



# LENTEN CAMPAIGN 2024

"COME, FOLLOW ME!"

Prepared by Archdiocesan Catechetical Centre  
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur

## INTRODUCTION

Ash Wednesday, which falls on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024, marks the beginning of the season of Lent, which is a time of intense spiritual preparation and discipline in the Catholic Church. During this time, the Church calls us to repentance through the 3 pillars of Lent: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. What does it mean to repent and what does it have to do with these 3 practices? Let us learn and reflect on it together.

## THE SAME OLD STORY...

As the Church returns to the liturgical season of Lent, we may wonder if there is any meaning in these practices that we repeat year after year, whenever we hear the call to fast, pray and give alms. Why are these practices important, and why during Lent?



Just as Christmas and New Year mark the passage of time for us, Lent as a season reminds us of our call to grow ever closer to God. Just as Christmas would be meaningless if we are not grateful for the presence of Christ in our lives, so too, Lent would be meaningless if it did not help us to know Him and love Him better.

This journey of growing in our knowledge and love for God and choosing to turn towards him in all that we do is called repentance. Jesus, the Word of God, came to earth as a man to show us the way to the Father and all throughout his ministry he calls, "Follow me!"

## OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this special time of Lent when we remember Your love for us and Your call to turn back to You no matter where we are. Open our hearts and our minds to You and help us in our practice of fasting, prayer and almsgiving, so that we may become ever more holy and pleasing in Your sight. May all that we do in this time lead us to know You and love You more. Amen.

### HOSEA

Come back to me,  
With all your heart,  
Don't let fear keep us apart  
Trees do bend,  
Though straight and tall  
So must we to others' call

**Long have I waited for  
your coming,  
Home to me and living,  
Deeply our new life**

## THE 3 PILLARS OF LENT

What does repentance have to do with fasting, prayer and almsgiving? Isn't it enough for us to avoid sin? Why are these three practices, especially the practice of almsgiving, so important during Lent? Let us listen to the following story from the Gospel of **Luke 18: 18-23**.

*A ruler asked Jesus, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not accuse falsely; honour your father and your mother.'"*

*And the man said, "I have kept all these commandments from my youth." Then Jesus answered, "There is still one thing you lack. Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in Heaven. And then come, follow me!" When he heard these words, the man became sad, for he was very rich.*

- 1) What did the man want from Jesus? Was he satisfied with just following the commandments?**
- 2) Why do you think Jesus asked him to sell away everything he had and give it to the poor?**
- 3) Why did the man become sad?**

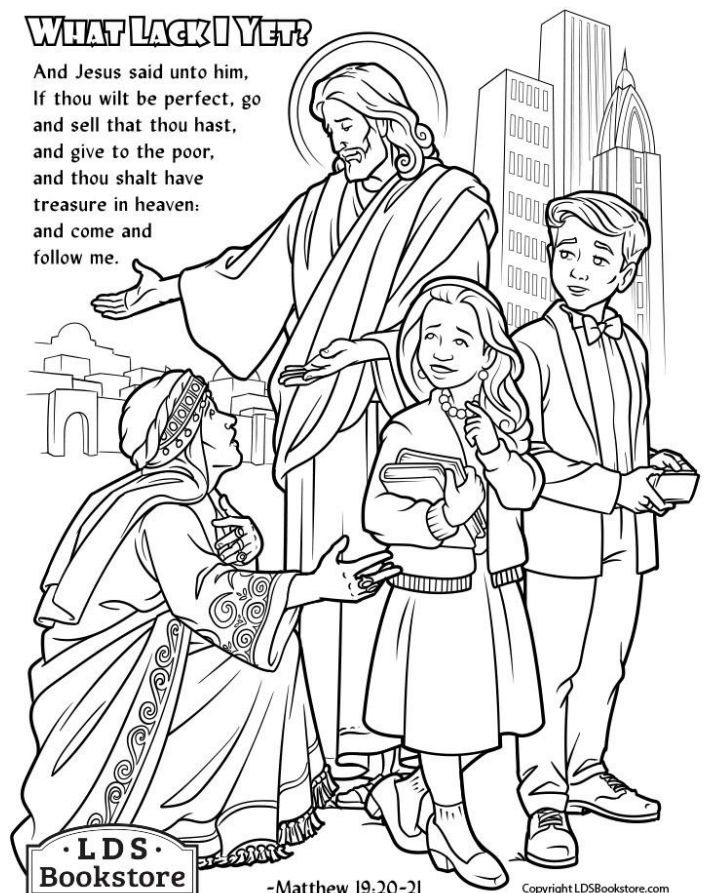
Just as he did with the rich man, Jesus calls us to let go of our earthly possessions and follow him wholeheartedly.

Giving money to charity or sharing our possessions with the poor is a sign of our willingness to give up our earthly possessions and personal desires because we trust in Jesus and want to follow Him to eternal life.

Prayer and fasting also help us to give ourselves more completely to God by denying ourselves food and spending more time in communion with Him. These 3 activities are known as the pillars of Lent because they help us turn away from the world and grow deeper in relationship with God.

### WHAT LACK I YET?

And Jesus said unto him,  
If thou wilt be perfect, go  
and sell that thou hast,  
and give to the poor,  
and thou shalt have  
treasure in heaven:  
and come and  
follow me.



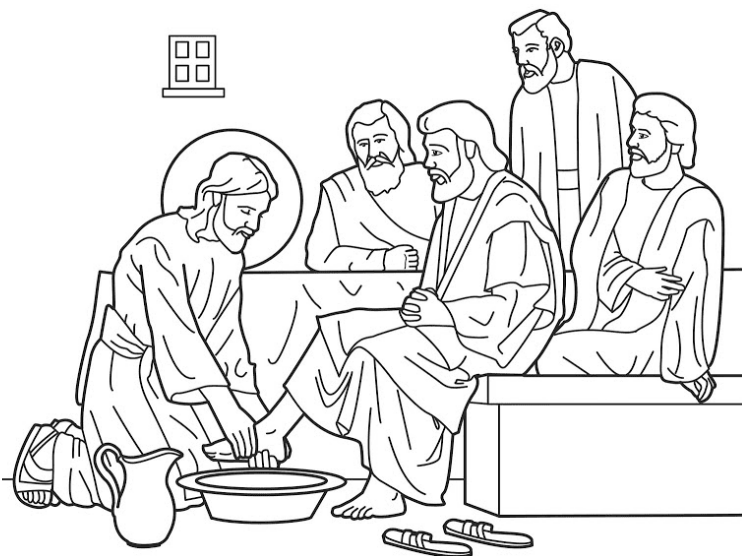
## ALMSGIVING AS A SIGN OF PENANCE

Sometimes, we may also feel moved to give away our possessions when we recognize the abundance of God's love and mercy for us, especially when we have sinned against Him. Let us listen to the following story from the Gospel of **Luke 19: 1-10**

*Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man named Zaccheus lived there. He was a tax collector and a wealthy man. He wanted to see what Jesus was like, but he was a short man and could not see him because of the crowd. So, he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree. From there he would be able to see Jesus who was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, come down quickly for I must stay at your house today." So, Zaccheus climbed down and received him joyfully. All the people who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone as a guest to the house of a sinner." But Zaccheus spoke to Jesus, "Half of what I own, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much." Looking at him, Jesus said, "Salvation has come to this house today, for he is also a true son of Abraham. The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."*

- 1) Why do you think Zaccheus wanted to see Jesus so much?**
- 2) Why did Zaccheus promise to give away his possessions?**

Sometimes, like Zaccheus, we feel so happy and grateful to God for His mercy to us, especially when we don't deserve it, that we happily give away what we have to honour Him in the poor. In Matthew 25:40, Jesus said "Truly, I say to you: just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it to me." When we give alms or help the poor, we are not only helping our human brothers and sisters, but also honouring God who is Father to the poor.



Finally, near the end of the season of Lent, at the Last Supper, we commemorate how Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and gave them a New Commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you". When we love and serve the poor through volunteering or almsgiving, we are living the commandment that Christ gave us, to love others as He loved us.

## WHAT CAN WE DO TO SERVE THE POOR THIS LENT?

Every year, the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur runs a campaign during the season of Lent to call us, members of the Body of Christ, to contribute to the work of bringing the Gospel message of love and brotherhood to the poor and marginalised of our society.

This campaign, organised by Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD), which is the official charity and social welfare arm of the Catholic Church, aims to collect funds for the implementation of humanitarian projects for the needy.

Even if we are unable to contribute much in terms of material help, we can get involved by becoming more aware of the harsh social realities around us, then contributing what we can in terms of money, time or goods to serve the poor.

This Lent, you are invited to fundraise according to your creativity, and contribute to one of the 8 ministries under AOHD as a class by giving to the Money Bank Fund/Offertory box. At the end of the collection time, your class may choose to join one of the AOHD ministries that you are interested in their outreach to the poor and marginalised in addition to contributing cash donations.



Let us not turn our eyes away from those who suffer, but for the love of God who first loved us, give our time and effort to bring His mercy and loving presence to all who are in need.

## CLOSING PRAYER

### Prayer of St Francis

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.  
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord, and where there's doubt, true faith in you.  
Make me a channel of your peace. Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, only light, and where there's sadness, ever joy.  
**Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek, so much to be consoled as to console.**  
**To be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love with all my soul.**  
Make me a channel of your peace, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving of ourselves that we receive, and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

**Please visit the AOHD website at [www.aohd.org](http://www.aohd.org) for more information about the Office and its various humanitarian works on behalf of the Catholic church as well as about the Lenten Campaign**