

# Conversion of Heart

Lenten Reflections on Mercy and Forgiveness

Week 5

READINGS: *Isaiah 43:16–21; Philippians 3:8–14; John 8:1–11*

## We are not alone

Today's Gospel calls to mind the power of community. The woman caught in the act of adultery was persecuted by the mob, thus representing the negative side of communal power. Then, Jesus incites his brilliant gift of reason into the angry mob, and, just like that, they disappear. None remain except the one sinner and her savior, the most powerful community of good that one can attain.

In Christ, we form part of the union of his greater community known as the Communion of Saints. In this group we find great holy members of the Faith like

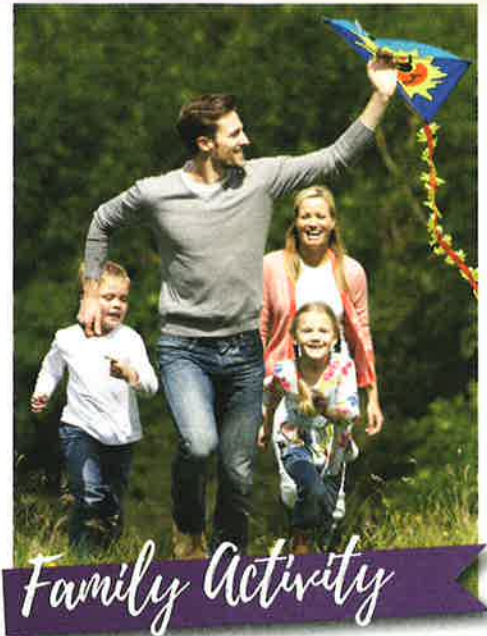
St. Thérèse and St. John of the Cross as well as lesser-known inhabitants of the heavenly homeland such as deceased family members. Furthermore, this community includes us, the Church Militant, who strive for holiness as we make it through our earthly journey.

The Gospel reminds us that in our times of most need Jesus is present. Not only is he present, but so are the rest of his children,

those whom we call saints. May we never forget that such a powerful community for good is constantly in our corner. We need only to call upon them for help.

“Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her”

(Jn 8:7).



## Family Activity

### Memories that last forever

The unity of families is the bedrock of society. Without the fusion of our family bonds, it is harder to learn how to love, serve, and appreciate the loving care of others. This week, do something special to show your family that they are loved. Write them a letter, take them out to eat, or escape on a family fun night. Do something out of the ordinary and create a memory that will last forever.

## For Reflection

- › How often do you call on God for spiritual guidance?
- › Which saint do you most often ask for intercession?
- › With whom do you share your spiritual joys and fears?





## Catechism Chat

“The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others” (1434).

## Fasting TIPS

If you are traveling in the spiritual desert solo, your efforts alone might not be enough to withstand temptations to break your fasting. Find an accountability partner to help motivate you — and you them — to conquer temptations. The road to salvation is best walked with the company of those we love.



## Prayer



## Faith Lesson

### We are “one body in Christ”

Jesus tells us that he is “the vine” and we “are the branches” (Jn 15:5). If we are not connected to him, we cannot produce good fruit. Indeed, without Jesus, we have no life within us.

The same goes for relationships. When we are closely connected to one another, the good fruits of joy, charity, and peace thrive. However, when we are angry with one another, we only reap

division, injustice, and loneliness.

That is why the gift of forgiveness is so important. From God, we are forgiven of our sins and thus reconnected to his glorious power. When we forgive others their offenses, we repair his earthly body and make it stronger. We are “one body in Christ,” and it would be wise to maintain it as the unified body it was designed to be.

Blessed Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, you are love. In your communion we see, experience, and understand love. Help me to be for others the same source of joy and mercy that you and your Communion of Saints are to me.

“The saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult moments in the Church’s history.”

- ST. JOHN PAUL II



# Seder Supper

Holy Thursday

April 18, 5:30pm – 7pm

Social Hall South

All members of the parish family are invited to attend – adults, kids, families, singles, seniors. There is no charge for the meal, but contributions are welcomed. The Seder will finish in time to attend the Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:30 in the church. To make reservations, please call 515-296-2966 or e-mail [gaitchis@iastate.edu](mailto:gaitchis@iastate.edu) by April 14.

*Each year, for the past 45 years, St. Cecilia Parish has celebrated a Seder Meal during Holy Week. Traditionally, the Seder is a festive meal for family and friends which is shared by the Jewish people during the Passover. This festive meal is a meaningful mark in the Holy Week journey.*

*The Seder Meal gives us some insight regarding the Journey that Jesus walked in his last days. It was at a Seder Meal with his friends, that Jesus celebrated his Last Supper and instituted the Eucharist. The Seder Meal reminds us of our spiritual heritage as children of Abraham and Moses as well as brothers and sisters in Christ.*

**Make the Seder Supper a part of your Holy Week**