

A LENTEN JOURNEY THROUGH THE DESERT OF POVERTY



Previous week: Trapped in the Cycle – walk a day in the shoes of someone in poverty (March 31-April 6)

This week: Inspirational People (April 7-13)

EDUCATION

REFLECTION

CHALLENGE

SUNDAY

Julia Greeley

Julia Greeley was born into slavery and treated very poorly causing blindness in one eye. Despite being treated terribly by slave owners, when Julia became free she decided to become Catholic and devoted the rest of her life to helping the poor. Despite her own poverty, she spent most of her time collecting food, clothing and goods for the poor. She would do the majority of her work at night to avoid embarrassing the people she was helping.

How is God calling you to give in secret? What motivates you to give? Julia was treated unjustly however treated others with love. Is there someone you need to forgive or a judgment you need to release in order to freely love and extend help?

Do a random act of kindness or charity for someone today. Make sure you do it in secret.

Attend Father Bills Lenten talk at SJM

MONDAY

St. Oscar Romero

St. Oscar Romero was the Archbishop of San Salvador and spoke out against the government repression in the time leading up to El Salvador's civil war. Romero realized the need to advocate for the oppressed after his close friend Fr. Rutilio Grande was assassinated for working to uplift the poor. Romero is a martyr, killed during Mass after delivering a homily that called on Salvadoran soldiers to stop carrying out government orders that violated human dignity.

sides with one social class. What we do is invite social classes, rich and poor, without distinction, saying to everyone let us take seriously the cause of the poor as though it were our own". - Oscar Romero

When thinking about the poor do I actually put a face behind those that are affected or do I keep them at arms distance? Do I have the courage to speak up against injustices? Reflect on what keeps you from speaking up and ask God to help remove that barrier so you are more confident to speak God's truth regardless of consequences.

Finish this sentence " Like Oscar Romero I stand up for justice when..." Hang your quote somewhere it will inspire you to act.

TUESDAY

Cesar Chavez

Cesar Chavez was a Mexican American farm worker that grew up in poverty. As an adult, a priest encouraged Chavez to train as a community organizer and use his Catholic faith to work for justice. The work of Cesar Chavez was crucial in securing just working & living conditions for Latino migrant laborers. He stressed nonviolent methods including boycotts, marches and hunger strikes. For over 30 years Cesar devoted himself to some of the poorest workers in America and succeeded in raising salaries & improving working conditions.

sick, as a humble prayer to God?

"In giving of yourself, you will discover a whole new life full of meaning and love." -Cesar Chavez

Have you ever cared about something enough to protest? What was it that pushed you? Is God pushing you to take a stronger stance on some issues? Are you uncomfortable with outward protest? If so what is it that causes you to be uncomfortable? How can nonviolent ways of protesting be used to lift the voices of the poor and our Catholic faith?

Fast or eat minimally today In honor of Cesar Chavez and the many times he participated in food strikes to help others while he sacrificed his own health and well being.

WEDNESDAY

St. Damien of Molokai

St. Damien of Molokai was known for his love and compassion towards those with leprosy. Originally from rural Belgium, he joined a religious order and was moved to Hawaii. St. Damien addressed the spiritual and medical needs of the lepers who were isolated from society & forced to live on a separate island. He improved water and food supplies, housing and founded two orphanages. He worked for the community until the end, eventually dying of leprosy himself.

“My greatest pleasure is to serve the Lord and his poor children rejected by other people.” St. Damien of Molokai

What groups of people does our society reject? What groups do you struggle in accepting? Ask God to replace the rejection with compassion.

“But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret.”

Matthew 6:3-4.

Make eye contact with all those you come in contact with, even those that make you uncomfortable. Seek to hug someone or comfort someone new this week. When you smile at a stranger, let that smile reach your eyes.

THURSDAY

Sister Norma Pimentel

Sister Norma is a member of the Missionaries of Jesus. She was born to two immigrants and lived in Brownsville TX. For 12 years she has been the executive director of Catholic Charities in Rio Grand Valley. Furthermore for 30 years she has been one of the most important advocates for immigrants in our country. In 2014 she responded to God's call without hesitation by setting up a shelter for refugees. She is fundamental in bringing the community together even people who disagree. She believes in restoring the dignity of all humans. She sees her “work” as a calling

“ May we be transformed to be agents of mercy, seeking to protect, defend and uphold the dignity of all people. No matter where they come from, what color they are, or what language they speak my faith teaches me that every life has value. I am to love my neighbor as much as I love myself and show compassion and tenderness to those in need. That is my call” Sr.Norma Pimentel

Do you tend to focus on weaknesses instead of positives? Reflect on the strengths and dignity that God gave each one of us. Pray to be able to show love and mercy to all God's people.

“When we speak for the poor, please note that we do not take

Think of people in your life that work with the poor and or advocate on their behalf. Write down characteristics of them and use it has a motivator for yourself.

FRIDAY

St. Martin de Porres

St. Martin de Porres was praised for his unconditional medical and spiritual care of all people, regardless of race and wealth. Born in Peru of a freed slave and a Spanish gentleman, Martin endured ridicule and exclusion due to his mixed race. Trained in the medical arts in his youth, as a Dominican lay brother, Martin worked in the infirmary where he encompassed the virtues to care for and comfort the sick, in the most difficult of situations. Martin's life reflected his great love for God and all of God's gifts.

“Compassion my dear Brother, is preferable to cleanliness. Reflect that, with a little soap, I can easily clean my bed covers but even with a torrent of tears, I would never wash from my soul the stain that my harshness toward the unfortunate would create.”

- St. Martin de Porres

Have you ever felt your intelligence, skills or worth have been judged simply by the look of you or where you came from? Have you ever done this to another? How can we let the judgment of the world be inconsequential in our lives and, instead of growing bitter, offer everything we do, from sweeping the floor to caring for the

Like St. Martin de Porres, try not to let the precept of obedience to the world's rules take precedence over being merciful in both your actions and your words. Before speaking to anyone today, force yourself to pause and ask yourself, “Am I so focused on being right that I'm forgetting to be kind?”

SATURDAY

Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, promoted justice for the poor. Day is a model of radical conversion - she spent her young adult years as atheist. She allowed her faith to influence all areas of her life, especially her social and political activism. Even when rejected by her political allies, she refused to separate her fight for justice from the Catholic faith. Inspired by the Gospel, she opened hospitality homes where the homeless and forsaken would always be welcomed.

“I'm sure that God did not intend that there be so many poor. The class structure is of our making and our consent, not His. It is the way we have arranged it and it is up to us to change it.” -Dorothy Day

How do I let my faith influence my life? Do I allow it to influence all aspects or just some? Do I withdraw into my protective cocoon and ignore the world around me, or am I willing to open my eyes and ears and look around?

Go to the margins today. See that someone is cold today and send that contribution to the St. Patrick Center. See that someone is hungry and drop off your groceries at the food pantry. Pray for the grace to see Christ's face in everyone and the boldness to align your fight for justice in your faith.