

March 8 Wednesday Evening Lenten Series: *Inwardly Digest* Book Discussion
Counting Church Time (Chapters 2 & 3)

Calendar Conclusions

The prayer book offers the Calendar as a means of giving deliberate structure to the Christian experience of time. By shaping our common life around major festivals—Easter preeminent among them—we give festal expression to core truths about the God with whom we are in relationship. Key elements of the creeds are underscored and unpacked in the liturgies and the seasons supporting them: the Incarnation of Jesus in Christmas; his suffering, death, and burial in Lent and Holy Week; his Resurrection at Easter; his ascension with the Ascension; the Holy Spirit in Pentecost and the time following; the return of Jesus as Lord of Time in Advent.

The seasons train us in the central religious affections—ways of being that are composed of emotions, thoughts, understandings, and deliberate choices about how we lead our lives and pattern them after Jesus and the saints. These seasons of focus are not meant to be emotional straightjackets but more intensive times of examination and discovery.

The sanctoral aspect of the Calendar invites us to reflect on the person and virtues of Jesus as they have been incarnated in his followers and friends. This great cloud of witnesses who share in our Baptism continue in the risen life of Jesus Christ and remain as fellow witnesses and ministers with us. They support us with their examples and prayers as we join in one great company around the throne of God.

(Olsen, Derek. *Inwardly Digest: The Prayer Book as Guide to a Spiritual Life*. United States, Forward Movement, 2016.)

Discussion questions

- What did you think of the church calendar before reading?
- What surprised or challenged you in the reading?
- Where did you encounter God/divinity in this week's topic?
- What are you going to take with you (practices, beliefs, knowledge, etc.) from this week?
- What are you interested in learning more about?

Time: Wednesdays in March, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Location: Fireside Room in St. James Cathedral

Contact: Deacon Jessica Harmon, jharmon@stjamesfresno.org

| Week | Topic | Chapters to be discussed |
|----------|----------------------------------|---|
| March 15 | Praying every day | 5&6 - Essence and Anatomy of the Daily Office |
| March 22 | Eucharist | 8&9 - Spirituality and Shape of the Eucharist |
| March 29 | The Church is the Body of Christ | 10, and anything else we want to discuss |

Prayers for today

Collect of the Week (2nd Sunday in Lent):

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Collect of the day (Wednesday in the 2nd week of Lent - from Lesser Feasts and Fasts):

O God, you so loved the world that you gave your only-begotten Son to reconcile earth with heaven: Grant that we, loving you above all things, may love our friends in you, and our enemies for your sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Collect for Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs, 202 (LFF commemoration for March 7)

O God, the King of Saints, who strengthened your servants Perpetua, Felicity, and their companions to make a good confession and to encourage one another in the time of trial: Grant that we who cherish their blessed memory may share their pure and steadfast faith, and win with them the palm of victory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Collect for Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, 1910 (Church of England Lesser Festival for March 8)

God of peace, who gave such grace to your servant Edward King that whomever he met he drew to Christ: fill us, we pray, with tender sympathy and joyful faith, that we also may win others to know the love that passes knowledge; through him who is the shepherd and guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Collect for Gregory of Nyssa, Bishop and Theologian, c. 394 (LFF commemoration for March 9)

Almighty God, who has revealed to your Church your eternal Being of glorious majesty and perfect love as one God in Trinity of Persons: Give us grace that, like your bishop Gregory of Nyssa, we may continue steadfast in the confession of this faith, and constant in our worship of you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us pray the daily devotion “At the Close of Day” on pg. 140