Lent is a 40-day journey of opening our minds and hearts to deeper patterns of life, to become more fully the people we’re created to be. It’s a season of preparation so that we can arrive at the Easter feast with a wider capacity to receive the new things God has in store for us. It’s a time for renewal.

It can also be a long slog. Six weeks is long enough to ask us if we’re really serious about going deeper. The traditional Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving get us moving in the right direction, but this effort toward renewal also takes daily attention.

That’s why we created this quote-a-day journal. We want to take a moment each day to pause and reflect on where we are going, where God is leading us. A small step every day can lead us to new horizons if we hang with it for 40 days.

We all enter Ash Wednesday as sinners, and though no one arrives at Easter a perfect saint, the journey can be transformative if we stick with it together because God promises to meet us on the way. Check in with us and others online at #GrottoLent2020!

February 26, 2020: Ash Wednesday

Lent puts in touch with the elements of life that do not change. When everything in your life has turned to dust, what do you hope remains?

No matter how hard we work, we will take no wealth with us from this life. Earthly realities fade away like dust in the wind.
—Pope Francis
Thursday, February 27, 2020

We need to reject all those petty cliches that tell us we can’t change, that it’s not worth trying, that nothing will make a difference.  
—Pope Francis

What are three words that describe the person you want to be at the end of this Lenten journey?

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Friday, February 28, 2020

Lent is the time to rediscover the direction of life.  
—Pope Francis

Describe the direction you want your life to take in one sentence.

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Saturday, February 29, 2020

Do not wish to be anything but what you are, and try to be that perfectly.  
—St. Francis de Sales

List three things that are preventing you from being the person you are created to be.

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March 1, 2020: First Sunday of Lent

I know well that the greater and more beautiful the work is, the more terrible will the storms that rage against it. —St. Faustina Kowalska

What are the forces that oppose the deeper life you are being called to?

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Monday, March 2, 2020

We pay God a great compliment by asking great things of Him. —St. Teresa of Avila

Write down a prayer asking something of God during this Lenten season.

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Tuesday, March 3, 2020

Fasting wakes us up. —Pope Francis

How is your Lenten fast going? What do you notice about yourself in the absence of what you gave up?

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Wednesday, March 4, 2020

The world offers you comfort, but you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness!
—Pope Benedict XVI

Name one “comfort” that you’ve grown accustomed to that might be holding you back from something more.

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Thursday, March 5, 2020

Love — to be real — it must cost, it must hurt, it must empty us of self.
—St. Mother Teresa

What is one thing you can do to show love to someone in your life?

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Friday, March 6, 2020

Lent is a favorable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ.
—Pope Francis

What is one thing you can do today or tomorrow to show love to someone in your community who is poor?

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Saturday, March 7, 2020

Seek then the highest wisdom—not by arguments in words but by the perfection of your life.
—St. Columban

It’s easy to mistake reflection and conversation for change, even if our intentions are pure. What matters is action. What is one challenge you are facing in your Lenten journey right now?

March 8, 2020: Second Sunday of Lent

Grace is nothing else but a certain beginning of glory within us.
—St. Thomas Aquinas

After the first 10 days of Lent, what changes do you notice taking root within you?

Monday, March 9, 2020

We are called to confront the poverty of our brothers and sisters, to touch it, to make it our own, and to take practical steps to alleviate it.
—Pope Francis

What is one source of news or information that you can add to your media consumption that will open your eyes to the suffering of others?
Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Evil draws its power from indecision and concern for what other people think.
—Pope Benedict XVI

If you were not concerned about the way you would be perceived, what would be the next step you’d take toward spiritual growth?

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

The more we let God take us over, the more truly ourselves we become.
—C.S. Lewis

What fears do you have about allowing God into your life more?

Thursday, March 12, 2020

Prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven.
—St. Therese of Lisieux

Think back over the past 24 hours. Describe a moment when your heart was moved.
Friday, March 13, 2020

In your place of work or study or in your own home, what is one thing you can do to be a “protagonist of change”?

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Please, do not leave it to others to be protagonists of change. You are the ones who hold the future!
—Christus Vivit, #174

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Saturday, March 14, 2020

How can you plan to incorporate a period of mindful silence into the activities for the day?

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Without silence, words lose their meaning; without listening, speaking no longer heals.
—Henri Nouwen

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March 15, 2020: Third Sunday of Lent

St. Augustine knew that desire is an engine that drives us forward, toward God. Often, we misdirect that energy, though. How would you describe your deepest longings?

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Longing makes the heart deep.
—St. Augustine
**Monday, March 16, 2020**

The endurance of darkness is the preparation for great light.
—St. John of the Cross

What is a darkness you are enduring in your life right now? It can be a good first step to put into words, to pull it out into the light.

**Tuesday, March 17, 2020**

Everything, even sweeping, scraping vegetables, weeding a garden, and waiting on the sick, could be a prayer if it were offered to God.
—St. Martin de Porres

What is a task you’ll take on today — even if it’s ordinary — that you can offer to God?

**Wednesday, March 18, 2020**

He who goes about to reform the world must begin with himself.
—St. Ignatius of Loyola

Name one change you would like to see in the world. How can you make a starting point within yourself for that change?
**Thursday, March 19, 2020 (Feast of St. Joseph)**

Do you want to know yourself better? Then discover silence.
—Pope Benedict XVI

What is a source of input (social media, a streaming show, music, etc.) that you can put away today for 10 minutes of intentional silence?

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**Friday, March 20, 2020**

God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving.
—Pope Francis

Name a gift God has given you this week. Name a challenge that has come your way this week.

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**Saturday, March 21, 2020**

Ask Christ to help you become happy.
—St. Paul Miki

God wants for us the same happiness we want for ourselves. Write a one-sentence prayer asking for happiness.

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March 22, 2020: Fourth Sunday of Lent

List three ways in which love has illuminated your life.

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Monday, March 23, 2020

We’re more than halfway through Lent. Our journey is partly about us pushing ourselves, and partly about allowing ourselves to be pulled along by God. How has God supported your efforts this Lent?

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Tuesday, March 24, 2020

Look back to the first week of this journal and what you wrote in it. What do you notice about the Lenten journey you’ve been on for the last month?

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Wednesday, March 25, 2020: Feast of the Annunciation

God lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things.
—Luke 1:46-55

How has God lifted you up this Lent?
How has He filled you with good things?

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Thursday, March 26, 2020

You wish to see: listen. Hearing is a step toward vision.
—St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Take time in the next day to listen carefully to a friend or family member. Write down the values that you heard underneath what they were saying.

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Friday, March 27, 2020

We grow in wisdom and maturity when we take the time to touch the suffering of others.
—Christus Vivit #171

Take a moment to think about someone in your life who is suffering right now. Reach out to them with a call or text to ask how they are doing.

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Saturday, March 28, 2020

We are far enough along in our Lenten journey to recognize that patterns of selfishness are not easy to break. When you are facing discouragement, what helps you start over?

We must not be disturbed at our imperfections since for us, perfection consists in fighting against them.
—St. Francis de Sales

Sunday, March 29, 2020: Fifth Sunday of Lent

In the spiritual life, the strength to change comes more from carving out room in our lives to receive than from imposing our will. Silence and hope are tools we use to do that work — they force us to be honest with ourselves and to get in touch with our deepest longings. How can you foster these two dispositions in the week ahead?

In silence and hope are formed the strength of saints.
—Thomas Merton

Monday, March 30, 2020

Fasting should help us set some things aside in order to make room for other gifts. What has God been giving you through your fasting this Lent?

God is always trying to give good things to us but our hands are too full to receive them.
—St. Augustine
Tuesday, March 31, 2020

We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone — we find it with another. —Thomas Merton

Write down the name of one person who has helped you find meaning in life. Then write a sentence about the qualities they have that have been helpful. Send them a note to thank them.

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Wednesday, April 1, 2020

To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often. —St. John Henry Newman

Look back at the three words you wrote on Feb. 27 to describe the change you were hoping for this Lent. How has that change transpired? How has it changed course into something new?

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Thursday, April 2, 2020

If you can't feed a hundred people, feed just one. —St. Mother Teresa

What is one thing you can do today to feed people who are hungry in your community?

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Friday, April 3, 2020

Walking in community, with friends, with those who love us: this helps us, it helps us to arrive precisely at the destination where we must arrive.
—Pope Francis

Have you been sharing your Lenten journey with anyone? Make plans to have a conversation with a good friend about how things are going.

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Saturday, April 4, 2020

There is no better way to complete the spiritual life than to be ever beginning it over again.
—St. Francis de Sales

You may have started Lent with an idea of the path you were hoping to take to Easter, but it’s likely that this path has changed. As we enter Holy Week in the coming days, it’s a time to re-focus our efforts. What practices do you want to take up to finish this journey well?

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Sunday, April 5, 2020: Palm Sunday and Beginning of Holy Week

Grace fills empty spaces, but it can only enter where there is a void to receive it.
—Simone Weil

In what way does your life feel empty right now? Rather than looking for an answer to that emptiness, or something to put into it, can you see any signs that God is in that emptiness with you?

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**Monday, April 6, 2020**

Do you have anything in your closet that you haven’t used in a year? Make a plan to evaluate what could be shared with someone in need.

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Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbor as a brother or sister.
—Pope Francis

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**Tuesday, April 7, 2020**

Perform an act of love for someone today, and think of it as a prayer. Write down what you did and how it felt.

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Prayer is an act of love; words are not needed.
—St. Teresa of Avila

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**Wednesday, April 8, 2020**

Technically, this is the last day of Lent because tomorrow begins the series of days around Jesus’ suffering and death. Still, it’s not too late to embrace this season. What is one thing you can do in the next three days to open yourself more fully to God’s love?

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There is still time for endurance, time for patience, time for healing, time for change.
—St. Basil the Great
April 9, 2020: Holy Thursday

Love lives through sacrifice and is nourished by giving.
—St. Maximilian Kolbe

Each of us has been nourished by the service and love of others — parents, friends, spouses. Write a note to thank someone for the sacrifices they’ve made for you.

April 10, 2020: Good Friday

I looked into my deepest wounds and was dazzled by Your glory.
—St. Augustine

Name a way in which you are wounded. How has this wound led you to seek God?

April 11, 2020: Holy Saturday

All human wisdom is contained in these two words: Wait and hope.
—Alexandre Dumas

Today, the day before Easter, is a day of expectant waiting. Write down the names of loved ones who have died and say a prayer for them.
April 12, 2020: Easter Sunday

Christ is risen — he is truly risen. His resurrection conquers death and opens a way to new life for us — both when we die, and in the smaller ways that loving others renews us every day. So today begins a great feast to celebrate the joy and hope of the resurrection. Reach out to someone else and celebrate this feast with them in some way.

One who has hope lives differently.  
—Pope Benedict XVI

April 13, 2020: Easter Monday

Write down three words that describe your interior life, your heart, your spirit. What defines you as you? In the resurrection, God has created a way for us to move through our failings and wounds to something new. The words you wrote down are a good articulation of what that “something new” looks like.

Your heart is greater than your wounds.  
—Henri Nouwen

April 14, 2020: Easter Tuesday

What are three ways in which your Lenten journey has dispelled darkness in your life?

Darkness can only be scattered by light; hatred can only be conquered by love.  
—St. Pope John Paul II
April 15, 2020: Easter Wednesday

Fight for the common good, serve the poor, be protagonists of the revolution of charity and service.
—Christus Vivit #174

The resurrection changes life for us, who are seeking God. It gives us hope, which strengthens us to love and act for others. What is an act of service you can offer in joy to someone today?

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April 16, 2020: Easter Thursday

Faith, hope, and charity are absolutely free, because if they are rooted in us deeply enough, they are also able to draw strength from whatever opposes them!
—Father Jacques Philippe

Recall what you wrote down on March 1 about the forces that oppose your journey this Lent. What do you notice about how this opposition impacted your faith, hope, and love?

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April 17, 2020: Easter Friday

We have all known the long lonelines, and we have found that the answer is community.
—Dorothy Day

Write down the name of someone you know who is lonely. What can you do to support them?

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April 18, 2020: Easter Saturday

The Lenten journey changes us. Even if we were only able to take a small step, it is a step toward something greater, it is a step away from complacency. In the weeks ahead, how do you hope to continue to grow in God’s love?

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Do not be satisfied with mediocrity.
—St. Pope John Paul II

April 19, 2020: Second Sunday of Easter

The fruit of our Lenten journey is peace — greater peace within ourselves, with others, and with God. But that peace requires attention — we must continually cultivate it. What are some sustainable practices that you hope to carry with you in the weeks ahead?

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Peace entails a conversion of heart and soul. It is a challenge that demands to be taken up ever anew.
—Pope Francis