

Lent Week 2 – 2026 Year A

Genesis 12:1-4; Ps 32:4-5; Timothy 1:8-10; Matt 17:1-9

‘Pope Leo XIV has recently urged priests to resist “the temptation to prepare homilies with artificial intelligence.” and not to pursue likes on Tic Tok¹ I am sorry to have to tell you this, as it means you’ll continue to get the same old junk from me.

I wish to ask you all something. But before I do, I to offer you a short reflection on the five wounds of Christ. One of the ways I think of them, is not just as the physical wounds, which are grievous enough, but the spiritual wounds. I find it helps me concentrate. The five wounds of Christ are 1) The wounds caused when he was crowned with thorns, 2) the wound caused by the nail driven through his right hand 3) the wound caused by nail driven through his left hand 4) the wound caused by nail driven through this feet 5) the wound caused by the spear thrust into his heart.²

1 – The crown of thorns is the damage wrought by our sinful thoughts. Here is the seat of our transgressions. Here is where we brood upon and entertain evil acts. Here are resentment, lust and envy and the desire for revenge. These – although at times invisible sins - corrode our soul.

2 – the wound to the right hand are the actions that we do. The nail is the times when we strike someone with our fist or with our words.

It is there when we steal or lie or kill. This wound is caused when we are spiteful or treacherous.

3 – the wound to the left hand is the wound of omission. This is the nail that is driven in by our neglect. Our refusing to help when someone asks; our walking across the street to avoid the hungry; not giving forgiveness. Our not asking how someone is, just in case we are told. It is the closing of our eyes, our ears or our mouths to what is just.

4 – The nail through our Lord’s feet is for the times of walking away. Our neglecting prayer. Our preferring sport or food or our bed to time with Jesus. Not desiring Jesus in the Sacrament of Communion or Reconciliation. Not witnessing to our faith out of shame or embarrassment. This nail is from the neglect of our promises and duties.

5 – Water and Blood poured from the heart of Jesus when it was pierced by the spear of a soldier. This is the cry from the cross: ‘Father, why have you abandoned me.’ This is the cry of those who have divorce, death, physical or emotional isolation creating a void in their lives. This is the abandonment of the soul. This is not so much a wound of direct sin, as the space we have created in ourselves or others through our not loving God.

These are the wounds inflicted on Christ: thought, deed, neglect, abandonment and isolation.

Now, I ask that ‘something’. With our Lenten practice of prayer, almsgiving and fasting what are we doing about ‘40 Days for Life’? I put

¹ <https://www.osvnews.com/pope-leo-xiv-tells-priests-not-to-use-ai-to-write-homilies-or-look-for-likes-on-tiktok/> accessed 22 Feb 2026

² I have drawn inspiration and some content from ‘*Contemplate my Wounds*’ a Marian Press publication, 2017

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notices every year in the newsletter about what they do. There are posters in every church. We offer prayers almost every week about it. This is all for the unborn. In Stapleford, not far up the road, is the largest abortion centre in Nottinghamshire. Abortion the most devastating calamity ever to hit our nation, and it seems to me that there are only a handful of people who understand the wounds of Christ enough to be there to pray and offer help.

It is a contentious issue between God's will and the world's will. But it should not be for us. It can be uncomfortable. It might be something we just did not want to know was there. But, it is there. We need to know what we think. We need to know what we pray. We need to know what we believe. Pope Francis spoke unequivocally about it: "Abortion is murder...It's a human life, period."³ Silence does not fill the void of a human life taken.

In today's Gospel Jesus turns to the frightened disciples who had seen his glory at the Transfiguration. He does not say to them 'Bow and tremble', rather, he says 'Rise, and have no fear.'⁴ He says this because to follow Him, they have to stand up and be seen, not cower away and hope everything will be okay without them.

The invitation to us is there. The wounds of Christ remind us of the alternative and the cost. Who are going to be Jesus' disciples? We who receive His Body and Blood. The wilderness of Lent opens up before us, and we hear His voice. I think we must go.

³ <https://capp-usa.org/2023/05/pope-francis-on-abortion/> accessed 24 Feb 2026

⁴ Matt 17: 9