

## Lenten Reflection 2025

*Let us journey together in hope.*

Thus Pope Francis begins his Lenten Message for 2025. In it he invites us to enter into “our annual pilgrimage of Lent in faith and hope...to open our hearts to God’s grace.” In it he also proposes “a few reflections on what it means to *journey together in hope*, and on the summons to conversion that God in mercy addresses to all of us,” for Lent is a season of conversion and a season of hope—hope in the resurrection and, ultimately, in eternal life.

It is most appropriate that Pope Francis would declare this Lent as a journey in hope, for this is also a Jubilee Year, one in which Pope Francis has called us to be Pilgrims of Hope. He is well aware of the grave suffering of so many people worldwide who struggle to hold onto any hope. In his World Day of Peace Message, he mentions “the inhuman treatment meted out to migrants, environmental decay, the confusion willfully created by disinformation, the refusal to engage in any form of dialogue and the immense resources spent on the industry of war.” He states that in some way we must all feel some responsibility for these harsh disparities and, hence, heed the call “to break the bonds of injustice and to proclaim God’s justice.”

And so here we are, Pilgrims of Hope, journeying together through Lent in response to the call to conversion.

Pope Francis writes that the first call to conversion “comes from the realization that all of us are pilgrims in this life.” He suggests that “it would be a good Lenten exercise for us to compare our daily life with that of some migrant or foreigner, to learn how to sympathize with their experiences and in this way discover what God is asking of us so that we can better advance on our journey to the house of God.”

He describes the second call to conversion as “a summons to synodality.” By this he means that we are “to journey *together*.... It means walking side-by-side, without shoving or stepping on others, without envy or hypocrisy, without letting anyone be left behind or excluded.... attentive to one another in love and patience.”

Finally, Pope Francis names the third call to conversion “a call to hope, to trust in God and God’s great promise of eternal life.” St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, writes of “the hope that does not disappoint,” and Pope Francis tells us “Death has been transformed into triumph.” Here we find our grounds for hope.

In this time when despair and despondency seem much easier to come by than hope, let’s listen to Pope Francis and scripture. Let’s be Pilgrims of Hope.

Please spend some time with this reflection. Also consider doing the following:

- ❖ Read the complete World Day of Peace Message of Pope Francis at <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/20241208-messaggio-58giornatamondiale-pace2025.html>
- ❖ Read the full Lenten Message of Pope Francis at <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/len/20250206-messaggio-quaresima2025.html>
- ❖ Reflect on some questions Pope Francis raises in his Lenten Message:
  - Am I really on a journey, or am I standing still, not moving, either immobilized by fear and hopelessness or reluctant to move out of my comfort zone?
  - Am I seeking ways to leave behind the occasions of sin and situations that degrade my dignity?
  - Am I capable of walking together with others, listening to them, resisting the temptation to become self-absorbed and to think only of my own needs? Do I cooperate with others? Am I welcoming, with concrete gestures, to those both near and far? Do I make others feel a part of the community or keep them at a distance?
- ❖ Journey together in hope at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Good Friday Way of the Cross organized by Pax Christi Metro New York (PCMNY) on April 18<sup>th</sup> beginning at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, E. 47<sup>th</sup> St. between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues at 8:30 AM.
- ❖ Visit the Pax Christi websites for more ways to pray, study, and act: [www.paxchristinys.org](http://www.paxchristinys.org) and [www.nypaxchristi.org](http://www.nypaxchristi.org).
- ❖ Share this reflection with others.

