

the paths of hope

Fratelli tutti §55

given in Assisi, at the tomb of Saint Francis, on 3 October 2020, the eighth of my Pontificate.

re-creation in Lent for the Parish of the Holy Family
using pointers from

Fratelli tutti Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis on Fraternity and Social Friendship
First Readings at Mass during Lent

Prayers compiled by Sister Judith Sutera OSB ©2010 Mount Saint Scolastica, Inc.
Observations made by Paulo Coelho in *The Alchemist*

**Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,
so that we may discover anew
that all are important and all are necessary,
different faces of the one humanity
that God so loves. Amen.**



Dear Parishioners,

Clearly, Lent 2021 will be more of a challenge than Lent has been in previous years! Our usual Day of Reflection at Buckfast, Stations of the Cross and other additional liturgies have been curtailed by the mantra *stay at home*. I have, then, put together a proposal for a parish *Lent at Home* under the heading *the paths of hope*, a phrase from Pope Francis' latest Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli tutti*, "*Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.*" (§55)

Just as **JOY** was our word for Advent, let **HOPE** be our anchor word for Lent.

In the booklet, you will see on the front page a prayer to be used daily during Lent, 'Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty.' On each page following, you will see the pattern: ❶ an excerpt from a First Reading; ❷ words from *Fratelli tutti*; ❸ a thought from Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* and ❹ a picture for pondering. At the foot of each page is a prayer beginning either '*Merciful and loving God*', '*Forgiving God*', '*All-powerful God*', '*God of power and might*' or '*All-loving God*' – all calling on the God we meet as we '*advance along the paths of hope*'.

Please, if you wish, use each page for a week's reflection and prayer beginning, The First Sunday of Lent, The Second Sunday of Lent, etc. Above all, take it slowly, as I think each page gives us a lot to think about!

Another suggestion is that we all, as far as possible read *Fratelli tutti* and/or *The Alchemist*.

There is a Kindle edition of the *Alchemist* (Amazon £11.49.) and a Mass Market Paperback (Amazon £5.99.)

Pope Francis' Encyclical *Fratelli tutti* can be read (in English!) on the Vatican website : [www.vatican.va > francesco > encyclicals > documents](http://www.vatican.va/francesco/encyclicals/documents)

It is also available from Amazon (paperback £8.99. and Kindle £3.99.)



Let's have a **DLB** (DISTANCED-LENTEN-BOOKCLUB) in the parish along the lines St. Benedict proposes in his Rule:

'During the days of Lent, they should devote themselves to reading from the morning until the end of the third hour; and from then until the tenth hour they should do the work assigned to them. In these days of Lent they should each receive a book from the library, to be read straight through in its entirety. These books are to be given out at the beginning of Lent.' (RB 48)

God bless you all.

Happy Lent!!

Fr Philip

From the First Reading on Ash Wednesday

(Joel 2:12-18)

INTRODUCING LENT

“Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks – come back to me with all your heart turn to the Lord your God again, for he is all tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, and ready to relent.”

It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Fraternity between all men and women. *“Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together”.* Address at the Ecumenical and Interreligious Meeting with Young People, Skopje, North Macedonia (7 May 2019)

Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.

Fratelli tutti §8



I don't live in either my past or my future. I'm interested only in the present. If you can concentrate always on the present, you'll be a happy man. Life will be a party for you, a grand festival, because life is the moment we're living now.

Paulo Coelho *The Alchemist*

Merciful and loving God, I know that, no matter how many times I fall, you are always waiting to lift me up and hold me. When I feel most unlovable, show me your love. When I feel I cannot face you, help me to see your compassionate face looking kindly at me. Keep me from all fear and despair as I make my way slowly and awkwardly toward you this Lent.

From the First Reading of the First Sunday of Lent (Genesis 9:8-15)

WEEK 1

God spoke to Noah and his sons,

“... When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh.”

True wisdom demands an encounter with reality. Today, however, everything can be created, disguised and altered. A direct encounter even with the fringes of reality can thus prove intolerable. A mechanism of selection then comes into play, whereby I can immediately separate likes from dislikes, what I consider attractive from what I deem distasteful. In the same way, we can choose the people with whom we wish to share our world. Persons or situations we find unpleasant or disagreeable are simply deleted in today's virtual networks; a virtual circle is then created, isolating us from the real world in which we are living.

Fratelli tutti §47



The wise men understood that this natural world is only an image and a copy of paradise. The existence of this world is simply a guarantee that there exists a world that is perfect. God created the world so that, through its visible objects, men could understand his spiritual teachings and the marvels of this wisdom.

Paulo Coelho *The Alchemist*

Forgiving God, you already know all my failings, but I must face them and acknowledge them. I am truly sorry for all that I have done that was not as you would have wanted me to do. Sprinkle me with the healing waters of your mercy as I promise to go forward in holiness and abandon sinful ways. Bless in a special way all those whom I have hurt by my actions.

From the First Reading of the Second Sunday of Lent (Gen. 22:1-2,9-13,15-18)

WEEK 2

God put Abraham to the test.

“Take your son,” God said “your only child Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you.”

When they arrived at the place God had pointed out to him, Abraham built an altar there, and arranged the wood. Then he bound his son Isaac and put him on the altar on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and seized the knife to kill his son.

The spiritual stature of a person’s life is measured by love, which in the end remains *“the criterion for the definitive decision about a human life’s worth or lack thereof”*. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25 December 2005) §230. **Fratelli tutti §92**

What’s the world’s greatest lie? It’s this: that as a certain point in our lives we lose control of what’s happening to us and our lives become controlled by fate.

Paulo Coelho *The Alchemist*



All-powerful God, help me to pray as your Son, Jesus, and his mother, Mary, did, that everything be done according to your will. Help me to find something good in all that happens, even if it is not what I wanted to happen. I offer my sufferings and disappointments for all who are suffering more intensely and are more in want than I am.

From the First Reading of the Third Sunday of Lent (Exodus 20:1-17)

WEEK 3

God spoke all these words. He said, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no gods except me."

In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference, born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all in the same boat.

Fratelli tutti §30

Tell your heart that the fear of suffering is worse than the suffering itself. And that no heart has suffered when it goes in search of dreams, because every second of the search is a second's encounter with God and with eternity.

Paulo Coelho *The Alchemist*



*'And God said love me,
love them, and love it,
and don't forget to love yourself.'*

Mr God, this is Anna.

The true story of a very special friendship by Fynn

Maybe the best kind of love is the kind where you sit on the sofa together, not saying a word, and walk away feeling it was the best conversation you ever had. Anon

God of power and might, I know that I am but one tiny bit of your creation. Help me to remember that you still hold me as precious. Bless the lowly of our world, the helpless, the persecuted, the abandoned. Help me to see myself in true perspective, to recognise both my insignificance and your merciful love. May I offer my gifts generously, simple as they are, and rejoice in serving others.

From the First Reading of the Fourth Sunday of Lent (2 Chron. 36:14-16,19-23)

WEEK 4

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added infidelity to infidelityThe Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets.

"... At times, the frantic pace of the modern world prevents us from listening attentively to what another person is saying. Halfway through, we interrupt him and want to contradict what he has not even finished saying. We must not lose our ability to listen. Saint Francis heard the voice of God, he heard the voice of the poor, he heard the voice of the infirm and he heard the voice of nature. He made of them a way of life. My desire is that the seed that Saint Francis planted may grow in the hearts of many". From the film *Pope Francis: A Man of His Word*,

by Wim Wenders (2018).

Fratelli tutti §48



People are afraid to pursue their most important dreams, because they feel that they don't deserve them, or that they'll be unable to achieve them.

Paulo Coelho *The Alchemist*

O master, grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love with all my soul.

attributed to St Francis



Merciful God, even in the ultimate persecution of crucifixion, your Son not only endured but forgave. Place in my heart the strength to accept injury and the grace to forgive. Bless all those who are tortured by others, and those who torture themselves with feelings of hatred for those who have hurt them.

From the First Reading of the Fifth Sunday of Lent (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

WEEK 5

“See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel ... but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine this is the covenant I will make deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people.”

I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfilment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile”. *Greeting to Young People at the Padre Félix Varela Cultural Centre, Havana, Cuba (20 September 2015)*

Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.

Fratelli tutti §55

Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.



When you are loved, you can do anything in creation. When you are loved, there's no need at all to understand what's happening, because everything happens within you.

Paulo Coelho *The Alchemist*

All-loving God, help me to always want what you want. As Lent ends, I place my eager efforts before you, not in fear that I am inadequate but as a free expression of my love. Thank you for all you have given me. May I ever be motivated by gratitude and the joy of being loved.