of the
LORD, your God,

which I enjoin on you today,

loving him, and walking in his ways,

and keeping his commandments, statutes and decrees,

you will live and grow numerous,

and the LORD, your God,

will bless you in the land you are entering to occupy.

If, however, you turn away your hearts and will not listen,

but are led astray and adore and serve other gods,

I tell you now that you will certainly perish;

you will not have a long life

on the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and occupy.

I call heaven and earth today to witness against you:

I have set before you life and death,



the blessing and the curse.
Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land that the LORD swore he would give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

The word of the Lord

PSALM 1:1-2, 3, 4, 6

R. Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Blessed the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked Nor walks in the way of sinners, nor sits in the company of the insolent, But delights in the law of the LORD and meditates on his law day and night.



R. Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

He is like a tree planted near running water, That yields its fruit in due season, and whose leaves never fade. Whatever he does, prospers.

R. Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Not so the wicked, not so; they are like chaff which the wind drives away. For the LORD watches over the way of the just, but the way of the wicked vanishes.

R. Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 9:22-25

Jesus said to his disciples:

"The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised."

Then he said to all,

"If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?"

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION:

"Take up your cross daily and follow me." This is an analogy describing the difficult things in our lives as "crosses" which we must bear. Whether we are young or old there are times when we suffer setbacks: illnesses or some other negative we would wish had not happened. Then one is apt to hear, "Well, be strong and carry your cross."

The analogy, of course, is with the passion of Jesus as described in the gospels. He is unjustly accused and condemned to death - a death on a cross which, according to Roman customs, he had to carry.

Our Lenten devotion "The Way of the Cross" often celebrated in parishes on Fridays in Lent is instructive here. Yes, Jesus took up his cross, but the second

