

STILL POINT

A PUBLICATION OF TAU CENTER

A spirituality ministry of the Wheaton Franciscans

THE JOURNEY OF LENT

SPRING 2022



LABYRINTH | SELF-COMPASSION | REFLECTIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. A FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE	4
2. SELF-COMPASSION AS A PATH	6
3. LABYRINTH WALKS FOR FOR LENT	8
4. GUIDED LABYRINTH WALK	16
5. INSTRUCTIONS USING FINGER LABYRINTH	18
6. EXPLORING THE THREE PILLARS OF LENT	20
7. LENTEN REFLECTIONS	32
8. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE	42
9. PROGRAMS & OFFERINGS	46
10. POETRY OF EASTER	50

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REFLECTIONS FROM: THE POETRY OF LENT - A LENTEN COMPANION

TO MARY OLIVER'S DEVOTIONS

BY <https://www.saltproject.org/>

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*A spirituality ministry of the
Wheaton Franciscans*

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CREATE A SPACE FOR JOURNEY & STILLNESS THIS LENTEN SEASON

During this Lenten season, your spirit is beginning to prepare for introspection. It is also a good time to begin a new practice.

Rooted in the Anglo-Saxon word for 'Springtime', Lent is a time for new life, growth and renewal. The forty days of Lent offer us an invitation to sit in the quiet, and discover in our hearts the meaning of our lives and where God lies within it.

During this sacred season, we invite to explore who God is for you, where you encounter the divine presence, and the meaning God has in your life.

A FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE ON LENT & THE PASSION OF CHRIST

John Duns Scotus is a little-known Franciscan theologian who lived in Scotland the 14th century and while you may not know his name, you are probably very familiar with one of his most famous theological arguments and that was for the Immaculate Conception. However, another of his theological arguments has been lost in the mists of time – except to a few nerdy theologians, scholarly types – and a few Franciscans. It's really too bad that his message is not well-known, because it's quite extraordinary and truly spot-on for Christians.

Scotus challenges the notion that Christ came into the world to save us from our sins – to “fix us” as it were. His theological premise is this: God is all good, all powerful, all knowing, all loving. Everything God creates is good. Recall the Creation story from Genesis: God creates the world and proclaims everything is “Good!” At the very core of our being is this goodness from God. Scotus asks, *Having been created in the image and likeness of God, how can we be anything but good?*

Scotus challenges the premise of Original Sin. Again he asks, *How is it possible, that God, who is Love, would create beings that are at their core evil or sinful?* We are made from love, to be love. It is life's circumstances, temptations and choices that cause us to sin. We are not sin itself, but have sinful tendencies because we are human with the gift of free will. It is also the very love of God that redeems us. We are forgiven even before we ask for forgiveness.

So Scotus' real challenge to the traditional theology is to ask: *Would God have sent Christ into the world if humankind had not sinned?* Scotus' answer is of course, a resounding “Yes!” God comes to us always...in our goodness and in our sinfulness. It is impossible to think that Jesus came only to be a great “fixer upper.” It is in essence the very opposite of the nature of God.

So, as you continue on your Lenten journey, and enter into the mysteries of Holy Week, take a moment to think about John Duns Scotus and claim your goodness as a child of God. You are loved, and God comes to you. God comes to us without reservation.

Sr Glenna Czachor, OSF is a Wheaton Franciscan Sister with more than 25 years experience in group facilitation and retreat leadership, specializing in contemplative prayer and worship, scripture study, and creative spirituality. Sr Glenna serves on the Regional Leadership Team of the Wheaton Franciscans and acts as the Tau Center Liaison, working behind the scenes as a facilitator and guide for operations and as a creative consultant for programs and communications.

SELF-COMPASSION AS A PATH TO FORGIVENESS

As we enter the Lenten season I've been thinking about forgiveness – specifically the times I have fallen short of family, of friends, of God. Reflecting on this, I felt my heart being led to explore self-compassion.

It felt a bit strange – perhaps a bit selfish - to be thinking about forgiveness from a place of self-compassion, but I followed where my heart was being led. I came across this explanation of self-compassion from Dr. Kristen Neff, “Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings.”

The more I reflected this, the more I was led to see self-compassion can begin the path towards forgiveness. By first fully accepting our fallibility and imperfections as a part of our humanness, we can then work through the process of

letting them go, and more fully accept the love, grace and forgiveness God so longs to give us.

Taking this insight with me through Lent, in the times that I find myself criticizing myself or engaging in the cycle of negative self-talk, I seek to first pause and remind myself I am created in the image of God; wonderfully and fearfully made. Isn't that exactly what this season is about - to truly appreciate that God so loved us that He gave his one and only Son? Not so that we could continue to dwell in our darkness but that we could be released from it and experience the light? The light He so freely and openly wants us to have?

How might you also take this into your own Lenten experience? How might you make your way to light through the path of self-compassion?

Karen Bychowski is offering an online guided reflection program. More details and her bio are on page 46.



LABYRINTH WALKS FOR LENT, HOLY WEEK, AND EASTER

If your church or group has a labyrinth the period of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter it provides a great opportunity for beginning a practice of labyrinth walking. The suggestions provided in this article (*Labyrinth Walks for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter*, by John W. Rhodes) can also be used with “finger walking” finger labyrinths, as well.

There are three primary types of labyrinth walks, each a little more structured than the previous category: open walks, themed or focused walks and guided walks.

Keep in mind that a labyrinth is not a maze. A labyrinth has only one path that one walks from the entrance to the center, and then walks the same path returning from the center to the entrance, which is now an exit. For this reason the labyrinth is often referred to as a “unicursal” pattern. Because of this, a labyrinth walk naturally organizes itself into three phases, regardless of the degree of structure provided for the walk.

THE WALK FROM THE ENTRANCE OF LABYRINTH TO THE CENTER

This phase of the labyrinth walk is often called “releasing.” (The classic term is “purgation.”) Let go of what burdens you. Let go of the details of your life. This is an act of shedding thoughts and emotions. Allow your mind to empty and become quiet.

THE TIME SPENT AT THE CENTER

This phase of the labyrinth walk is often called “receiving.” (The classic term is “illumination.”) Spend some time and be open to what you may hear, feel, or experience. Stay there as long as you like. The center is a place of meditation and prayer. Receive what is there for you to receive.

THE WALK FROM THE CENTER OF LABYRINTH TO THE EXIT

This phase of the labyrinth walk is often called “returning.” (The classic term is “union.”) Express gratitude for the walk and for the insights you received, whether you are aware of these insights or not, at this point. Be open to thoughts or intuitions concerning



how you might integrate the labyrinth experience into your daily life as you leave the sacred space of the labyrinth. If you add to these steps some time for preparation before beginning a walk (e.g. reading some scripture, reading a meditation or a poem, reading a script for the walk, etc.) and some time following the walk for integrating your experience (e.g. journaling, doodling, sitting quietly beside the labyrinth, etc.) you really have a five-part walk.

1. Preparing
2. Releasing
3. Receiving
4. Returning
5. Integrating

These three-part or five-part structures will be helpful to you as you walk the labyrinth or as you develop materials to assist labyrinth walkers during Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and beyond.

OPEN LABYRINTH WALKS

Open labyrinth walks are just that: individuals or groups simply walk the labyrinth as they choose. Either no additional guidance is provided, or general guidance can be provided regarding the three or five parts of a labyrinth walk described earlier. One can be reminded that the labyrinth is a tool for prayer, reflection, contemplation, meditation, celebration, fun, problem solving, and personal growth. One may be reminded that the labyrinth often is seen as a metaphor, or a symbol, for the journey of life.

Lent is a good time to begin a new practice of daily or weekly labyrinth walking. A practice is more flexible than a discipline. A discipline is usually done at a certain time each day. There are specific methods or techniques to

LENT IS A TIME

to begin a new practice of daily
LABYRINTH WALKING.

enter into it. The practice of labyrinth walking is guided by what you need from the walk. Use a labyrinth when it calls you. When you want the benefits of a quiet mind, a prayerful heart, a release from controlling behavior, find your way to a labyrinth.

START SOMETHING NEW FOR LENT

This year don't give something up for Lent. This year start something new: the spiritual practice of walking the labyrinth daily or weekly. Every week during Lent and Holy Week begin a new, short meditation to guide your prayer, meditation, and labyrinth walk.

THEMED OR FOCUSED LABYRINTH WALKS

Themed, or focused labyrinth walks go a step beyond open labyrinth walks in providing suggested structure for walks. In addition, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter provides a wealth of material with which to focus labyrinth walks. For this reason, these periods are good times to encourage one to begin a practice of labyrinth walking.

For example, it might be suggested that one sit quietly, read a meditation, and then spend some time in reflection. Then choose a word or phrase from the meditation that particularly speaks to you and repeat that word or phrase as you walk the labyrinth. Or begin walking the labyrinth and see if a particular word or phrase from the meditation suddenly pops into your mind. If so, go with that and see where it leads.

Lenten Studies: This time of year publishers make available Lenten studies, particularly for use by classes and small groups. Each week's study topic could be used as a focus for labyrinth walks that week in the same manner as previously suggested.

Create your own: For your own personal Lenten practice, exercise your creativity and commit to writing a meditation for each week of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Use these meditations as themes for labyrinth walks, as described earlier.

JOURNEY



Also, perhaps a labyrinth walk or two would bring additional ideas to mind. Before you walk the labyrinth, simply set an intention for allowing creative ideas and then walk the labyrinth. Be careful that you don't program your walk regarding what you "should" receive. Simply walk with openness to new ideas, and respond to the gentle nudges and leadings of the Holy Spirit. When you finish your walk(s), spend some time beside the labyrinth making notes of any ideas that might have come to mind. Don't develop them or evaluate them at this point, just capture the ideas. What will you do with/about these ideas? These thoughts?

GUIDED WALKS

Guided labyrinth walks are very similar to themed or focused walks, except that much more structure is provided for each phase of the walk. A guided walk comes very close to being scripted, with suggested steps for each of the three or five aspects of the labyrinth walk. Thus, while developing a guided labyrinth walk(s) takes time, the benefits are priceless.

Regardless of the type of labyrinth walk you choose to emphasize as you begin your Lenten practice of daily or weekly labyrinth walking, you will find a rich supply of material available to you for ideas. Use your creativity, walk your labyrinth, and most importantly share your thoughts and ideas with friends and family.

THIS YEAR START

something new for Lent,
such as walking the labyrinth...

GUIDED LABYRINTH WALK

Background/Purpose

To provide a guided labyrinth walk, based on an appropriate Lectionary reading, suitable for the first week of Lent. Consider what follows to be suggestions or guidelines for a walk, not a prescription. The same guidelines may be used, whether an individual is physically walking a labyrinth or tracing a finger labyrinth.

PREPARATION: BEFORE THE WALK

- Read Matthew 4:1-11.
- Think about/reflect on/meditate on the temptation of Jesus as it relates to your understanding of and preparations for Lent.
- Think about/reflect on/meditate on how you handle temptations.
- Think about/reflect on/meditate on how you worship God, hear God, and serve God.

THE WALK

On the way in

- Allow the process of walking the labyrinth to help you quiet your mind and shed external thoughts, distractions and emotions.
- Focus on the phrase, "Worship the Lord, your God." (Matthew 4:10)
- Think about/reflect on/meditate on this phrase as you walk the labyrinth path in toward the center.
- Repeat the phrase silently or in a whisper. (Repeat the phrase aloud only if you are alone in the labyrinth or if this would not be a distraction to others who might be walking.)
- Repeat fragments of the phrase, or creative variations of the phrase, as they feel appropriate to you. (For example, "Worship the Lord," "Worship God," "Worship," "the Lord your God," "the Lord my God")

In the center

- Focus briefly on the phrase, "... by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)
- Meditate quietly and prayerfully on this phrase for a short time.
- Allow your mind to be calm and open to any thoughts, images, or fragments of intuition and insight that might come to you.
- Do not try to program or force anything. If nothing comes, accept that and just experience the quiet and safety of the sacred space in the center of the labyrinth.

On the way out

- Focus on the phrase, "... Serve only him," (Matthew 4:10) or "The devil left him, and angels came and took care of him." (Matthew 4:11)

- Meditate quietly and prayerfully on this phrase as you walk the path out of the labyrinth.
- Reflect on any thoughts or insights you had at the center, the meaning they have for your life, and how they may be integrated into your life.

AFTER THE WALK

- Think about/reflect on the total experience of your walk, as well as individual parts of the experience that might stand out in your mind.
- Write about or otherwise express (draw, doodle, etc) your reactions to your experience in your own journal and/or for the "Labyrinth Reflections" notebook. What metaphors or symbols for your life did the walk bring to mind?
- After the experience has had a few days to "settle," repeat the journaling process.

INSTRUCTIONS USING FINGER LABYRINTH



We invite you to use the Labyrinth for your Lenten Meditation

- Use your finger to follow the path of the Labyrinth
- Quiet your mind
- Pray for yourself or someone else
- Keep a question in mind and feel the question using your emotions

EXPLORING THE THREE PILLARS OF LENT: PRAYER, FASTING, & ALMSGIVING

FOR CHRISTIANS, Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday is the 40-day season of Lent in which we are invited to take part in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Known as the “three pillars of Lent,” we look upon these practices as ways to prepare ourselves for the experience of Resurrection, celebrated through Christ at Easter.

PRAYER

The first pillar of Lent is prayer. It makes sense that this pillar comes first as it is the cornerstone of our relationship with the Divine. Whether it's through the silent language of love or a professed set of words, prayer is our communication with Spirit — a sending and receiving of affection. It is contemplative and active, an exchange that requires both listening and responding.

Prayer being the initial pillar reminds us to keep first things first, to prioritize our relationship with the Source of All above all else. Everything flows from this. St. Teresa of Avila said “Authentic prayer changes us, unmasks us, strips us, indicates where growth is needed.” There are countless forms of prayer given the many ways we experience this sacred relationship. Some common themes include confession, petition, thanksgiving, intercession, and praise. Let us reflect upon each one for a moment.

Confession — A good way to enter into prayer is to first empty ourselves of whatever stands in the way of our relationship to the Redeemer. We might liken it to dealing with an “elephant in the room,” something that needs to be addressed before we can be at ease in this friendship. There is freedom in truth. When we take responsibility for ourselves and commit to making amends wherever needed, we take away sin's power to hurt us or others any further.

Petition — After taking time to search ourselves in truth, we can start to name what it is we need. Where are things difficult in our lives? Where might we need support? What troubles us? We can give voice to the desires that emerge and turn them over to our Higher Power, recognizing the limits of our control. Petitioning for help is a way of giving up resistance and surrendering to what is. It is a way of saying, “I can't do this alone,” and a reminder that we don't have to. We can ask for what we need.



Thanksgiving — As Meister Eckhart once conveyed, “If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.” Approaching each day with a spirit of gratitude fosters a life of contentment. When we take time to intentionally appreciate the ways in which we’ve been blessed, we remember that we are loved and supported by our Maker. Any point of gratitude will do, from a brief observation of the natural world to receiving a letter from a friend. No blessing in life is too small to recognize the meaning it brings.

Intercession — This practice reminds us we are not alone. While we pray only to God, we can commune with spirits on earth or in heaven and ask them to join us in prayer. Just as we might say to a friend, “please pray for me,” so too we can ask anyone who has gone before us to pray with us. Prayer is the communication of the soul and souls are eternal. So who do we want to bring into our prayer lives? Perhaps we welcome one of the saints, such as Francis, Clare, or Mary. Perhaps we invite a dearly beloved ancestor. Let us enjoy the company of others as we pray.

Praise — Some people interpret praise as expressing outwardly how wonderful the Almighty is. While it can be that, another way to understand what it means to offer praise is to quietly enter into a spirit of awe and wonder. When we attempt to comprehend how vast the Creator of the Cosmos is while also realizing the intimacy and preciousness of each living being, this too is a form of praise. This awareness may cause us to dance or sing or to simply sit in stillness, basking in the magnificence of it all.

As the forty days of Lent unfold, let us be intentional in taking time to nurture our relationship with God through prayer, however we might experience it. Prayer can open us up and enhance our connection to Spirit. It is a foundational piece of the journey we make on the way to experiencing Resurrection with Christ.

BLESSED

FASTING

Fasting is the second pillar of Lent. Many religions have a component of fasting as part of their spiritual practice. The experience of intentionally abstaining from something we normally use or enjoy brings about a mindfulness of our blessings and our need for self-control. It also makes room for something new to fill us.

As Christians we know that Jesus fasted. We also know he prayed “give us this day our daily bread.” He was acutely aware that to have what one needs for survival each day is no small thing. Despite the false sense of security our modern comforts provide, it is important that we too remember the fundamental needs all living beings require to exist.

For the purposes of deepening our sacred journey during Lent, let us contemplate what our daily “bread” is, whether actual food or another form of nourishment, and how we might regulate our consumption of it to bring into focus our reliance upon it.

Through the absence of these provisions we can grow in awareness that ultimately all sustenance comes from Our Creator. We are dependent creatures indeed.

Fasting is not for deprivation’s sake but for the purpose of fostering a positive change in us. In addition to reminding us of what we are grateful for in our lives, it can also empower us to remove that which blocks us from alignment with the Holy Spirit.

The discipline fasting calls for teaches us how to show up differently in our lives. For example, it might lead to a clearing away of that which no longer serves us or a redistribution of personal resources. Whatever the case, fasting can help us learn how to declutter our lives. When we remove the nonessentials, we discover a space within us where we can connect more deeply to Sacred Wisdom. Theologian Joan Chittister says, “Lent is the time to let life in again...” In order to do that we need to make room. Fasting can help with this.

"LENT IS A TIME
of going very deeply into ourselves...
What is it that stands between us and God?
Between us and our brothers and sisters?
Between us and life, the life of the Spirit?
Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out,
without a moment's hesitation."

— Catherine Doherty



ALMSGIVING

The final pillar of Lent is almsgiving. Now that we have set the foundation of our Lenten journey with prayer and we have carved out space for something new through fasting, we are ready to give thought to how we can share the gifts God has entrusted to us. Almsgiving is an intentional way to be charitable.

When considering how or what to give away this Lent, let's think of where our gifts intersect with the needs of society around us. How might we use a skill that comes naturally to us, or that we've been privileged enough to develop, in service of something that benefits others? Do we have resources, whether money or material, that could offer some support to someone? And what about time, a most precious offering? We all have been given the same amount of minutes in a day. How might we give some of those away to another in loving kindness?

Even the simplest of gestures makes a difference. To increase someone's joy, to stand in solidarity with another, to encourage someone in hope — all of these are contributions we can make for one another. St. Polycarp of Smyrna wrote "When you can do good, defer it not, because 'alms delivers from death.'" We lift one another out of hardship when we attune ourselves to the needs we are called to serve. Let us not delay in doing so.

Our almsgiving can be a way to honor the many times in life when someone has given us just what we needed to get through the next day, hour, or moment. We are a communal people, connected in the ebb and flow of challenge and grace. To give charitably to another in a spirit of compassion is to deposit more love into the world.

**ANOTHER WAY TO VIEW
THE CROSS —
A REFLECTION FOR HOLY
WEEK**

As Christians around the world enter Holy Week, I find myself considering the story of the crucifixion... again. The common belief that Jesus died for all — to pay for our sins so that we may be reconciled to God — has been a formula I've struggled with for some time. That kind of atonement theology does not satisfy my reasoning. As one who subscribes to a loving, life-giving, and merciful God, I reject the idea of a sadistic payoff being required to right all of humanity's wrongs. Maybe for some that notion works, giving them a place to go with guilt and unworthiness, but I cannot bless violence this way. For me, that image of God resembles an abusive parent which betrays every notion I've ever understood about what Divine Love looks like.

Instead, what resonates deeper with me is the idea that, in Jesus' unwarranted and horrific death, we see what sin looks like and just how very ugly and destructive it is — when we persecute, or assassinate, the innocent because their views differ from ours, or we don't like their perspective on God, or

we feel threatened by their transformative influence (albeit peaceful). And for some of us, we are simply complicit in this kind of maltreatment because we stand by and do nothing. So as I reflect upon the cross I ask God to “wake me up” to my transgressions, to where I contribute harm instead of help or hope, so that I may do better.

Did Jesus reconcile us to God? Indeed, in his earthly ministry spanning just three years he revealed an understanding of a God who is loving and approachable, vast yet intimate. He taught us radical new ways of practicing peace, mercy, and justice. He drew us into right relationship with God and each other. Was his actual death sacrificial? Of course, as we realize how far his love and integrity would go — that he was willing to risk his own life for what he believed and the truth he felt compelled to share. What a challenge for any Christian to consider: How long might I be willing to stand unwavering in my values and convictions?

There are different ways to view the cross. For me, when I contemplate it, I see how devastating sin can be and how far Love will go to reach us. I remember that Jesus gave all he had to give.



TRANSFORMATION THROUGH LOVE — A REFLECTION FOR EASTER

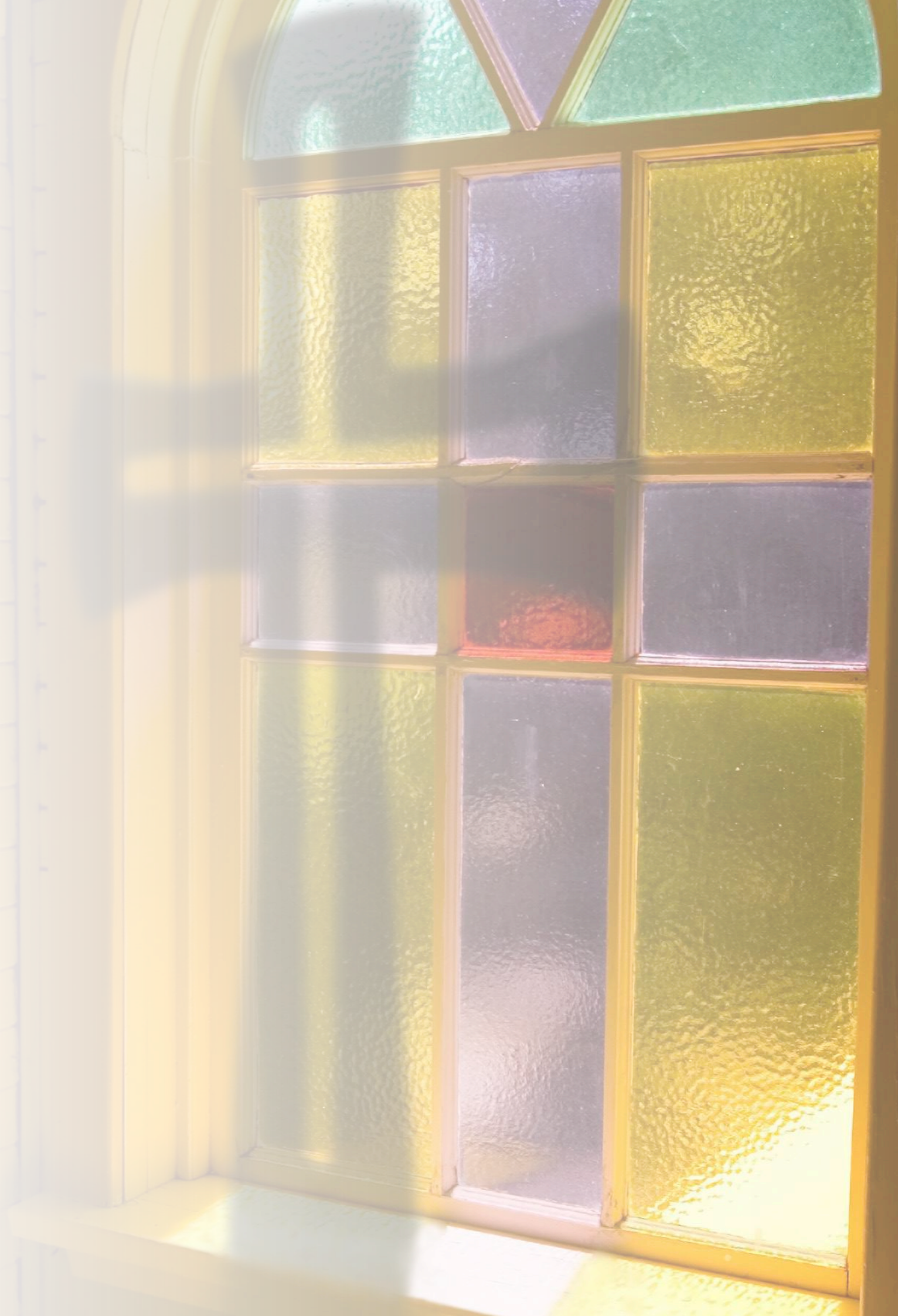
After taking the 40-day journey of Lent through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we arrive at the Easter Triduum, where the Paschal Mystery of Christ unfolds. In this mystery we confront again the reality that death and resurrection go together. We cannot experience one without the other. Through the example Jesus gave us in his living, dying, and rising, we trust that the grace of new life is available to everyone. All death can enter into the Divine Light that is Christ.

The Easter Season spans 50 days and is the most significant liturgical time for Christians as we joyfully celebrate that death does not have the last word. In fact, Jesus' mystical Resurrection reveals that there is no death, only transformation through Love. We might see this akin to the principal of the conservation of mass-energy in physics which states that matter and energy cannot be destroyed, only changed. We might recognize this pattern in the cycle of nature which brings forth new seedlings

each spring. God does not abandon us in our moments of death but rather lovingly leads us to "the life of the world to come."

Though Easter usually calls to mind the glory of the empty tomb on that amazing day, we can also remember that throughout the years of his earthly ministry Jesus consistently taught about peoples' potential for rebirth in everyday life. Author Richard Rohr, OFM, expresses in his book, *The Universal Christ*, that our crucifixions will be transformed by God. New life is constantly ready to emerge out of the rubble of all kinds of death — death of a way of life, death of a dream, death of a relationship, and even the death of a loved one. When we allow the new to rise up out of the ashes of our brokenness, we welcome the miracle of spiritual regeneration to heal and restore us. We are led out of our despair into hope, where we will be invited to sing the highest level of praise once again: Alleluia! Christ is risen indeed!

***Tammy Winn** will offer "Mystery of Suffering" via Zoom, see page 48 to learn more.*



LENTEN REFLECTIONS

WEEKLY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

WEEK 1: ASH WEDNESDAY

This week begin each day by lighting a candle of simplicity, praying, “God of light and life, help me to focus on what’s most important today. Turn my heart away from things and towards your grace and newness of life.”

[illegible]

WEEK 2: FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

This week begin each day by lighting a candle of repentance, praying, “God of mercy, help me change my life; let me love today with a wild and imaginative love, on earth as it is in heaven.”

[illegible]



WEEK 3: SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

This week begin each day by lighting a candle of salvation, praying, “God of grace, help me love what is mortal. Help me hold on to what needs to be embraced, let go of what needs to be let go – and have the wisdom to know the difference.”

[illegible]

WEEK 4: THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

This week begin each day by lighting a candle of courage, praying, “God of love, help me live today in ways that consecrate the world, defend the vulnerable, protect what is good, and honor creation.”the vulnerable, protect what is good, and honor creation.”

[illegible]

[illegible]

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or printed text on the page.





PALM SUNDAY

This week begin each day by
lighting a candle of praise,
praying, "God of glory, God of love,
help me praise you today in all I do and say."

[illegible]

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Today light a candle of love, praying,
“God of love, help my love become more tangible,
more luminous, more clear today – and every day.”

[illegible]

GOOD FRIDAY

Today light a candle of sorrow, praying, "God of mercy, forgive us. Break our hearts open, never to close again to the rest of the world."

[illegible]

EASTER SUNDAY

Risen and rising God, help us dare to pray,
dare to rise, dare to be a blazing lilly this
morning, and every morning. Hallelujah! Amen.

[illegible]

Examination of Conscience

A traditional Lenten practice is to engage in an *Examination of Conscience*. A simple review of your life, your behaviors and attitudes can be a cathartic and enriching exercise. It can help bring focus and clarity, as well as an urging to conversion and transformation.

Think about the following statements in terms of “me/I” – and write the first thing that comes to mind...don’t overthink your responses:

The most destructive habit	
The greatest joy	
The greatest loss	
The most satisfying work	
The ugliest personality trait	
The most underutilized resource	
The greatest “shot in the arm”	
The greatest problem to overcome	
The most powerful force in life	
The most crippling failure	
The greatest comfort	
The worst thing to be without	
The greatest asset	
The two most powerful words	
The deadliest weapon	
The most beautiful attire	
The least effective emotion	
The most prized possession	
The most powerful channel of	

A TRADITIONAL LENTEN

practice is to engage in an
EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.



ABOUT TAU CENTER

Established in 2008 by the Wheaton Franciscans, who live intentionally as a presence of blessing in our world, the Tau Center is committed to the transformation of our world by helping individuals awaken to the sacredness of life.

In the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, Tau Center provides a peaceful and reflective environment for people seeking a deeper relationship with God, self, others and all of Creation.

Through the integration of body, mind and spirit, Tau Center is committed to offering diverse

experiences where individuals can nourish their spirit, find companions on their journey, and connect what they discover to meaning in their life and the world around them.

We offer a sacred space to assist individuals on their own spiritual journey – whether it is to reconnect with their inner-spirit or whether they are seeking a deeper relationship with God and the world around them. Our programs encourage an awakening of the spirit that leads to hope, healing, peace and transformation.

PROGRAMS AND OFFERINGS

Self - Compassion as a Path to Forgiveness — A Guided Reflection with Karen Bychowski

About this event:

Wednesday, March 16

7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (CST) -

ONLINE via Zoom

"For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."
– John 3:16

Most of us recognize this scripture, but how do we actually live this in our day to day? How often do we get trapped in the cycle of judging ourselves, criticizing ourselves? Holding ourselves hostage to all our past mistakes and transgressions, instead of fully accepting the sacrifice of Jesus and the love of God?

During this guided reflection, we'll explore what it means to practice self-compassion, and how the path of self-compassion can lead us on a journey of greater acceptance of our humanness, and a fuller experience of God's love and mercy for us.

Three Levels of Listening: A Path to Deeper Connection and Understanding — A Guided Reflection with Karen Bychowski

About this event:

Wednesday, March 30

7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (CST) -

ONLINE via Zoom

"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.. and the crowd was astounded and amazed." Acts 2:4-7

We live in a noisy world, but how often do we truly listen... to ourselves? To each other? To God? How often does this lack of listening lead to a sense of misunderstanding or separation?

During this guided reflection, we'll explore three levels of listening, and how we might use these levels to gain a deeper connection with and understanding of ourselves, each other, and God.

**TO REGISTER FOR
PROGRAMS PLEASE VISIT
WWW.TAUCENTER.ORG**

About our Facilitator, Karen Bychowski

For nearly 20 years, Karen Bychowski spent much of her time traveling around the United States and across the world, helping large organizations navigate change as part of her work with a Global Fortune 100 Consulting Company, before making the transition in 2019 to focus on coaching and facilitation. Her experience includes individual and team coaching, across levels, as well as leadership workshop facilitation.

Karen is passionate about helping others design and live out the most inspired vision for themselves and considers each person's values, talents, goals, and purpose. She completed robust coaching training at the Hudson Institute of Coaching, is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) through the International Coaching Federation and is a Gallup-Certified CliftonStrengths Coach. She received her BA from the University of Illinois and her MS from Loyola University Chicago.

PROGRAMS AND OFFERINGS

The Mystery of Suffering — Where Can We Go with Pain?

*Three Session Lenten
Reflection Series,
featuring the work of
Richard Rohr*

About this event
Thursday, March 10, 17, 24
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (CST) -
ONLINE via Zoom

*Facilitated by Tammy Winn
Bocher*

***“If we do not transform our
pain, we will most assuredly
transmit it.” — Richard Rohr***

Join us in a **three-part series** wherein we will reflect upon short writings by Franciscan friar and ecumenical teacher Richard Rohr. We will consider with one another what these texts have to say as we contemplate the personal and universal mystery of suffering, including that of the crucified Christ.

This intentional time will be one of sharing, prayer, and gathering insights for encouragement to help us integrate the pain we all encounter on the path of living and loving.

**One time registration for all
three sessions required by
noon March 3, 2022**

Program participants will be sent the three required readings via email, one PDF for each session, along with zoom instructions.

Tammy Winn Bocher holds a graduate degree in Religious Studies, with a deep appreciation for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. She provides spiritual nourishment as a recording artist, contemplative writer, and presenter. Additionally, Tammy has experience teaching theology and working in parish ministries. For more information, visit www.TammyWinn.com.

**TO REGISTER FOR
PROGRAMS PLEASE VISIT
WWW.TAUCENTER.ORG**

WHEATON FRANCISCAN LENTEN OFFERINGS

TAIZE
(LIVESTREAM)
MARCH 11 / 7 p.m.

**STATIONS OF
THE CROSS**
(LIVESTREAM)
APRIL 8 / 7 p.m.

LIVE STREAM LENTEN LITURGY

**TO LEARN MORE PLEASE VISIT
WWW.WHEATONFRANCISCAN.ORG**

POETRY OF EASTER

Morning Poem

by Mary Oliver

Every morning
the world
is created.
Under the orange
sticks of the sun
the heaped
ashes of the night
turn into leaves again
and fasten themselves
to the high branches—
and the ponds appear
like black cloth
on which are painted
islands
of summer lilies.
If it is your nature
to be happy
you will swim away
along the soft trails
for hours, your
imagination
alighting everywhere.
And if your spirit
carries within it

the thorn
that is heavier than
lead—
if it's all you can do
to keep on trudging—

there is still
somewhere deep within
you
a beast shouting that
the earth
is exactly what it
wanted—

each pond with its
blazing lilies
is a prayer heard and
answered
lavishly,
every morning,

whether or not
you have ever dared to
be happy,
whether or not
you have ever dared to
pray.

Swan

by Mary Oliver

Did you too see it, drifting, all night, on the black river?
Did you see it in the morning, rising into the silvery air —
An armful of white blossoms,
A perfect commotion of silk and linen as it leaned
into the bondage of its wings; a snowbank, a bank of lilies,
Biting the air with its black beak?
Did you hear it, fluting and whistling
A shrill dark music — like the rain pelting the trees — like a
waterfall
Knifing down the black ledges?
And did you see it, finally, just under the clouds —
A white cross Streaming across the sky, its feet
Like black leaves, its wings Like the stretching light of the
river?
And did you feel it, in your heart, how it pertained to
everything?
And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for?
And have you changed your life?

STILL POINT

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A spirituality ministry of the Wheaton Franciscans

THE JOURNEY OF LENT

SPRING 2022

