

# Homily Themes

## Lent through Easter Sunday, Year B

*Theme is Change our Hearts!*

*Theme song for all Lenten weekend masses: Gather #493, Change our Hearts*

**WEDNESDAY Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday**

*“Even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart.” (Joel 2: 12)*

Today’s first reading reminds us that the core of who we are, resides in our hearts. If we want to be faithful to the Lord, it has to take root in our hearts. It has to be sustained by our heart’s longing for the Lord’s love and grace. Our contrition has to be pumped through every cell of our being by our hearts. It has to be heartfelt! Ashes are an external reminder of this interior conversion of heart that begins in a conscious manner today.

**Liturgical Art & Environment: A Big Purple Heart**

**Feb. 17/18 First Sunday of Lent**

*“The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news.” (Mark 1: 15)*

Repentance is key during our Lenten journey. But repentance can’t be superficial or motivated out of a sense of fearing Hell. No, repentance, if it’s to be lasting and genuine, has to be motivated by the love of God that we feel in our hearts. It has to be motivated by a deep down heartfelt desire to return God’s love in generous acts of service. It involves rejoicing in the good news that God loves us and saves us.

**Liturgical Art & Environment:** the same purple heart from Ash Wednesday.

**Feb 24/25 Second Sunday of Lent**

*“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? (Romans 8: 35a)*

Great question from St. Paul! His point is that God doesn’t want such a separation. It us human beings who place obstacles in the way of God’s love. When are we going to remove those obstacles so that God’s love flowing freely from his heart may course as well in ours?

**Liturgical Art & Environment:** A smaller heart that goes over the purple heart in a shade of purple or blue)

**Mar. 2/3 Third Sunday of Lent (because of RCIA first scrutiny, the readings for this Sunday are taken from cycle A.)**

***“Hope does not disappoint us because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” (Romans 5: 5)***

Yes, St. Paul argues that justification by faith leads to peace with God through Christ, which enables us to have hope of sharing in God’s glory. Such a realization gives us an experience of the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

**Liturgical Art & Environment:** Another heart smaller than the first two in a shade of purple or blue overlaid on the first two.

**Mar. 9/10 Fourth Sunday of Lent (because of RCIA second scrutiny, the readings for this Sunday are taken from cycle A.)**

***“The Lord does not see as the human sees; the human looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16: 7b)***

The Lord looks on the heart! He looks at what’s really deep down inside of us. He’s not impressed at all with outward displays of faithfulness if our inner disposition doesn’t match. God chooses those who have a soft heart, a malleable heart, a heart open to doing God’s will to bring him glory!

**Liturgical Art & Environment:** Another heart smaller than the first three in a pink or rose overlaying the others. This is Laetare Sunday, the Sunday of rejoicing that the Resurrection of the Lord is coming soon!

**Mar. 16/17 Fifth Sunday of Lent (because of RCIA third scrutiny, the readings for this Sunday are taken from cycle A.) THIS IS ALSO SOLIDARITY SUNDAY FOR DEVELOPMENT & PEACE ANNUAL COLLECTION.**

***“Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him (referring to Lazarus).’ ” (John 11: 35-36)***

In one of the most heartfelt stories in the Gospels, Jesus weeps over the death of his friend Lazarus. He wasn’t immune from the human emotion of grieving. And that grief affected him to the core of his heart. His tears were an outward expression of his love for Lazarus. Do we love the Lord in the same way? Do we realize that the sins we commit are like little deaths, that grieve our Lord? Additionally, when we don’t grieve and take action against corporations in the rural south that exploit poor migrant farmers, we offend the Lord who grieves over their exploitation.

**Liturgical Art & Environment:** Another heart smaller than the rest a shade of purple or blue overlaying the others.

**March 23/24 Palm Sunday (We're back to Year B readings.)**

*“Morning by morning he wakens –wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord has opened my ear and I was not rebellious. I did not turn backward. I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.” (Isaiah 50: 4b-5)*

A good sign that our hearts are attuned to the Lord is having an openness of mind, body and spirit to the sacrifices God sometimes asks us to make. We take heart in God's sacrifice on the cross for us, as we remember his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the events that led to Jesus' crucifixion on the cross.

**Liturgical Art & Environment: Red heart smaller than the rest and overlaid on them, surrounded by palm fronds.**

**THE SACRED TRIDUUM FOLLOWS:**

**Thursday March 28 Holy Thursday**

*“Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” (John 13: 1b)*

Yes, to the end, Jesus continued to love all of his disciples, even those who would betray him or deny him or run away from the cross. Jesus' love was expressed in serving the needs of his disciples. He asks us to have hearts full of servant love for all.

**Liturgical Art & Environment: Keep the heart display up. Surround it with towels and basins for the foot washing ceremony.**

**Friday March 29 Good Friday**

*“One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.” (John 19: 34)*

Jesus death showed the extent of his love for us sinners! The shedding of his precious blood is the proof of that love, and the evidence that our sins have been forgiven and our lives redeemed! Let us give our hearts in love to this Holy Redeemer for whom our church is named.

**March 30/31 Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday NEW THEME SONG FOR EASTER  
BEGINS TODAY: #624 in Gather, 'Lift up your Hearts'**

*(No particular scripture is emphasized today.)*

This Easter Vigil, we celebrate how the Lord has changed our hearts during our journey of Lent! We rejoice and are glad that the Lord has given us hearts ready to believe in him, to hope in his saving Word and to love him and all of God's people superabundantly!

**Liturgical Art & Environment** In addition to the flowers and waters of baptism decorating our church, we will have a big white heart in front of the altar! With each subsequent week of Easter, we will add pastel colors of rejoicing to this heart!