



Bringing Home the Word

First Sunday of Lent (A)
February 22, 2026

The Gift of Boredom

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

Boredom is not a bad thing. It's a good thing. In fact, boredom is a gift. Lost in boredom, we begin to explore new interests and develop unrealized talents. We daydream and begin to form new hopes for our future. For these reasons, periods of boredom are especially good for children, and computers and mobile phones become distinct drawbacks for children and adults alike. It is also in the reverie of boredom that we find ourselves recognizing our limitations, faults, and weaknesses as human beings—the beginning steps to growth and wholeness.

Sunday Readings

Genesis 2:7–9; 3:1–7

The snake said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened."

Romans 5:12–19 or 5:12, 17–19

Through one righteous act, acquittal and life came to all.

Matthew 4:1–11

Jesus answered [the devil], "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'"

Being bored can be like living in a desert, and that's not a bad thing to do once in a while. Deserts and their absence of anything to distract us become places where we come to know ourselves. It's what took place in Jesus on his journey into the desert. There, he was confronted by his humanity in the temptations he experienced. There, he came to realize his calling and the beginnings of where it would take him. There, in the desert, he came to know himself.

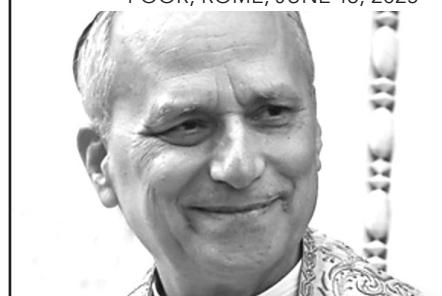
The season of Lent, then, becomes an opportunity for us to create a desert for ourselves. Putting limits on our television and computer time can create a desert. Snacking between meals can become a mindless distraction; thus, fasting can become another desert. Setting aside time for quiet and prayerful reflection becomes one more such desert experience. A grace of this Lent would be a fuller and more honest knowledge of ourselves—a kind of resurrection. †

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for ourselves.***

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

Today, signs of hope are increasingly found in care homes, communities for minors, centers for listening and acceptance, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and low-income schools. How many of these quiet signs of hope often go unnoticed and yet are so important for setting aside our indifference and inspiring others to become involved in various forms of volunteer work!

MESSAGE FOR WORLD DAY OF THE POOR, ROME, JUNE 13, 2025



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

REFLECTION
QUESTIONS

- Do you allow yourself to be bored?
- Has boredom ever led to self-knowledge or creativity?



Mercy for All

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

When we look at Church life today, especially within parishes, it is obvious that it is made up of much more than only the core, committed congregation, namely those who participate regularly in Church life and accept (at least for the main part) the dogmatic and moral teachings of their churches.

The Church also contains a wide variety of the less engaged: people who practice occasionally; people who accept some of its teachings; guests who visit our churches; people who don't explicitly commit but are sympathetic to the Church and offer it various kinds of support; and, not least, people who link themselves to God in more private ways—those who are spiritual but not religious.

This does not mean there are tiers within discipleship, where some are called to a higher holiness and others to a lower one. The Church may never be divided into the perfect and less perfect, the better and the half-baked, full participation and partial participation. The full gospel applies

to everyone, as does Jesus' invitation to intimacy with him. Christian discipleship doesn't ideally admit of levels, notches, layers, and different tiers of participation. Each individual chooses how deep he or she will go. Some go deeper than others, though everyone is meant to go its full depth. We are all around Jesus in our different ways, and we must be careful not to judge each other.

Perhaps when the priest blesses the congregation at the end of a liturgy, instead of saying, "Bow down for the blessing," he might say, "Those of you who think you are not in need of this blessing, please bow your heads and pray for God's blessing. Meanwhile, those of you who feel beaten, broken, and unworthy of this blessing, raise your heads to receive a love and a gift that you have long despaired of ever receiving." †

We are all around Jesus in our different ways, and we must not judge each other.

From *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Lent and Easter* by Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, Liguori Publications (828201). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Restoring Hope: Healing When You Have Been Hurt by the Church" by Paige Byrne Shortal

If you love someone who has rejected the Church; if you worry about someone who does not know Jesus; if you ache for someone who does not know God, God bless you. You are opening yourself up to love that sacrifices for the other. That being said, let God be God. As much as you love someone—even your own precious child—God loves that someone even more. Every night, Pope St. John XXIII would end his prayers with, "It's your Church, God; I'm going to bed." When we have done our duty and prayed for those about whom we are most concerned, perhaps we might end our prayers like good Pope John: "They are your children, God; I'm going to bed."

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

PRAYER

So that we may observe Lent with fasting, prayer, and sharing with those in need, we pray—Lord, let us be like you.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

February 23–28

Monday, Lenten Weekday:
Lv 19:1–2, 11–18 / Mt 25:31–46

Tuesday, Lenten Weekday:
Is 55:10–11 / Mt 6:7–15

Wednesday, Lenten Weekday:
Jon 3:1–10 / Lk 11:29–32

Thursday, Lenten Weekday:
Est C:12, 14–16, 23–25 / Mt 7:7–12

Friday, Lenten Weekday:
Ez 18:21–28 / Mt 5:20–26

Saturday, Lenten Weekday:
Dt 26:16–19 / Mt 5:43–48