

# Three Pillars- One Heart

*An Elementary School Age Lenten Journey with Heart of Mary House*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Heart of Mary House invites schools and families of the Diocese to enter more deeply into the season of Lent by walking intentionally through the Church's three traditional pillars: Prayer, Almsgiving and Fasting. On an even deeper level, we invite you to encounter Christ in the suffering through the works of mercy.

This program is designed to be:

- Theologically Catholic
- Pastoral and age-appropriate
- Simple to implement
- Deeply formative

At its heart, this journey is about encounter—encountering Christ present in the dying poor, and allowing that encounter to shape hearts, habits, and faith.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Program Title: *Three Pillars, One Heart*

Audience:

- Catholic elementary, middle, and high schools
- Families

Duration: Ash Wednesday through Holy Week and completed on Divine Mercy Sunday

Core Goal: To lead participants into a lived experience of mercy through prayerful accompaniment, sacrificial giving, and concrete service in support of the mission of Heart of Mary House.

## **PILLAR I: PRAYER**

*Encountering Christ in the Dying*

Prayer grounds this journey. Participants are invited to pray with and for the residents, families, and caregivers of Heart of Mary House.

### **Weekly Lenten Prayer Intentions**

Week 1: For the dignity of every human life, from conception to natural death

Week 2: For those who are lonely, forgotten, or afraid at the end of life

Week 3: For caregivers, nurses, volunteers, and all who serve the dying

Week 4: For peaceful deaths and holy deaths

Week 5: For families grieving loss and those preparing to say goodbye

Holy Week: In thanksgiving for the gift of merciful love revealed on the Cross

### **Spiritual Adoption**

Each classroom and family is invited to spiritually adopt an anonymous resident of Heart of Mary House for the duration of Lent.

### **Participants commit to:**

- One short prayer per week (Rosary decade, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or provided HOMH prayer)
- Offering one small sacrifice weekly for their adopted resident

### **Heart of Mary House Prayer**

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, present in the suffering and the dying, we entrust to You the residents of Heart of Mary House. May they know Your peace, Your mercy, and Your loving presence. Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, accompany them home to the Father. Amen.

## **PILLAR II: ALMSGIVING**

### *Giving Sacrificially*

Almsgiving invites participants to unite sacrifice with generosity, recognizing that what we give up can become a gift of love for another.

### **Giving Models**

#### 1. "Give Something Up → Give Something Away"

- *Participants are encouraged to give up a comfort (snacks, soda, coffee, treats) and donate the money saved throughout Lent.*

#### 2. Alms Box Collection

- *Classrooms or families place a visible alms box labeled: "Supporting the Dying Poor at Heart of Mary House."*

#### 3. Simple Meal Day

- *Schools or families host a soup-and-bread meal*
- *Soup Sundays- bring soup to a neighbor or friend*

### **Impact of Giving**

- \$25 helps provide meals for residents
- \$50 supports nursing and personal care supplies
- \$100 assists with utilities and household needs

## **PILLAR III: FASTING**

### *Offering Sacrifice in Union with Christ*

Fasting invites participants to enter more deeply into Christ's self-emptying love by intentionally denying themselves comforts and uniting those sacrifices to prayer and charity.

### **Core Invitation**

Participants are encouraged to fast in ways that are age-appropriate, meaningful, and connected to solidarity with the poor and the dying.

### **Age-Appropriate Fasting Practices**

#### Elementary School

- Give up a small treat or privilege one day each week
- Practice silence or patience as a form of fasting
- Connect fasting to a simple prayer for the residents of Heart of Mary House

#### Middle & High School

- Fast from snacks, soda, social media, or entertainment on chosen days
- Participate in a simple meal day (soup and bread)
- Reflect on how fasting creates space for prayer and generosity

#### Family Groups

- Observe traditional Friday abstinence and additional fasting days
- Host communal simple meals
- Encourage fasting offered for the intentions of the dying poor

*Fasting is not about punishment,  
but about making room for love.*

## **The Heart: SERVICE**

### *Practicing Mercy Through Presence*

Service teaches that love is shown not only through action, but through presence and compassion.

### Age-Appropriate Service Opportunities

#### Elementary School

- Handmade cards and artwork for residents
- Prayer chains or spiritual bouquets

#### Middle & High School

All of the above, plus:

- Reflection letters on dignity, suffering, and mercy
- Donation drives (approved items only)
- On-site volunteer service for eligible ages

#### Family Groups

All of the above, plus:

- Meal preparation
- Laundry and housekeeping support
- Grounds beautification projects
- Ongoing volunteer discernment

## **CULMINATING MOMENT: HOLY WEEK**

### An Offering of Mercy

Schools and parishes are encouraged to conclude the program by offering:

- Collected alms
- Written reflections or prayers
- A communal prayer service or Mass intention for Heart of Mary House

This moment symbolizes placing the fruits of Lent at the foot of the Cross.

## **IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST**

### **Heart of Mary House provides:**

- Program overview
- PDF, printable materials
- Weekly prayer intentions
- Giving guidance
- Service coordination
- Contact person for questions

### **Schools and families commit to:**

- Designating a program coordinator
- Encouraging participation across age groups
- Sharing the mission with their community

All service activities are coordinated with Heart of Mary House staff to ensure appropriateness and dignity.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Heart of Mary House Nashville, Tennessee

For coordination, materials, or questions: Kim Derrick, [kimderrick@heartofmaryhouse.net](mailto:kimderrick@heartofmaryhouse.net)

**“Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40)**

## Almsgiving

Each week during Lent you will have a focus on almsgiving. What is almsgiving?

*The foundational call of Christians to charity is a frequent theme of the Gospels. During Lent, we are asked to focus more intently on "almsgiving," which means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity. As one of the three pillars of Lenten practice, almsgiving is "a witness to fraternal charity" and "a work of justice pleasing to God." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2462).*

There are opportunities for students to offer their own sacrificial giving throughout the Lenten Program and there are also opportunities to collect donations for the Heart of Mary House.

What is the Heart of Mary House?

**Mission:** *To provide a safe, comfortable, and peaceful home-like setting for underserved people who have been given a terminal prognosis and need somewhere to stay and someone to care for them in their final days and weeks.*

**Vision:** *Our vision is a Middle Tennessee where every individual facing the end of life has access to shelter, care, and dignity, regardless of their financial situation or support network. We strive to create a community where no one is left without a peaceful, compassionate place to spend their final days.*

The Impact of giving includes the following:

- \$25 helps provide meals for residents
- \$50 supports nursing and personal care supplies
- \$100 assists with utilities and household needs



HEART of MARY  
HOUSE

For on-line donations, please scan the code:

Donations can also be mailed to  
Heart of Mary House  
c/o Kim Derrick  
9632 S Harpeth Rd.  
Nashville, TN 37221



SUN MON TUES WED THU FRI SAT

*Feb. 18*  
Ash  
Wednesday

*19*

*20*

*21*

*22*  
1<sup>st</sup> Sun

*23*

*24*

*25*

*26*

*27*

*28*

*Mar. 1*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sun.

*2*

*3*  
St. Katherine  
Drexel

*4*

*5*

*6*

*7*  
St. Perpetua  
St. Felicity

*8*  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sun.

*9*

*10*

*11*

*12*

*13*

*14*

*15*  
4<sup>th</sup> Sun.

*16*

*17*  
St. Patrick

*18*

*19*  
Solemnity of  
St. Joseph

*20*

*21*

*22*  
5<sup>th</sup> Sun.

*23*

*24*

*25*  
Annunciation

*26*

*27*

*28*

*29*  
Palm  
Sunday

*30*

*31*

*Apr. 1*

*2*  
Holy  
Thursday

*3*  
Good  
Friday  
Novena Day 1

*4*  
Holy  
Saturday  
Novena Day 2

*5*  
Easter  
Novena Day 3

*6*  
Novena Day 4

*7*  
Novena Day 5

*8*  
Novena Day 6

*9*  
Novena Day 7

*10*  
Novena Day 8

*11*  
Novena Day 9

*12*  
Divine  
Mercy  
Sunday

*3 Pillars- 1 Heart*

# Introductory Week- for instructors

## Invitation

- Introduce the three pillars: Prayer, Almsgiving, and Fasting
- Invite students to commit themselves prayerfully to the full journey
- Encourage silence, simplicity, and intentionality this Lent

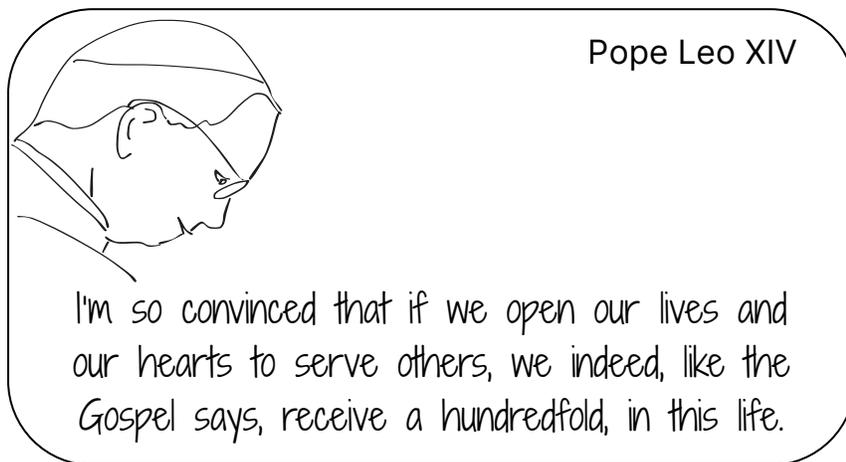
## Suggested Practice

- Opening prayer service or write a classroom prayer together
- Explain Heart of Mary House and the mission briefly
- Begin Lenten sacrifices and prayer intentions
- Begin with Scripture (Matthew 25:40; John 19; Luke 23)
- Reflect on how Christ is present in the suffering and dying

## Heart of Mary House Mission & Explanation for Children

- Heart of Mary House is a non-profit hospice home providing care for the poor and needy. Hospice care is for people who are very sick and are going to die soon. Our goal at HOMH is to offer kindness and love to the residents so that they can have peace in their final days. It is very important to pray for the residents and offer sacrifices for them to have peace and comfort.
- At the Heart of Mary House each resident is treated with kindness and gentleness, we want them to feel like they are resting in their own lovely home. At the end of a person's life, they need lots of gentle care because they cannot even get out of bed or eat without help.
- Caregivers take care of the residents in the home. A Caregiver is an employee of the Heart of Mary House who prepares meals for the residents, gives them their medicine, and helps to change or move them. It is very important to pray for our Caregivers as well; they need lots of grace to work long hours and love each resident with the tenderness of Christ's love.

**Reflect and discuss the quote below from Pope Leo. Journal or draw pictures to express your thoughts. Use this quote throughout Lent to gain a deeper understanding of service to others.**



# Introductory Week

**Theme:** Remembering Who We Are: "Remember that you are dust..."

**Focus:** Introduction & Preparation

**Goal:** Help children understand that Lent begins with humility, repentance, and hope.

## Reflection

Ashes remind us that our lives are a gift from God and that every person—from the youngest to the oldest—is precious. As we begin Lent, we prepare our hearts to walk with Jesus and care for others, especially those who are sick, dying, or alone. Ashes remind us of three truths:

1. Our mortality – every life has an end
2. Our humility – we are not self-sufficient
3. Our hope – repentance opens the way to mercy

As ashes are placed on our foreheads, we acknowledge that life is fragile and sacred from beginning to end. This Lenten journey with Heart of Mary House begins by recognizing that accompanying the dying is not something to fear—it is a holy responsibility rooted in love.

## PILLAR I: PRAYER

- Pray together: "Jesus, help us love others the way You do."
- Introduce Heart of Mary House and explain that we will pray for people who are very sick.

## PILLAR II: ALMSGIVING

- Introduce the classroom almsgiving box.
- Talk about sharing what we have with those in need.

## PILLAR III: FASTING

- Give up one small comfort today.
- Practice listening quietly as a form of fasting.

## The Heart: SERVICE

- Make a class promise to be kind and gentle during Lent.

**Key Teaching:** Ashes remind us that life is short, every moment matters, and love is urgent.

## Suggested Practice

- Open with prayer and reflection
- Explain Heart of Mary House and the mission briefly
- Begin Lenten sacrifices and prayer intentions

## Reflection Questions

- Why do we get ashes on Ash Wednesday?
- How can being kind help others feel loved?

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

18

Ash  
Wednesday  
Make  
Almsgiving box

19

20

Sacrifice

21

Rosary decade  
 Divine Mercy Ch.  
 Provided prayer

# Week 1

**Theme:** Jesus Loves Every Life. Life is sacred—always

**Focus:** The dignity of every human life, from conception to natural death

**Goal:** Help children understand that every human life is sacred and loved by God

## Reflection

Human dignity does not depend on age, ability, productivity, or health. From the first moment of life to the final breath, every person bears the image of God. Caring for the dying poor is not separate from being pro-life—it is an essential expression of it.

### PILLAR I: PRAYER

Encountering Christ in the Dying

- Weekly Intention: For the dignity of every human life, from conception to natural death

Spiritual Adoption

- Pray for the Resident in Room 1
- Pray one decade of the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or the provided prayer
- Offer one small sacrifice for your adopted resident

### PILLAR II: ALMSGIVING

Giving Sacrificially

- "Give Something Up → Give Something Away"
- Create an almsgiving box for your classroom
- Soup Sunday: bring soup to a neighbor or friend

### PILLAR III: FASTING

- Give up a small treat one day this week
- Practice patience when things are hard
- Say a short prayer for the residents when you fast

### The Heart: SERVICE

- Handmade cards or artwork for residents
- Prayer chains or spiritual bouquets

## Suggested Practice

- Prayer: Pray for respect for life at every stage
- Fasting: Give up something that reminds us life is a gift, not an entitlement
- Almsgiving: Begin alms collection intentionally

## Scripture

- Psalm 139:13–16
- Matthew 25:40

## Reflection Questions

- Who takes care of you when you are sick or sad?
- How do you think Jesus feels when someone is alone?
- What is one small way you can show love this week?

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

1<sup>st</sup> Sun

Week 1: For the dignity of every human life, from conception to natural death

Sacrifice

Rosary decade  
 Divine Mercy Ch  
 HOMH prayer

# Week 2

**Theme:** Jesus Stays With Those Who Are Lonely. No one should die alone

**Focus:** For those who are lonely, forgotten, or afraid at the end of life

**Goal:** Help children recognize loneliness and respond with compassion.

## Reflection

Many who come to Heart of Mary House have been forgotten by the world. Loneliness can be as painful as physical suffering. Christ enters that loneliness and asks us to do the same—through prayer, presence, and compassion.

### PILLAR I: PRAYER

Encountering Christ in the Dying

- Weekly Intention: For those who are lonely, forgotten, or afraid at the end of life

Spiritual Adoption

- Pray for the Resident in Room 2
- Pray one decade of the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or the provided prayer
- Offer one small sacrifice for your adopted resident

### PILLAR II: ALMSGIVING

Giving Sacrificially

- Add extra coins to the almsgiving box this week
- Share something you usually keep for yourself

### PILLAR III: FASTING

- Fast from complaining or unkind words
- Practice silence for one minute each day
- Say a short prayer for the residents when you fast

### The Heart: SERVICE

- Write prayers for people who feel lonely
- Sit with someone who seems left out

## Suggested Practice

- Prayer: Pray for those who feel abandoned or afraid
- Fasting: Fast from noise, distraction, or isolation
- Almsgiving: Offer sacrifice for those with no one to care for them

## Scripture

- Psalm 22
- John 14:18

## Reflection Questions

- How does it feel to be lonely?
- What can you do to help someone feel included?

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sun.**  
Soup Sunday  
bring soup to a  
neighbor or friend

St. Katherine  
Drexel

St. Perpetua  
St. Felicity

Week 2: For those who are lonely, forgotten, or afraid at the end of life

Sacrifice

Rosary decade  
 Divine Mercy Ch.  
 HOMH prayer

# Week 3

**Theme:** Jesus Strengthens Those Who Care for Others. Mercy wears many faces

**Focus:** For caregivers\*, nurses, volunteers, and all who serve the dying

**Goal:** Teach gratitude for caregivers and helpers.

## Reflection

Those who care for the dying carry both joy and sorrow. Their work is often hidden, exhausting, and deeply holy. This week invites gratitude for those who quietly serve Christ in the suffering.

### PILLAR I: PRAYER

Encountering Christ in the Dying

- Weekly Intention: For caregivers, nurses, volunteers, and all who serve the dying
- Pray for the Resident in Room 3
- Pray one decade of the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or the provided prayer
- Offer one small sacrifice for your adopted resident

### PILLAR II: ALMSGIVING

Giving Sacrificially

- Donate saved allowance or snack money
- Thank someone who helps care for others

### PILLAR III: FASTING

- Give up rushing or impatience
- Offer your fasting for caregivers
- Say a short prayer for the residents when you fast

### The Heart: SERVICE

- Make thank-you notes for caregivers
- Help at home without being asked

*\*A caregiver is someone who takes care of the residents at Heart of Mary House. A caregiver is responsible for cooking foods for the residents, feeding them, helping them change, making sure they are comfortable, and giving them medicine if they need it. The residents at Heart of Mary House are not able to get out of bed and walk around like you and me, they need lots of care and love because they are sick.*

## Suggested Practice

- Prayer: Pray for strength, patience, and consolation for caregivers
- Fasting: Give up complaining or impatience
- Almsgiving: Offer gifts in thanksgiving for those who serve

## Scripture

- Isaiah 40:29–31
- Galatians 6:2

## Reflection Questions

- Who helps take care of people who are sick?
- How can saying "thank you" be an act of love?

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

3<sup>rd</sup> Sun.

Week 3: For caregivers, nurses, volunteers, and all who serve the dying

Sacrifice

Rosary decade  
 Divine Mercy Ch.  
 HOMH prayer

# Week 4

**Theme:** Jesus Brings Peace. Dying well means dying with hope.

**Focus:** For peaceful deaths and holy deaths

**Goal:** Help children understand peaceful and holy deaths.

## Reflection

A holy death is not the absence of suffering, but the presence of peace, faith, and love. We pray that every person may die reconciled with God and surrounded—physically or spiritually—by prayer.

### PILLAR I: PRAYER

Encountering Christ in the Dying

Weekly Intention: For peaceful deaths and holy deaths

- Pray for the Resident in Room 4
- Pray one decade of the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or the provided prayer
- Offer one small sacrifice for your adopted resident

### PILLAR II: ALMSGIVING

Giving Sacrificially

- Continue sacrificial giving
- Offer giving for someone who is sick

### PILLAR III: FASTING

- Fast from noise (TV, games) for a short time
- Pray quietly for peace
- Say a short prayer for the residents when you fast

### The Heart: SERVICE

- Create peaceful artwork or prayer cards
- Help at home without being asked

## Suggested Practice

- Prayer: Pray for those nearing death
- Fasting: Fast in solidarity with the suffering
- Almsgiving: Offer alms for end-of-life care

## Scripture

- Luke 23:46
- Romans 14:8

## Reflection Questions

- What helps you feel calm and safe?
- How can prayer bring peace?

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

4<sup>th</sup> Sun.  
Soup Sunday  
bring soup to a  
neighbor or friend

Week 4: For peaceful deaths and holy deaths

St. Patrick

St. Joseph

Sacrifice

Rosary decade  
 Divine Mercy Ch.  
 HOMH prayer

# Week 5

**Theme:** Jesus Comforts the Sad: Love does not end at death.

**Focus:** For families grieving loss and those preparing to say goodbye

**Goal:** Help children understand grief and compassion.

## Reflection

Grief is a form of love that continues beyond loss. Families who accompany a loved one at the end of life experience sorrow, exhaustion, and profound tenderness. The Church is called to walk with them—not rush them.

### PILLAR I: PRAYER

Encountering Christ in the Dying

- Weekly Intention: For families grieving loss and those preparing to say goodbye

Spiritual Adoption:

- Pray for the Resident in Room 5
- Pray one decade of the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or the provided prayer
- Offer one small sacrifice for your adopted resident

### PILLAR II: ALMSGIVING

Giving Sacrificially

- Give in memory of someone you love
- Share with someone who is sad

### PILLAR III: FASTING

- Fast from impatience with others' feelings
- Offer your sacrifice for grieving families
- Say a short prayer for the residents when you fast

### The Heart: SERVICE

- Write comfort prayers or notes
- Help at home without being asked

## Suggested Practice

- Prayer: Pray for grieving families
- Fasting: Fast from impatience with others' pain
- Almsgiving: Offer support in memory of loved ones

## Scripture

- John 11:32–36
- Revelation 21:4

## Reflection Questions

- What helps you when you feel sad?
- How can you help someone who is hurting?
- Have you lost a loved one? Who?

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

5<sup>th</sup> Sun.

Annunciation

Week 5: For families grieving loss and those preparing to say goodbye

Sacrifice

Rosary decade  
 Divine Mercy Ch.  
 HOMH prayer

# Week 6 - Holy Week

**Theme:** Jesus Gives Everything: "It is finished."

**Focus:** In thanksgiving for the gift of merciful love revealed on the Cross.

**Goal:** Help children understand Jesus' love on the Cross.

## Reflection

On the Cross, Christ enters fully into suffering and death. Holy Week reveals that mercy is not theoretical—it is poured out completely. Every act of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving this Lent finds its meaning here.

### PILLAR I: PRAYER

Encountering Christ in the Dying

- Weekly Intention: In thanksgiving for the gift of merciful love revealed on the Cross.
- Pray before the Cross
- Thank Jesus for His sacrifice

Spiritual Adoption:

- Pray for the Resident in Room 5
- Pray one decade of the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or the provided prayer
- Offer one small sacrifice for your adopted resident

### PILLAR II: ALMSGIVING

Giving Sacrificially

- Offer collected alms

### PILLAR III: FASTING

- Keep Good Friday fasting in age-appropriate ways
- Say a short prayer for the residents when you fast

### The Heart: SERVICE

- Acts of kindness done quietly

## Suggested Practice

- Offer collected alms
- Participate in the Triduum
- Place intentions at the foot of the Cross

## Scripture

- John 19
- Isaiah 53

## Reflection Questions

- Why did Jesus die on the Cross?
- How does His love help us love others?

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

29

30

31

1

2

3

4

Palm  
Sunday

Collect alms

Journal written  
reflections or  
prayers

Holy  
Thursday

Good  
Friday

Holy  
Saturday

Holy Week: In thanksgiving for the gift of merciful love revealed on the Cross

Sacrifice

Rosary decade  
 Divine Mercy Ch.  
 HOMH prayer

# Concluding Week

**Theme:** Jesus' Mercy Is Greater Than Everything: Mercy triumphs.

**Focus:** Divine Mercy Novena → Divine Mercy Sunday

**Goal:** Bring together the whole journey and celebrate mercy.

## Reflection

The journey does not end at the Cross—it culminates in Divine Mercy. Over nine days, the Church prays for the whole world, drawing together every intention of Lent: the dying, the grieving, the forgotten, and those who serve them. This week gathers all previous weeks into one final offering of trust in Christ's mercy.

### PILLAR I: PRAYER

Encountering Christ in the Dying

- Weekly Intention: In thanksgiving for the gift of merciful love revealed on the Cross.
- Pray the Divine Mercy Novena or Chaplet
- Thank Jesus for His mercy

Spiritual Adoption:

- Pray for the Resident in Room 6
- Pray one decade of the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or the provided prayer
- Offer one small sacrifice for your adopted resident

### PILLAR II: ALMSGIVING

Giving Sacrificially

- Celebrate how giving helped others

### PILLAR III: FASTING

- Reflect on what was hardest to give up

### The Heart: SERVICE

- Share stories of mercy experienced

## Suggested Practice

- Pray the Divine Mercy Novena
- Reflect on where mercy was encountered this Lent
- Celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday as the fulfillment of the journey

## Scripture

- John 20:19–29
- Psalm 136

## Reflection Questions

- Where did you see Jesus this Lent?
- How can you keep showing mercy after Lent?

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

Easter

Divine  
Mercy  
Sunday

Sacrifice

Rosary decade  
 Divine Mercy  
 HOMH prayer