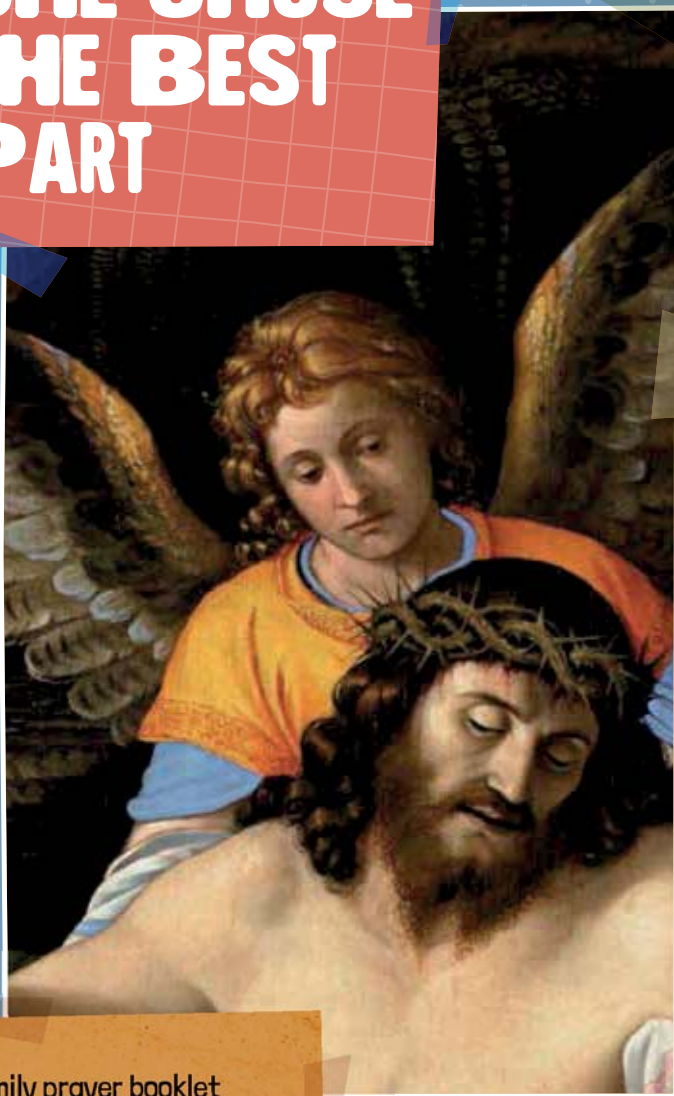


SHE CHOSE THE BEST PART



Family prayer booklet
Lent – Easter 2023



Dear families,

We find ourselves again in prayer to live together, young and elderly, the journey towards Easter, and I am deeply grateful for this possibility. It is nice to think of ourselves as united, albeit distant, through this booklet and the instruments that accompany it. It is an important occasion to feel like a family, to savor the beauty of a Church that becomes home and where we can regenerate in body and spirit, in view of that journey, as fascinating as it is tiring, called “life”.

In this season of Lent that begins, we are invited to train ourselves in discernment and choice. The example will come to us from Mary, Martha’s sister, who in the Gospel of Bethany, tells us that, by placing herself at Jesus’ feet, she chose the best part by listening to his Word and enjoying his company.

The invitation, for me and for each one of you, is that we can truly reach Easter, capable of recognizing the Risen One who dwells in our life, our home and this troubled history, thanks to a daily training that, step by step, week by week, has made us docile to the Spirit and able to choose according to God’s logic, that of love to the end.

Have a good journey,
+ Vescovo Francesco

The title of the Lenten journey “Has chosen the best part” is in continuity with what was chosen to accompany the season of Advent. Let us take inspiration once again from the passage from Luke’s Gospel, that is an icon in this pastoral year (Luke 10:38-42) and let us continue the story, turning our gaze to Mary, Martha’s sister, who sits at Jesus’ feet and listens to His Word. And this makes Jesus himself say that, precisely, she chose the best part.

This is the style with which we wish to set out towards Easter, training ourselves in discernment and choice, as our Bishop wrote to us in the introduction. And the invitation is that, it should be a journey to be lived in and as a family, willing – from stage to stage – to let oneself be met and provoked by some characters we will meet in the festive Gospels, from Ash Wednesday to the Solemnity of Pentecost.

The supports, through which we will be guided and accompanied in prayer, are composed of:

- A **FOLDER** called to gather and keep track of the journey,
- A **BOOKLET** that preserves the texts and provocations to pray all together, as a family or as adults,
- A **MAP** to accompany the Lenten journey of the youngest of the family, always intertwined with that of parents and older siblings.



The weekly rhythm of the prayer in the booklet will be marked by seven provocations, from which prayer and sharing will arise, one for each different day of the week, starting from the feast day:

- **the passage of the festive Gospel** to help us to listen to the *words and life of Jesus*, training ourselves in the following, the feast day,
- **the passage from the First Festive Reading** to continue frequenting *the Word*, on Monday;
- **the existential and spiritual commentary on the first reading** to listen to *the voices of brothers* in the faith on Tuesday,
- **the testimony** to help us echo *good family stories* on Wednesdays,
- **the blessing of the table** to train us in gratitude and foster care on Thursday,
- **the testimonies of the Bergamo missionaries** to let ourselves be provoked by *other experiences and styles* on Fridays;
- **The artistic commentary on the work** to pray in the company of the character of the week, on Saturday.



Among the pages of the booklet, we will then find a special reminder, not to forget the journey of the little ones who, following their map, can arrive at Easter between prayers to recite, commitments to live, origami to compose, trading cards to attach, and much more.

Missionary solidarity project for Lent 2023

CHOOSING THE MAN

A few years after the beginning of missionary cooperation in Bolivia, Bishop Gaddi wanted the Church of Bergamo, in all its components, to choose the season of Lent as a time of attention and solidarity towards the diocesan missions, which in a few years, would become three: Bolivia, Ivory Coast and Cuba.

The bishop's desire was that the entire diocese feel part of this missionary cooperation that has always chosen to be on man's side to promote his dignity. Thus, began for Bergamo, the experience of "missionary Lent".



We then began to be on the side...

... of the Bolivian who struggles to administer the few coins he has in his bag and spends them on alcohol to forget his misfortunes; who is forced to abandon his family to look for a more dignified job and often gets lost in the search for an easier, but not honest, gain; who is forced to abandon his hut to seek his fortune in the suburbs of the big cities, thus finding himself implementing the sad phenomenon of a disorderly and anonymous urbanization....

To these problems, for example, Don Riccardo Giavarini tries to give an answer by weaving social networks that involve families, the elderly, young people and kids, Don Fabio supports children through a widespread comedor and Don Alessandro helps young people and adults who ended up in alcohol, to rebuild their lives.





... on the side of the Ivorian who consigns his future to a land, plundered by multinationals, thirsty for easy riches; who still relies too much on the fatalities of life; who is a victim of the harmful consequences of diseases that with a few euros could find an adequate cure ...

these are some of the attentions that Don Marco and Don Luca had in mind when they visited the communities and are particularly close to the families who have sick people within them. So also, was Walter, who was particularly attentive to children and young people with disabilities.



... on the side of the Cuban who has no room for freedom in choices, thoughts and dreams; who cannot decide his future; who because of political choices, does not have enough food to feed himself and his family in a dignified way...

this is the greatest attention that Don Massimo tries to put in promoting collaboration with Caritas of Guantanamo Baracoa. In this alienating situation there is also Don Sergio, who has just arrived in Cuba, trying to understand how to be a bearer of humanity, in a land that is still struggling to find its way.



The proceeds of the Lenten harvest, to be delivered at the end of the same in the parish, will be destined to promote the dignity of Bolivians, Ivorians and Cubans, entrusted to the care of our missionaries.

Activating the creativity of the little ones of the house, we suggest building a container where you can collect day by day, the offers addressed to the missions.

ASH
WEDNESDAY



Giampietro Silvio
(circa 1495 - Venezia, 1551)
Cristo morto sostenuto da tre angeli
1530 - 1550 circa, Olio su tela, 268 x 155 cm
Sedrina, chiesa di San Giacomo

CHOOSE... SILENCE

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to Matthew (6, 5-6)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: 'When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites who, in synagogues and in the corners of squares, love to pray standing upright, to be seen by the people. Truly, I say to you, they have already received their reward. Instead, when you pray, enter your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.'

Let us pray together, saying:

Father, who sees in secret, forgive us.

For as often as we keep your gifts,
without sharing them fraternally with those in need. *Rit.*

For all the times we turn to you in prayer for help,
without making ourselves available as a help for others. *Rit.*

For all the times we do not know how to deprive ourselves
of the things that fill our appetites
and prevent us from meeting you. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be
and the sign of the cross.

Sign of the cross

Dear children,

during this Lent, we will make with you a journey that will lead us, week by week, to CHOOSE.

We will choose some attitudes with the help of the characters we will meet in the Sunday Gospels, and who will help us to pray, but not only! There will be other things to discover and do, as in any trip. And in order not to lose the road, we will have a MAP that will mark our path.

It will not be necessary to follow the route on set days, but within each week everyone can organize themselves as best they can, even with the help of parents. Of course, it would be nice not to do everything at the same time but to remember to walk one stage at a time, or maybe even on two days of the week not attached, so that our journey leads us constantly to Easter in which we will meet the risen Jesus.

In short, there are many things to do that await us ... So let's get going!

Happy Lent and good prayer!

*Standing around the table, We take each other by the hand
and one prays for all with the following words.*

Thank you, Lord, for the food you give us.

At the beginning of this Lent,
committing ourselves to prayer,

Help us to understand what is the food that gives strength to our body to be able to love you by serving our brothers, and what is the food to avoid because it prevents us from seeing you as the way, truth and life for our happiness.

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving
may they help us to live fully the journey towards Easter.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

If there are children, Parents make a sign of the cross on their foreheads.

We conclude with the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the cross.

Sign of the cross

We read the voice and testimony of Fr Efrem Lazzaroni, a fidei donum priest in Cuba.

Yesterday, I called a mechanic to fix the parish jeep that now, after several years of "mission" here in the mountains of Baracoa, breaks often. In the afternoon, I took him home and, as we were leaving the gate, he told me: «Of course you are really bad, not even the radio works on this car!». I answered:

«Yes, it still works a little...». And he was amazed: «So why don't you turn it on?!».

It is only the last episode that made me reflect on how, among the many forms of poverty that are lived in Cuba, there is also that of silence. Between the constant media

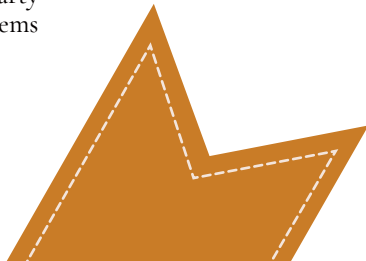
bombardment of ideology, the noises of obsolete contraptions, the desire to party in order to forget the problems

and the social predisposition to "fix the world" to the sound of chatter ... Silence is not widely practiced, not even in churches.

Or maybe it is today's world, which lives in the constant and now essential flow of many "connections", considering silence as something "outdated". But, precisely in this context, I ask myself: «Can't silence still give added value to my life?».

Provoked by what we have heard and by the final question that has been given to us, we commit ourselves to making silence an ally in our daily life and our prayer.

Let us conclude, taking each other by the hand, praying with the words of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.



Sign of the cross

At the beginning of this Lenten Season, let us allow ourselves to be provoked by this scene that already seems to bring us to the end of the journey. These forty days want to be a workout because we can get to choose the best part, not necessarily the easiest.

The lifeless body of Jesus, which bears the signs of his Passion, is the heart of the painting. Supported, cared for and offered to contemplation by three colorful angels, whose robes exalt even more, the whiteness of the shroud and complexion of Jesus. Let us focus our gaze on the face of the central angel: it reveals an intense emotion and sincere participation in the drama that has just taken place on the Cross. Unlike the two angels on the sides who cannot hold back their crying, the one in the center is absorbed, as if living a deep and inexpressible compassion. The Lent that we are preparing to live can be a time to strengthen an intimate bond with Jesus, who is nourished in silence, and by listening to his Word.



Let us pray together, saying: **Lord, teach us to pray.**

For all the times that praying to you is the desire to be freed from all problems, forgetting to meet you. *Rit.*

For all the times we fail to love and let ourselves be loved. *Rit.*

For all the times we are afraid to discover the truth about ourselves in dialogue with you. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Sunday, February 26

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to Matthew (Cfr. 4, 1-11)

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil. The tempter said to him, «If you are the Son of God, say that these stones may become bread.» But he answered, «It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.» Then the devil took him to the highest point of the temple and said to him, «If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down.» Jesus answered him, «It is also written, Thou shalt not test the Lord your God.» Again the devil took him up a very high mountain and said to him, «All these things I will give you if, throwing yourself at my feet, you worship me.» Then Jesus answered him, «Go away, Satan! For it is written: The Lord, your God, you shall worship: to him alone shall you worship.» Then the devil left him.

Let us pray together, saying:

Forgive us, Lord, we have sinned.

For all the times we have chosen the one we like instead of what is good for us. *Rit.*

For all the times we have chosen the one that makes us look great instead of what makes us be true. *Rit.*

For all the times we have chosen to dominate others instead of serving them with love as you do with us. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

CHOOSE...
THE GOOD

FIRST
WEEK

Marco d'Oggiono
(Oggiono, 1470 circa - Milano, 1524 circa)

Volto del Redentore

Olio su tavola, 42 x 30 cm
Bergamo, Museo Adriano Bernareggi

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the first reading proclaimed yesterday at Holy Mass.

From the book of Genesis (3, 1-7)

The serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals God had made, and he said to the woman, «Is it true that God said, “You must not eat of any tree in the garden.”» The woman answered the serpent: «Of the fruits of the trees of the garden we can eat, but of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden God has said: “You must not eat of it and you must not touch it, otherwise you will die”». But the serpent said to the woman, «You will not die at all! Indeed, God knows that the day you eat of it, your eyes would be opened and you would be like God, knowing good and evil.» Then the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, pleasing to the eye, and desirable for acquiring wisdom; She took of the fruit and ate of it, then she also gave it to her husband, who was with her, and he also ate of it. Then they both opened their eyes and knew they were naked; They braided fig leaves and made belts out of them.

Let us leave a few moments of silence so that we can think back on the Word heard and share aloud the word that struck us most.

Let us pray together, saying:

You are our good, Lord.

When we are in trouble and we are tempted to think that you do not love us. *Rit.*

When we are well and we are tempted to do without you. *Rit.*

When we are called to choose and are tempted not to rely on you and others. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Sign of the cross

Today we allow ourselves to be accompanied by the words of commentary written by Don Luca Della Giovanna, priest of our Diocese, to the passage of the book of Genesis heard yesterday.

The story of the creation of the first man and woman places us inside the Garden of Eden, the image of the Promised Land. After shaping their bodies, God offers a splendid place to dwell: it is the world with all its beauty, colors, seasons, trees with lush fruits. The gift of freedom, however, is limited by an absolute prohibition: they may eat of all trees except the one in the middle of the garden, described as «pleasing to the eye and desirable for acquiring wisdom.» For their own good, God asks both not to choose it, even if they do not understand the meaning of this prohibition. They realize later - deceived by the snake - because «seeing themselves naked» they feel exposed to embarrassment, shame, malice. The story recalls the commitment to resist certain «no's of life», necessary to safeguard a greater good.

Let's leave a few moments of silence and let ourselves be provoked by the following question, first personally, and then sharing what emerged within us:

**How do I deal with certain «no's in life»?
Do I know how to contain myself to the
enticements of evil in the name of a greater
good, even when this requires much effort?**

Let us conclude by taking each other by the hand, reciting together the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.

Wednesday, March 1

Sign of the cross

Let's read together the testimony of Nuwan and Madu, a Sri Lankan family that has managed to choose the good, thanks to the good in turn received.

Our family is from Sri Lanka, it consists of five people: me, the father, my wife and our three children. After much wandering we moved to Bergamo, where I found a job and a rented house. I can only work because my wife, despite her past as a cook and handyman, has to look after the children who are still young. Thanking the Lord, we finally found a welcoming environment and friendly faces, willing to help us both with food and in the handling of complicated paperwork. When the idea of an evening with an ethnic Sri Lankan dinner was mooted in the parish, my wife and I threw ourselves enthusiastically into

the organization, grateful for the great opportunity we had been given to be able to contribute to a project to help other people in need.

With the decision to donate all the proceeds of the evening to Caritas, it was not just a matter of showing our gratitude by reciprocating, with our effort, the good we had received, but the possibility and joy of giving the necessary to those who, like us, are in need. We would like everyone to understand that there are no strangers or different, but people who strive to live free to be able to choose what is good for themselves and for others, with the help of the Lord.

Let us take each other by the hand and pray with the following words:

We thank you, Lord,
because you never tire of loving us and helping us,
even when we are far from you.
Give us the strength and intelligence to recognize you
in the example of those who love you and choose to follow you
and help us to know how to distinguish what is good
from what we want only for our selfish well-being,
and to choose according to your teachings.
Never abandon us in temptation.
Amen.

We conclude
with the sign
of the cross.

Thursday, March 2

Sign of the cross

Standing around the table, We take each other by the hand
and one prays for all with the following words.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of this food. You tell us that man does not live only by bread, but by every word that comes out of your mouth. Help us to listen with an open heart to what you tell us, and to give it with love to those close to us. Help us to make ourselves a gift to others, as you did to us. By trusting in you, and feeding on your Word, we will have the strength to live the good, and give it to our brothers and sisters.

If there are children, Parents make a sign of the cross on their foreheads.

We conclude with the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the cross.

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the voice and testimony of Gloria, a lay Fidei Donum who has returned from Mozambique.

L The mission is a privileged place for encounter and, at the same time, a place of temptation: «If you are a good missionary, you will be able to provide for the needs of your brothers». Yet, so many times it was the Macua people who provided for my needs: teaching me to speak when I arrived, worrying about me when I was sick.



«You are a good missionary, if you are able to work hand in hand with Providence.» Where are you God when Magdalene dies giving birth to Martha in her hut far from any hospital? Do you hear my prayers? Yet, you are in the heart of dad Melo, who calls us to lovingly bury his daughter and takes care of his grandchildren. «You are a good missionary if once you return home you know

how to make great choices and show everyone the works of God». Yet here, you make me experience that there is more room for You in my fragility than in all my desire for omnipotence.

Life in Mozambique has allowed me to see the good even where sometimes it is really difficult, even just to intuit it: what is the good I am looking for? And what comes to me? And the true good for the life of every man? Am I asked to always choose the good? What are the greatest efforts?

Provoked by what we have heard and by the final questions that have been given to us, we commit ourselves to being seekers of good, even in the darkest moments and in the most difficult situations.

Let us conclude by taking each other by the hand, praying with the words of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.

Sign of the cross

Following the invitation addressed to us in the commentary that follows, let us reflect ourselves on the face of Jesus chosen to accompany this first week of Lent, wishing to be able to resemble him more and more in choosing the good.

Lent is a precious time to contemplate, even more intensely, the face of Jesus, because, as he himself says: «He who sees me sees the Father» (Jn 14:9). It is God himself who gives himself to be seen in the human face of Jesus. God became flesh and therefore assumed a human's face, on which expressions and emotions emerged. It is in fidelity to the principle of the Incarnation that Christians have always given the Son of God a face, and have asked artists of every century to depict it, making Jesus always contemporary. Images like the one painted by Marco d'Oggiono inspired personal prayer. They lived in the private rooms and exhorted us to understand that choosing the good was deciding to resemble the Master more and more: to commit oneself every day to mirroring oneself in the face of Jesus, with the lively desire to conform oneself to him. The same invitation is addressed to us today.



Let us pray together, saying: Together with You, Lord, we will overcome every temptation.

When we let ourselves be taken by the desire for attractive things, instead of authentic relationships. *Rit.*

When we let ourselves be overwhelmed by the desire to succeed at any cost, instead of choosing the logic of the common good. *Rit.*

When we delude ourselves that holding back is the winning strategy for happiness, instead of opening our hands to service. *Rit.*

SECOND
WEEK

CHOOSE...
EVERYDAYLIFE

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to Matthew (cfr. 17, 1-9)

At that time, Jesus took with him Peter, James, and his brother John and led them apart to a high mountain. And he was transfigured before them: his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. And behold, a voice from the cloud said: «This is my beloved Son: in him I am well pleased. Listen to him.» On hearing this, the disciples fell with their faces to the ground and were seized with great fear. But Jesus came near, touched them, and said, «Arise, and fear not.» As they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, «Tell no one about this vision, until the Son of man has risen from the dead.»

Let us pray together, saying:

Help us, Lord, to meet you in everyday life.

For all the times we would like to stay where we feel calm, but we do not find you there. *Rit.*

For all the times we seek you and desire to hear you, as the Father has told us. Where are you? *Rit.*

For all the times that, coming down from the mountain, we are able to live with love the days you give us. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory be and the sign of the cross.

Giovan Battista Moroni
(Albino, 1520-1524 circa - 1579)

Trasfigurazione di Gesù

1564 - 1565

Olio su tela, 200 x 150 cm

Comun Nuovo, chiesa del Santissimo Salvatore

Monday, March 6

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the first reading proclaimed yesterday at Holy Mass.

From the book of Genesis (12, 1-4)

In those days, the Lord said to Abram, «Go from your land, your kinship, and your father's house, to the land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation and bless you, make your name great and may you be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and those who curse you, I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.» Then Abram departed, as the Lord had commanded him.

Let us leave a few moments of silence so that we can think back on the Word heard and share aloud the word that struck us most.

Let us pray together, saying:

Give us your love, in you we hope.

Lord, you ask us to leave our securities to go to the land that you show us. *Rit.*

Lord, often the land you point us to, was not in the least in our thoughts and desires. *Rit.*

Lord, help us to recognize that it is everyday life, the land to which you ask us to walk, with you as a life partner. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Tuesday, March 7

Sign of the cross

Today we allow ourselves to be accompanied by the words of commentary written by Don Luca Della Giovanna, priest of our Diocese, to the passage of the book of Genesis heard yesterday..

Paradoxically, Abraham's greatness was not to remain anchored to his daily life, but to have come out of it. He leaves «his land» to reach another: a land not chosen by him, but offered to him by God. The word «daily», in Latin, indicates «what happens or is done every day», in the time and space that is entrusted to us by life. This requires a continuous capacity for discernment, listening, courage, aware that every day is different from the other. For Abram, choosing daily life therefore means walking «every day» towards the Promised Land, letting himself be shaped by the Word of God and by the occasional encounters on the road. He will truly experience God not at the end of the journey but along the way, collecting step by step, the fragments of a mystery more promising than that land that he will tread with his feet

Let's leave a few moments of silence and let ourselves be provoked by the following question, first personally, and then sharing what emerged within us:

How often by «daily» do we mean to soak in habit and comfort: are you willing to go out of everyday life to reach that land that the Lord places before your steps?

Let us conclude by taking each other by the hand, reciting together the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.

Wednesday, March 8

Sign of the cross

Let us read together the testimony of Paola and Filippo, a married couple and parents who choose the company of God in their daily lives.

We arrived at marriage, thanks to a personal and couple journey that combined our choices, those of every day and the most fundamental ones, with a path of spirituality, allowing us to feel the presence of God in our lives. For us, the daily life of Christian spouses is to live with the certainty of the promise that God has made us to be with us, blessing with his good gaze our history, often limited and imperfect. This allows us to live everyday life, aware that we are not the sole owners of our life, and that life, no matter how many programs we can make, will give us more and more, because He builds it creatively with us. This gaze changes the horizon of our days because it allows us to face weariness, but also joys, without absolutizing them,

and invites us to have the same benevolence of God towards the life that is given to us, the daughters who have been entrusted to us, the people we meet.

In any case, to live fully the conjugal and family daily life, we feel it is essential to live moments of retreat, together with the Lord. For us, on our journey, before and after marriage, was the Spiritual Exercises, lived according to the possibilities of our condition of life, but also moments of «desert», in prayer, on special occasions. The ability to «stop» like the disciples on the Mount is fundamental, and keeping trained is the only way that helps us to keep in balance the relationship between everyday life and awareness, between everyday life and faith in the Lord.

Let us take each other by the hand and pray with the following words:

Lord
Grant us to be able to find moments
to be with You,
to learn to live our days to the full
putting our heart into everything we do
and having a good look towards the people we meet.
May our daily life not only be “ours”,
but may it be a full life lived in your presence.
Amen.

We conclude
with the sign
of the cross.

Thursday, March 9

Sign of the cross

Standing around the table, We take each other by the hand
and one prays for all with the following words.

We thank you,
Lord, for the gift of this
table
and the possibility of living there daily.
May the light on the face of Jesus also
transfigure our lives,
how he transfigured that of his disciples.
It's great for us to be here,
because listening to you changes our hearts,
It makes life bloom; it makes it beautiful.
Always give this beauty to our family
and to all the families of the world.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

If there are children, Parents make a sign of the cross on their foreheads.

We conclude with the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the cross.

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the voice and witness of Sister Rosaria, a Comboni missionary in Central Africa.

The episode of the Transfiguration wants to remind us that, if we live the Gospel, our life is transfigured! It is transfigured every day, to the extent that I am capable of acceptance, of listening, of tenderness towards every person. How Pauline's face is transfigured, every time she receives a bag of rice and two cans of sardines. Or Baptiste, when he received help to buy a large waterproof sheet to rebuild a house collapsed due to flooding. And these "my" people, poor and simple, know how to find the Lord in every event and taught me that there is a moment for everyone when we experience the beauty of God. And so,

I cannot stay above the

mountain, because in the periphery, there are brothers who are waiting to see a bit of sky in me... and then with them I can say: «It is good for me to be here»!

With this Sunday's Word, the Evangelist Matthew wishes us to live the experience of the Transfiguration. Do we know how to recognize moments and people of transfiguration that help us to face the daily "descents" because their light has changed us?

Provoked by what we have heard, we are committed to giving the best of ourselves to illuminate the daily descents and ascents, ours and those around us.

Let us conclude by taking each other by the hand, praying with the words of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.



Sign of the cross

Let us allow ourselves to be provoked by the faces and postures of the disciples, imagining which are those in which we take refuge in our daily lives: do we face the days with our heads held high and sure of ourselves, projected towards ourselves or with outstretched hands to help others?

The first thing that catches the eye of the viewer of this painting is the strong distinction between the two groups of characters: the three disciples – Peter, James and John – below and Jesus with Moses and Elijah, above. Two worlds very far away even if apparently so close. The upper scene is dominated by light. And it is understood: the evangelist Matthew recounts that the face of Jesus «shone like the sun and his garments became white as light». The three figures then communicate with each other: Moses and Elijah are turned towards Jesus, look at him intently and converse with him. The scene of the lower part is different, where the hands cover the eyes: two characters still have their hands on their foreheads and the third has just raised it, keeping it open in front of their eyes. They are sitting, indeed: squatting. The cloak of the disciple of the center and the one of the left wrap the bodies as if to hide them. Bodies folded in on themselves, struggling to return to everyday life. We too are called to this openness in this season of Lent.



Let us pray together, saying:

Let our lives shine forth, Lord.

You, Lord, make the life of those who listen to you shine. Help us to echo it with hope and goodness. *Rit.*

The transfiguration has already begun with your coming. Give us eyes to see it and voice to announce it. *Rit.*

As your disciples, make us courageous witnesses of your light, so that every man can say: «It is good for us to be here». *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Sunday, March 12

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to John (4, 21–26)

Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Anointed; when he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking with you.”

Let us pray together, saying:

Make us hear your voice, Lord.

We too, like the Samaritan woman, are looking for eyes capable of seeing us for who we are. *Rit.*

Not all springs of our life are capable of quenching our deepest thirst. *Rit.*

You, faithful and man-loving God, are the truth that satisfies our every thirst. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

CHOOSE...
THE TRUTH

THIRD
WEEK



Francesco Capella
(Venezia, 1711 – Bergamo, 1784)

Gesù e la Samaritana

1760 circa

Olio su tela, 73 x 57 cm

Ranica, casa parrocchiale

Monday, March 13

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the first reading proclaimed yesterday at Holy Mass.

From the Book of Exodus (17, 3-7)

Here, then, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? A little more and they will stone me!" The LORD answered Moses, "Go over there in front of the people, along with some of the elders of Israel, holding in your hand, as you go, the staff with which you struck the river. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb. Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink." This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel. The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled there and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD in our midst or not?"

Let us leave a few moments of silence so that we can think back on the Word heard and share aloud the word that struck us most.

Let us pray together, saying:

You are our truth, Lord.

For all the times we happen to murmur and complain because things don't go the right way. *Rit.*

For all the times we question your presence, not realizing that we're the ones walking away from you. *Rit.*

For all the times we don't want you in our imperfect life, be scared of judgment. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Tuesday, March 14

Sign of the cross

We allow ourselves to be accompanied by the words of commentary written by Don Luca Della Giovanna, a priest of our Diocese, on the passage from the book of Exodus heard yesterday.

The people of Israel are walking in the desert which is leading them from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land. It's a long, tiring journey, full of surprises. Sometimes the temptation to "go back" blinds them to resentment and grumbling. Other times the journey exposes the people to fragility and to the most natural needs to the point of making them doubt the goodness of God. The immediate need to have water to survive refers to that infinite thirst for truth that everyone experiences daily in their hearts. Moses' delicate task is to mediate between God's promise and that survival instinct that reduces men to simply satisfying their own needs. The truth at stake is greater than need; God causes water to flow immediately from the rock, but does not stop to make us feel the "thirst" of His presence.

Let's leave a few moments of silence and let ourselves be provoked by the following question, first personally, and then sharing what emerged within us:

Do I know how to listen to the "thirst" that I feel within me? Do I spend my life constantly complaining about what I lack or do I love looking for the truth between the lines of the story?

Let us conclude by taking each other by the hand, reciting together the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.

Wednesday, March 15

Sign of the cross

Let's read together the testimony of Milena and Fabio, a family

In the Gospel of John the well is the meeting place, for us it was a community that hosted mothers with children in difficulty. It was 2004 when we began our journey, as a young novice professional educator and civil service on behalf of Caritas Diocesana. Educating the least has been our job for both in recent years: it is a difficult profession, made up of ups and downs, where the encounter with human fragility, of others and one's own, is daily, inviting you to cultivate acceptance authentic in daily challenges, even and above all in the family. Like the Samaritan woman, we sometimes feel inadequate, not enough, but never alone and always hopeful. We've learned that being happily imperfect is the key to serenity, but always with an eye inside of us and outside of us. Over the years our family has expanded: we have two beautiful children, we have gone through difficult times with the loss and illness of people dear to us. But we have always felt "invited" to that well, we have always felt embraced by that God who reveals Himself through our tenderness, loyalty and hard work and that of the people we are close to. We had good teachers, attentive families of origin, experienced welcoming speakers, experienced good and "bad" fortunes, but we always felt safe. We continue to inhabit the hope and wonder of "being with". With the love that has united us and that accompanies us every day, with our children, with our guests and with God, who asked the Samaritan woman for water and who every day gives us the joy of choosing the Truth.

Let us take each other by the hand and pray with the following words:

Lord,
teach us to come to your well,
symbol of life and of your Presence
and guide us towards the search for the Truth,
through the simplicity of welcoming and proximity gestures.
Help us to draw the true meaning of your Word
and to recognize you in the fragile humanity
in need of your tenderness.
Amen.

We conclude
with the sign
of the cross.

Thursday, March 16

Sign of the cross

Standing around the table, We take each other by the hand
and one prays for all with the following words.

We thank you,
Lord, for the gift of this
table

and everything you put at our disposal.

In this week,
you made us pay attention to the water that
quenches thirst
and to the only water that quenches all thirst.

You are that water.

Always give us your water!

And make it become in us a spring that always gushes,
so that it can be donated to those who are thirsty and
tried by life,
discouraged and in search of truth for himself
and for those he loves.

In the name of the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

If there are children, Parents make a sign of the cross on their
foreheads.

We conclude with the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of
the cross.

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the voice and testimony of Fr Pierluigi, a Fidei Donum priest in Cuba.

The strength of Jesus Christ and the beauty of his Gospel also lie in the ability to raise questions before giving answers. Before telling you the truth, he makes you understand that you need it, that you miss it! Reading the Word of God, it is nice to know the people who meet Jesus. The Samaritan woman, only by meeting Jesus, begins to discover the truth of her life: what it means to pray, what it means to love. And this is what happens even today to those who, letting themselves be found, meet him.

The mission in Cuba offers an example. The Cuban people grow up with the conviction that they have all the answers to all the questions: the ideology in power offers them both, that single thought that does not allow for variations. The encounter with Jesus leads many of them to ask themselves real questions and to seek other answers.

If the question that Pilate asks Jesus were asked to contemporary man: 'what is truth?', he would easily find the answer: I am the truth, what I think, the world as I see it! Are we really so sure that this is enough for us?

Provoked by what we have heard and by the final question that is handed to us, we commit ourselves to seeking truth for our life and for our history, learning the art of sincerity.

We conclude by joining hands, praying with the words of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.



Sign of the cross

It is a provocative and unsettling choice around which we are invited to gather in prayer, just as the truth about ourselves is often provocative and unsettling. Let's try to imagine ourselves, thirsty, next to that well, in the presence of Jesus: what truth would we hear?

The well, which is the center around which everything revolves, is almost hidden. From the landscape, the architecture and the two protagonists of the scene. And yet, the words of Jesus and the expectations of the Samaritan woman move around the well. It is the meeting place that makes life new. The woman thirsts for listening, tenderness and mercy, but her attitude seems to say the opposite. Behind a slightly cheeky clothing and posture there is a great thirst for truth and authenticity. Even the Son of God is thirsty. His thirst is a gateway to the mystery of God, who became thirsty to quench man's thirst. He leans towards the woman, with a gesture inviting her to draw water from the well. He is the well to draw from; His revelation of the Father as merciful love is true water.



Let us pray together, saying: **Quench our heart.**

Wait for us, Lord, at the well of encounter, where the many thirsts of our lives lead us. *Rit.*

Lord, dissolve indifference, prejudices, doubts, fears that prevent us calling the thirsty with His name. *Rit.*

Lord, dilate our heart, dig a hole and fill it with desire and give us your Spirit. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

FOURTH
WEEK

CHOOSE...
TRUST

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to John (9, 1-7)

As he passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

Let us pray together, saying:

Lord, make us trusted men and women.

The man born blind trusted your Word, Lord, and you gave him back his sight. *Rit.*

You smeared mud on his eyes, as if it were a new creation of man, a rebirth. *Rit.*

You asked him to wash his eyes at the pool, because you also want our cooperation. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Francesco Capella
(Venezia, 1711 - Bergamo, 1784)

Gesù guarisce il cieco

1774 - 1784 circa

Olio su tela, 340 x 460 cm

Desenzano al Serio (Albino),

Santuario della Madonna del Miracolo



Monday, March 20

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the first reading proclaimed yesterday at Holy Mass.

From the first Book of Samuel (cfr. 16, 1-13)

In those days, the Lord said to Samuel: "Fill your horn with oil and leave. I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehem, because I have chosen for myself a king among his sons." Samuel did as the Lord commanded him. When he had entered, he saw Eliab and said: «Surely, before the Lord stands his anointed one!». The Lord replied to Samuel: "Do not look at his appearance or at his height. I rejected it, because it doesn't matter what a man sees: in fact, man sees the appearance, but the Lord sees the heart". Jesse had his seven sons pass in front of Samuel and Samuel repeated to Jesse: «The Lord has not chosen any of these». Samuel asked Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Jesse replied: «The youngest still remains, who is now tending the flock». Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, because we won't sit down to table before he gets here." He sent for him and had him come. He was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and handsome in appearance. The Lord said: «Rise and anoint him: it is he!». Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord broke upon David from that day forward.

Let us leave a few moments of silence so that we can think back on the Word heard and share aloud the word that struck us most.

Let us pray together, saying:

Make that we learn to entrust ourselves to you, Lord.

For all the times we trust appearances and build our choices on them. *Rit.*

For all the times we don't listen to your Word and miss the chance to open the eyes of the heart. *Rit.*

For all the times that our expectations don't meet your wishes for good for our life. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Tuesday, March 21

Sign of the cross

We allow ourselves to be accompanied by the words of commentary written by Don Luca Della Giovanna, a priest of our Diocese, on the passage from the first book of Samuel heard yesterday.

The prophet Samuel receives from God the task of going to Bethlehem, a very small rural village in Judea, to choose the new king of Israel. The choice falls on the family of Jesse, father of eight children. The first seven sons are sent for, all promising candidates for the throne. After reviewing them one by one, however, the prophet understands that God has not chosen any of them: there is still the last son, the very young David, the only one absent. The youngest of the brothers is anointed king of Israel: "Man sees the outward appearance, but the Lord sees the heart". God trusts David even before being judged by men. The presumption of "choosing the best" often hides pride, especially when choosing by pure calculation. The desire of God, on the other hand, does not long for human perfection, but for a total act of trust in His mysterious divine plan.

Let's leave a few moments of silence and let ourselves be provoked by the following question, first personally, and then sharing what emerged within us:

How much do I perceive that faith in God is, above all, an act of trust in Him? Do I choose the Lord out of convenience or because I entrust myself totally to him every day?

Let us conclude by taking each other by the hand, reciting together the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.

Wednesday, March 22

Sign of the cross

Let's read together the testimony of Sara and Enrico, who discovered the beauty of being a family willing to entrust themselves to each other and to God.

In the passage from the Gospel of the man born blind we read: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world".

This excerpt from the Word of God immediately reminded us of our wedding day in which the Gospel passage recited: "You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world".

So we too can be the light of the world because the Lord is and we trust him.

As children we played "go blind" and mom and dad guided us through the corridors of the house avoiding crashing or falling. We trusted them, in fact blindly! We placed the same trust in the Lord the day we got married. To be honest we weren't sure where

we were going or the obstacles on the way. However, we asked the Lord to help us always love each other as He loves us and not to be blind to the need of the other. In the same way, and much more, we trusted the Lord when he put the desire for a child into our hearts. We didn't know if we would be able to be parents, but we had and still have faith that the Lord accompanies all our steps and supports little Andrea through our love for him and our desire for happiness for him. When we are blind to the choices to make, the Lord lights the way for us and helps us find the path of goodness for our family. When we don't know where to go, we close our eyes and we let Him guide us.

Prenons-nous par la main et prions avec les paroles suivantes:

Lord,
we pray to you to support the "undecided",
who doesn't know what to do, where to go.
Guide them, protect them,
give them assurance
that their steps are supported by you
that you love them without measure.
Amen.

We conclude
with the sign
of the cross.

Thursday, March 23

Sign of the cross

Standing around the table, We take each other by the hand
and one prays for all with the following words.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of this table,
fruit of your love
and that of whoever prepared it for us.
Heal our blindness,
open our eyes,
because we can see your presence
around us, next to those who do not have these gifts,
and show us how these goods that you have given us
become a call to share them with those without them.
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy
Spirit. Amen.

If there are children, Parents make a sign of the cross on their foreheads.

We conclude with the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the cross.

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the voice and testimony of Walter, a Fidei Donum layman in the Ivory Coast.

The Gospel of the man born blind and my daily encounter with disability in the Ivory Coast clearly tell the dynamics, perceptions and limits that surround every condition of fragility. Jesus puts those in need of help at the center and this is what we choose and try to do every day on mission: give attention to and welcome children with disabilities who, on the other hand, African culture seeks to distance because they are considered the fruits of curses and sorceries. Trusting those who are struggling is not always easy, it requires daily constancy which is sometimes made up of trials, attempts, falls, defeats and victories...



But the confident tenacity shown to those who are fragile helps all people find themselves and assume the responsibility of transforming an immense effort into an opportunity to grow.

How important is it for you to have faith, to have a gaze capable of seeing beyond appearances? How willing are you to let yourself be questioned by the stories that life places on your path? How much trust can you see in the experience of being born blind? And how do you explain why Jesus stopped by him?

Provoked by what we have heard and by the final questions that are given to us, we are committed to living our days with an attitude of trust towards others, not as deluded but as believers.

We conclude by joining hands, praying with the words of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.

Sign of the cross

During the past week, prayer invited us to choose trust as the best part of our lives, learning from the man born blind to welcome the daily sendings and invitations to look at the light and to bring it into the lives of others.

The blind man's eyes are dull and tired. Jesus will open them, He will shatter the veil of death that covers them and they will shine again. They will finally know "the true light, the one that enlightens every man" (Jn 1:9). The Master's eyes rest on those of the blind man. Christ's gaze triggers man's healing process: "Jesus passing by, saw a man blind from birth" (Jn 9:4). He looks at him in a new way, with the eyes of a brother. He doesn't look at him as the people around do, who wonder about the guilt of that blindness. The blind man leans forward, towards the source of the light. It's as if he was attracted to it, even though he doesn't perceive it yet. Then Jesus performs a gesture of care: mixing the powder with His saliva, He spreads it on the eyes of the blind man. He feels he can place trust in those who have seen his heart and have not stopped at his dark eyes.



Let us pray together, saying:
Heal our eyes, Lord.

For all the times we are unable to see our fragility and ask for help. *Rit.*

For all the times we grope in the dark and can't find the strength to turn to you, true light of the world. *Rit.*

For all the times we blindly trust ourselves, willing to become new creatures in your love. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

CHOOSE...
LIFE

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to John (cfr. 11, 32-45)

María llegó adonde estaba Jesús y, al verlo, se postró a sus pies y le dijo: «Señor, si hubieras estado aquí, mi hermano no habría muerto». Jesús preguntó: «¿Dónde lo pusieron?». Le respondieron: «Ven, Señor, y lo verás». Y Jesús lloró. Jesús, conmoviéndose nuevamente, llegó al sepulcro, que era una cueva con una piedra encima, y le dijo: «Quiten la piedra». Entonces quitaron la piedra, y Jesús, levantando los ojos al cielo, dijo: «Padre, te doy gracias porque me oíste. Después de decir esto, gritó con voz fuerte: «¡Lázaro, ven afuera!». El muerto salió con los pies y las manos atados con vendas, y el rostro envuelto en un sudario. Jesús les dijo: «Desátenlo para que pueda caminar». Al ver lo que hizo Jesús, muchos de los judíos que habían ido a casa de María creyeron en él.

Let us pray together, saying:

Lord, give us life again.

For all the times in our lives we find heavy stones that take away all hope, like that of the tomb of Lazarus. *Rit.*

When our problems seem to take our breath away and you, Lord, are moved as in the face of the death of your friend Lazarus. *Rit.*

When we choose you as our travel companion, willing to come out of our graves. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Gregorio Lazzarini (attribuito a)
(Venezia, 1655 - Villabona Veronese 1730)

Resurrezione di Lazzaro

1683 circa,

Olio su tela, 250 x 170 cm

Sombreno (Paladina),

Santuario della Natività di Maria



Monday, March 27

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the first reading proclaimed yesterday at Holy Mass.

From the first Book of Ezekiel (37, 12-14)

Thus says the Lord GOD: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and have you rise from them, O my people! I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the LORD. I have promised, and I will do it, says the LORD. Thus the word of the LORD came to me: .

Let us leave a few moments of silence so that we can think back on the Word heard and share aloud the word that struck us most.

Let us pray together, saying:

You are our life, Lord.

For all the times we think we can dispose of our existence freely and without limits. *Rit.*

For all the times that living seems to be just a matter of continuing to breathe, of surviving. *Rit.*

Because the Easter that we will celebrate in a few days really brings us out of our graves. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Tuesday, March 28

Sign of the cross

We allow ourselves to be accompanied by the commentary written by Don Luca Della Giovanna, a priest of our Diocese, on the passage from the prophet Ezekiel heard yesterday.

In times of exile and expansionist wars, the people of Israel are crushed by fear and despair. He is often attacked by the idea of having been abandoned by God, fueling continuous feelings of guilt for having transgressed his Law. The prophet Ezekiel - he too exiled to Babylon - promotes a new hope by announcing to Israel that the time of rebirth is near. Death is not the last word on life! God is Lord of life even in the face of death. Indeed, He has the strength to uncover the tombs and to breathe life even when life seems lost forever. The promise of the resurrection encourages the people to awaken the desire to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the city. Choosing life even when it seems impossible is the best antidote to personal and community self-destruction.

Let's leave a few moments of silence and let ourselves be provoked by the following question, first personally, and then sharing what emerged within us:

In a symbolic sense, when in my life do I choose death over life? Am I always willing to defend life and nurture hope?

Let us conclude by taking each other by the hand, reciting together the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.

Wednesday, March 29

Sign of the cross

Let us read together the testimony of Chiara and Mario, a family who, going through the pain of death, managed to leave the tomb and abandon themselves in the embrace of the Father.

The day my brother passed away unexpectedly and suddenly, we were celebrating our 10th wedding anniversary. In disbelief and desperation, some questions crossed our minds: "Why him?", "Why on this very important day of celebration?", and also a curse: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!".

This great pain has questioned who we are, it has become the recurring thought, opening up continuous questions, reliving that terrible day every time and from a different angle. He put a new pair of unwanted glasses on our faces and in his hand a sieve with which to filter life's priorities. Relationships have also been sieved, starting with the one with

the person with whom you share your life and family. We have gone through moments in which we seemed to speak different languages or in which loss risked making us lose ourselves in the streets of suffering.

Then came a moment in which we felt called to choose: "Do we really believe we have abandoned him to the grave or have we entrusted him to the True and Living Jesus Christ?". Our belief has gone through suffering for the loss and lack of those we love, it has made itself aware that the questions are part of the game and that the Cross is a passage towards Easter. In God, the Father of infinite mercy, nothing and no one is lost! Now we believe it.

Let us take each other by the hand and pray with the following words:

Let us join hands and pray with the following words:
Lord, we pray to you because always choosing life,
we know how to build right now, in our daily life,
in our relationships, a piece of Heaven for everyone.
Amen.

We conclude with the sign of the cross.

Thursday, March 30

Sign of the cross

Standing around the table, We take each other by the hand and one prays for all with the following words.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of this food, through which you give strength to our life.

Help us share the gifts you give us, so that every life can be lived in dignity.

In particular, we thank you for the gift of life, help us to be close to those who live in suffering

and make us your collaborators finding the way to testify concretely the beauty of the gift of life to those who feel they have lost it.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

If there are children, Parents make a sign of the cross on their foreheads.

We conclude with the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the cross.

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the voice and testimony of Mario, a lay Fidei Donum in Bolivia

The Gospel we heard on Sunday tells us of the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus, a sign of how Jesus is the Lord of life who always conquers death. And this is what I learned here in Bolivia: I came here out of love for Cintia and I rediscovered the Faith.

of losing Cintia almost two years ago, but thanks to my faith I always manage to have her with me and feel that she continues to be close to me, advising me. The love Jesus taught us is to know that death is not the end, but a new beginning.

Does our faith in Jesus of life give us the strength to share our journey with the people we meet without prejudice and selfishness, but only with the great desire to place ourselves at the service of their history and their needs?

Provoked by what we have heard and by the final question that has been given to us, we are committed to sharing life with those around us, especially with those who are most in need.

We conclude by joining hands, praying with the words of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.

Every day I see adolescents who live on the margins, who have committed crimes, some very serious, who however, with personal commitment and adequate accompaniment, rediscover the path of goodness and these seem to me miracles of the Lord of life. Personally I felt the great pain



Sign of the cross

Let us allow ourselves to be fascinated by the intertwining of death and life that this work shows us and try to identify ourselves with one of the characters in the scene: do we feel like Lazarus in a tomb or resentful like Martha or distrustful like those who witness the scene? What life are we capable of?

Lights and shadows play on Lazarus' face. He is still wrapped in the shroud. He felt the cold of death, his body was swallowed up by the darkness of the tomb. He still bears the signs, but the friendship of Jesus brings him back to life. On his face it can bring the light to rest. Around there is pain, inability to understand, distrust. Even Lazarus' two sisters find it hard to believe. Martha can't help herself and her gaze seems to reproach Jesus for having abandoned her friend, even though her hands remain clasped in a trusting prayer. Jesus places his hand on Lazarus' shoulder in a gesture of affection. Those who trust in him will receive the same support at the hour in which they cross the dark threshold of death and will then be called back to life definitively, in the certainty that "he who believes in me will live, even if he dies" (Jn 11:25).



Let us pray together, saying: **Lord, make us witnesses of the good life that comes from you.**

When we feel you are a friend, as you were of Lazarus, and we share our life with you. *Rit.*

When, on the other hand, we feel alone and find it harder to feel your presence. *Rit.*

In front of the people who lock themselves up in their tombs of fatigue and pain. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

PALM
SUNDAY



Francesco Capella
(Venezia, 5 luglio 1711 – Bergamo, 1784)

Gesù aiutato da Simone di Cirene

1770

Olio su tela, 80 x 60 cm
Urgnano, chiesa dei Santi Nazario e Celso

CHOOSING...

THE PROXIMITY

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to Matthew (27, 28–32)

The soldiers stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his hands. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews”. They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him. As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

Let us pray together, saying:

Our Lord, you never abandon us.

Your voice and your sorrow arrive at our heart, help us not to leave you alone. *Rit.*

You wanted to take over you our sin, our distress to save us. *Rit.*

You loved us till the end and without limit, help us to get close to others with this type of total love. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Monday, April 3

Sign of the cross

Let us listen to the first reading proclaimed yesterday at Holy Mass.

From the book of the prophet Isaiah (50, 4-7)

The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue. That I might know to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I might hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. The Lord God is my help; therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

Let us leave a few moments of silence so that we can think back on the Word heard and share aloud the word that struck us most.

Let us pray together, saying:

Thank God because you came close to us.

You love us till to strip you and make you poor. *Rit.*

You, Almighty, suffered for us, accepting insults and spits. *Rit.*

You offered your life for us without pulling you back. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

Tuesday, April 4

Sign of the cross

Let's listen to the comment on the passage of the prophet Isaiah listened yesterday, written by don Luca Della Giovanna, priest of our Diocese.

When the news that the people of Israel will come back from the Babylonian exile, the prophet Isaiah re-reads the difficult years of the captivity in the foreign land. A period of seventy years deprived Israel of its freedom exposing it to shame and injustice of powerful men of the period. Isaiah, faithful servant, remembers he has never stopped to be a disciple and to have encouraged many people not to lose hope. He could witness his faith despite the threads, the tortures and the injustices. His swollen face and his scourged back have given hope to other exiles, that have made of his suffering their strength, instead of getting discouraged. Israel at last understands that God never abandon them but he has always been next to them, in particular during the experience of pain

Let's leave a few moments of silence and let ourselves be provoked by the following question, first personally, and then sharing what emerged within us:

How do you accept the suffering in your life? How can you "be next" to someone who is suffering?

Let us conclude by taking each other by the hand, reciting together the prayer of the Our Father and with the sign of the Cross.

Wednesday, April 5

Sign of the cross

Let's read the testimony of Giuliana and Marco, a family who decided to answer to the plea of the history, helping other brothers.

The Ukraine war, fratricide war, has strongly stricken our family and from a Cristian point of view we gave hospitality to some refugee. We had an empty apartment, and we called the "Caritas Diocesana" and we host a family with a two and half year-old baby, his grand-mother, a boy and his nine year old sister. Day by day we helped them in their difficult and disheartening moments but at the same time very deep.

Soon their uneasiness became trust and we started to consider them as part of our family and for six months we shared their tears and suffering trying to alleviate them as better as we could. They have recently reached their parents in German, but we often hear them because they have a special place in our heart.

Let's take hands and pray with the following words:

Our Lord,
You call blessed the peacekeepers and mild people,
Pull away from us every feeling of indifference
Make us thoughtful towards all the ones that suffer
And let us always show our closeness to the suffering people,
In our prayers and our solidarity.
Amen.

We conclude with the sign of the cross.

We have arrived at the beginning of the Paschal Triduum, let's read, think about an extract of a work by Tonino Bello (*Italian Bishop, that became venerable on 25th November 2021*) so we can re-think about our walk during Lent, starting from the Ashes on our head...

Dear friends,

Ashes on our head and water on our feet

A very short street of about less than two meters. But much longer and tiring. Because we must start from our head to reach the feet of other people. It is not enough the forty days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday to walk it. We need all our life, and the period of Lent is only a scale reduction.

Repent and service. They are the two great sermons that the Church entrust to the ash and water. Every Cristian is fascinated by these two sermons. The other sermons are soon forgotten. But not these ones because they are told through symbols and they use a language that lasts forever.

The ashes burns on our head, as it is just come out from a crater of a volcano. To extinguish the fire, let's look for the water to pour on other feet. Repent and service. This is the obliged trail to walk to reach our house. Ash and water. Primordial ingredients of the ancient laundry. But in particular symbols of a complete conversion, which take us from the head to the feet.

Don Tonino Bello

Thursday, April 6

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to John (cfr. 13, 1-15)

Jesus having loved those who were in the world, loved them to the end. He got up from table, removed his outer garments and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist. He then poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand; if I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash each other's feet.'

CHOOSING... THE SERVICE

Let us pray together, saying:

Our Lord make us able of service

Today you ask us too, as you asked Peter, to let you and our brothers to wash our feet. *Rit.*

We too want to look after our brothers, beginning from our relatives. *Rit.*

With the humility of the service, following your example, we discover what is the meaning of love and of being loved. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

HOLY
THURSDAY



Giovan Battista Moroni
(Albino, 1520-1524 circa - 1579)

Ultima Cena

1568- 1569

Olio su tela, 295 x 195 cm

Romano di Lombardia,

chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta e San Giacomo

Friday, April 7

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to John (19, 25-30)

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the mother of Cleopas and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and next to her the disciple whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

There was a vessel filled with vinegar. So they put a sponge soaked in vinegar and he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit

CHOOSING... THE FREEDOM

HOLY
FRIDAY

Let us pray together, saying:

Our Lord teach us to stay.

Under your Cross, as John that day on Golgota... *Rit.*

In front of your open arms on the Cross... *Rit.*

In spite of our unfaithfulness and our misunderstanding... *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Ee and the sign of the cross.

Francesco Rizzo da Santacroce
(Venezia, documentato dal 1505 al 1545)

Cristo Morto tra Maria e San Giovanni Evangelista
1518

Olio su tavola, 60 x 71 cm

Serina, chiesa di Santa Maria Annunciata

EASTER
OF RESURRECTION



Marziale Carobbio
(Bergamo, documentato nel 1737)

**Gesù appare a Maria di Magdala
(Noli me tangere)**

Seconda metà del XVIII secolo
Olio su tela, 300 x 160 cm
Grumello del Monte,
chiesa della Santissima Trinità

CHOOSING...

THE JOY

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to John (cfr. 20, 1-18)

A On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark. She turned around and saw Jesus there but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbuni," which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, "Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" al Señor!».

Let us pray together, saying:

This is the day made by God: let's rejoice and be glad.

Like Mary of Magdala, we stop in our sad thoughts too, unable to feel you next to us. *Rit.*

But as soon as we come back to you, your voice call us by name and fill our heart of joy. *Rit.*

You, the Crucified and Risen Lord, the loved Son sent to us by the Father, are our life and you lead us on the streets of love. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

PENTECOST
OF THE LORD



Francesco Capella
(Venezia, 5 luglio 1711 - Bergamo, 1784)

Pentecoste

1760

Olio su tela, 300 x 190 cm
Alzano Lombardo, Basilica di San Martino

CHOOSE...

THE MISSION

Sunday, May 28

Sign of the cross

From the Gospel according to John (20, 19-23)

It was the first day of the week, and that very evening, while the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them. "Peace be with you!" He said to them. After He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Again, Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so also I am sending you." When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."

Let us pray together, saying:

Send your Spirit, Lord, to renew the world.

Warms our hearts and make us witnesses of the good news of the Gospel. *Rit.*

When the path becomes hard, give us strength. When we are sad, console us. When we are doubtful, advise us. *Rit.*

Lead our life, gift of the Father for us, so it can become a gift for our brothers. *Rit.*

We conclude by reciting the prayer of the Glory Be and the sign of the cross.

We thank:

don Luca Della Giovanna for his comments on the first festive reading

the families for their thoughts of Wednesdays

the missionaries for their thoughts of Fridays

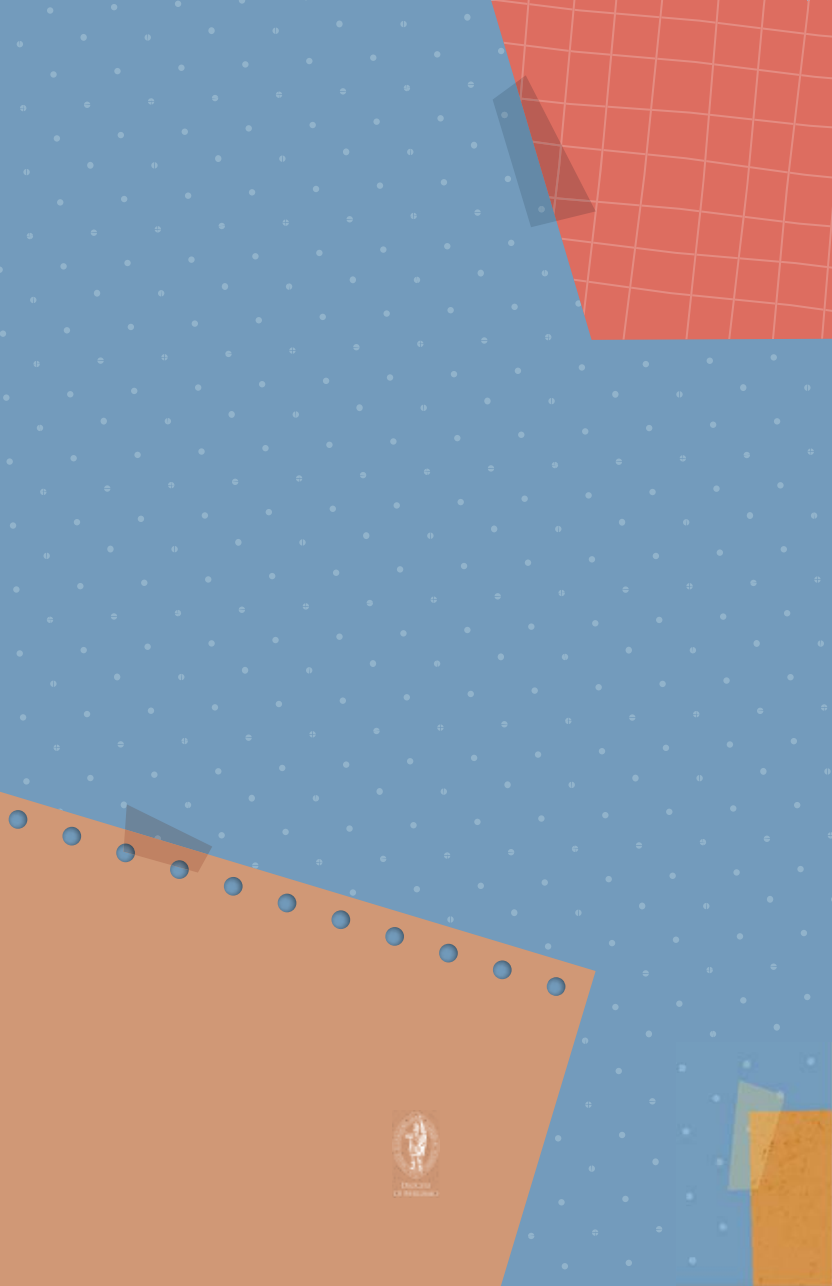
the office for the pastoral care of culture
and **Fondazione Adriano Bernareggi**
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Giovanni, don Doriano, don Emanuele, Federica and Cristian
for the precious collaboration

Immagine di copertina:

Giampietro Silvio, Cristo morto sostenuto da tre angeli
Sedrina, chiesa di San Giacomo





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