



PALM SUNDAY 2023

Stay with me

Reflection and Prayer for Lent with Sunday readings and spiritual teachers from our Catholic tradition - Saints Benedict, Jean Pierre de Caussade and Therese Lisieux

SIGN OF THE CROSS.

Lord, help us to wait and to stay with you.

FROM THE READINGS

First Reading: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!

Matthew 21:9

Gospel: After the psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away from me tonight, for the scripture says: I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered, but after my resurrection I shall go ahead of you to Galilee.' At this, Peter said to him, 'Even if all fall away from you, I will never fall away.' Jesus answered him, 'In truth I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times.' Peter said to him, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the disciples said the same. Then Jesus came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Stay here while I go over there to pray.' He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And he began to feel sadness and anguish.

Then he said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and stay awake with me.' And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. 'My Father,' he said, 'if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.' He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, 'So you had not the strength to stay awake with me for one hour? Stay awake, and pray not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak. Again, a second time, he went away and prayed: 'My Father,' he said, 'if this cup cannot pass by, but I must drink it, your will be done!' And he came back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words. Then he came back to the disciples and said to them, 'You can sleep on now and have your rest. Look, the hour has come when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! My betrayer is already close at hand.'

Matthew 26:30-46 from Palm Sunday Gospel Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

FROM SAINT BENEDICT OF NURSIA 480-547

Benedict left a comfortable life to be a hermit in a cave at Subiaco. Others came and asked him to be Abbot for a community. His *Rule* for monastic life, grounded in the Scriptures, formed a foundation for many monastic communities to follow.

They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other (Rom 12:10), supporting with great patience one another's weaknesses, both of body and behaviours, and eagerly competing with one another in obedience. No one is to pursue what he thinks is better for himself, but only what he deems better for someone else. The brothers demonstrate pure love to one another, loving fear to God, sincere and humble love to their abbot. Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us altogether to everlasting life. Rule 72

————— JEAN PIERRE DE CAUSSADE 1675 – 1751 —————

Born in France, Jean became a Jesuit priest and school teacher. He was a wise spiritual guide, who led retreats and conferences for Presentation Order religious sisters. His book on prayer, *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, is sometimes called *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*.

What God does is like the front of a lovely tapestry. The worker creating the tapestry sees only the back as he stitches with his needle, but all those stitches are creating a splendid picture, the great beauty of which appears only when every stitch is done, and only from the other side. Abandonment.

The one thing necessary is always to be found by the soul in the present moment ... What God arranges for us to experience at each moment is the best and holiest thing that could happen to us ... God is working in every single event, at every moment of our lives.

A summary of Jean Pierre's teaching on the 'Sacrament of the Present Moment' in *Abandonment*.

————— SAINT THERESE OF LISIEUX 1873-1897 —————

Therese was born in 1873 to a loving French family. She joined the Discalced Carmelites* at Lisieux where she lived quietly. Before dying of tuberculosis at age 24, Therese was asked to write a story of her life (*Story of a Soul*). Therese's spirituality, based on small acts of love, simplicity and trust in God, has inspired many.

Prayer for me is an upward leap of the heart, an untroubled glance towards heaven, a grateful and loving cry from the deepest depth of sorrow as well as from the height of joy. Its supernatural grandeur enlarges the soul and unites the soul with God. The Story of a Soul

Never before have I felt so strongly how gentle and merciful God is, for he sent me this cross at precisely the time I was strong enough to bear it. At any other time, it would have disheartened me, but now it merely removes all natural satisfaction from my longing for heaven. The Story of a Soul

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

- **Ask** for God's guidance.
- **Read** the scripture passages and words of St Benedict, Jean Pierre de Caussade and St Therese, aloud or silently.
- **Reflect and pray**, stopping to ponder any 'stand out' words or phrases. 10 mins
- **Respond** 10-15 mins
 - Individuals: Write or sit quietly with your reflections.
 - Groups: Share your responses and listen to others. 2-3 mins each
 - o What stands out for you?
 - o What do you want to take with you?
- **Express a hope for the future.**

PRAYER OF ABANDONMENT

You, Lord, are all I want or need.

Use this little creature as you wish.

Everything is yours, is from you and for you.

I no longer have anything to tend or to do.

Not a single moment is mine to control for it is all yours.

Amen.

Prayer of Jean Pierre de Caussade



Prepared for Lent Year A 2025 for the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst, PO Box 201 Bendigo, Vic. 3550
Email: adultfaith@sandhurst.catholic.org.au To learn more about the life and teaching of Saints
Benedict, Jean Pierre de Caussade and Therese of Lisieux, St Benedict of Nursia *The Rule*, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/benedict/>; M. Gibbard, 'De Caussade' in *Study of Spirituality* (London: SPCK, 1986); J. P. de
Caussade, *Self Abandonment to Divine Providence* <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/decaussade/>; St Therese
of Lisieux, <https://www.carmelite.org/carmelite-spirituality/saints-of-carmel/>
*Disalced' means 'without shoes', as simple sandals were worn.