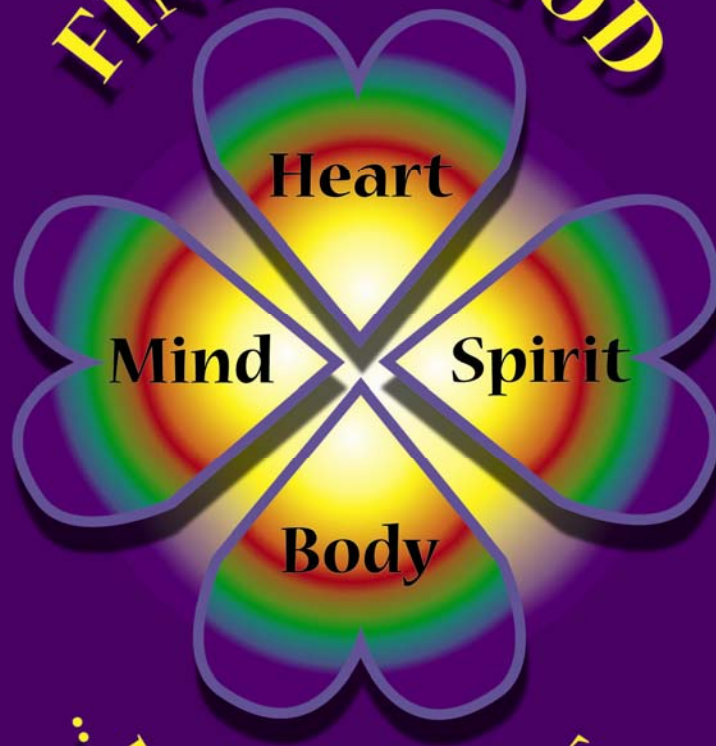


FINDING GOD



...IN THE BALANCE

Lent 2010 ~ Saint Bartholomew Parish, San Mateo

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{LENTEN PROJECT WITH ST. VINCENT DE PAUL}

Jesus calls for a continuous conversion rather than a one-time event. His call to reform our lives is a challenge to invest ourselves in repeated resolutions to love God with all our Heart, Spirit, Mind and Body. Through the Lenten practices, we strengthen our relationship with Christ and prepare to enter more deeply into the Paschal Mystery of his dying and rising.

Our love for God is expressed in our care for others. In recent years, St. Bartholomew Parish supported Catholic Relief Services and Second Harvest Food Bank as its Lenten projects. For 2010, Fr. Mike Healy and the Pastoral Council have designated **St. Vincent de Paul Society** as the beneficiary.

This booklet, ***Finding God in the Balance: Heart, Spirit, Mind and Body***, suggests a variety of ways for individuals and groups to connect with the work of St. Vincent de Paul as we share the Lenten journey. Begin with the **Spiritual Inventory** that opens the door to a real change of heart. **Reflect on the Sunday Gospels and journal** your thoughts and feelings through the weeks. How about reading a **spiritual book, praying online** or inviting God into your exercise routine with **Mindful Walking**?

To provide for basic necessities, St. Vincent's has asked us to **collect detergent, underwear, and diapers** (all sizes: infant through adult). Contributions can be placed in the collection barrels found in the church vestibule and parish office. On **Sunday, March 28, after the 9:30 and 11:15 Masses**, we will **sort all the donated items**. All are welcome to help.

A special **Lenten offering can** will also be available for use at home, and the funds collected given to the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

{SPIRITUAL INVENTORY}

During the weeks of Lent, we are invited to take time for a spiritual inventory. Renowned theologian Henri Nouwen suggests ten questions that invite us to live deeply from the heart.

- Who will answer my questions?
- Where do I begin?
- Who am I?
- Where have I been and where am I going?
- What is prayer?
- Who is God for me?
- How do I hear the Word?
- Where do I belong?
- How can I be of service?
- Where do I go from here?

Nouwen suggests three spiritual practices that will reorient our lives and open the door to spiritual transformation:

- **Look within to the Heart:** Introspection and contemplative prayer in solitude
- **Look to God in the Book:** Spiritual reading and meditation on sacred text
- **Look to Others in Community:** Relationships with the people of God in small groups, worship experiences and mission activities

*(from *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith* by Henri Nouwen)*

{REFLECTION ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL}

{Week 1} Luke 4: 1-13 – Desert

“Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus was led by the Spirit through the wilderness where he was tempted.”

Key phrase/words: Heart: Led by the Spirit
Soul: Filled with the Spirit
Mind: Tempted
Strength: One does not live on bread alone.

HEART: “It is in silence that we can hear God speak to our hearts.”

- St. Vincent de Paul

{Week 2} Luke 9: 28-36 – Transfiguration

“As Jesus prayed his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white.”

Key phrase/words: Heart: Saw His glory
Soul: It is good that we are here
Mind: Frightened
Strength: Overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake

SOUL: “Love is inventive, even to infinity.”

- St. Vincent de Paul

{Week 3} Luke 13: 1-9 –Barren Fig Tree

“I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree and found none.”

Key phrase/words: Heart: Cultivate the ground and fertilize it
Soul: Planted in his orchard
Mind: In search of fruit
Strength: It may bear fruit in the future

SOUL: “The most powerful weapon to conquer evil is humility.”

- St. Vincent de Paul

OSPEL AND JOURNALING PROMPTS}

{Week 4} Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32 – Prodigal Son

“Your brother was dead and has come to life again.”

Key phrase/words: Heart: Filled with compassion
Soul: Embraced
Mind: Angry and refused to enter the house
Strength: Ran out to meet him

MIND: “Bitterness never served any purpose than to embitter.”
- St. Vincent de Paul

{Week 5} John 8: 1-11- Woman caught in adultery

“Let the one who is without sin be the first to throw a stone.”

Key phrase/words: Heart: You may go
Soul: Do not sin any more
Mind: No one condemned
Strength: Throw a stone

HEART: “Kindness is the key to hearts”
- St. Vincent de Paul

{Week 6} Luke 19: 28-40 - Passion Sunday

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”

Key phrase/words: Heart: Praise God with joy
Soul: Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord
Mind: Why
Strength: Mighty deeds

***STRENGTH: “May God increase your strength, and may he
make you share more and more in His spirit”***
- St. Vincent de Paul

{MINDFUL WALKING THROUGH LENT}

My Lord God,
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.
And I know that, if I do this, you will lead me by the right road.

Therefore I will trust you always.
Though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
And you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

*(From *Thoughts in Solitude* by Thomas Merton)*

{PREPARATION FOR MINDFUL WALKING}

Mindful walking meditation for an individual, family or group.

Quieting the mind allows you to become more aware of the Spirit within. At the end of your walk, you usually experience a greater sense of peace. You might also use this meditation when waiting in a line. If you cannot walk, do this exercise while sitting.

Prayer: Use the Merton prayer above to center yourself.

Pulse: Find your pulse and take a couple of moments just feeling your heart pumping your blood. Give thanks.

Breath: Become aware of your breath and that the air you breathe is total gift. Slow down your breathing so that the inhaling and exhaling is of the same length. Feel the air enter your body through the nostrils and go into the lungs and then be released. Give thanks.

Sight: Look out to the furthest point on the horizon; then gently let your gaze drop to your own feet. Imagine looking up through your body into your heart. Let your “gaze” rest there a while. Then looking out again – step forth, paying attention to each step. Give thanks.

Mantra (or sacred word): Choose a mantra as the focus of your walk. As you walk, listen to your mantra echoing within you. Each time you are caught up in the beauty of nature, or perhaps a distracting thought, let it flow through you, and then gently return to repeating to your sacred word.

{ADDITIONAL RESOURCES}

We offer these resources for those who are looking for some more ways to grow and reflect on their spiritual journey during this Lenten season.

{SPIRITUAL READING RECOMMENDATIONS}

Select a book title by one of these favorite authors to read during Lent.

William Barry
Edward Hays
Thomas Merton
Henri Nouwen
John O'Donohue
Richard Rohr
Ron Rolheiser
Joyce Rupp
Margaret Silf

{WEBSITES TO VISIT}

Daily reflections for Lent:

- <http://sacredspace.ie/>—daily Scripture and prayer online
- www.findinggod.org—offers a 3 minute daily retreat
- www.contemplativeoutreach.org—Thomas Keating site for Centering Prayer
- <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/index.html>

Prepare for the Sunday readings:

- www.word-sunday.com/
- <http://liturgy.slu.edu/>

Podcasts and MP3s:

- www.pray-as-you-go.org/—Daily Prayer for your MP3 Player
- www.bustedhalo.com/—Site for young adults sharing “Everyday Faith for Everyday People”

Local Retreat offerings:

- www.mercy-center.org
 - www.vallombrosa.org
 - <http://jrclosaltos.org/default.htm>
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SOCIETY of ST. VINCENT de PAUL of SAN MATEO COUNTY



Saint Bartholomew Lenten Project 2010: Society of St. Vincent de Paul of San Mateo County

Each year SVdP serves over 40,000 distinct neighbors in need – from children to seniors. It helps with food, rent, utilities, basic survival necessities for the homeless, and restorative justice assistance for victims of crime, offenders and those recently released from incarceration. SVdP stores recycle clothing and household items and provide rehabilitation employment opportunities.

To volunteer or donate and for more information call (650) 373-0623 or visit SVdP's web site:

www.svdP-sanmateoco.org

During Lent, SVdP collection barrels can be found in the church and parish office. Please donate much needed items that take basic care of the body, ease the stress of the mind, and nurture the spirit for the often forgotten, suffering or deprived – because we care!

We are collecting the following items:

- **Diapers—for infants (all sizes), disabled and seniors**
- **underwear and socks—for the homeless**
- **laundry detergent—for needy working poor families**

{JOIN ST. VINCENT DE PAUL AND HELP!}

We are in need of new members for St. Bart's Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. As members of SVDP conference, you make "home visits" to the underprivileged, giving them vouchers for furniture, food and clothing as needed. The days and times for "home visits" are very flexible and can be adapted to your individual schedule. There is a Vincentian meeting approximately once a month. Please call or e-mail **Randi Randle** if you are interested at **573-0619** or **randirandle@gmail.com**.