Into your hands

Welcome to the Lenten season of SCC groups – 2020

Our theme for Lent comes from Jesus’ own words on the cross (Luke 23: 46). These words, “into your hands I commend my spirit,” are rooted in our Psalm for Good Friday (Psalm 31: 6). With this statement, Jesus shows us his great trust in the Lord, our Father and Creator. He also shows us their unity and oneness. It’s something we can take to heart as well. There are times when we realize we can’t handle things ourselves – and we don’t need to. It’s time to let go.

This Lent might be the right time to ask, “What do I want to put into God’s hands during this season of prayer and sacrifice?” This is an act of trust, a sign that you are staying open to the actions of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you will want to pray in this way...

Into your hands, Lord, I commend ________ (fill in the blank). For example, I commend my work situation, my health crisis, my children, etc.

When we trust in God’s love for us, we can see that God truly wants to draw us closer, and to draw us toward wholeness. This makes it easier to surrender our concerns, as well as our joys and triumphs – to God’s limitless, capable hands. When we let go, we can find the freedom to collaborate with God.

“God is not limited by the brokenness in this world: he takes what is dark and torn asunder and transforms it into beauty beyond imagination. God is not made in our image and likeness – we are made in his. We belong to God.” Sr. Miriam James Heidland, S.O.L.T.

Praying During Lent

As many Catholics approach Lent, they think: “I’ve got to give something up!” But here’s another way of thinking about the season: as a time to explore new ways of prayer. For example, if you like to pray with the daily Gospel readings, you might instead use the prayers of the Mass (like the beautiful prefaces to the Eucharistic prayers for Sundays in Lent) as something new.

My favorite way to pray is to use this season as a period of self-examination and conversion. Each Lent I ask myself: “What do I most want to change about myself? Where might God want me to grow in love?” Then, at the end of every day, I sit quietly with God for a few moments and look at this particular area. Often I imagine myself in conversation with Jesus about this aspect of my life, and I ask for his healing and grace.

But one needs to be patient when it comes to change. Conversion isn’t a once-and-for-all event. It takes time, even a lifetime. Try not to grow frustrated if you’re not changing “fast enough.” It’s something like watching a child grow up. A few years ago, when one of my nephews was seven or eight, I told him that I was amazed at how tall he was getting. “Uncle Jim,” he said, “I look in the mirror every day and I can’t see myself growing. But every time you come you tell me that!”

Trust in God’s ability to help you to change, and grow, even if you don’t think it’s fast enough, and even if you don’t see it. Because God does.

Fr. James Martin, S.J., In All Seasons, For All Reasons, Liturgical Press
In your hands

Lord, I so wish to prepare well for this time.
I so want to make all of me ready and attentive
and available to you.
Please help me clarify and purify my intentions.
I have so many contradictory desires.
My activity seems to be so full of busyness
and running after stuff that doesn’t really seem to matter or last.
I know that if I give you my heart, whatever I do will follow my new heart.
May all that I am today, all that I try to do today,
may all my encounters, reflections,
even the frustrations and failings all place my life in your hands.
Lord, my life is in your hands.
Please, let this day give you praise.

—Adapted from St. Ignatius of Loyola