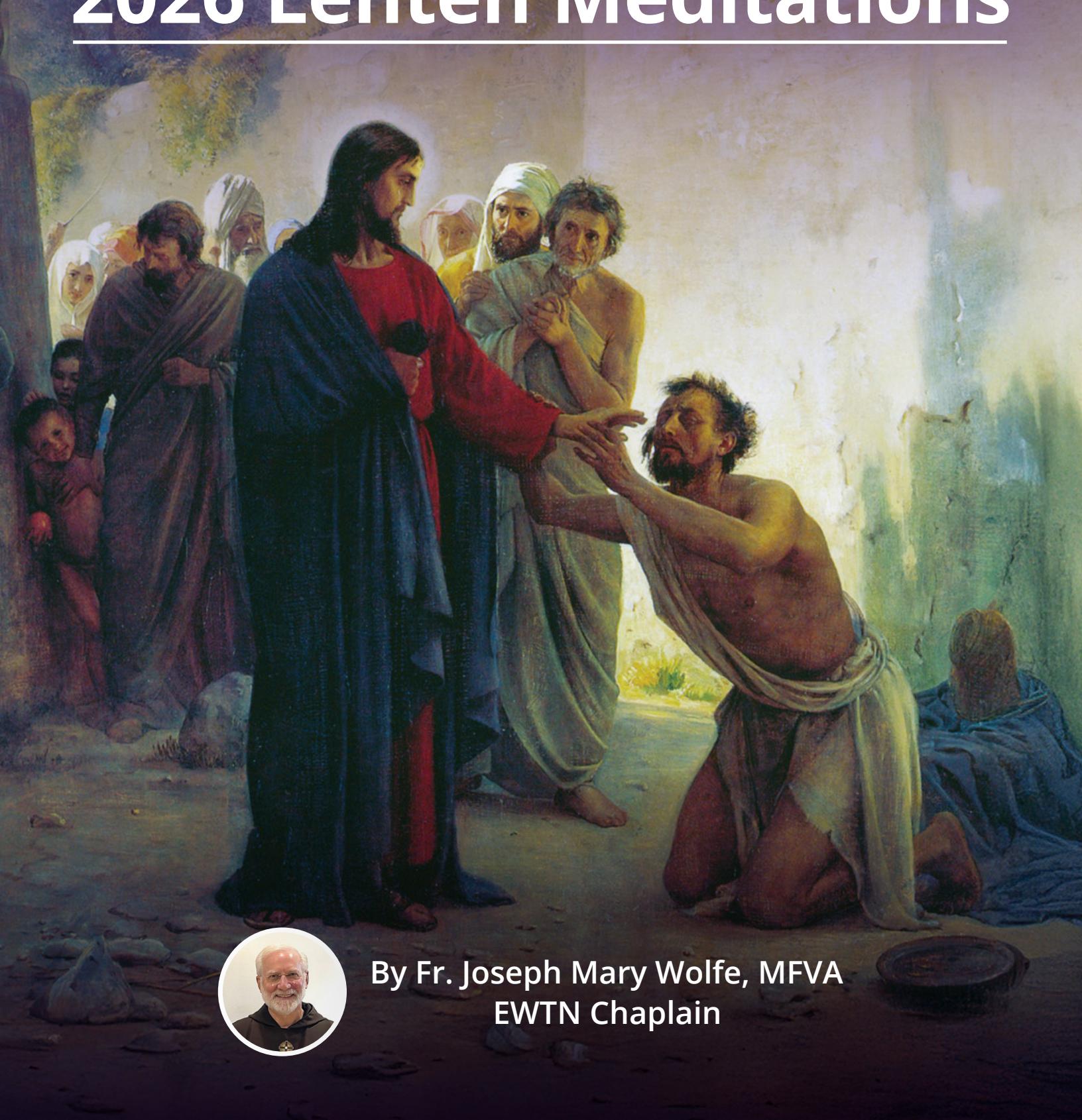




2026 Lenten Meditations



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Cover Image: *Jesus Heals the Blind Man* – Carl Bloch

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Introduction

Hello Family,

In the Gospels, what are your favorite healings that Jesus performed? Is it the healing of the blind man that we will hear on the Fourth Sunday of Lent? Or perhaps the raising of Lazarus from the dead that we will listen to the following Sunday? Perhaps another Gospel account comes to mind?

Are you in need of healing? In fact, because of the sin of our First Parents, recounted during the First Sunday of Lent, we have all inherited a brokenness that only God can heal.

The theme for our Lenten meditations this year is taken from the First Letter of St. Peter: **“By His wounds you have been healed”** (1 Peter 2:24). And how have we been healed? St. Peter continues, “For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

Each week during this Holy Season we will consider the different types of healing that we find in Jesus. These will include, most importantly, the healing effects of an ever-deepening conversion, a “re-turn,” which transforms the heaviness and misery of sin into joyful freedom and wholeness. We will look at practical ways that will bring healing—healing from the One “who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Join me this Lent for a journey of healing.

In His healing wounds,



Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

February 18, 2026 | Ash Wednesday

Today's Readings

First Reading:	Joel 2:12-18
Responsorial Psalm:	51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and 17
Second Reading:	2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2
Gospel:	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Hello Family,

In the Gospel for Ash Wednesday, we hear Jesus remind us three times that our hidden acts are neither unseen nor unrewarded. No, “your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.” Taking up our daily cross (see Luke 9:23) is the most important penance we can offer—the **daily** cross of our state of life, such as: going to sometimes unsatisfying work for your family; helping your children for the umpteenth time with patient love and a smile even when tired or upset; as a Religious or Priest, rising early, once again, to offer praise to God and to intercede for the many needs we learn of, and working to alleviate them; and at the eve of life, being patient with the infirmities and limitations as they increase—and offering them with prayer for others.

“And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”

Those hidden acts of self-sacrifice are neither unseen nor unrewarded. In fact, they are proofs of genuine love. We deepen our conversion through the often-unchosen penances of daily life.

Grumbling makes our burdens un-bearable. **Love, however, is healing and lightens the load:** loving God in prayer; loving others in self-giving generosity; and loving ourselves in fasting, which quiets the demands of our untamed nature.

*Lord God, help us as we begin this Holy Season to take up our **daily** cross with love, so that our conversion to You may ever deepen. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

In His healing wounds,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

February 22, 2026 | First Sunday of Lent

Today's Readings

First Reading:	Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7
Responsorial Psalm:	51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17
Second Reading:	Romans 5:12-19 or 5:12, 17-19
Gospel:	Matthew 4:1-11

Hello Family,

Our First Parents didn't trust God and somehow thought He was depriving them—and so they chose to put themselves in His place, leading to the loss and brokenness we all now experience. And because humanity is one body, we all share in the deprivation of the inheritance that would have been ours if our First Parents had not lost it (see Romans 12:5). However, because of "so great a Redeemer" it is a "happy fault" for our human nature is to be raised up to something greater! (see CCC 412).

Temptation is an invitation to distrust God, to be suspicious of His motives toward us, and so put ourselves in His place. Jesus said, "When the devil lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). Let us see temptation for what it is: a BIG FAT LIE. God is neither miserly nor indifferent nor unaware of what is going on in our lives. There is no one who loves us like He does.

Love is healing. Do not believe the lies that God cannot be trusted, that you are somehow being "short-changed" by your Father in Heaven. "Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

Jesus, Victor over the tempter, help us, we pray, to see through the lies and to find healing in Divine Love (see John 14:23).

In His healing wounds,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

March 1, 2026 | Second Sunday of Lent

Today's Readings

First Reading:	Genesis 12:1-4a
Responsorial Psalm:	33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22
Second Reading:	2 Timothy 1:8b-10
Gospel:	Matthew 17:1-9

Hello Family,

What do you want to do with your life? Many of us were asked that during our high school years, and it is certainly important to assess one's talents and interests with a possible future work and vocation. However, focusing solely on **my** wants each moment of the day can lead to a restlessness that can never be stilled. We become like a rudderless ship that is tossed about by the whims of the moment.

In the First Reading of the First Sunday of Lent, Abram is told to leave his kinsfolk to go “to a land that I will show you. ... Abram went as the Lord directed him.” Leaving the security of his “father’s house” he was to rest in the true security of *The* Father’s promises. Abram would go about in tents, never having a permanent residence “for he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

One of the **healings** we can experience this Season of Lent is **the peace that comes from choosing to live in God's will and plan for my life**. The Transfiguration is a prefiguration of where our cooperation with His plan will lead us: to share in His glory forever as we go forth from earthly securities—as the Lord directs us—and so come to the eternal land He will show us.

Father, we rest secure in your promises. Amen.

In His healing wounds,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

March 8, 2026 | Third Sunday of Lent

Today's Readings

First Reading:	Exodus 17:3-7
Responsorial Psalm:	95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9
Second Reading:	Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
Gospel:	John 4:5-42

Hello Family,

Is this world enough for you? I know it's not. How could it possibly be? For our hearts are made for the infinite, that which transcends this world. And if we do not look for healing transcendence in God Who is above all and Who has made all, then we will look for it in something that ultimately is empty, deforming, or destructive: perhaps by dabbling in the occult; or in the temporary euphoria of drugs; or maybe in an immoral or licentious lifestyle. This, however, only leaves us desolate and miserable.

“Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?” (Isaiah 55:2)

What we deep-down desire is that which **truly** elevates us, what Jesus offers the Samaritan woman in the Gospel: “whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water **welling up** to eternal life.”

If you are experiencing the desolation and misery of sin, **the Lord has a healing gift for you today.** He offers you a “hope that does not disappoint.” He wants the love of God to be “poured into your heart” and to quench your thirst for meaning, for love, for life—for that which transcends this world and satisfies the thirsty soul.

Jesus, give us a deep drink of the healing water you have to give that wells up to eternal life. Amen.

In His healing wounds,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

March 15, 2026 | Fourth Sunday of Lent

Today's Readings

First Reading:	1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Responsorial Psalm:	23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
Second Reading:	Ephesians 5:8-14
Gospel:	John 9:1-41

Hello Family,

In her book on healing, Dr. Mary Healy gives the remarkable statistic that **21 percent** of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' public ministry are devoted to reports of physical healings and exorcisms! (Mary Healy, *Healing*, pg. 26). She also mentions that the miracles that He Himself initiated always took place on the Sabbath, as in the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Lent. Why? "Jesus is revealing that he is the Lord who instituted the Sabbath in the first place and who fulfills its deepest meaning."

The reason for the institution of the Sabbath was "a sign of our highest dignity—our covenant relationship with God—and of the freedom and joy that come from communion with him." Healings on the Sabbath indicate that "human beings are restored to the fullness of life that God intended from the beginning."

"Sickness and disability were not part of God's plan for creation but are outward symptoms of the damage caused by the Fall. God designed human beings with bodies meant to radiate the splendor of divine life present within them" (ibid., pp. 35-36).

Jesus, we the sick need a doctor, we need You, the Divine Physician. You restored sight to the man born blind, a sign of the healing to be found in You—You who are the Light of the World! Restore, we pray, health and vitality to us who are physically broken and the light of Faith to us who are in darkness. Amen.

In His healing wounds,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

March 22, 2026 | Fifth Sunday of Lent

Today's Readings

First Reading:	Ezekiel 37:12-14
Responsorial Psalm:	130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
Second Reading:	Romans 8:8-11
Gospel:	John 11:1-45

Hello Family,

Last year, two dear people in my life died less than a day apart: Sr. Mary Michael, PCPA, who was 94; and my godmother, Marge, who was 86.

Would I have wanted them to be restored to this broken life? No. Sr. Emmanuel, joking about how she and Sr. Michael were getting more and more stooped over, chuckled, saying, "God is taking us to Heaven one inch at a time!"

St. Ambrose, at the death of his brother, wrote: "God did not decree death from the beginning; he prescribed it as a remedy. Human life was condemned because of sin to unremitting labor and unbearable sorrows and so began to experience the burden of wretchedness. Without the assistance of grace, immortality is more of a burden than a blessing" (St. Ambrose, *Office of Readings* for Nov. 2).

What we want for our loved ones and for ourselves is **the greatest of all healings**, the one that lasts forever. We desire the healing of **ALL** the infirmities of aging, of the body, of the mind, and of the soul. The resuscitation of Lazarus was an unmistakable confirmation of what Jesus taught that day, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live"

Jesus, we proclaim with Martha, that You are the Christ, the Son of God. Your death is the remedy for ours. Your Resurrection is the promise of our ultimate and eternal healing. Amen.

In His healing wounds,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

March 29, 2026 | Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Today's Readings

At the Procession:	Matthew 21:1-11
First Reading:	Isaiah 50:4-7
Responsorial Psalm:	22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24
Second Reading:	Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel:	Matthew 26:14—27:66

Hello Family,

I began these Lenten meditations quoting the First Letter of St. Peter, “**By His wounds you have been healed**” (1 Peter 2:24). Peter is himself quoting a passage from the Prophet Isaiah that we hear on Good Friday: “It was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, ... But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, **by his stripes we were healed**” (Isaiah 53:5).

This Holy Week, as we contemplate the sufferings of Jesus, we find healing. **Healing from the fear or despair** that can accompany suffering in our lives or that of our loved ones.

St. Leonard, understanding this, set up the *Stations of the Cross* in some 571 places, including the Colosseum in Rome. In his homily on that occasion, he said:

“Try it when sad thoughts trouble you and dark days are upon you; pass over the Way of the Cross, and lo! the clouds will fade quickly away, and a clear sky will shine upon you. ... Try it for yourself ... and you will see how your heart will change” (Fr. Dominic Devas, O.F.M., Life of St. Leonard of Port Maurice, p. 103ff).

Jesus, as we consider Your Passion this week, we are astounded by Your love—so great a love! Heal our fears and despair. Give us, we pray, a share in Your love and Your strength and Your peace. Amen.

In His healing wounds,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

April 5, 2026 | Easter Sunday

Today's Readings

First Reading:	Acts 10:34a, 37-43
Responsorial Psalm:	118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
Second Reading:	Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8
Gospel:	John 20:1-9 or Matthew 28:1-10

Hello Family,

“By His wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24). And how have we been healed? St. Peter continues, “For you were straying like sheep, but have now **returned** to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

Those wounds Jesus suffered on earth now radiate forever in glory as a continual testimony of the great love with which He loved us. They forever bear witness that **He came to bring us healing** by bearing our infirmities and enduring our sufferings (see Isaiah 53:5). Indeed, He is now and forever the “Shepherd and Guardian of [our] souls.” Returning to Him has been the goal of this Holy Season of Lent and is the remedy for our brokenness of body, mind, and soul, our fears and despair, our misery in our sins, and for the ultimate evil we all face: death.

“But why did God not prevent the first man from sinning? St. Leo the Great responds, ‘Christ’s inexpressible grace gave us blessings better than those the demon’s envy had taken away’” (CCC 412).

Jesus, on this glorious Easter day we return wholeheartedly to You, trusting in the “power that went forth from You” (see Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19), the “power flowing from Your Resurrection” (see Philippians 3:10), the power to heal, to deliver, and to conquer our greatest enemy, death. Jesus, Shepherd of my soul, guide me to eternal life where I may praise those glorious wounds of Yours that have brought me healing, now and forever. Amen.

In His healing wounds,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

Dates in Lent 2026

Ash Wednesday.....	February 18
First Sunday of Lent.....	February 22
Second Sunday of Lent	March 1
Third Sunday of Lent	March 8
Fourth Sunday of Lent.	March 15
St. Joseph's Feast Day	March 19
Fifth Sunday of Lent.....	March 22
The Annunciation of the Lord	March 25
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.....	March 29
Holy Thursday.....	April 2
Good Friday.....	April 3
Holy Saturday.....	April 4
Easter Sunday.....	April 5

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[Easter](#)

[Divine Mercy Sunday](#)

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Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA

Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word

Fr. Joseph Mary is the Chaplain of the Eternal Word Television Network where he initially came to work in 1985 as an engineer. Two years later, he became one of the founding members of the men's community which Mother Angelica founded in 1987: the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word. The motto of the friars is: "The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back." They do so by utilizing the modern means of communication. Fr. Joseph often celebrates the televised Mass and has produced a number of series and devotions featured on EWTN.

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