



*A
Lenten
Journey*

*February 6th to
March 23rd, 2008*

Lenten Journey: Introduction

LENT

Some History

The season of Lent in the church year goes back to the early 300s AD. The Council of Nicea discussed a 40-day period but did not take official action in relation to church practices. By the time of Gregory the Great, Lent was a part of the church year and began on Monday. Gregory the Great, at the beginning of the 600s AD, moved the beginning of Lent to Ash Wednesday so that there would actually be 40 days in Lent, not counting Sundays. Lent still begins on Monday in the Eastern church. It was also Gregory the Great who began the practice of putting ashes on the foreheads of Christians who came to the church for forgiveness reminding them of their mortality, “you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SEASON OF LENT

Fasting. Members of the Roman Catholic Church are supposed to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (one meal only). In addition on the Fridays during Lent, eating meat is not permitted. The Eastern Orthodox church is more strict requiring abstinence from meat, wine, oil, dairy products, and even fish. Protestants have not incorporated these practices as part of their observance of Lent, however, the notion of giving up something for Lent does mean we are embracing some form of this practice. This booklet will address the notion of fasting in other ways, appropriate to the time in history in which we live.

Prayer. One discipline we are encouraged to strengthen during this season is that of prayer. You will be encouraged to strengthen this discipline in your life in this booklet, especially in relation to another discipline, that of reading and thinking about the daily lectionary reading from the New Testament.

Charity. We often hear people asking each other what did you give up for Lent? The image many of us have of Lent

is that it is a time of giving up something. However, Lent is also the time of making a concerted effort to do something positive that helps others in need. Our theme for Lent this year focuses on this aspect of Lent, "Sharing Resources, Changing Lives." Throughout the season of Lent you will be encouraged to think about many different resources you have that you can share to change others lives (and yours) For one of these resources, money, we encourage you to set aside some kind of container (bank) into which you can deposit coins or dollars on a daily basis. In the "paths or resistance" portions for some days, recommendations are made about making these donations. The amount set aside during your Lenten journey will become your offering on Palm Sunday weekend, March 15th and 16th, when the One Great Hour of Sharing offering is made. Ways of sharing other resources you have, such as time, will also be made in this booklet.

Scripture Reading. We are reminded of Jesus in the wilderness, who when tempted by the devil, showed his familiarity with the scriptures (Hebrew) by countering the devil's suggestions for his behavior, by saying "it is written," and then making reference to a portion of the Hebrew scriptures. During this Lenten season, as you use this Lenten Journey booklet, you will be provided a scripture passage to read for each day. By the end of the Lenten Journey, you will have read most of the Gospel according to Mark.

Organization of the Lenten Journey booklet:

There is a separate page for each day during Lent. For each day (on each page) there is a *reading from the New Testament*, a suggested "*Path of Resistance*," and space for writing your thoughts, questions, etc. (*journaling*) as you reflect on the scripture reading and your experiences during the day, especially with reference to that day's "path of resistance."

We encourage you to read the scripture passage in the morning doing so in a prayerful and receptive frame of mind. As hard as it may be to set aside other concerns for the day, try to focus on the passage of scripture, even summarizing what you have read in your own words in the space provided on the page for that day.

In addition, also in the morning, read that day's "Path of Resistance," taking note on what it is that you are being asked to accomplish that day.

What do we mean by "Paths of Resistance?" Most simply put, this means doing something that day that is not part of your usual routine. Engaging in behavior that we are calling "paths of resistance" will mean that you are resisting the habitual behavior(s) in which you normally engage -- and you will find that the forces of your habitual behavior(s) will be quite strong. Just your commitment to read a passage of scripture early in the morning and write some thoughts about it will take a great deal of resistance on your part to your normal routine -- you will initially find your mind going quickly to everything else you have to do, including worrying about time, etc.

Paths of Resistance also have to do with social behavior, how we interact with others in a variety of settings, including both behaviors in which we engage and behaviors from which we refrain in engaging. Here it is important to understand one other basic concept, social system. A system refers to any collection of elements that cohere to make a whole. In social systems the elements are statuses, not people. People participate in social systems through the statuses available to them. For example, in a family there are at least the statuses of husband and wife. With children added, the statuses of father, mother, child, son/daughter are added. Each person in a status the family has expectations about the appropriate thoughts, feelings (values) and behaviors for

his/her own status and for each other person occupying a status in the family social system. For parents, these, generally speaking, are learned sets of expectations based on participating in our own family in which we grew up. For children, these sets of expectations are learned from parents and peers. It is these expectations, formal and informal that define paths of least resistance for thoughts, feelings and behavior towards others in that family system. It is much easier to “go with the flow,” the sets of expectations that others have for us, than to constantly resist those sets of expectations.

We are always participating in the larger society through statuses available to us in other social systems like corporations, schools, churches, etc. For example, in a corporate setting, we may occupy the status of manager or hourly worker, or more likely, a status that is more specifically defined with respect to the expectations for the appropriate thoughts, feelings (values) and behaviors for a person in that status. These expectations form the “paths of least resistance” for our behavior in a particular social system and they are reinforced by everyone in a status in that social system connected to our status.

More generally in our society we also use status to define people according to how they differ with respect to race, gender, religion and sexual orientation. This becomes problematic when, as our society has done, people who have different statuses are treated differently with respect to their access to full participation in all aspects of our society.

Another more subtle status by which we are defined in our larger social system is that of *consumer*. We live in a “consumer society.” We are constantly bombarded with ads encouraging us to buy every new thing we “need” to be beautiful, high tech, healthy, etc. This has tremendous implications for the kind of environmental footprint we, as Americans, have on our environment.

“Paths of resistance in this Lenten Journey will sug-

gest ways to think about how we currently participate in our society's paths of least resistance -- going with the flow -- and how we might participate differently, engage in paths of resistance.

Each day you will be asked to engage in/think about a path of resistance. We encourage you to take a risk and try out that path of resistance and regardless of success, write about your experiences at the end of the day.

Finally, a note about journaling. As you will note, each day's page has room for you to write about what has happened to you that day. Journaling is more than describing events, it is also writing about how those events have affected you personally. "Each of us carries on inner conversations as we sort through our feelings about daily living, our relationships, world events. Journaling is the process of writing down those 'talks with ourselves' so that what our mind is thinking and our hearts are feeling becomes tangible: ink on paper" (p. 12, *Journaling: A Spirit Journey* by Anne Broyles) Journaling thus becomes one more "path of resistance," in your Lenten Journey unless, of course, it is part of your current practice.

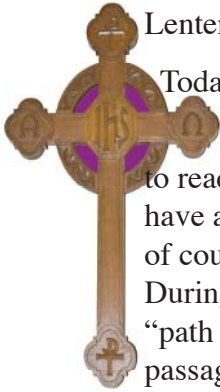
Thank you for engaging in this journey with us.

Ted and Jane Settle and Valerie Yacik for the Mission Outreach Commission and Steve Yacik for the Christian Education Commission


Lenten Journey, Day 1, February 6, 2008

Today's Scripture: Luke 18:9-14

Today's Path of Resistance: If you took the *time* to read the scripture passage above, most likely you have already engaged in a "path of resistance," unless of course this is a normal pattern of behavior for you. During your Lenten Journey this year, continue this "path of resistance" each day by reading the scripture passage included for that day.



Actions taken and reflections on the day: (use this space to engage in another "path of resistance," doing something you probably do not do on a regular basis. Take the time at the end of the day to reflect on your day and on the passage of scripture you read and also on your experience of doing the various things you have been asked to do on this day. Plan to do this each day. You will face different demands on your time and find that you can think of many reasons not to engage in "journaling," but try to stick with it for the 47 days of Lent.)



Lenten Journey, Day 2, February 7, 2008

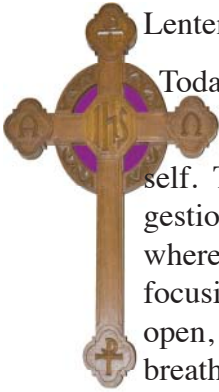
Today's Scripture: John 17:1-8

Today's Path of Resistance: "Foster your spiritual care. It deepens our self-awareness, connects us with something outside of ourselves, and gives meaning and direction to our actions. Building a sustained, robust spiritual life takes time and energy and it doesn't just happen by accident. It can be a real challenge to find clarity in the chaos of our daily lives. Taking time to nourish yourself as a spiritual person allows you to look deep within yourself to find out who you are at your core. Today, ask yourself these two questions: What is my purpose in life? and, What would I regret if I died today?"

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 3, February 8, 2008

Today's Scripture: John 17:9-19



Today's Path of Resistance: Try centering yourself. This means paying attention to the moment. Suggestions for doing this include: Stillness, find a place where you can be still and won't be interrupted, Try focusing on your breathing -- keep your mouth slightly open, breath in slowly through your nose, hold your breath for a second or two and slowly let it out through your mouth. Try repeating "prepare the way of the Lord" as you breath in and "make his paths straight" as you breath out.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 4, February 9, 2008

Today's Scripture: John 17:20-26

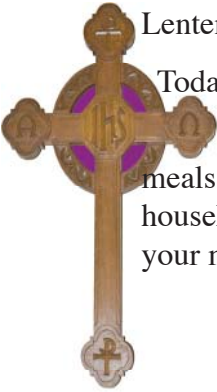
Today's Path of Resistance: What are the resources you have to share -- gifts, talents, time, money? What are your patterns for sharing these resources with others? Today, try one new way to share a resource you have with someone else. Offer praise to God for your resources and the opportunity to share with others.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 5, February 10, 2008

Today's Scripture: John 12:44-50

Today's Path of Resistance: Plan your evening meals for the week. Do this with the others in your household, if any. Try to avoid fast foods as part of your meals for this week.



Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 6, February 11, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 1:1-13

Today's Path of Resistance: To help control overconsumption, try the "halving principle" for toothpaste, shampoo, etc. Try using only half the amount you normally use. Magically the tube gets twice as big. If it works, halve it again till you've found your proper amount. Start halving one thing each day or week.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 7, February 12, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 1:14-28

Today's Path of Resistance: Make a list of kinds of items that are recyclable in your community. Check your list against a list obtained from the county office. Compare your list and the list provided by the county and indicate which items you recycle and which items you don't do such a good job of recycling. During Lent try to recycle as fully as possible.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:



Lenten Journey, Day 8, February 13, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 1:29-45

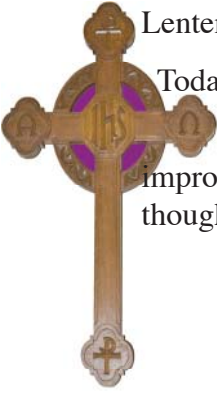
Today's Path of Resistance: The average African woman may have to walk several miles to get water for each day. Count how many access points you have in your house where you can obtain water, any place where fresh water comes into the house or is available through spigots outside the house. Contribute \$.25 to your Lenten bank for each access point.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 9, February 14, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 2:1-12

Today's Path of Resistance: Today, work on improving attitudes about yourself. Replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations and prayer.



Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 10, February 15, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 2:13-22

Today's Path of Resistance: What are the resources others in your life have to share with you? Does someone have a resource that you would like that person to share with you. Comment on that resource the other person has and ask him/her to share that resource with you.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 11, February 16, 2008

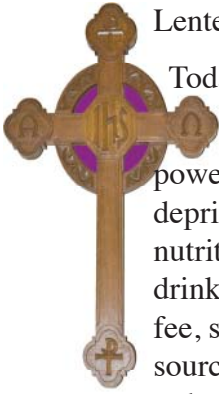
Today's Scripture: Mark 2:23-3:6

Today's Path of Resistance: Be open to the diversity of nationalities in Central America [C.A.]. "Hispanics" are not all the same! Be open to the contributions and the needs of people from C.A. Read about a Central American country today. Attend the Casa del Banquete worship service tonight (7:30 pm) or go out to eat at an Hispanic restaurant like Spice of Life in Bound Brook.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 12, February 17, 2008

Today's Scripture: John 5:19-24



Today's Path of Resistance: Learn about the power of "Cheap Food." Resist using foods that deprive other countries of food and have little or no nutritional value. People of goodwill who drink coffee drink with their conscience by buying Fair Trade coffee, such as Equal Exchange. Visit www.FairTradeResource.org If you drink coffee, buy Fair Trade coffee today at church.

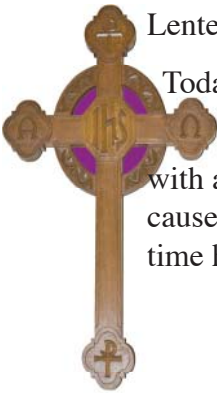
Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 13, February 18, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 3:7-19a

Today's Path of Resistance: When you drive today, try driving at the speed limit (drive other drivers crazy). For every mile you drive today faster than the speed limit, contribute a nickel to the bank you have set aside for a collection for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:



Lenten Journey, Day 14, February 19, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 3:19b-35

Today's Path of Resistance: Become acquainted with a person whom you would normally avoid (because of race, age, class, disability, etc.). Observe over time how your attitude toward that person changes.

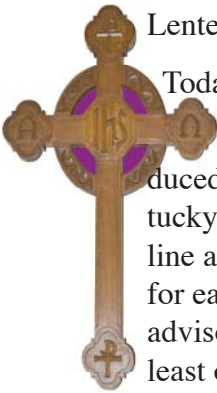
Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 15, February 20, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 4:1-20

Today's Path of Resistance: Celebrate your baptism by drinking only water today. Feel the addictive effects that soft drinks or coffee or some other beverage may have on you. Are you willing to ask God for help to reduce or eliminate any such addictions? Put 50¢ into your bank each time you drink something carbonated or caffeinated today.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

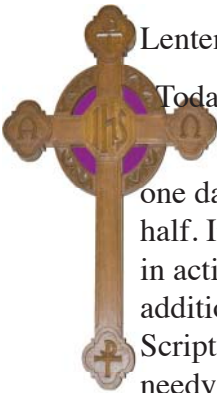


Lenten Journey, Day 16, February 21, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 4:21-34

Today's Path of Resistance: Electricity is produced from coal mined in Clear Fork Valley, Kentucky, where half the residents live below the poverty line and two thirds have no flush toilets. Give \$.50 for each outlet in your house. Pray for our youth and advisors as they plan their next ASP trip. Purchase at least one share to support the ASP trip.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:



Lenten Journey, Day 17, February 22, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

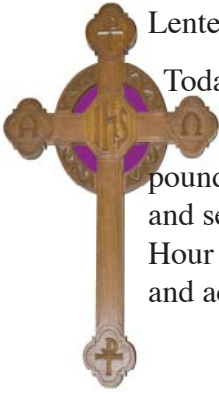
Today's Path of Resistance: Give up TV viewing one day a week until Easter - or cut your viewing in half. Instead, spend that time 1) with family members in activity or conversation or just being together; 2) in additional spiritual pursuits, such as prayer, meditation, Scriptural reading or Bible study; or 3) in service to a needy individual or worthwhile group.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 18, February 23, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 5:1-20

Today's Path of Resistance: Estimate how many pounds of meat your family ate during the past week and set aside \$.25 for each pound for your One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Find a new meatless recipe and add it to your menu for the coming week.



Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 19, February 24, 2008

Today's Scripture: John 5:25-29

Today's Path of Resistance: Many electronic devices are assembled in countries where workers earn fewer than \$.25¢ an hour. Give at least \$.25 for each electronic device in your house. Visit www.Sweat-Shops.org



Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 20, February 25, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 5:21-43

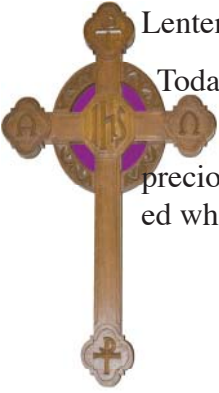
Today's Path of Resistance: "Dematerialize" celebrations by making your own gifts or giving gifts to non-profit organizations in honor of family and friends. Write about a meaningful gift you have received. Consider your next gift giving opportunity and how you would follow this path of resistance.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 21, February 26, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 6:1-13

Today's Path of Resistance: Our water is both precious and finite. Turn the water off when not needed while washing hands, shaving or brushing teeth.



Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 22, February 27, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 6:13-29

Today's Path of Resistance: Buy only the paper products you really need. "Close the loop" by purchasing products made of recycled fibers, even if they cost somewhat more. Caring for Creation does not mean "living on the cheap." Yes, we can afford to do this for the Earth! Visit www.Eco-Justice.org

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 23, February 28, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 6:30-46

Today's Path of Resistance: Count the number of light bulbs in your home. How many are high efficiency light bulbs? Contribute \$.10 to your bank for each light bulb that is not high efficiency. By the end of the Lent, plan to convert as many of these light bulbs to high efficiency bulbs as possible.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:



Lenten Journey, Day 24, February 29, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 6:47-56

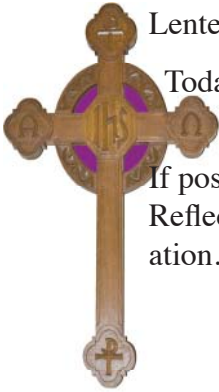
Today's Path of Resistance: Cars are idols for many in our culture. Plan to carpool, take public transportation, ride a bike or walk to school or work every day next week. How will this change your life? Give \$1 to your bank each time you drive alone.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 25, March 1, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 7:1-23

Today's Path of Resistance: Take a walk outside.
If possible plan this to coincide with sunrise or sunset.
Reflect on your relationship with nature, God's creation. Do you heal, control or destroy?



Actions taken and reflections on the day:



Lenten Journey, Day 26, March 2, 2008

Today's Scripture: John 6:27-40

Today's Path of Resistance: Set your timer to count up before stepping into the shower. Shower in no more than three minutes. Pray for those who don't have the luxury of a bath or the dignity that comes with cleanliness. Become more aware of the difficulties of the impending world-wide water shortage. Contribute \$.50 for each minute over three.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 27, March 3, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 7:1-23

Today's Path of Resistance: Today, turn off your car radio and/or tape/CD player as you drive. Use this time for quiet reflection. How does this affect your life?



Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 28, March 4, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 8:1-10

Today's Path of Resistance: Eat your evening meal by candlelight tonight and discuss better ways to conserve energy. Give \$1 for every electrical appliance in your kitchen. Visit www.SolarCatalyst.com



Actions taken and reflections on the day:



Lenten Journey, Day 29, March 5, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 8:11-26

Today's Path of Resistance: Go online today to the following two web sites: www.witnessforpeace.org and www.cpt.org. What are these web sites about? Were you familiar with the organizations presented? What one new thing did you learn from your visit to these websites?

Actions taken and reflections on the day:



Lenten Journey, Day 30, March 6, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 8:27-9:1

Today's Path of Resistance: Fix all leaks. Turn off all water in the house. Read your meter, wait one hour (make sure no water is turned on in the house), and then read the meter again. If the meter has changed, you have a leak somewhere.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 31, March 7, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 9:2-13

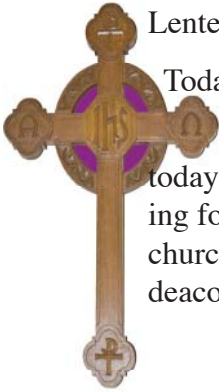
Today's Path of Resistance: Replace alkaline batteries in portable devices with rechargeable NiCd, NiMH or Lithium-ion batteries. Check for compatibility. Recycle rechargeable batteries that no longer hold a charge. Check www.rbrc.org for the nearest battery drop-off location. Contribute \$.10 for each alkaline battery that you have currently in a portable device.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 32, March 8, 2009

Today's Scripture: Mark 9:14-29

Today's Path of Resistance: Fast for one meal today. Use the money saved on this meal for purchasing food for the food bank and deposit the food in the church's food bank collection boxes. Check with the deacons for most needed items.



Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 33, March 9, 2008

Today's Scripture: John 8:46-59

Today's Path of Resistance: Set thermostats no higher than 68F in the winter and no lower than 78F in the summer. Dress appropriately. Style is no excuse to waste energy! Layers of clothing can be put on or taken off to keep comfy. This way we use the body's natural heating and cooling system.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 34, March 10, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 9:30-41

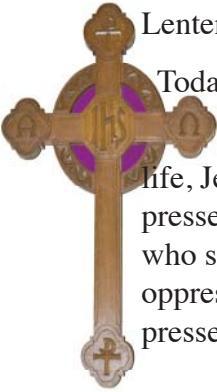
Today's Path of Resistance: People tend to fear what is different or what they do not understand (ideas, people, different cultures, races, ways of life). Think of a group of people you fear or dislike, and consider why you might not like them. Give 25¢ to your bank for each fear.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 35, March 11, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 9:42-50

Today's Path of Resistance: Throughout his life, Jesus aligned himself with those who were oppressed. Even in his death, he was on the side of those who suffer injustice. How is Jesus with those who are oppressed today? How can we be on the side of the oppressed? Give 50¢ to your bank for each.

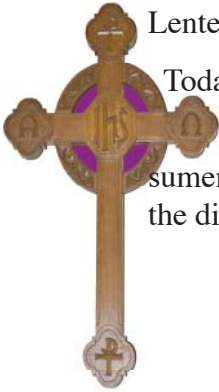


Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 36, March 12, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 10:1-16

Today's Path of Resistance: Where does consumerism "set our mind" on human things rather than the divine realities? Visit www.SimpleLiving.NET

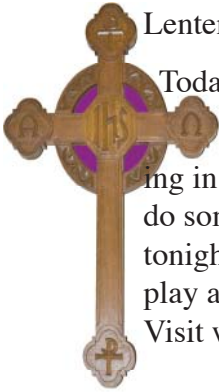


Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 37, March 13, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 10:17-31

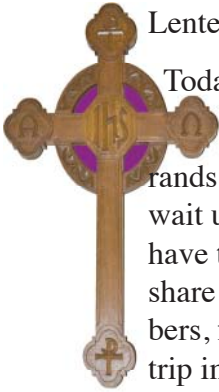
Today's Path of Resistance: Average TV viewing in U.S. households is over 7 hours a day. Decide to do something for at least an hour other than watch TV tonight, such as read, take a walk, talk with each other, play a game, etc. Alternatives has lots of ideas for you! Visit www.TVTurnOff.org



Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 38, March 14, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 10:32-45



Today's Path of Resistance: Consolidate errands. Unless it is a true emergency, it can probably wait until tomorrow. Don't take your car unless you have three needs (not wants). Can you find a way to share or swap errands with coworkers, family members, friends and neighbors so one person makes one trip instead of three people each making a trip?

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 39, March 15, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 10:46-52

Today's Path of Resistance: Find a wilderness area or green space near your home, at a park or at a reserve. Visit the area with a few friends or your family. While you are there, spend forty minutes in silence opening your mind and heart to God. Give \$.10 for every wild creature you see.

Actions taken and reflections on the day:



Lenten Journey, Day 40, March 16, 2008

Today's Scripture: Luke 19:41-48

Today's Path of Resistance: Look forward to Earth Day on April 22nd. Plan now. Consider planting a tree - the fourth "R" (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, RESTORE).

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 41, March 17, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:12-25

Today's Path of Resistance: Prayer before showering: Generous God, Help me use only the water I need. In Jesus' name. Amen. Turn the water off while soaping when you take your shower today.

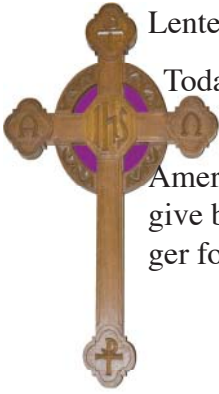


Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 42, March 18, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:27-33

Today's Path of Resistance: Pray this Latin American mealtime prayer: "To those who hunger give bread, and to those who have bread, give the hunger for justice." Visit www.NewInt.org



Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 43, March 19, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 12:1-11

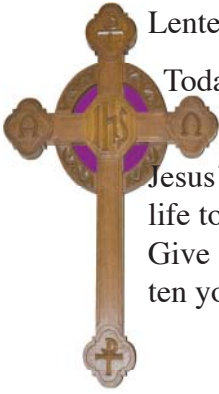
Today's Path of Resistance: Go to your place of solitude. Relax with eyes closed for 5 minutes. Now remember one joyful childhood experience. How did that experience make you feel loved? How can you share that joy with someone else? Learn about the Institute for Peace and Justice, Parenting for Peace and Justice Network, and Families Against Violence Advocacy Network at www.IPJ-PPJ.org

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 44, March 20, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 14:12-25

Today's Path of Resistance: As you meditate on Jesus' impending suffering, list ten ways in your own life to practice self-denial rather than self-indulgence. Give \$1 for each example. Give \$5 for each one shy of ten you can't think of!

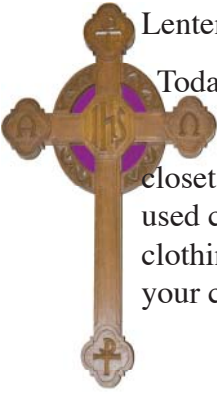


Actions taken and reflections on the day:

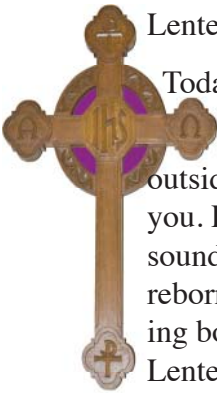
Lenten Journey, Day 45, March 21, 2008

Today's Scripture: John 18:1-19:42

Today's Path of Resistance: Go through your closet today and give away at least five pieces of unused clothing. Learn to live with less. Spruce up old clothing instead of buying new. Discuss what guides your clothes purchasing habits.



Actions taken and reflections on the day:



Lenten Journey, Day 46, March 22, 2008

Today's Scripture: John 19:38-42

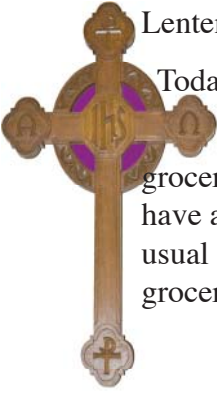
Today's Path of Resistance: Spend some time outside today. Pay attention to what is going on around you. How does the wind feel against your skin? What sounds do you hear? Is the Earth beginning to be reborn into spring? What new habits do you feel being born in your life through your participation in this Lenten Journey?

Actions taken and reflections on the day:

Lenten Journey, Day 47, March 23, 2008

Today's Scripture: Mark 16:1-8

Today's Path of Resistance: Next time you grocery shop bring your own cloth bags. If you do not have any, purchase enough at the grocery store for your usual shopping trip and then use them each time you grocery shop.



Actions taken and reflections on the day: