

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

The early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.

During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent:  
by self-examination and repentance;  
by prayer, fasting, and self-denial;  
and by reading and meditating on  
God's Holy Word.

Draw near to Christ through this 40-day Lenten reading plan through the Gospels of Mark and John, focusing on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Lent is 40 days (not counting Sundays). Use Sundays to catch up on reading or for personal reflection and meditation.

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| 1. John 1:1-18 (Ash Wednesday) | 21. John 10           |
| 2. John 1:19-51                | 22. John 11           |
| 3. Mark 1                      | Sunday, March 14      |
| 4. Mark 2                      | 23. Mark 10           |
| Sunday, February 21            | 24. Mark 11           |
| 5. Mark 3                      | 25. John 12           |
| 6. John 2                      | 26. Mark 12           |
| 7. John 3                      | 27. Mark 13           |
| 8. John 4                      | 28. Mark 14:1-42      |
| 9. John 5                      | Sunday, March 21      |
| 10. Mark 4                     | 29. John 13           |
| Sunday, February 28            | 30. John 14           |
| 11. Mark 5                     | 31. John 15           |
| 12. Mark 6                     | 32. John 16           |
| 13. Mark 7                     | 33. John 17           |
| 14. John 6:1-40                | 34. Mark 14:43-72     |
| 15. John 6:41-71               | Palm Sunday, March 28 |
| 16. Mark 8                     | 35. John 18           |
| Sunday, March 7                | 36. Mark 15           |
| 17. Mark 9                     | 37. John 19           |
| 18. John 7                     | 38. Mark 16           |
| 19. John 8                     | 39. John 20           |
| 20. John 9                     | 40. John 21           |