

# The Spiritual Journey of Great Lent 2014



## Parishioner Lenten Guidebook

- \*Prayer
- \*Fasting
- \*Works of Charity
- \*Lenten Worship Services
- \*Studies and discussions

*"O Lord, I have cried out to you, hear me!"*  
(Psalm 104)

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## Introduction: The 7-Week Lenten Journey

Spiritual growth for Christians is essential, and Great Lent provides a variety of spiritual tools to help us grow in our relationship with Christ, with one another, and even with ourselves. The Orthodox Church refers to Great Lent as a journey because it implies movement; starting at one place and ending up in another. With respect to spiritual growth, this is very helpful and very healthy. All healthy relationships grow: friendships, marriages, and our relationship with Christ our God. The Orthodox Church has developed the spiritual journey of Great Lent to help us deepen our relationship with Christ as Orthodox Christians.



Every journey has a beginning and an ending. The journey of Great Lent begins this year on Monday, March 3, 2014, and ends with the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. Within those seven weeks, we are called to practice three important virtues: prayer, fasting and works of charity. The following pages offer information and opportunities on each of them to help keep you on track throughout your journey.

## 1. Lent by-the-Week

### Sunday Before Lent

Sunday, March 2, 2014: Forgiveness Sunday

9am: Sunday Matins

10am: Divine Liturgy

Parish Oratorical Festival

6pm: Great Vespers of Forgiveness



This is how Orthodox Christians begin the Lenten journey: with forgiveness. At the conclusion of this evening's service, we approach each person and ask their forgiveness so that we may begin lent with a clean heart.

This is why the first day of Lent is referred to as Clean Monday.

### The First Week

Monday, March 3, 2014: **Great Lent begins**

Tuesday, March 4, 2014

7pm: Lenten Compline Service

Video: **St. Haralambos**

*Refreshments and discussion*

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

10:30am: Bible study (Conference Room)

6pm: Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

Lenten Fellowship Dinner

Friday, March 7, 2014

7pm: Akathist Hymn, 1<sup>st</sup> Stanza

Presentation on International Orthodox Christian Charities

*(See Chapter 5 for more information)*

Saturday, March 8, 2014

9am: Divine Liturgy

Memorial Service: Saturday of Souls



If you have names you would like included in the Memorial Service, please clearly print them on paper and leave them on the Memorial table.

11am – 4pm: Lent Retreat:

**“Becoming Human: A Word from the Early Church Fathers for us Today”**

Fr. John Behr, Dean of St.  
Vladimir Orthodox Seminary  
Place: Sts Peter and Paul Church  
1614 E Monte Vista Rd. Phoenix  
(602) 253-9515  
\$10 donation (Lunch included)



**First Sunday of Lent, March 9, 2014: The Sunday of Orthodoxy**

9am: Sunday Matins

10am: Divine Liturgy; Procession of Icons

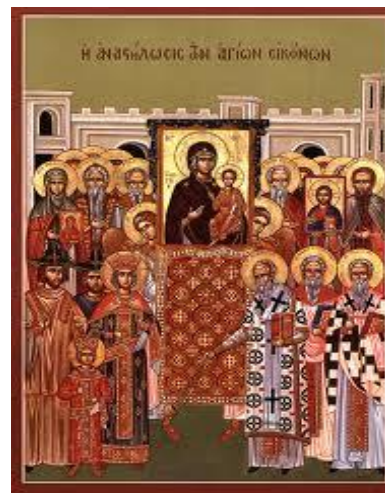
6pm: Pan-Orthodox Vespers

Host Parish: Holy Trinity Cathedral

1973 E. Maryland Ave; (602) 264-7863

Evening Sermon: Fr. John Behr

*Offering Tray benefits IOCC*



## The Second Week

Tuesday, March 11, 2014

7pm: Lenten Compline Service

Video: **John the Baptist**

*Refreshments and discussion*

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

10:30am: Bible study (Conference Room)

6pm: Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

Lenten Fellowship Dinner

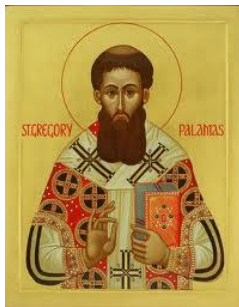
Friday, March 14, 2014

7pm: Akathist Hymn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Stanza

**Second Sunday of Lent**, March 16, 2014: St. Gregory Palamas

9am: Sunday Matins

10am: Divine Liturgy



St. Gregory served as Archbishop of Thessaloniki in the 14<sup>th</sup> century who wrote extensively on the distinction between God's essence, which is unknowable to man, and His energies, which can be experienced and understood by man.

6pm: Pan-Orthodox Vespers

Host Parish: Assumption Church, Scottsdale

8202 East Cactus Road

480-991-3009

Evening Sermon: Fr. Dragomir Tuba

*Offering Tray benefits Orthodox Christian Missions*

## The Third Week

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

7pm: Lenten Compline Service

Video: **St. Dionysios**

*Refreshments and discussion*

Wednesday, March 19, 2014

10:30am: Bible study (Conference Room)

6pm: Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

Lenten Fellowship Dinner

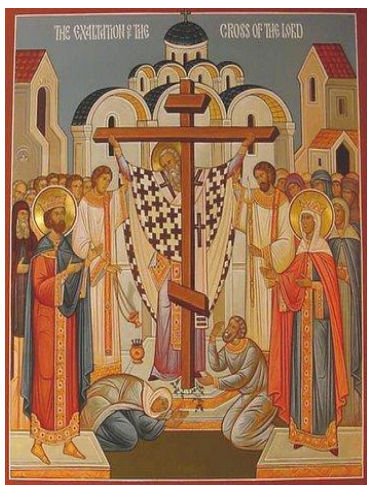
Friday, March 21, 2014

7pm: Akathist Hymn, 3<sup>rd</sup> Stanza

**Third Sunday of Lent, March 23, 2014: The Holy Cross**

9am: Sunday Matins

10am: Divine Liturgy; Procession of the Cross



The half-way point of Great Lent brings us the symbol of Christ's victory over death: the Cross. Death was put to death by our Lord's crucifixion upon the Cross, and His victorious Resurrection. As we will hear at the end of the Resurrection Service, early on the morning of April 20, "O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory!"

6pm: Pan-Orthodox Vespers

Host Parish: St. Savas Church, Phoenix

4436 E. McKinley, Phoenix

(602) 275-7360

Evening Sermon: Fr. Alin Munteanu

*Offering Tray benefits St. Paisios Monastery, Safford, AZ*



## The Fourth Week

Tuesday, March 25, 2014

9am: Divine Liturgy - Annunciation of the Theotokos

7pm: Lenten Compline Service

Video: **Peter the Apostle**

*Refreshments and discussion*

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

10:30am: Bible study (Conference Room)

6pm: Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

Lenten Fellowship Dinner

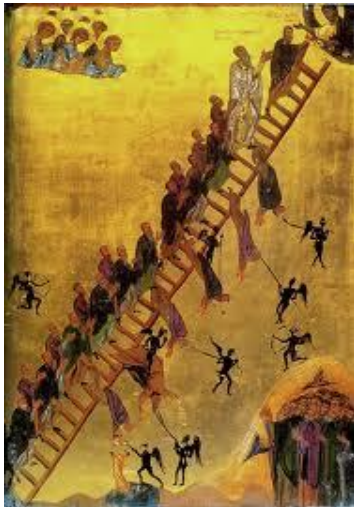
Friday, March 28, 2014

7pm: Akathist Hymn, 4<sup>th</sup> Stanza

**Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 30, 2014:** St. John of the Ladder

9am: Sunday Matins

10am: Divine Liturgy



St. John was a monk of Mt. Sinai monastery in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, known primarily for his classic book of Orthodox spirituality, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent." It was written as a guide to acquiring the virtues of the spiritual life. Thirty chapters long (one for each of the years of our Lord's age at his baptism), his book is based on the Old Testament story of Jacob's ladder in Genesis 28.

6pm: Pan-Orthodox Vespers

Host Parish: Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Phoenix

1614 E. Monte Vista, Phoenix

602-253-9515

Evening Sermon: Fr. Apostolos Hill

*Offering Tray benefits Project Mexico*



## The Fifth Week

Tuesday, April 1, 2014

7pm: Lenten Compline Service

Video: **Archangel Michael**

*Refreshments and discussion*

Wednesday, April 2, 2014

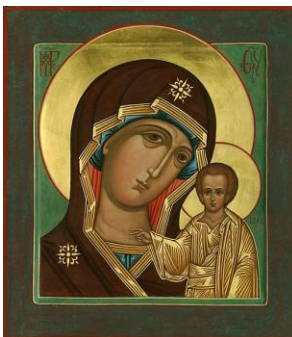
10:30am: Bible study (Conference Room)

6pm: Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

Lenten Fellowship Dinner

Friday, April 4, 2014

7pm: Akathist Hymn (Complete)

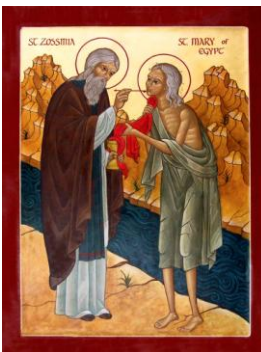


**Fifth Sunday of Lent, April 6, 2014: St. Mary of Egypt**

9am: Sunday Matins

10am: Divine Liturgy

*God's image was perfectly preserved in you, O Mother. For taking up the Cross you followed Christ. You taught us by example to disdain the flesh, a passing thing, but to see the soul which is immortal. Wherefore, O holy Mary, your spirit rejoices with the angels.*



6pm: Pan-Orthodox Vespers

Host Parish: Exaltation of the Holy Cross R. O. C.

10030 N. 32nd Street, Phoenix

(623) 693-4639

Evening Sermon: Fr. Andre Paez

*Offering Tray benefits Arizona Clergy Council*

## The Sixth Week

Tuesday, April 8, 2014

7pm: Lenten Compline Service

Video: **Monks of Mt. Athos**

*Refreshments and discussion*

Wednesday, April 9, 2014

10:30am: Bible study (Conference Room)

6pm: Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

Lenten Fellowship Dinner

Saturday, April 12, 2014: Saturday of Lazarus

9am: Divine Liturgy

Lenten Fellowship Breakfast

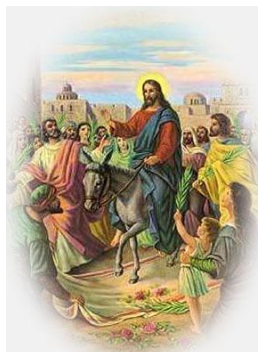


*Following the liturgy, everyone is invited to stay for breakfast, and we will be making palm crosses for Palm Sunday.*

**Palm Sunday**, Sunday, April 13, 2014: Entrance into Jerusalem

9am: Sunday Matins

10am: Divine Liturgy; Fish Luncheon



## Holy Week Begins

6pm: Christ "The Bridegroom" Matins Service

Holy Week services begin this evening with the Matins service, known as the Bridegroom service. The beautiful hymn, "Behold, the Bridegroom is coming" reminds us to prepare ourselves for the eventual return of Jesus Christ.

## Holy Week Services

### Holy Monday: April 14, 2014

7pm: "The Bridegroom" Matins Service

### Holy Tuesday: April 15, 2014

7pm: "The Bridegroom" Matins Service

### Holy Wednesday: April 16, 2014

9am: Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

4pm: Holy Unction (children)

7pm: Holy Unction

### Holy Thursday: April 17, 2014

9am: Divine Liturgy

7pm: The 12 Passion Gospels



### Holy Friday: April 18, 2014

9am: Reading of the Royal Hours

3pm: Vesper Service: The Descent from the Cross

7pm: The Lamentations; Procession of the Epitaphios

### Holy Saturday: April 19, 2014

10am: Divine Liturgy

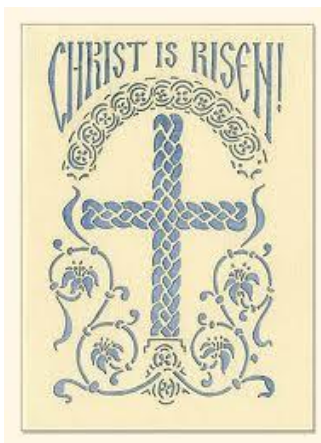
11:15pm: Resurrection Service and Divine Liturgy

## **"Come, Receive the Light!"**

### Easter Sunday, Holy Pascha: April 20, 2014

1pm: The Agapi/Love Vespers

Children's Easter Egg Hunt



## 2. Fasting Guidelines



“Just say NO!” We’ve all heard that familiar slogan designed to encourage young people to stand up to peer pressure. A firmly stated “NO” can be helpful.

The Church calls us to Fast from certain foods during Lent. In a sense, we have to do the same thing: “Just say NO!” The problem with this slogan, however, is that it puts fasting in a negative light: do NOT eat this and do NOT eat that. But fasting should not be seen as a negative undertaking. All spiritual tools and disciplines – prayer, fasting, reading, Confession, etc. - should always be seen in a positive, rather than negative, light.

*“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Mt.6:16-18)*

Fasting is pleasing to God as long as it is done with the proper attitude. This means we don’t make a point of telling others what a great person we are for fasting, and we don’t judge others if we think they are not fasting. Remember the parable of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee? (Luke 18:10-15)



If we are following all the rules on fasting but still keep anger, hatred and envy in our hearts, the fasting is of no use! Why? Because the point of fasting is to be more concerned with our spiritual growth, and becoming more like Christ. If our behavior - towards God and one another - does not change as a result of our fasting, all we're doing is changing our diet.

Fasting is not meant to make us sick, but it should teach us at least two things: 1) we don't need as much food as we're used to eating; and 2) we need to pay more attention to our spirit, the type of people we are on the inside.

When the Church calls us to fast, it does so with the intent of changing our focus from the physical to the spiritual, from being self-centered to Christ-centered.

The Orthodox Church calls us to "Just Say YES!" to the discipline of fasting so we can see the benefits of filling our soul with Christ through increased reading from the bible, increased time spent in prayer, and increased time spent giving to the needs of others. These are the positive aspects of fasting.

Try not to get caught up in the many details of what not to eat and when. Begin with prayer, asking God to strengthen your resolve during Lent; to go without certain foods, and even eating less at mealtimes. Ask Him to help your intent this year to fast with the right attitude. Make a plan to fast as often as you can, and make it reasonable and practical. If you fall, don't give up, and start again tomorrow.

## **My Fasting Plan**

1. Foods I will try to give up:
2. Leisure activities I will try to give up or limit:
3. Spiritual activities (prayer, reading, charitable works) I will try to add to my day:

### 3. Personal prayer



*"Hear my prayer, O Lord!"*

In addition to praying as a congregation during Church services, it is important to develop a personal prayer life. This is your time with God, wherever and whenever it may be. You choose the time and the place. You decide what words to use.



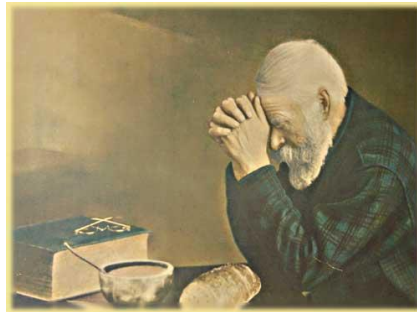
As with fasting, proper attitude in prayer is important. To the best of your ability, put away all other distractions, and try to stay focused on just speaking with God. You can begin with prayers of the Church, such as the ones on the next page, and then you can use your own. Begin by making the sign of the Cross, and know that God is always listening.

Remember that prayer is communicating with God, and communication is always two-way, not one. God knows what is on our heart and knows what we want to say, but we still should say it! God is listening and will respond, but not always when or how we want. How do we know He is listening? One way is by keeping quiet, so we can listen to Him!

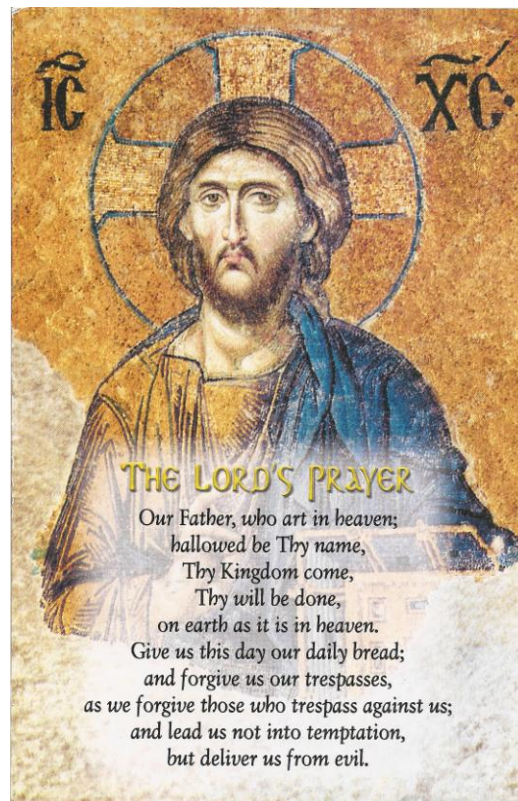
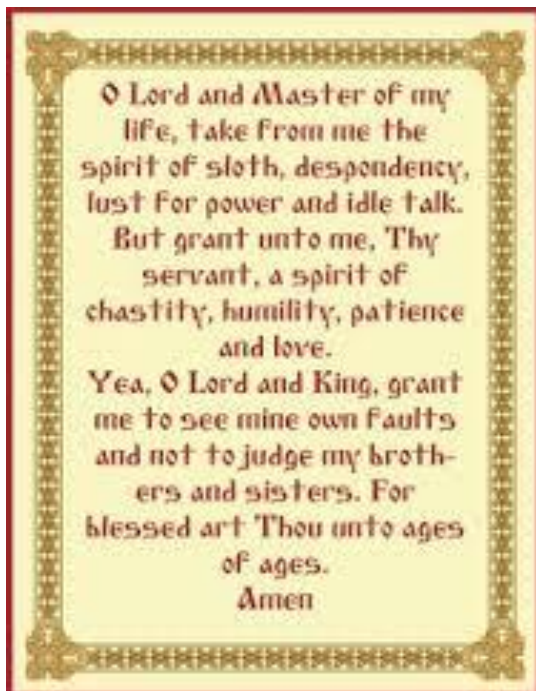


Prayer is a gift of the Holy Spirit; we ask the Spirit to help us pray, and to help us listen for an answer. It's not a game; don't look for lightning or swinging chandeliers. God truly wants us to be in close relationship with Him, and prayer is a very powerful tool to help grow our relationship with Him. Make your prayer time count. Be honest, keep calm and quiet, use words from your heart, and you will feel the presence of God.

Try to establish a daily Rule of Prayer during Lent. This means that you pray at the same time each day or each evening. It might be difficult at first, but stick with it, and you'll find it not just easier, but more fulfilling as time goes on.



## Prayer of St. Ephraim





## 4. Works of Charity

Simply put, these are activities, in the name of Christ, for the benefit of others. They can be simple that involve one person, or they can be more involved, benefiting many people. Here are three to help get you started:



Volunteers are always needed, and there are parishioners at the food bank each week. You can go with them (see Roy Christian on Sundays) or you can find a time that fits your schedule.

### **Project Mexico/St. Innocent Orphanage** (ProjectMexico.org)

This pan-Orthodox institution has been building homes for families since 1988 with volunteers from Orthodox Churches from all over the United States and Canada. St. Innocent Orphanage is the only Orthodox Orphanage for boys in the western hemisphere. Since 1996, boys have been taken in, fed, clothed, educated physically, spiritually and mentally. The resident Chaplain is Fr. Nicholas Andruchow, formerly of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church of Flagstaff.

The orphanage can always use materials and supplies. Home building events are open to individuals 16 or older. See the website for further details.

## **International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC.org)**

**MISSION:** “IOCC, in the spirit of Christ’s love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.”

We are pleased to welcome Mr. Nick Kasemiotis from IOCC on Friday evening, March 7, following the Akathist Hymn. Nick will be talking about IOCC and the many ways in which all of us can offer our support.



There are many opportunities, locally and internationally, that need support, many through the Orthodox Church, and others independent of the Church. During Great Lent, we are called to stretch our generosity, our charity, our love, just a little bit further than normal.

**What will you decide to do this year?**

## 5. Lenten Activities for our Youth

Children as well as adults can appreciate and benefit from the Lenten journey. Parents should not be afraid to discuss fasting and prayer with their children, and encourage them to participate.



Our Youth Group continues to meet monthly with various activities during Lent. As we get closer to Holy Week, children participate on Lazarus Saturday with the making of the Palm Crosses for Palm Sunday.

On Good Friday, a half-day retreat is planned for our youth, which finishes in time for them to participate in the Vesper service at 3pm.

For the Lamentations service on Good Friday, young girls are encouraged to participate as Myrrhbearers. Finally, on Easter Sunday, there will be an Easter Egg Hunt for our young people in the Church back yard. See Lindsay Vardalos for further information.

Children naturally imitate the behavior of their parents. When children are with their parents in Church, watching them pray, making the sign of the cross, lighting candles, venerating icons, receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion, they are watching, learning and will imitate what they see.

## 6. Preparing for Confession



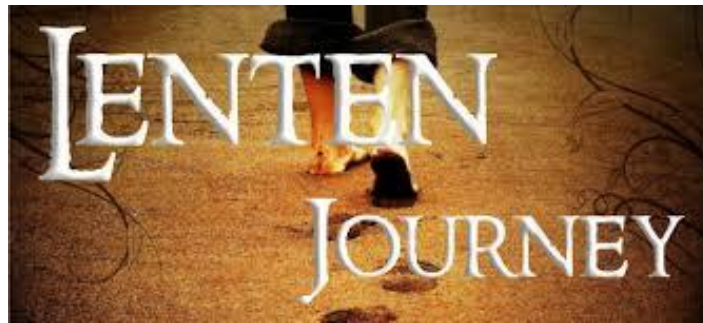
Part of the Lenten Journey is making an appointment for the Sacrament of Confession. This is another spiritual tool to help us grow as Christians by ridding our minds of guilt, depression and anxiety over past sins. Confession helps us to see ourselves as we truly are: imperfect, but acknowledging our weaknesses, repenting and asking forgiveness. This is the path towards reconciliation with God.

If it has been at least a year since your last Confession, consider calling the office or emailing Fr. Michael to make an appointment sometime during Lent. Preparation for Confession always helps. This can be a review of the 10 Commandments, and a simple inventory of sins we know we have committed.

The point of confessing our sins is to repent, and to ask God's forgiveness. It does take an amount of courage and humility to make the appointment for Confession. But the alternative is much worse. If we are sorry for sins we have committed, it is quite natural to want to ask for, and receive, God's forgiveness.

There is no set age for children to go to Confession. Parents usually know when their children feel remorse for things they've done, and have learned to say "I'm sorry." If possible, the family should go to Confession together.

The Sacrament of Confession is another helpful spiritual tool for Orthodox Christians, particularly during the Lenten Journey.



Hopefully this booklet will help you make your Lenten Journey be both meaningful and inspirational. The goal is to continue growing as Christians, and, especially at this time of year, to prepare our hearts and soul to celebrate our Lord's Resurrection.

The Orthodox Church offers many helpful tools to keep us growing from childhood through adulthood. They are of no use until we make the decision to use these tools, become involved and participate in the various activities, disciplines and worship services.

Make the decision this year to push yourself spiritually, become involved in the life of the Church, and experience the spiritual joy of celebrating Christ's Resurrection at the conclusion of your journey.

May your Lenten Journey set you on a path that leads to greater love for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



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