



Embrace the Darkness

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS


The darkness can be unsettling. As a child, my nightly bedtime ritual included checking beneath my bed as well as in the dark hall closet. One could never know what denizens of harm might be lurking there, hidden in the shadows. As adults, the darkness we fear is no longer what lies hidden about our home. Rather, the darkness we attempt to escape is the unknown forces that have the power to overturn our lives. It is the death of someone we love that plunges us into fear and loss, forcing us to somehow make our way, alone and unsure. It is the frightening medical diagnosis that has the ability to dismantle our planned future. It is the financial security that dissolves before our very eyes. In such darkness, we grope blindly to find our way.

The Book of Genesis notes that a trance came upon Abram, a terrifying darkness that enveloped him. The gospel relays how Peter, James, and John became frightened atop Mt. Tabor when they found themselves in a cloud that obscured their sight. Yet, the darkness became for each of them a place in which they came to know their God in a totally new way; it set them on a new path of faith. It is then that we, too, are forced to surrender trust in our own wisdom.

Unable to see clearly what is in store for us, we can only rely on a new path, trusting that we will be accompanied by our God. ●

Reflect

When has life's darkness brought me to a new and deeper faith in God?



Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him."

LUKE 9:35

Dear Padre,

***Does the Church teach how we should dress to go to Mass?
Maybe I'm just old-fashioned, but the way some people dress
seems very disrespectful.***

Church teaching, dogmas, doctrines, and creedal formulations are not the specific resources to consult in order to answer this question. It is properly a matter of discipline and practice, although the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* does direct that “bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey respect” (1387). There are many commentaries on what exactly “respect” might mean.

It would be very difficult to establish a universal dress code. The many different cultures, climates, and particular circumstances of a specific Catholic community make a dress code unmanageable. It seems that you judge the local practice not up to your standards. Your judgment may be correct, or you may have unreasonable expectations. There was a time when “Sunday best” was the established norm. In other communities, the expectation would be “business casual” as a bare minimum. Now, it seems standards and practices are very fluid and flexible. All of this being said, it is ultimately a pastoral concern, not doctrinal or dogmatic. Try not to allow how other people dress distract you from your purpose at Mass. While they may not look like you imagine they should, their prayer might be genuine and heartfelt. ●



BRICOLAGE / SHUTTERSTOCK

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

***After the labors of each day, it will do
us good not to switch off the light in the
room without placing
ourselves in the light
of God.... Wonder
at the boundless
love of God, who
never tires of us
and has the power
to transfigure our
days, to give them a new
meaning, a new, unexpected light.***



ANGELUS, ROME, MARCH 13, 2022

UNSPLASH

Monday

March 17

Lenten Weekday

Dn 9:4b–10

Lk 6:36–38

Tuesday

March 18

Lenten Weekday

Is 1:10, 16–20

Mt 23:1–12

Wednesday

March 19

*St. Joseph, Spouse
of the Blessed
Virgin Mary*

2 Sm 7:4–5a,
12–14a, 16

Rom 4:13, 16–18,
22

Mt 1:16, 18–21,

24a or Lk 2:41–51a

Thursday

March 20

Lenten Weekday

Jer 17:5–10

Lk 16:19–31

Friday

March 21

Lenten Weekday

Gn 37:3–4, 12–
13a, 17b–28a

Mt 21:33–43,
45–46

Saturday

March 22

Lenten Weekday

Mi 7:14–15, 18–20

Lk 15:1–3, 11–32

Sunday

March 23

*Third Sunday
of Lent*

Ex 3:1–8a, 13–15

1 Cor 10:1–6,
10–12

Lk 13:1–9

**Do you have a question
for the Padre?**

Go to **DearPadre.org**
to send your question and to
learn more about ***Dear Padre***.