

Lent Devotional March 20, 2026

Scripture

1 Corinthians 12:27-13:3

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work powerful deeds? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

13 If I speak in the tongues of humans and of angels but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all my possessions and if I hand over my body so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Devotion

The Rev. Dr. James Goodlet III '25

I have a love/hate relationship with this time of year. As one who lives in the southern part of the United States, the month of March represents something of a colossal tease. One day, temperatures will rise to the 70s or 80s as the dogwoods bloom and the carpenter bees buzz. The next day, a cold front will race through our region, bringing with it thunderstorms, tornadoes, and an unwelcome blast of cold air. We Southerners are well-acquainted with Mother Nature's fickle ways during the third month of our calendar year. Indeed, many from these parts will remember the famous blizzard of 1993—as a middle schooler, I experienced snow flurries at Disney World on March 12 of that year.

Fittingly, an old proverb states, “March roars in like a lion and bows out like a lamb.” In the state where I live, this represents the hinge season between the chillier climate of February and the eventual springtime heat of April. And there, amid the precipitous increases and decreases in temperature of the month, sits March 20, also known as the spring equinox, the date marking the official start of spring and the beginning of a season when daytime finally outlasts the night.

When daytime finally outlasts the night.

There is something very fitting—very mid- to late-Lenten—about March 20. The darkness is still very much present, almost in equal proportion to the day. But not quite. Not anymore. The light begins to take over, with the cold sting of death soon giving way to the radiant temperatures of resurrection.

And yet—still—we're not there. We Lenten pilgrims remain very much on our way. Soon, however, the darkness will fade. Even as the weather patterns of our lives change with lightning-quick speed. Even as Corinthian-like division runs amok within our world, our countries, and our homes. Even as we squabble about whose gifts are the greatest in the kin-dom of God.

Daytime finally outlasts the night. The season now turns over to spring and all the life it ushers forth, as crosses and empty tombs dot the horizon.

And we, O Church, strive for the greater gifts—the greatest of which is love.

Prayer

Almighty God, as the seasons change and the darkness gives way to light, may we hold fast to the hope that anchors us in all times and all places: Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Instill within us a love that builds up, that edifies, that unifies—even as the storms of division rage and the winds of dissension blow. May we speak, listen, respond, and act as teachers, apostles, prophets, and healers, remembering always that the greatest of all gifts is love. Come Holy Spirit; make it so. Amen.