



Give Us
This Day

MARCH 2025

Canticle of Zechariah (Benedictus)

Luke 1:68-79

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
he has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty savior,
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old
that he would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet
of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.



Give Us This Day®

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
<div>March 2025</div>		
<div>2 Eighth Week in Ordinary Time</div> <div>W</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>Sr. Verna Holyhead</div> </div> <div> <i>Within the Word: What Must I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?</i> <div> <div></div> <div>Sr. Carolyn Osiek</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>3</div> <div>G</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>[St. Katharine Drexel]</div> </div> <div> <div> <div>✝</div> <div>St. Katharine Drexel</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Deacon Jay Cormier</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>4</div> <div>G</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>[St. Casimir]</div> </div> <div> <div> <div>✝</div> <div>St. Teresa Verzeri</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Fr. Henri Nouwen</div> </div> </div> </div>
<div>9 First Week of Lent</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>John Borelli</div> </div> <div> <i>Within the Word: Time-honored Practices</i> <div> <div></div> <div>Fr. Dale Launderville</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>10</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div> <div>✝</div> <div>Marie-Joseph Lagrange</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Howard Thurman</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>11</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div> <div>✝</div> <div>St. Oengus</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Sr. Pat Kozak</div> </div> </div> </div>
<div>16 Second Week of Lent</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>Susan Pitchford</div> </div> <div> <i>Within the Word: Covenant</i> <div> <div></div> <div>Sr. Joan E. Cook</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>17</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>[St. Patrick]</div> </div> <div> <div> <div>✝</div> <div>St. Patrick</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>St. Bede the Venerable</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>18</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>[St. Cyril of Jerusalem]</div> </div> <div> <div> <div>✝</div> <div>St. Salvador of Horta</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Agnes M. Kovacs</div> </div> </div> </div>
<div>23 Third Sunday of Lent</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>Barbara Brown Taylor</div> </div> <div> <i>Within the Word: A Single Story</i> <div> <div></div> <div>Br. John R. Barker</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>24</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div> <div>✝</div> <div>St. Oscar Romero</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Melody S. Gee</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>25</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>Annunciation of the Lord</div> </div> <div> <div> <div>✝</div> <div>St. Marie-Alphonsine Danil Ghattas</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Daniella Zsupan-Jerome</div> </div> </div> </div>
<div>30 Fourth Week of Lent</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div>Daniel P. Horan</div> </div> <div> <i>Within the Word: Love Set in Concrete</i> <div> <div></div> <div>Amy Ekeh</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>31</div> <div>V</div> <div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div> <div>✝</div> <div>John Donne</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Sr. Patricia Parachini</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<div>1</div> <div>X</div> <div> † George Herbert \ Grace Mariette Agolia </div>
<div>5</div> <div>Ash Wednesday</div> <div> † Ann M. Garrido </div>	<div>6</div> <div> † Martin Niemoeller \ Richard Reece </div>	<div>7</div> <div>[Sts. Perpetua and Felicity]</div> <div> † St. María Antonia de Paz y Figueroa \ Deacon Greg Kandra </div>	<div>8</div> <div>[St. John of God]</div> <div> † St. John of God \ Megan McKenna </div>
<div>12</div> <div> † St. Maximilian \ Michael J. Sanem </div>	<div>13</div> <div> † Bd. Agnellus of Pisa \ St. Catherine of Siena </div>	<div>14</div> <div> † Chiara Lubich \ Michael Jordan Laskey </div>	<div>15</div> <div> † St. Louise de Marillac \ Joyce Rupp </div>
<div>19</div> <div>St. Joseph</div> <div> † St. Joseph \ Christina Leañó </div>	<div>20</div> <div> † St. Maria Josefa de Guerra \ Sr. Julia Upton </div>	<div>21</div> <div> † St. Benedetta Frassinello \ John Shea </div>	<div>22</div> <div> † Johan van Hulst \ Peter Dwyer </div>
<div>26</div> <div> † Joseph Dutton \ Mark A. Scott </div>	<div>27</div> <div> † Mothers of the Disappeared \ Fr. John Meoska </div>	<div>28</div> <div> † Maria von Trapp \ Sr. Anita Louise Lowe </div>	<div>29</div> <div> † Lev Gillet \ Sr. Julia Walsh </div>
			<div>Key</div> <div> † <i>Blessed Among Us</i> by Robert Ellsberg \ <i>Reflection/Within the Word</i> Author [] <i>Optional Memorial</i> </div> <div>Vestment colors:</div> <div>W White G Green V Violet</div>

Give Us **ThisDay**®

DAILY PRAYER FOR TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Ælred Senna, OSB, *Publisher* ♦ Heidi Busse, *Editor*

Catherine Donovan, *Associate Publisher*

Kendra Richards Ohmann, *Publishing Coordinator*

Elizabeth Elin, *Excerpts Editor*

Lori Dahlhoff, *Special Content Editor*

Robert Ellsberg, "*Blessed Among Us*" *Author*

Susan Barber, OSB, *Intercessions*

Therese L. Ratliff, *Liturgical Press Director*

Editorial Advisors

James Martin, SJ ♦ Irene Nowell, OSB

Carolyn Y. Woo ♦ Timothy Radcliffe, OP

Kathleen Norris ♦ Ronald Rolheiser, OMI

giveusthisday.org

Give Us This Day, Liturgical Press

PO Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56321-7500

Customer Service: 888-259-8470, subscriptions@giveusthisday.org

© 2025 by the Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota.

Printed in the United States of America.

Give Us This Day® (ISSN 2159-2136, print; 2166-0654, large print; 2159-2128, online) is published monthly by Liturgical Press, an apostolate of Saint John's Abbey, 2950 Saint John's Road, Collegeville, Minnesota. Rev. Douglas Mullin, OSB, *Abbot*. For complete publication information see page 381.

CONTENTS

March 2025 ♦ Volume 15, Issue 3

<i>New Hearts</i> Renée Darline Roden	5
<i>Teach Us to Pray: Praying for Those Who Have Hurt Us</i> Fr. James Martin ...	7
<i>Prayer for the Blessing of Ashes</i> Fr. James A. Wallace	8
Prayers and Blessings	10
Prayer at Night	14
Daily Prayer	16
Order of Mass	337
Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word (with Holy Communion)	367
Hymns	370
Guide to <i>Lectio Divina</i>	376
<i>About the Cover</i> Br. Ælred Senna	380

New Hearts

Renée Darline Roden

“I will take from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh,” writes the prophet Ezekiel in the thirty-sixth chapter of his book. I know the feeling of my heart turning from stone into flesh. It feels like a physical softening from stony anger into forgiveness; when someone else’s problem I have kept at arm’s length finally penetrates my own story, or when the injustices we turn a blind eye to we see and feel melt our hearts. We become more penetrable, more human—more like God.

When Ezekiel wrote those words to the people of Israel, they were in exile in Babylon. The prophet spent the previous thirty-five chapters of his book spelling doom upon the city of Jerusalem and woe to Israel’s unjust shepherds, lamenting their sins, and decrying their idolatry and desecrations of God’s temple. But, in the thirty-sixth chapter, Ezekiel’s message changes key.

God promises to the people who have suffered dispersion, confusion, and bloodshed—who are in the throes of despair, are exiled from their home—that God will not leave them orphaned. God promises to renew the covenant of belonging with the Israelites—not with their old selves, but with their renewed, remade humanity: “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. . . . Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (36:26-28).

Ezekiel invokes an image of cleansing water flowing through Jerusalem. God's new temple will be a source of this river of water, which will flow from the temple, and God's people will be reborn through this new water, free from impurities. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you," God says to Israel (36:25).

The origin of the forty days of Lent is the traditional period of preparation for Christian baptism. Yes, Lent's forty days mirror Christ's fasting for forty days in the desert. But Lent began as a preparation for baptism: the water without impurities, flowing from the new temple of Christ's body, that restores us into life with God.

Many of our friends and family prepare to receive confirmation or enter the Church through baptism at the Easter Vigil. But even for those of us already adults in the Church, Easter calls us to re-commit to our baptism. Each Easter, we deepen our immersion into the mystery of our baptism. In our baptism, we died with Christ and rose with him to new life. At the Easter Mass, as we repeat our baptismal vows, we celebrate that we truly have been remade—that our life is hidden with Christ in God. Each year, we seek to grow more and more like Christ as we re-walk the steps of his passion. In Lent, we re-create the preparations for baptism: we seek to soften our hearts of stone into ones of flesh. And, on Easter, we plunge into the mystery of God's salvation once again, sprinkled with the clean water of grace.

Renée Roden is a journalist and Catholic Worker. You can read her spiritual reflections on her Substack newsletter, Sweet Unrest.

Teach Us to Pray

Praying for Those Who Have Hurt Us

Fr. James Martin

It is one of the most difficult and complex of Jesus' sayings, especially for modern audiences. During the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells his listeners: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

In fact, loving our enemies may be the "easier" part. Most of us have probably figured out a way to *love* (if not like) our enemies. We treat them with courtesy, try to see things from their point of view, or maybe just avoid them because we know how much they hate us! But praying for people who hurt us seems like going the extra mile, because we're asked not simply to love them passively, but to actively *do* something for them: take time from our day to lift them up in prayer. For me, it's one of the hardest tasks as a Christian.

This doesn't mean that you're a doormat or put up with abuse of any kind. Maybe the best way of approaching this is with a prayer that I was once taught on a retreat: Ask God for the grace to see that person as God sees them. Perhaps you can ask to see the struggles they might be going through that lead them to persecute you. (A few years ago, when a brother Jesuit saw someone mistreating me, he said sadly, "They must be in so much pain to do that.") And then ask God to be with them, to soften their hearts.

But even if all you can muster is, "Help them, God," I think Jesus would be pleased.

James Martin is a Jesuit priest, editor at America magazine, and author of many books, including his latest title, Come Forth: The Promise of Jesus's Greatest Miracle, and In All Seasons, For All Reasons, a collection drawn from this column in Give Us This Day.

Prayer for the Blessing of Ashes

O God, who desire not the death of sinners, but their conversion, mercifully hear our prayers and, in your kindness, be pleased to bless ✠ these ashes, that we, who acknowledge we are but ashes and shall return to dust, may, through a steadfast observance of Lent, gain pardon for sins and newness of life after the likeness of your Risen Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

—*Roman Missal*



The words “the blessing of ashes” can be heard in two ways: a blessing formula used to fulfill a particular purpose and the blessing that ashes are in themselves. Regarding the second understanding, I learned recently that there are many ways ashes improve our lives: enriching compost, melting ice, deterring pests, polishing silverware, absorbing odors—the list goes on and on.

The blessing of ashes on Ash Wednesday is for a purpose. For centuries ashes have called us as a people of faith to ponder our mortality, and the judgment that will follow. The old formula for imposition of ashes, “*Remember you are dust . . .*,” is an implicit call to conversion, made more explicit by the more recent formula: *Repent and believe in the Gospel*. Both encourage us to enter wholeheartedly into Lent, which is the word for “spring” in Old English, the season of new life.

The beautiful (alternative) prayer of blessing the ashes proclaims God as One who desires for us fullness of life,

indeed, life forever. This season calls us to seek God's forgiveness for our sins, personal and collective, and to take up the three traditional Lenten practices: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving for the purpose of drawing closer to God. Our triune God yearns to come more fully into our lives as we draw near to the celebration of the Paschal Mystery.

How wonderful that the ashes are blessed by sprinkling holy water, a reminder of our baptism which first brought us into our relationship with God. On Ash Wednesday, we ask God to bless these ashes to motivate us to enter wholeheartedly into the blessing and work of Lent. In tribute to the gift of ashes, we might add to the blessings of all creation found in the Cantic of Daniel 3:52-90:

*Ashes of the earth, bless the Lord.
Praise and exalt God above all forever.*

..... Fr. James A. Wallace

James A. Wallace, CSsR, is a parish priest at Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Boston, Massachusetts. He is also the author of Preaching to the Hungers of the Heart and The Ministry of Lectors.

Lenten Prayer for Unity and Justice

Creator Spirit, help us respond to your call to be members
of one family.

Guide us to constant, peaceful concern
for sisters and brothers throughout the world.

Make us mindful of the needs of those
who must endure day by day the injustice of hunger
and poverty.

Bless us all this Lenten season
that we may live in harmony and unity with others.
Renew our Christian commitment to the global family.

—*Prayer Without Borders*



Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

—St. Patrick's Breastplate

Table Blessing

Ever-patient God,
meet us as we set ourselves to know you,
and leave a blessing upon our table
and all those dear to us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

—Fr. Michael Kwatera and Br. Dietrich Reinhart



Prayer to Saint Joseph

Saint Joseph, Illustrious Descendant of David,
Husband of the Mother of God,
Foster-father of the Son of God,
in a dream you received from the Almighty
the task of taking Mary as your wife
and Jesus as your Son, conceived from the Holy Spirit,
and of caring for them in the difficult beginnings
of the New Covenant.
Intercede for us so that your example may remind us
to care for the presence of Jesus and Mary in our lives,
in the trials of today's world.

—*Blessings and Prayers for Home and Family*

Prayer for Dreamers

God of our waking and our sleeping,
in every age,
you have spoken to your prophets
in dreams and visions
and have promised that
our sons and daughters shall prophesy
through your Spirit.
Through the dreams of young Joseph,
you saved your people from famine.
In the visions of King Solomon,
you blessed your land with wisdom.
Because of dreams,
elder Joseph acted quickly
to protect your only Son from harm.
And through the revelation announced to Mary,
you brought forth a new King and a new dream
for all the world.
Bless those who continue to seek you in dreams.
Open their ears to hear you in their visions,
loosen their tongues to speak your word,
strengthen their hands to respond swiftly in action,
and embolden their hearts that what they hear in the dark
they may proclaim in the light.
Make us all dreamers who tirelessly pursue
the vision of your Kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

—Diana Macalintal, *The Work of Your Hands*

Communion Prayer

Son of the Living God,
Lord Jesus Christ,
whose death,
willed by the Father,
empowered by the Holy Spirit,
restored the life of the world,
deliver me from all my iniquities and from every evil
through this most sacred Body and Blood of yours.
Keep me always close to your commandments
and never allow me be separated from you.

—Latin original from 9th century



Monthly Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

For families in crisis.
Let us pray that broken families might discover
the cure for their wounds through forgiveness,
rediscovering each other's gifts,
even in their differences.

—Pope's Prayer Network
(Apostleship of Prayer; popesprayerusa.net)

Prayer at Night

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Briefly consider your day: What did I do well? What could I have done better? Whom did I offend? Whom did I help or encourage?

Pray the Act of Contrition or another prayer of sorrow and promise of amendment.

PSALM 134

O come and bless the LORD,
all you servants of the LORD,
who stand by night in the house of the LORD.
Lift up your hands to the holy place,
and bless the LORD.

May the LORD bless you from Zion,
who made both heaven and earth.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:12-15

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful.

ANTIPHON

Protect us, Lord, while we are awake and safeguard us while we sleep, that we may keep watch with Christ and rest in peace.

CANTICLE OF SIMEON

Lord, now let your servant go in peace;
your word has been fulfilled:

my own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father . . .

MARIAN ANTIPHON—LENT (or another Marian hymn,
pp. 374–75)

Hail, O Mary, Queen of heaven,
Queen of all the saints and angels,
Root of Jesse, heaven's portal
Source of light of all the world.

Now rejoice, O glorious Virgin,
Blessed with beauty far surpassing
All that ever was created!
Pray for us to Christ the Lord.

MARIAN ANTIPHON—EASTER (or another Marian hymn,
pp. 374–75)

O Queen of the heavens, rejoice, / Alleluia!
For He whom as Virgin you bore, / Alleluia!
Arose from the tomb, as he said, / Alleluia!
Pray for us to God, / Alleluia!

BLESSING

May God grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end.
May the divine assistance be always with us and with all
our loved ones. Amen.

Saturday, March 1

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 148:1-6

Alleluia!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;

praise the Lord in the heights.

Praise the Lord, all his angels;

praise the Lord, all his hosts.

Praise the Lord, sun and moon;

praise the Lord, all shining stars.

Praise the Lord, highest heavens,

and the waters above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
who commanded, and they were created.

God established them forever and ever,
gave a law which shall not pass away.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Sirach 1:11-15

The fear of the Lord is glory and exultation, / gladness
and a festive crown. / The fear of the Lord rejoices the
heart, / giving gladness, joy, and long life. / Those who fear
the Lord will be happy at the end, / even on the day of death
they will be blessed.

The beginning of wisdom is to fear the Lord; / she is created with the faithful in the womb. / With the godly she was created from of old, / and with their descendants she will keep faith.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Fear of the Lord opens our eyes to the grandeur of God's works.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of heaven and earth, you give gladness, joy, and life. In hope we pray: *R/*. God of the living, hear our prayer.

Inspire service volunteers in their efforts to honor diversity, and advance equitable treatment of marginalized persons. *R/*.

Advance measures to protect species and ecosystems. *R/*.

Prosper the cultivation of farmers, and give them perseverance and strength. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May the wisdom of Christ rest in our hearts and fill us with peace and gladness, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

George Herbert

Anglican Vicar and Poet (1593–1633)

George Herbert was born to a distinguished Welsh family. He received a superb education, served a term in Parliament, and seemed well launched on a path of worldly success. At the age of thirty-three, however, he announced his intention to seek holy orders in the Anglican Church. After ordination he accepted a position as rector of a church in Bemerton, a tiny rural parish that was half in ruins. His ministry lasted only three years, as he died of consumption on March 1, 1633. So his name might have vanished in obscurity, except for a manuscript of poems, published after his death, which established his reputation as one of the greatest poets in the English language.

All his poems deal with the religious life, written in a simple, fresh style that reflects the virtues of balance and moderation prized in Anglican spirituality. One poem, “Prayer,” consists of nothing but concise images piled one upon another: “Prayer the Churches banquet, Angels age / God’s breath in man returning to his birth, / The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage.” Each image constitutes a sermon in itself—“Reversed thunder,” “Heaven in ordinarie”—until the poem rises to a breathless whisper: “The land of spices; something understood.”

For Herbert, writing verse was a form of prayer, a way of contemplating God, offering praise, but also questioning his Creator. In short, it was his path to “heaven in ordinarie.”

“Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back / . . . ‘You must sit down,’ says Love, ‘and taste my meat’: / So I did sit and eat.”

—George Herbert

The “Blessed Among Us” features each month are written by Robert Ellsberg, author of *All Saints*.

Mass

Saturday of the Seventh Week in Ordinary Time

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Psalm 13 (12):6

O Lord, I trust in your merciful love. / My heart will rejoice in your salvation. / I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me.

COLLECT

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, always pondering spiritual things,
we may carry out in both word and deed
that which is pleasing to you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Sirach

17:1-15

In his own image the Lord made them.

God from the earth created man, / and in his own image he made him. / He makes man return to earth again, / and endows him with a strength of his own. / Limited days of life he gives him, / with power over all things else on earth. / He puts the fear of him in all flesh, / and gives him rule over beasts and birds. / He created for them counsel, and a tongue and eyes and ears, / and an inventive heart, / and filled them with the discipline of understanding. / He created in them knowledge of the spirit; / With wisdom he fills their heart; / good and evil he shows them. / He put the fear of himself upon their hearts, / and showed them his mighty works, / That they might glory in the wonder of his deeds / and praise his holy name. / He has set before them knowledge, / a law of life as their inheritance; / An everlasting

covenant he has made with them, / his justice and his judgments he has revealed to them. / His majestic glory their eyes beheld, / his glorious voice their ears heard. / He says to them, "Avoid all evil"; / each of them he gives precepts about his fellow men. / Their ways are ever known to him, / they cannot be hidden from his eyes. / Over every nation he places a ruler, / but God's own portion is Israel. / All their actions are clear as the sun to him, / his eyes are ever upon their ways.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

103:13-14, 15-16, 17-18

R. (see 17) The Lord's kindness is everlasting to those who fear him.

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him,
For he knows how we are formed;
he remembers that we are dust. **R.**

Man's days are like those of grass;
like a flower of the field he blooms;
The wind sweeps over him and he is gone,
and his place knows him no more. **R.**

But the kindness of the LORD is from eternity
to eternity toward those who fear him,
And his justice toward children's children
among those who keep his covenant. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

See Matthew 11:25

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the
Kingdom.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

10:13-16

*Whoever does not accept the Kingdom of God
like a child will not enter it.*

People were bringing children to Jesus that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the Kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Then he embraced the children and blessed them, placing his hands on them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we celebrate your mysteries, O Lord,
with the observance that is your due,
we humbly ask you,
that what we offer to the honor of your majesty
may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Psalm 9:2-3

I will recount all your wonders, / I will rejoice in you and
be glad, / and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.

Or:

John 11:27

Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, / the
Son of the living God, who is coming into this world.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that we may experience the effects of the salvation
which is pledged to us by these mysteries.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Holding Creation Gently

When their parents installed a chicken coop in the backyard, my two little nephews welcomed the skittish birds with excitement and curiosity. The older boy watched his mother stroke one of the frightened hens and wanted a turn. He stayed very still, holding the hen gingerly in his arms. The younger boy reached out to touch the feathers, eager to imitate his brother. As soon as he set her down, the chicken strutted away. He started to run after her but stopped when his father said to let her go. The boys' parents are teaching them how to treat the chickens gently instead of squeezing, chasing, or whacking them.

Those who care for toddlers quickly learn that they are not angelic beings, despite their cherubic appearance. Children remind us of our basic dependence as humans and our tendency to be fickle, stubborn, and possessive. Even as we enjoy the gift of freedom as creatures made in the divine image, we need instruction and guidance from our Creator, who fills us with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. God gives us “rule over beasts and birds,” but we are to act toward them as God does toward us—with compassion, for we, too, are but dust, lovingly fashioned and held by God.

Christ embraces and blesses the children. Can we, like my nephews, learn to hold creation gently in our arms, not grasping but letting her enjoy her own proper autonomy? Can we tend rightly to the world entrusted to our care, beholding it and our God with reverence, wonder, and awe?

Grace Mariette Agolia

Grace Mariette Agolia is a doctoral candidate in systematic theology at Boston College. She is the editor of Richard R. Gaillardetz's While I Breathe, I Hope: A Mystagogy of Dying (Liturgical Press, 2024).

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 73:1-3, 21-26

How good is God to Israel,
to those who are pure of heart!
As for me, my feet came close to stumbling;
my steps had almost slipped,
for I was filled with envy of the proud,
when I saw how the wicked prosper.

And so when my heart grew embittered,
and I was pierced to the depths of my being,
I was stupid and did not understand;
I was like a beast in your sight.

As for me, I was always in your presence;
you were holding me by my right hand.
By your counsel you will guide me,
and then you will lead me to glory.

What else have I in heaven but you?
Apart from you, I want nothing on earth.
My flesh and my heart waste away;
God is the strength of my heart,
my portion forever.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 5:5b-10

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings
with one another, for: / “God opposes the proud / but
bestows favor on the humble.” / So humble yourselves under

the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you.

Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings. The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ [Jesus] will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Ever-present God, you guide us by your counsel. Trusting in your Spirit we pray: *R.* God, come to our aid.

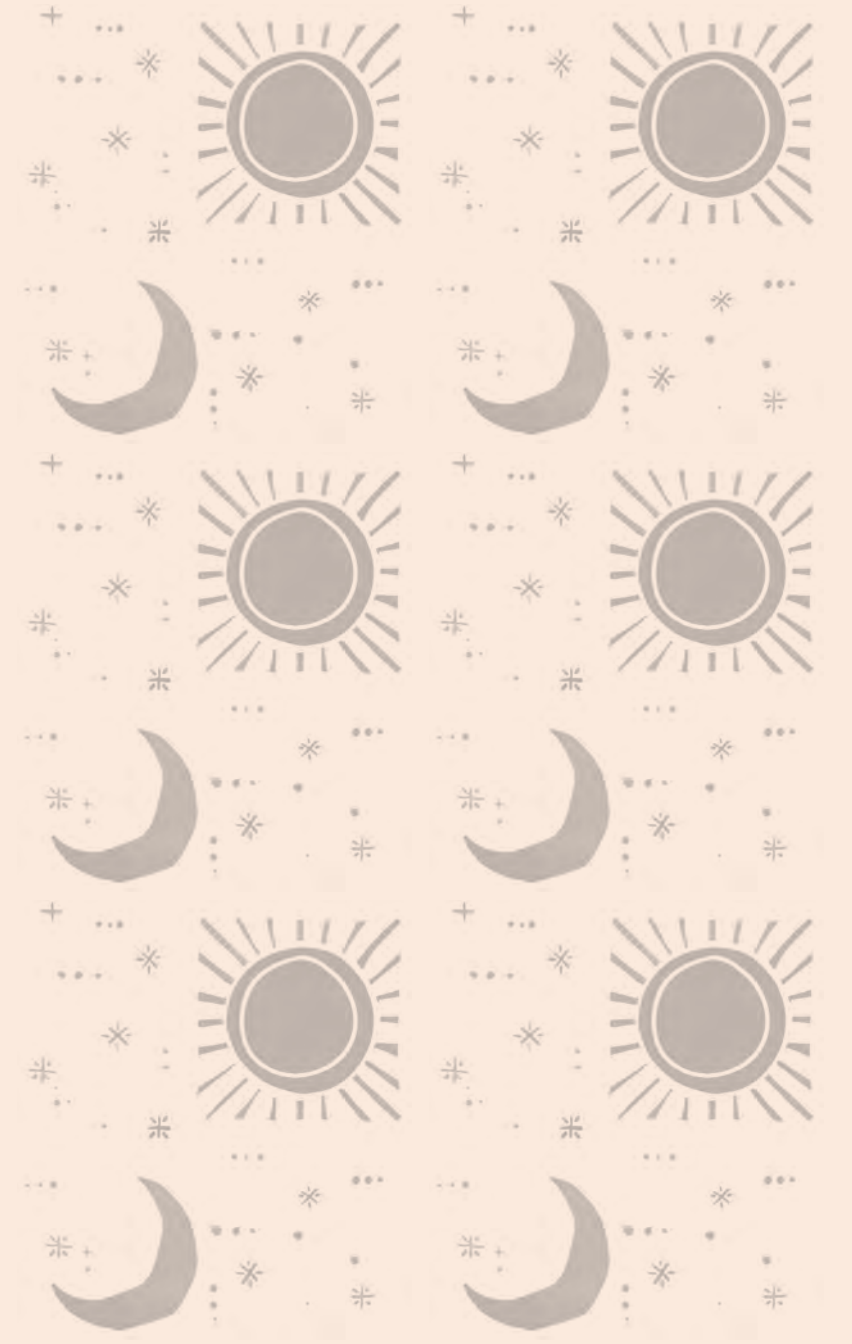
Thwart the plots of those who seek to destroy life or harm the common good. *R.*

Guide those who are discerning a vocation. *R.*

Comfort and console those who mourn the loss of a loved one. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit fill our hearts and remain with us forever. Amen.





Sunday, March 2

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 100

Cry out with joy to the LORD, all the earth.
Serve the LORD with gladness.
Come before God, singing for joy.

Know that the LORD is God,
who made us, to whom we belong.
We are God's people, the sheep of God's flock.

Enter the temple gates with thanksgiving
and its courts with songs of praise.
Give thanks and bless God's name.

Indeed, how good is the LORD,
eternal God's merciful love.
God is faithful from age to age.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 16:21-24

The wise of heart is esteemed for discernment, / and
pleasing speech gains a reputation for learning. / Good
sense is a fountain of life to those who have it, / but folly is
the training of fools. / The heart of the wise makes for elo-
quent speech, / and increases the learning on their lips. /

Pleasing words are a honeycomb, / sweet to the taste and invigorating to the bones.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Like the fruit of a tree, one's speech reveals the heart.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of the covenant, your fidelity is the source of our joyful praise. In faith we pray: **R.** God, in your wisdom, hear us.

Strengthen the faith of your Church through the singing of hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs. **R.**

Guide Pope Francis, bishops, and all the baptized through reflection of your Word and the reception of the Eucharist. **R.**

Help us to recognize and transform structures, thinking, and practices that reflect racism and discrimination. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May the praise of God be always on our lips and in our hearts, through Jesus, the Word made flesh. Amen.

Mass

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 18 (17):19-20

The Lord became my protector. / He brought me out to a place of freedom; / he saved me because he delighted in me.

GLORIA (p. 339)

COLLECT

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that the course of our world
may be directed by your peaceful rule
and that your Church may rejoice,
untroubled in her devotion.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Sirach

27:4-7

Praise no one before he speaks.

When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear; / so do one's faults when one speaks. / As the test of what the potter molds is in the furnace, / so in tribulation is the test of the just. / The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; / so too does one's speech disclose the bent of one's mind. / Praise no one before he speaks, / for it is then that people are tested.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

R. (cf. 2a) Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praise to your name, Most High,
to proclaim your kindness at dawn
and your faithfulness throughout the night. **R.**

The just one shall flourish like the palm tree,
like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow.
They that are planted in the house of the LORD
shall flourish in the courts of our God. **R.**

They shall bear fruit even in old age;
vigorous and sturdy shall they be,
declaring how just is the LORD,
my rock, in whom there is no wrong. **R.**

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul
to the Corinthians

15:54-58

God gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters: When this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: / *Death is swallowed up in victory. / Where, O death, is your victory? / Where, O death, is your sting? / The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Philippians 2:15d, 16a

Shine like lights in the world
as you hold on to the word of life.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 6:39-45

From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.

Jesus told his disciples a parable, “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,’ when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye.

“A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

CREED (p. 340)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who provide gifts to be offered to your name
and count our oblations as signs
of our desire to serve you with devotion,
we ask of your mercy
that what you grant as the source of merit
may also help us to attain merit's reward.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 13 (12):6

I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me, /
sing psalms to the name of the Lord Most High.

Or:

Matthew 28:20

Behold, I am with you always, / even to the end of the age,
says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by your saving gifts,
we beseech your mercy, Lord,
that by this same Sacrament
with which you feed us in the present age,
you may make us partakers of life eternal.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Producing Good Fruit

“Look, I just want to say this for your own good. . . .”

Do these or similar words press the “BEWARE” button for us? The answer probably depends on [the people] speaking and the tone in which they speak. If we recognize them

as people of good heart and great integrity, we will be willing to listen to constructive criticism; if we sense destructive superiority and self-righteousness in their words, we do not want them as our teachers. What Jesus teaches, he lives, and in today's continuation of the Sermon on the Plain he is the wisdom teacher who voices his expectation of this same integrity in his disciples. If we are blind to our own shortcomings, yet judgmental about those of our sisters and brothers, we have no right to guide them with our advice; we will only succeed in dragging them down into the metaphorical "ditch" rather than helping them out of their difficulties.

. . . Using the familiar biblical language of a tree whose quality is judged by the good or bad fruit it produces, Jesus teaches his listeners that the quality of people is judged by their actions. There is more involved here than "spiritual eye surgery" to get rid of the judgmental log that blinds us. It is a matter of the biblical heart, that deepest personal reality, the storehouse of our dreams and desires.

Sr. Verna Holyhead, *Welcoming the Word in Year C*

Verna A. Holyhead, SGS (d. 2011), was an Australian Sister of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St. Benedict.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 118:1, 8-14

Give thanks to the LORD, who is good,
whose faithful love endures forever.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in human beings;
it is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in rulers.

The nations all encircled me;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off.
They encircled me all around;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off.

They encircled me about like bees;
they blazed like a fire among thorns.
In the name of the LORD I cut them off.

They pushed me, pushed me hard to knock me down,
but the LORD was my helper.
The LORD is my strength and my song,
and has been my savior.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 5:1-5

We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. For in this tent we groan, longing to be further clothed with our heavenly

habitation if indeed, when we have taken it off, we shall not be found naked. For while we are in this tent we groan and are weighed down, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a first installment.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Just God, your works delight our hearts. In joyful trust we pray: *R.* God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Prosper the exploration and education of scientists and medical research. *R.*

Help us to end all wars and oppressive regimes. *R.*

Give unending life to those who have gone before us in faith. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God look upon us with kindness and give us peace, through Jesus, our victory over death. Amen.

March 2–8

Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Within the Word

What Must I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?

In Monday's Gospel, Jesus is met by a figure known to us as "the rich young man." Rich he is, but young only in Matthew 19:20. In fact, in the other two accounts, here in Mark and in Luke 18:18-23, he has kept the commandments "from my youth," suggesting that he is no longer young. Be that as it may, Jesus' invitation to him points us in the right direction: The "eternal life" that he wants to inherit consists in actions now. Divesting his wealth and turning it over to those who need it would bring him into the Kingdom that exists all around him. Tragically, he cannot accept it.

In the next days, we head into Lent. On the whole, the Ash Wednesday liturgical readings are not very interesting. The first reading and the Gospel both *talk* about fasting, to get us into the mood of actually *doing it*. But in the middle of the two readings about fasting comes the gem of the day. Paul has it right. It's not about fasting, penance, and gloomy faces. It's about recognizing and seizing the moment. Paul quotes, then comments on, Isaiah 49:8: *In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you*. So salvation is not what happens at the end of life; it is what happens in every moment of life. *Now* is the time of salvation.

If we must deal with the penance and fasting issue, it gets more real in the days following Ash Wednesday with the passage from Isaiah 58 on Friday and Saturday. Isaiah is highly critical of fasting as a ritual and almost convinces us that fasting isn't really necessary—or at least, it is worth a

critical reexamination. If we are wondering why our fasting doesn't seem to work to make us holier, see the agenda that Isaiah lays out: "This is the fast I want." Not sackcloth and ashes but freeing those held in any kind of bondage, feeding the hungry, speaking with integrity and not malice.

Christians often focus the salvation question on the after-life, with a kind of accounting system. At the end, it all gets added up on two sides of the ledger, pro and con. The worldview of the Scriptures brings us back to salvation in the present: struggle with disease, injury, war, anguish, fear. It can be as simple as extending forgiveness to someone held in bondage because of my refusal to let go of a past slight. It can be as complex as trying to sort out truth from misperception in many of today's political and moral dilemmas.

Moses has already spelled it out for us on the day after Ash Wednesday—the choice between the way of life and the way of death (Deut 30:15-20). No matter how complex it may seem, there is a clear path to the way of life, now and after death. Lent is here to remind us how to get there.

—Sr. Carolyn Osiek

Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ, is Charles Fischer Professor of New Testament Emerita at Brite Divinity School and archivist for the Society of the Sacred Heart, United States–Canada Province.

Monday, March 3

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 120

To the LORD in the hour of my distress

I call—and am answered.

“O LORD, save my soul from lying lips,
from the tongue of the deceitful.”

What should God give you, what repay you,

O deceitful tongue?

The warrior’s arrows sharpened,

with red-hot coals from the broom tree!

Alas, that I sojourn in Meshech,

dwelt among the tents of Kedar!

I have had enough of dwelling

with those who hate peace.

I am for peace, but when I speak,

they are for war.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 19:19-21

Elijah set out, and came upon Elisha, son of Shaphat, as he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen; he was following the twelfth. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak on him. Elisha left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, “Please, let me kiss my father and mother good-bye, and I will follow you.” Elijah answered, “Go back! What have I

done to you?” Elisha left him and, taking the yoke of oxen, slaughtered them; he used the plowing equipment for fuel to boil their flesh, and gave it to the people to eat. Then he left and followed Elijah to serve him.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Sell what you have, give to the poor, and come follow me.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Lover of peace, all truth finds its source in you. In confidence we pray: *R/*. O God, lead us along the everlasting way.

Deepen and direct your Church's preferential option for those who are in need. *R/*.

Guide the work of artists and entertainment professionals. *R/*.

Come to the aid of small business owners who struggle. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May God bless us with generous hearts and grateful spirits, through Jesus our brother. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Katharine Drexel

Founder, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (1858–1955)

Katharine Drexel was born into one of the wealthiest families in America. Before her father died, he established a trust for his three daughters worth fourteen million dollars. Devout Catholics, they all three regarded their fortune as an opportunity to glorify God through the service of others.

There were certainly plenty of claims on the generosity of a young Catholic heiress. But Katharine felt a special dedication to those ignored by the Church—especially Indigenous people and African Americans. She endowed scores of schools on Native reservations. In 1878 during a private audience with Pope Leo XIII, she begged the pope to send priests to serve the Natives. He responded, “Why not become a missionary yourself?”

Finding no existing religious order corresponding to her sense of mission, Katharine founded her own: The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People. She insisted that her sisters rely on alms, while she reserved her trust money to fund such initiatives as the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions and the founding of Xavier University in New Orleans, the first Catholic college established for Black students.

Mother Drexel, whose life spanned the era of slavery and the dawn of the civil rights movement, died on March 3, 1955. She was canonized in 2000.

“It is a lesson we all need—to let alone the things that do not concern us. He has other ways for others to follow Him; all do not go by the same path. It is for each of us to learn the path by which He requires us to follow Him, and to follow Him in that path.”

—St. Katharine Drexel

Mass

Monday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

[*St. Katharine Drexel, opt. memorial*]

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 18 (17):19-20

The Lord became my protector. / He brought me out to a place of freedom; / he saved me because he delighted in me.

COLLECT

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that the course of our world
may be directed by your peaceful rule
and that your Church may rejoice,
untroubled in her devotion.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Sirach

17:20-24

Turn again to the Most High, and learn the judgments of God.

To the penitent God provides a way back, / he encourages those who are losing hope / and has chosen for them the lot of truth. / Return to him and give up sin, / pray to the LORD and make your offenses few. / Turn again to the Most High and away from your sin, / hate intensely what he loathes, / and know the justice and judgements of God, / Stand firm in the way set before you, / in prayer to the Most High God.

Who in the nether world can glorify the Most High / in place of the living who offer their praise? / Dwell no longer in the error of the ungodly, / but offer your praise before death. / No more can the dead give praise / than those who have never lived; / You who are alive and well / shall praise

and glorify God in his mercies. / How great the mercy of the LORD, / his forgiveness of those who return to him!

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

32:1-2, 5, 6, 7

R. (11a) Let the just exult and rejoice in the Lord.

Blessed is he whose fault is taken away,
whose sin is covered.

Blessed the man to whom the LORD imputes not guilt,
in whose spirit there is no guile. *R.*

Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
my guilt I covered not.

I said, "I confess my faults to the LORD,"
and you took away the guilt of my sin. *R.*

For this shall every faithful man pray to you
in time of stress.

Though deep waters overflow,
they shall not reach him. *R.*

You are my shelter; from distress you will preserve me;
with glad cries of freedom you will ring me round. *R.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

2 Corinthians 8:9

Jesus Christ became poor although he was rich,
so that by his poverty you might become rich.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

10:17-27

Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor.

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You

know the commandments: *You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.*” He replied and said to him, “Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, “You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” At that statement, his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, “Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God.” They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “For men it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who provide gifts to be offered to your name
and count our oblations as signs
of our desire to serve you with devotion,
we ask of your mercy
that what you grant as the source of merit
may also help us to attain merit's reward.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 13 (12):6

I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me, /
sing psalms to the name of the Lord Most High.

Or:

Matthew 28:20

Behold, I am with you always, / even to the end of the age,
says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by your saving gifts,
we beseech your mercy, Lord,
that by this same Sacrament
with which you feed us in the present age,
you may make us partakers of life eternal.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

More Than Writing a Check

The rich young man's meeting with Jesus does not go well.

First, his addressing Jesus with the honorific "Good teacher" falls flat. His question about eternal life is all but dismissed by Jesus. His attempt to impress Jesus with his history of faithfulness receives not a blessing but a challenge: "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven."

Not surprisingly, the rich young man goes away sad.

Jesus has heard this before. We can't protect our sense of privilege and entitlement as long as the poor and destitute struggle at our doorstep, Jesus says; we can't expect to realize the "treasures" of the reign of God if our focus is on increasing the value of our portfolios. The rich young man in Mark's

Gospel embodies that difficult balance of amassing wealth in this world while, at the same time, working to store “treasure in heaven.”

It’s not enough to *give* to the poor, Jesus says—God calls us to *become* poor in our perspective and lifestyles for the common good. Scripture says that we “shall not kill,” but God calls us to nurture and sustain all life in whatever ways we can, regardless of the cost to us. God requires more from us than not defrauding or stealing—God calls us to actively seek justice for the victims of poverty, abuse, and prejudice.

No, it’s not easy, Jesus says. The young man finally gets it. And so do we. With the clarity that comes from Christlike humility, may we dismount our “camels” and make our way with wisdom and grace through the “needle’s eye” to the Kingdom of God.

Deacon Jay Cormier

Jay Cormier, a deacon serving in the Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire, teaches at Saint Anselm College and Pope John XXIII National Seminary. He is author of The Deacon’s Ministry of the Word and The Advent Wreath: Blessings and Prayers for Families and Households and is editor and publisher of Connections.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 119:73-80

It was your hands that made me and shaped me;
grant me insight to learn your commands.
Those who revere you see me and rejoice,
for I trust in your word.

O LORD, I know that your decrees are right,
and that in faithfulness, you humbled me.
Let your faithful love console me
by your promise to your servant.

Show me compassion, that I may live,
for your law is my delight.
Let the arrogant be shamed who deflect me with lies;
as for me, I will ponder your precepts.

Let those who fear you turn to me,
that they may know your decrees.
Let my heart be blameless in your statutes,
that I may not be put to shame.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 John 1:8–2:2

If we say, “We are without sin,” we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing. If we say, “We have not sinned,” we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

To the penitent God provides a way back and encourages those who are losing hope.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Creating God, you are the potter and we are the clay. In trust we pray: **R.** Transform us by your Spirit, O God.

Heal those who experience trauma, loss, or illness from the pandemic. **R.**

Humble our hearts, and help us to grow in respect, esteem, and love. **R.**

Lead all people to reverence life from conception to death. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God light our way and open our eyes to the beauty of the Gospel, through Jesus, our power and promise.
Amen.

Tuesday, March 4

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 71:17-22

O God, you have taught me from my youth,
and I proclaim your wonders still.
Even till I am old and gray-headed,
do not forsake me, O God.

Let me tell of your mighty arm
to every coming generation;
your strength and your justice, O God,
reach to the highest heavens.
It is you who have worked such wonders.
O God, who is like you?

You have made me witness many troubles and evils,
but you will give me back my life.
You will raise me from the depths of the earth;
you will exalt me and console me again.

So I will give you thanks on the lyre
for your faithfulness, O my God.
To you will I sing with the harp,
to you, the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 1:11-12, 16-17

What do I care for the multitude of your sacrifices? /
says the LORD. / I have had enough of whole-burnt

rams / and fat of fatlings; / In the blood of calves, lambs, and goats / I find no pleasure. / When you come to appear before me, / who asks these things of you? / Wash yourselves clean! / Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; / cease doing evil; / learn to do good. / Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, / hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

One who gives alms presents a sacrifice of praise.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Faithful God, you are our saving help. In hope we pray:

R. Teach us your ways, O God.

Guide pastors, catechists, and deacons. **R.**

Protect military men and women, and guide them by the light of your Word. **R.**

Secure the well-being of those who participate in peaceful protests. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God strengthen us to love tenderly, act justly, and walk humbly in Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Teresa Verzeri

Founder, Daughters of the Sacred Heart (1801–1852)

Teresa Verzeri was born in Bergamo, Italy, in 1801. It was a period of great social upheaval, and Teresa spent many years searching for her path. According to her Vatican biography, “Interiorly Teresa lived the special mystic experience of the ‘absence of God,’ anticipating something of the religious life of today. . . . Her lonely cry, like that of Jesus, became the entrusting of her whole self through love.”

After an unsuccessful stint in a Benedictine community, Teresa followed the counsel of her spiritual director in founding an institute that would combine contemplative life with teaching. This became the Daughters of the Sacred Heart. She prepared for her community not only a rule but a voluminous “Book of Duties” that outlined the governing spirit. The Daughters, she wrote, in drawing their charity from the Heart of Jesus, should burn with “the purist charity that has no aim save for the glory of God and the good of souls; universal charity that excludes no one but embraces all; generous charity that does not draw back from suffering, is not alarmed by contradiction, but rather, in suffering and opposition, grows in vigor and conquers through patience.”

The work of the Daughters extended to schools for the poor, care for sick women, the rescue of women imperiled by trafficking, and retreats for laywomen, while foundations spread to three continents. Mother Teresa died on March 3, 1852. She was canonized in 2001.

“Jesus Christ has given the precious gift of his Heart, for from no one else can you learn holiness, he being the inexhaustible source of true holiness.”

—St. Teresa Verzeri

Mass

Tuesday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

[St. Casimir, opt. memorial]

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 18 (17):19-20

The Lord became my protector. / He brought me out to a place of freedom; / he saved me because he delighted in me.

COLLECT

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that the course of our world
may be directed by your peaceful rule
and that your Church may rejoice,
untroubled in her devotion.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Sirach

35:1-12

To keep the law is a great oblation.

To keep the law is a great oblation, / and he who observes the commandments sacrifices a peace offering. / In works of charity one offers fine flour, / and when he gives alms he presents his sacrifice of praise. / To refrain from evil pleases the LORD, / and to avoid injustice is an atonement. / Appear not before the LORD empty-handed, / for all that you offer is in fulfillment of the precepts. / The just one's offering enriches the altar / and rises as a sweet odor before the Most High. / The just one's sacrifice is most pleasing, / nor will it ever be forgotten. / In a generous spirit pay homage to the LORD, / be not sparing of freewill gifts. / With each contribution show a cheerful countenance, / and pay

your tithes in a spirit of joy. / Give to the Most High as he
has given to you, / generously, according to your means.

For the LORD is one who always repays, / and he will give
back to you sevenfold. / But offer no bribes, these he does
not accept! / Trust not in sacrifice of the fruits of extortion.
/ For he is a God of justice, / who knows no favorites.
The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

50:5-6, 7-8, 14 and 23

R. (23b) To the upright I will show the saving power
of God.

“Gather my faithful ones before me,
those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”
And the heavens proclaim his justice;
for God himself is the judge. **R.**

“Hear, my people, and I will speak;
Israel, I will testify against you;
God, your God, am I.
Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you,
for your burnt offerings are before me always.” **R.**

“Offer to God praise as your sacrifice
and fulfill your vows to the Most High.
He that offers praise as a sacrifice glorifies me;
and to him that goes the right way I will show the
salvation of God.” **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

See Matthew 11:25

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the
Kingdom.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

10:28-31

*You will receive a hundred times as much persecution
in this present age, and eternal life in the age to come.*

Peter began to say to Jesus, “We have given up everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come. But many that are first will be last, and the last will be first.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who provide gifts to be offered to your name
and count our oblations as signs
of our desire to serve you with devotion,
we ask of your mercy
that what you grant as the source of merit
may also help us to attain merit's reward.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 13 (12):6

I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me, /
sing psalms to the name of the Lord Most High.

Or:

Matthew 28:20

Behold, I am with you always, / even to the end of the age,
says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by your saving gifts,
we beseech your mercy, Lord,
that by this same Sacrament
with which you feed us in the present age,
you may make us partakers of life eternal.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Downward Mobility

Our vocation as Christians is to follow Jesus on his downward path and to become witnesses to God's compassion in the concrete situation of our time and place. Our temptation is to let needs for success, visibility, and influence dominate our thoughts, words, and actions to such an extent that we are gripped in the destructive spiral of upward mobility and thus lose our vocation. It is this lifelong tension between vocation and temptation that presents us with the necessity of spiritual formation. Precisely because the downward mobility of the way of the cross cannot rely on our spontaneous responses, we are faced with the question, "How do we conform our minds and hearts to the mind and heart of the self-emptying Christ?"

To follow Christ requires the willingness and determination to let God's Spirit pervade all the corners of our minds and hearts and there make us into other Christs. Formation is transformation, and transformation means a growing conformity to the mind of Christ, who did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself.

Thus discipleship cannot be realized without discipline. Discipline in the spiritual life, however, has nothing to do

with the discipline of athletics, academic study, or job training, in which physical fitness is achieved, new knowledge is acquired, or a new skill is mastered. The discipline of the Christian disciple is not to master anything, but rather to be mastered by the Spirit. True Christian discipline is the human effort to create the space in which the Spirit of Christ can transform us into his lineage.

..... Fr. Henri Nouwen, *The Selfless Way of Christ*

Henri J. M. Nouwen (1932–1996) was an internationally known priest and is among the great spiritual writers of modern times.

[illegible]

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 146:1-2, 5-10

Alleluia!

My soul, give praise to the LORD;
I will praise the LORD all my life,
sing praise to my God while I live.

Blessed the one who is helped by Jacob's God,
whose hope is in the LORD our God,
who made the heavens and the earth,
the seas and all they contain,

Who preserves fidelity forever,
who does justice to those who are oppressed.
who furnishes bread to the hungry;
the LORD who sets prisoners free,
the LORD who opens the eyes of the blind,
the LORD who raises up those who are bowed down.

It is the LORD who loves the righteous,
the LORD who protects the stranger
and upholds the orphan and the widow,
but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, from age to age.

Alleluia!

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 2:21b-24

Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps. “He committed no sin, / and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

We have given up everything to follow you.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

All-powerful God, you call us to a lifetime of praise. In joy we pray: *R.* Righteous God, hear our prayer.

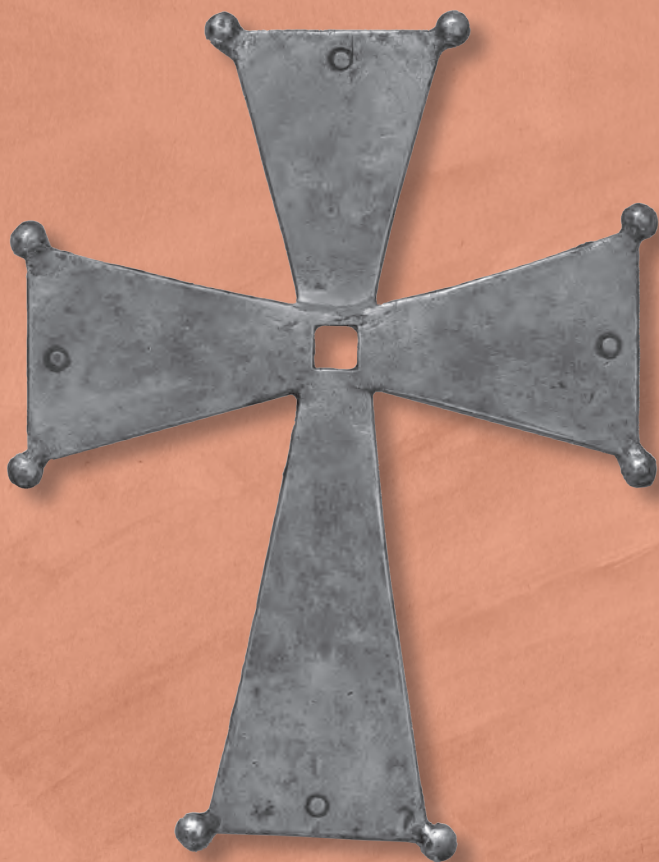
You set prisoners free: secure the release of those entrapped by human trafficking. *R.*

You protect strangers: safeguard refugees, immigrants, and migrants. *R.*

You uphold orphans and widows: direct protection and financial aid to those who are in need. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God bless us, keep us, and protect us from harm, through Jesus our peace. Amen.



Wednesday, March 5

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 6:2-6, 9-11

O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger;
reprove me not in your rage.
Have mercy on me, LORD, for I languish.
LORD, heal me; my bones are shaking,
and my soul is greatly shaken.

But you, O LORD, how long?
Return, LORD, rescue my soul.
Save me in your gracious love.
For in death there is no remembrance of you;
who can give you praise from Sheol?

Leave me, all who do evil,
for the LORD heeds the sound of my weeping.
The LORD has heard my plea;
The LORD will receive my prayer.
All my foes will be shamed and greatly shaken,
suddenly put to shame.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Zechariah 7:4-5, 9-10

Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me: Say to all the people of the land and to the priests: When you

fasted and lamented in the fifth and in the seventh month these seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted?

Thus says the LORD of hosts: Judge with true justice, and show kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the resident alien or the poor; do not plot evil against one another in your hearts.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Listening God, you are forever generous in grace. In hope we pray: *R/*. God, in your saving love, hear us.

Help us to know your forgiveness and to forgive one another. *R/*.

Strengthen us for greater prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. *R/*.

Restore wholeness and health to those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May God strengthen us to grow in faith, hope, and love these forty days of Lent, through Jesus, our saving help. Amen.

Mass

Ash Wednesday

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Wisdom 11:24, 25, 27

You are merciful to all, O Lord, / and despise nothing that you have made. / You overlook people's sins, to bring them to repentance, / and you spare them, for you are the Lord our God.

COLLECT

Grant, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting this campaign of Christian service, so that, as we take up battle against spiritual evils, we may be armed with weapons of self-restraint. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel

2:12-18

Rend your hearts, not your garments.

Even now, says the LORD, / return to me with your whole heart, / with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; / Rend your hearts, not your garments, / and return to the LORD, your God. / For gracious and merciful is he, / slow to anger, rich in kindness, / and relenting in punishment. / Perhaps he will again relent / and leave behind him a blessing, / Offerings and libations / for the LORD, your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion! / proclaim a fast, / call an assembly; / Gather the people, / notify the congregation; / Assemble the elders, / gather the children / and the infants at the breast; / Let the bridegroom quit his room / and the bride her chamber. / Between the porch and the altar / let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep, / And say,

“Spare, O LORD, your people, / and make not your heritage a reproach, / with the nations ruling over them! / Why should they say among the peoples, / ‘Where is their God?’”

Then the LORD was stirred to concern for his land and took pity on his people.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and 17

R. (see 3a) Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me. **R.**

For I acknowledge my offense,
and my sin is before me always:
“Against you only have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight.” **R.**

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
and your Holy Spirit take not from me. **R.**

Give me back the joy of your salvation,
and a willing spirit sustain in me.
O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. **R.**

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul
to the Corinthians

5:20–6:2

Be reconciled to God. Behold, now is the acceptable time.

Brothers and sisters: We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made

him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Working together, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says: / *In an acceptable time I heard you, / and on the day of salvation I helped you.* / Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

See Psalm 95:8

If today you hear his voice,
harden not your hearts.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

6:1-6, 16-18

Your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

BLESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

Dear brethren (brothers and sisters), let us humbly ask

God our Father

that he be pleased to bless with the abundance of his grace these ashes, which we will put on our heads in penitence.

O God, who are moved by acts of humility
and respond with forgiveness to works of penance,
lend your merciful ear to our prayers
and in your kindness pour out the grace of your ✠ blessing
on your servants who are marked with these ashes,
that, as they follow the Lenten observances,
they may be worthy to come with minds made pure
to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of your Son.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or:

O God, who desire not the death of sinners,
but their conversion,
mercifully hear our prayers
and in your kindness be pleased to bless ✠ these ashes,
which we intend to receive upon our heads,
that we, who acknowledge we are but ashes
and shall return to dust,
may, through a steadfast observance of Lent,

gain pardon for sins and newness of life
after the likeness of your Risen Son.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

To each who receives the ashes:

Repent, and believe in the Gospel.

(Mark 1:15)

Or:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

(See Genesis 3:19)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we solemnly offer
the annual sacrifice for the beginning of Lent,
we entreat you, O Lord,
that, through works of penance and charity,
we may turn away from harmful pleasures
and, cleansed from our sins, may become worthy
to celebrate devoutly the Passion of your Son.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 1:2-3

He who ponders the law of the Lord day and night / will
yield fruit in due season.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the Sacrament we have received sustain us, O Lord,
that our Lenten fast may be pleasing to you
and be for us a healing remedy.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Blow the Trumpet?

“Blow the trumpet in Zion!” cries the prophet Joel in today’s first reading. Joel wants the people—old and young, infants and newlyweds—to stop what they are doing and gather publicly to fast, weep, and beg God’s mercy.

Yet Jesus appears to order just the opposite. “Do not blow a trumpet,” he commands. Pray, but behind closed doors. Fast, but don’t let anyone know you are doing so. Talk about mixed messages.

Scripture scholars are unsure when Joel lived, but it was clearly a desperate time. A swarm of locusts had consumed Israel’s crops and the prophet foresees more locusts on the horizon. Joel calls the people to communal repentance.

Several hundred years later, Jesus observed that the practices of communal repentance had become mere public show. Trumpets were being blown, fasting undertaken, alms given, but they no longer represented a true change of heart. Jesus wanted the people to know that, from God’s perspective, internal change is more important than the external sign.

By setting these two readings side by side, the lectionary seems to remind us that the season of Lent requires both communal and personal change. As a nation, we are called to take a hard look at how our actions as a whole have brought us to our current desperate state. But this work must be accompanied by genuine personal soul-searching and openness to transformation. It is not a question of public or private conversion. Lent calls us to both.

Ann M. Garrido

Ann M. Garrido is associate professor of homiletics at Aquinas Institute of Theology and the author of several books, including Preaching with Children and Redeeming Power. Her website is anngarrido.com.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 38:2-7, 22-23

O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger;
reprove me not in your rage.
For your arrows have sunk deep in me;
your hand has come down upon me.

There is no soundness in my flesh because of your anger:
There is no health in my bones because of my sin.

My guilt towers higher than my head;
it is a weight too heavy to bear.
My wounds are foul and festering,
the result of my own folly.
I am bowed and brought to my knees.
I go mourning all the day long.

Forsake me not, O LORD!
My God, be not far from me!
Make haste and come to my help,
my Lord and my salvation!

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 3:12-15

Take care . . . that none of you may have an evil and unfaithful heart, so as to forsake the living God. Encourage yourselves daily while it is still “today,” so that none of you may grow hardened by the deceit of sin. We have become partners of Christ if only we hold the beginning of

the reality firm until the end, for it is said: / “Oh, that today you would hear his voice: / ‘Harden not your hearts as at the rebellion.’”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of salvation, our iniquities are many and your love is kind. In faith we pray: *R.* God, make haste to help us.

Show us your heart in those whom we find difficult. *R.*

Inspire us to steward the earth's resources wisely. *R.*

Strengthen those who are long suffering. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us and lead us to the joys of holy Easter. Amen.

Thursday, March 6

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 25:12-18, 21-22

Who are they that fear the LORD?
God will show them the path to choose.
Their souls shall live in happiness,
and their descendants shall possess the land.
The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear God;
to them is revealed the covenant.

My eyes are always on the LORD,
who rescues my feet from the snare.
Turn to me and have mercy on me,
for I am alone and poor.

Relieve the anguish of my heart,
and set me free from my distress.
See my lowliness and suffering,
and take away all my sins.

May integrity and virtue protect me,
for I have hoped in you, O LORD.
Grant redemption to Israel, O God,
from all its distress.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Wisdom 1:12-15

Do not court death by your erring way of life, / nor draw
to yourselves destruction by the works of your hands.

/ Because God did not make death, / nor does he rejoice in
the destruction of the living. / For he fashioned all things
that they might have being, / and the creatures of the world
are wholesome; / There is not a destructive drug among
them / nor any domain of Hades on earth, / For righteousness
is undying.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or
another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Today I have set before you life and death. Choose life!

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Almighty God, your goodness and truth are everlasting.
In trust we pray: *R.* Show us the way, O God.

Uphold those who risk their lives for the Gospel as
missionaries and truth-tellers. *R.*

Guide technology and media professionals in truth,
integrity, and vision for the common good. *R.*

Open pathways of opportunity for those who seek
employment. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God, the author of life, free our hearts from all
worry and anxiety and give us the joy and consolation of
the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

Martin Niemoeller

Confessing Pastor (1892–1984)

Martin Niemoeller served as a highly decorated German U-boat commander in World War I. Though he became a Lutheran pastor, he continued to dream of national glory and initially welcomed the cause of National Socialism. Nevertheless, within months of Hitler's rise to power he felt uneasy with the Nazis' hateful extremism. He further rejected the "German Christian movement," which identified the Gospel with Nazi ideology. When anti-Jewish legislation was applied to Christian pastors of "non-Aryan" extraction, he organized a petition of protest. This later became the seed of the so-called Confessing Church. Ultimately the question was: "Which God do we worship? Christ or Hitler?"

On July 1, 1937, Niemoeller was arrested and imprisoned, where he remained until the end of the war. As he learned of the extent of the Nazi crimes, he felt shame for not having spoken out earlier—especially on behalf of the Jews. Parting company with many Germans who refused to acknowledge any complicity with Hitler, he drafted a confession of guilt for the churches, which emphasized the Christian role in fostering a climate of anti-Semitism.

In later years, in light of the threat of nuclear war, Niemoeller realized that he could no longer justify any use of violence. As he described the key to his ethical principles, he simply asked, "What would Jesus do?" He died on March 6, 1984, at ninety-two.

"When the Nazis came for the Communists, I was silent, because I was not a Communist. . . . When they came for the Jews, I was silent. And when they came to get me, there was no one left to speak."

—Pastor Martin Niemoeller

Mass

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 55 (54):17-20, 23

When I cried to the Lord, he heard my voice; / he rescued me from those who attack me. / Entrust your cares to the Lord, and he will support you.

COLLECT

Prompt our actions with your inspiration, we pray, O Lord, and further them with your constant help, that all we do may always begin from you and by you be brought to completion.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

30:15-20

*Behold, I set before you the blessing and the curse
(Deuteronomy 11:26).*

Moses said to the people: "Today I have set before you life and prosperity, death and doom. If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I enjoin on you today, loving him, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and decrees, you will live and grow numerous, and the LORD, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to occupy. If, however, you turn away your hearts and will not listen, but are led astray and adore and serve other gods, I tell you now that you will certainly perish; you will not have a long life on the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and occupy. I call

heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land that the LORD swore he would give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6

R. (40:5a) Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Blessed the man who follows not
the counsel of the wicked
Nor walks in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the company of the insolent,
But delights in the law of the LORD
and meditates on his law day and night. **R.**

He is like a tree
planted near running water,
That yields its fruit in due season,
and whose leaves never fade.
Whatever he does, prospers. **R.**

Not so the wicked, not so;
they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
For the LORD watches over the way of the just,
but the way of the wicked vanishes. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matthew 4:17

Repent, says the Lord;
the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 9:22-25

Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Jesus said to his disciples: “The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.”

Then he said to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Regard with favor, O Lord, we pray,
the offerings we set upon this sacred altar,
that, bestowing on us your pardon,
our oblations may give honor to your name.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 51 (50):12

Create a pure heart for me, O God; / renew a steadfast
spirit within me.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the blessing of your heavenly gifts,
we humbly beseech you, almighty God,
that they may always be for us
a source both of pardon and of salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Indifference

“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” These words in today’s Gospel can lead to a perhaps painful examination of conscience. I confess:

I guard my resources, the money and things I’ve worked to earn. I invest to preserve and increase these things, and I resist the innumerable requests to give them away and the many who try to take them.

I save my self-esteem, reading tips on health, mental and physical, repeating “affirmations” I see on the internet, where entire websites are devoted to making me calm and comfortable and attractive.

I save my peace of mind by facing away from the suffering of others. When the news comes on television, I turn it off. It’s depressing, and what can I do anyway?

I save my life by separating myself from those who aren’t like me, and the world has arranged ways to facilitate this: gated communities, real and metaphorical, protect me from “undesirables”; borders enforce separation of land and people, even when families are separated; we even divide the world into First, Second, and Third World nations.

All of these ways of saving our lives were pinpointed by Pope Francis in a televised interview last May. Asked to define the biggest problem in the world today, he answered in one word: “Indifference.”

Jesus tells us: See others. Help others. Pray for others. When we do, we will save our lives—our eternal lives in Our Lord.

Richard Reece

Richard Reece is a writer and retired magazine editor. He is former editor in chief of Catholic Digest magazine and of NC Catholics, the magazine for the Diocese of Raleigh.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 136:1-9

O give thanks to the LORD, who is good,
for God's faithful love endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of gods,
for God's faithful love endures forever.
Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for God's faithful love endures forever.

Who alone has wrought marvelous works,
for God's faithful love endures forever.
who in wisdom made the heavens,
for God's faithful love endures forever;
who spread the earth on the waters,
for God's faithful love endures forever.

It was the Lord who made the great lights,
for God's faithful love endures forever;
the sun to rule in the day,
for God's faithful love endures forever;
the moon and the stars in the night,
for God's faithful love endures forever.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Romans 6:21-23

What profit did you get then from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit that you have leads

to sanctification, and its end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

If you wish to save your life, take up your cross and follow Christ.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of the covenant, your faithful love endures forever. In confidence we pray: *R/*. Surround us with your maternal care, O God.

For parents, guardians, and grandparents who are entrusted with care for the young, we pray: *R/*.

For those who grieve and those who are separated from loved ones, we pray: *R/*.

For those who are drawing near to death and those who wait with them, we pray: *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May the Word of God enlighten our hearts and minds and show us the way to everlasting life, now and forever. Amen.

Friday, March 7

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 69:2-4, 6-7

Save me, O God, for the waters
have risen to my neck.

I have sunk into the mud of the deep,
where there is no foothold.

I have entered the waters of the deep,
where the flood overwhelms me.

I am wearied with crying aloud;
my throat is parched.

My eyes are wasted away
with waiting for my God.

O God, you know my folly;
from you my sins are not hidden.

May those who hope in you not be shamed
because of me, O Lord of hosts;
may those who seek you not be disgraced
because of me, O God of Israel.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Tobit 12:8-10

Prayer with fasting is good. Almsgiving with righteousness is better than wealth with wickedness. It is better to give alms than to store up gold, for almsgiving saves from death, and purges all sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a

full life, but those who commit sin and do evil are their own worst enemies.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

This is the fasting I choose: sharing your bread with the hungry.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Just God of our salvation, you abolish evil. In faith we pray: **R.** Give light to our eyes, O God.

For those who are unrepentant, we pray: **R.**

For those who experience depression, despair, or grief, we pray: **R.**

For those who suffer illness or chronic pain, we pray: **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God fulfill our hope of salvation and fill our hearts with peace, through Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. María Antonia de Paz y Figueroa

“Mother of Argentina” (1730–1799)

Beginning in 1759, rulers in Europe, with acquiescence from the Vatican, achieved the suppression of the Society of Jesus in all their territories. This culminated in the wholesale prohibition of the Jesuits by order of the Holy See in 1773 (a decree lifted in 1815). Still, the Society lived on in various corners of the globe, including Russia. Elsewhere, embers of Jesuit spirituality continued to burn. In Argentina, that was largely due to the efforts of María Antonia de Paz y Figueroa, popularly known as Mama Antula.

Born to a prosperous family in northern Argentina, she rejected the options of marriage or enclosed religious life. Instead, she left home at fifteen to become a consecrated laywoman, working with the Jesuits to spread the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius and religious education among the poor. After the Suppression, she pursued this mission on her own, clad in the black cloak of the Jesuits and traveling by foot throughout the country to lead clandestine retreats. Eventually she arrived in Buenos Aires, barefoot and carrying a cross. Overcoming initial hostility, she earned the respect of the bishop, who authorized her to establish a House for the Spiritual Exercises. There, assisted by friendly priests, she offered Ignatian retreats that were open to all people. They became so widely respected that candidates for the priesthood were required to attend, and none was ordained without Mama Antula’s approval.

Upon her death on March 7, 1799, she was acclaimed as “mother of the country.” In 2024 she was canonized by Pope Francis, becoming Argentina’s first female saint.

“Patience is good, but perseverance is better.”

—St. María Antonia de Paz y Figueroa

Mass

Friday after Ash Wednesday

[*Saints Perpetua and Felicity, opt. memorial*]

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Psalm 30 (29):11

The Lord heard and had mercy on me; / the Lord became my helper.

COLLECT

Show gracious favor, O Lord, we pray,
to the works of penance we have begun,
that we may have strength to accomplish with sincerity
the bodily observances we undertake.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 58:1-9a

Is this the manner of fasting I wish?

Thus says the Lord GOD: / Cry out full-throated and unsparingly, / lift up your voice like a trumpet blast; / Tell my people their wickedness, / and the house of Jacob their sins. / They seek me day after day, / and desire to know my ways, / Like a nation that has done what is just / and not abandoned the law of their God; / They ask me to declare what is due them, / pleased to gain access to God. / “Why do we fast, and you do not see it? / afflict ourselves, and you take no note of it?”

Lo, on your fast day you carry out your own pursuits, / and drive all your laborers. / Yes, your fast ends in quarreling and fighting, / striking with wicked claw. / Would that today you might fast / so as to make your voice heard on high! / Is this the manner of fasting I wish, / of keeping a

day of penance: / That a man bow his head like a reed / and
 lie in sackcloth and ashes? / Do you call this a fast, / a day
 acceptable to the LORD? / This, rather, is the fasting that I
 wish: / releasing those bound unjustly, / untying the thongs
 of the yoke; / Setting free the oppressed, / breaking every
 yoke; / Sharing your bread with the hungry, / sheltering the
 oppressed and the homeless; / Clothing the naked when
 you see them, / and not turning your back on your own. /
 Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, / and your
 wound shall quickly be healed; / Your vindication shall go
 before you, / and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear
 guard. / Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer, / you
 shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

51:3-4, 5-6ab, 18-19

R. (19b) A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will
 not spurn.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
 in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my
 offense.

Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
 and of my sin cleanse me. **R.**

For I acknowledge my offense,
 and my sin is before me always:
 "Against you only have I sinned,
 and done what is evil in your sight." **R.**

For you are not pleased with sacrifices;
 should I offer a burnt offering, you would not accept it.
 My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
 a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not
 spurn. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

See Amos 5:14

Seek good and not evil so that you may live,
and the Lord will be with you.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

9:14-15

When the bridegroom is taken from them, then they will fast.

The disciples of John approached Jesus and said, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast much, but your disciples do not fast?” Jesus answered them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We offer, O Lord, the sacrifice of our Lenten observance,
praying that it may make our intentions acceptable to you
and add to our powers of self-restraint.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Psalms 25 (24):4

O Lord, make me know your ways, / teach me your paths.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We pray, almighty God,
that, through partaking of this mystery,
we may be cleansed of all our misdeeds,
and so be suited for the remedies of your compassion.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Many Kinds of Hunger

We're forty-eight hours into Lent. How is our fasting going? We might feel pangs of hunger, a craving for a Whopper or the Oreo cookies we stashed in a drawer in the kitchen. But then we hear this reading from Isaiah. "Do you call this a fast?"

Ouch.

Isaiah describes the kind of fasting we should pursue—releasing those bound unjustly, sharing bread, sheltering the oppressed, clothing the naked. All of which challenges us to admit that just as there are many kinds of fasting, there are many kinds of hunger. It's not just about food. The world is crying out in need. Our fasting unites us in solidarity with all the hungry around us and reminds us of our obligations to help them be fed.

What can we do on behalf of those who hunger for justice, or dignity; those who crave friendship or respect? Do we see those people that others overlook? What about the victimized? The marginalized? The neglected?

Our own hunger pangs remind us that there are those in the world who crave more than a hamburger. Some people are hungry for dignity. Others for consolation. Still others, for hope.

Lent calls on us to remember those who are often forgotten, and to use our sacrifice to let them know they are seen and heard. Think of the meals we miss or the desserts we skip.

Do we call that a fast? Is there more we can give up—and give?

Deacon Greg Kandra

Greg Kandra is a Roman Catholic deacon serving the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York. Author of The Busy Person's Guide to Prayer, he is an award-winning broadcast journalist and maintains The Deacon's Bench blog.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 13

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I bear grief in my soul,
have sorrow in my heart all day long?
How long shall my enemy prevail over me?

Look, answer me, O LORD my God!
Give light to my eyes lest I fall asleep in death;
lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over you;”
lest my foes rejoice when they see me fall.

As for me, I trust in your faithful love.
Let my heart rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the LORD who has been bountiful with me.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 9:6-10

Consider this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: / “He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; / his righteousness endures forever.” / The one who supplies seed to

the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

If you care for the needy, then you shall call and the Lord will say, "Here I am!"

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Compassionate God, you make every grace abundant for us. In joyful trust we pray: *R/*. Merciful God, hear us.

Answer the prayers of those who wait for the return of a loved one. *R/*.

Lead troubled youth to experience unconditional love and to know their precious worth. *R/*.

Inspire and prosper efforts to address a warming climate. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May God bless us with grateful and generous hearts, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Saturday, March 8

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 60:3-7, 13-14

O God, you have rejected us, and broken us.
You have been angry; come back to us.

You have made the earth quake, torn it open.
Repair what is shattered, for it sways.
You have inflicted hardships on your people,
made us drink a wine that dazed us.

For those who fear you, you gave the signal
to flee from the face of the bow.
With your right hand, grant salvation, and give answer,
that those whom you love may be free.

Give us aid against the foe,
for human help is vain.
With God we shall do bravely,
and God will trample down our foes.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 5:13-15

Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God. You shall not do any work, either you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or donkey or any work animal, or the resident alien within your gates, so that your male and female slave may rest as you do. Remember

that you too were once slaves in the land of Egypt, and the LORD, your God, brought you out from there with a strong hand and outstretched arm. That is why the LORD, your God, has commanded you to observe the sabbath day.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

If you call the Sabbath a delight, then you shall delight in the Lord.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Merciful God, you create humankind in your image. On this International Women's Day, we pray in hope: *R.* God of our hearts, hear our prayer.

Enliven your Church's inclusion of women for leadership and ministerial roles in the Church. *R.*

Prosper efforts to recognize political, social, economic, and cultural achievements of women. *R.*

Help us to expand services for education, health care, and childcare for women around the world. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God bless us and nurture our growth in faith, hope, and love, through Jesus our brother. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. John of God

Founder, Brothers Hospitallers (1495–1550)

The early life of John of God is cloaked in mystery. He served in the Spanish army until the age of forty and then resolved to live a life of penance. For some years he roamed the streets of Grenada proclaiming the sins of the world and was taken for a lunatic. Eventually he was persuaded by a famous preacher to express his love for God in a more constructive fashion.

He began at once to offer shelter and hospitality to poor and homeless people gathered from the streets. Eventually this hospitality became a full-time occupation. With limited income from the sale of religious books and devotional articles, and the assistance of interested benefactors, he supported a household of ex-prisoners, prostitutes, sick, crippled, and dying outcasts of the town. Still, he received abuse from many quarters—not least from many of his broken and derelict guests. In time the bishop conferred his approbation by clothing John in a religious habit and giving him the name John of God. The town expressed its appreciation by providing him with a hospital.

John frequently enjoyed mystical visions. Once, while washing the feet of a beggar, he was astonished to see the man transfigured and bathed in a radiant light. A celestial voice spoke: “John, all you do for the poor in my name is done for me. It is my hand that receives your alms; it is my body that you clothe, my feet that you wash.”

After jumping into a cold river to save a drowning man, John fell ill and died on March 8, 1550. Many of his helpers later joined to become the Brothers Hospitallers.

“Labor without stopping. Do all the good works you can while you still have the time.”

—St. John of God

Mass

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

[*St. John of God, opt. memorial*]

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 69 (68):17

Answer us, Lord, for your mercy is kind; / in the
abundance of your mercies, look upon us.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
look with compassion on our weakness
and ensure us your protection
by stretching forth the right hand of your majesty.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 58:9b-14

*If you bestow your bread on the hungry,
then light shall rise for you in the darkness.*

Thus says the LORD: / If you remove from your midst
oppression, / false accusation and malicious speech; /
If you bestow your bread on the hungry / and satisfy the
afflicted; / Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, /
and the gloom shall become for you like midday; / Then the
LORD will guide you always / and give you plenty even on
the parched land. / He will renew your strength, / and you
shall be like a watered garden, / like a spring whose water
never fails. / The ancient ruins shall be rebuilt for your sake,
/ and the foundations from ages past you shall raise up; /
“Repairer of the breach,” they shall call you, / “Restorer of
ruined homesteads.”

If you hold back your foot on the sabbath / from following your own pursuits on my holy day; / If you call the sabbath a delight, / and the LORD's holy day honorable; / If you honor it by not following your ways, / seeking your own interests, or speaking with malice— / Then you shall delight in the LORD, / and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; / I will nourish you with the heritage of Jacob, your father, / for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

86:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

R. (11ab) Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth.

Incline your ear, O LORD; answer me,
for I am afflicted and poor.
Keep my life, for I am devoted to you;
save your servant who trusts in you.
You are my God. **R.**

Have mercy on me, O Lord,
for to you I call all the day.
Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. **R.**

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.
Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my pleading. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Ezekiel 33:11

I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, says the Lord,
but rather in his conversion, that he may live.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 5:27-32

I have not come to call righteous to repentance but sinners.

Jesus saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him. Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were at table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes complained to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, we pray, O Lord,
the sacrifice of conciliation and praise,
and grant that, cleansed by its working,
we may offer minds well pleasing to you.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Matthew 9:13

I desire mercy, not sacrifice, says the Lord, / for I did not come to call the just but sinners.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished with the gift of heavenly life,
we pray, O Lord,
that what remains for us a mystery in this present life
may be for us a help to reach eternity.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

A Spirited Response

Jesus responds [to the Pharisees and scribes]: “The healthy do not need a doctor; sick people do. I have not come to invite the self-righteous to a change of heart, but sinners.” The answer is devastatingly truthful and puts those who question in jeopardy, for now there are only two categories: the self-righteous or sinners.

There are people who think there is nothing really wrong with them, and people who know there is much that is not well with them. There are people who think that what is wrong with the world is rooted in other people, and those who know they themselves are part of the problem. There are people who worship and pray with integrity, without self-interest, and those who confuse worship with just one more way to further their agenda and confirm their place in the world.

A holy person once put it to me bluntly: “If you’re praying or doing worship, really praying, then you are constantly changing and making others very uncomfortable, because they never know exactly what you will do in response to the Spirit. If you aren’t changing noticeably, becoming more sensitive to others’ needs and difficulties and less tolerant of injustice, then you simply aren’t praying.”

Megan McKenna, *Lent: Reflections and Stories on the Daily Readings*

Megan McKenna is an author, theologian, storyteller, and lecturer. She has taught at a number of schools, including Fordham University and the Washington Theological Union.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 92:2-7, 13-16

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to make music to your name, O Most High,
to proclaim your faithful love in the morning,
and your truth in the watches of the night,
on the ten-stringed lute and the harp,
with the sound of song on the lyre.

You have gladdened me, O LORD, by your deeds;
for the work of your hands I shout with joy.
O LORD, how great are your works!
How deep are your designs!
The senseless cannot know this,
and the fool cannot understand.

The righteous will flourish like the palm tree,
and grow like a Lebanon cedar.

Planted in the house of the LORD,
they will flourish in the courts of our God,
still bearing fruit when they are old,
still full of sap, still green,
to proclaim that the LORD is upright.
In God, my rock, there is no wrong.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 2:22b-26

P]ursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord with purity of heart. Avoid

foolish and ignorant debates, for you know that they breed quarrels. A slave of the Lord should not quarrel, but should be gentle with everyone, able to teach, tolerant, correcting opponents with kindness. It may be that God will grant them repentance that leads to knowledge of the truth, and that they may return to their senses out of the devil's snare, where they are entrapped by him, for his will.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Marvelous God, you are our strength and our song. In faith we pray: *R.* God, show us your mercy.

Heal those who suffer a rare or chronic disease. *R.*

Counsel and guide law enforcement personnel. *R.*

Teach us your hidden wisdom in the midst of our suffering and longing. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sin, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.



Sunday, March 9

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 118:24-29

This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice in it and be glad.

We beseech you, O LORD, grant salvation;
We beseech you, O LORD, grant success.
Blest is he who comes
in the name of the LORD.

We bless you from the house of the LORD;
the LORD is God, and has given us light.

Go forward in procession with branches,
as far as the horns of the altar.
You are my God, I thank you.
My God, I praise you.
Give thanks to the LORD, who is good,
whose faithful love endures forever.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Sirach 35:8-13

The offering of the just enriches the altar: / a sweet odor
before the Most High. / The sacrifice of the just is ac-
cepted, / never to be forgotten. / With a generous spirit pay
homage to the Lord, / and do not spare your freewill gifts.
/ With each contribution show a cheerful countenance, /

and pay your tithes in a spirit of joy. / Give to the Most High as he has given to you, / generously, according to your means. / For he is a God who always repays / and will give back to you sevenfold.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, Lord, have given me.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Most High God, like Moses, you call us to give our best offering to you. In hope we pray: *R.* Strengthen us by your Spirit, O God.

Inspire your Church to resist the lure of power, prestige, and possessions. *R.*

Pour your grace upon catechumens who will celebrate election in Christ, and help them to find support in your Church's prayer and example. *R.*

Rescue and sustain those whose lives are darkened by war, drugs, or political oppression. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God bless us with generous, open, and merciful hearts as we move through Lent toward Easter joy. Amen.

Mass

First Sunday of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 91 (90):15-16

When he calls on me, I will answer him; / I will deliver him and give him glory, / I will grant him length of days.

(The Gloria is omitted.)

COLLECT

Grant, almighty God,
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding
of the riches hidden in Christ
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

26:4-10

The confession of faith of the chosen people.

Moses spoke to the people, saying: "The priest shall receive the basket from you and shall set it in front of the altar of the LORD, your God. Then you shall declare before the LORD, your God, 'My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt with a small household and lived there as an alien. But there he became a nation great, strong, and numerous. When the Egyptians maltreated and oppressed us, imposing hard labor upon us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and he heard our cry and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. He brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand and outstretched arm, with terrifying power, with signs and wonders; and bringing us into this country, he gave us this land

flowing with milk and honey. Therefore, I have now brought you the firstfruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.' And having set them before the LORD, your God, you shall bow down in his presence."

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

R. (cf. 15b) Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
say to the LORD, "My refuge and fortress,
my God in whom I trust." **R.**

No evil shall befall you,
nor shall affliction come near your tent,
for to his angels he has given command about you,
that they guard you in all your ways. **R.**

Upon their hands they shall bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
You shall tread upon the asp and the viper;
you shall trample down the lion and the dragon. **R.**

Because he clings to me, I will deliver him;
I will set him on high because he acknowledges my
name.

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in distress;
I will deliver him and glorify him. **R.**

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

10:8-13

The confession of faith of all believers in Christ.

Brothers and sisters: What does Scripture say? / *The word is near you, / in your mouth and in your heart / —that*

is, the word of faith that we preach—, for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. For the Scripture says, *No one who believes in him will be put to shame.* For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matthew 4:4b

One does not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 4:1-13

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert and was tempted.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, *One does not live on bread alone.*” Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, “I shall give to you all this power and glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me.” Jesus said to him in reply, “It is written: / *You shall worship the Lord, your God, / and him alone shall you serve.*” / Then he led him to Jerusalem, / made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is

written: / *He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you, / and: / With their hands they will support you, / lest you dash your foot against a stone.*" / Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, *You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.*" When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

The Gospel of the Lord.

CREED (p. 340)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Give us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray,
to make these offerings,
for with them we celebrate the beginning
of this venerable and sacred time.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Matthew 4:4

One does not live by bread alone, / but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

Or:

Cf. Psalm 91 (90):4

The Lord will conceal you with his pinions, / and under his wings you will trust.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed now with heavenly bread,
by which faith is nourished, hope increased,
and charity strengthened,
we pray, O Lord,
that we may learn to hunger for Christ,
the true and living Bread,
and strive to live by every word
which proceeds from your mouth.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

The Spirit's Murmuring

With ashes smudged on our foreheads, we began Lent on Wednesday with a flourish. Now, on Lent's first Sunday, we remember how Jesus, "full of the Holy Spirit," as Luke's Gospel reminds us today, or "led up by the Spirit," as in Matthew's account, went into the wilderness. Mark's passage is in active voice, "the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness," and then sums it all up: "He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him."

After publicly submitting to John's baptism and experiencing the Spirit's descent, Jesus went off to pray, to reflect on what was unfolding in his life, and to say "no" to the temptations holding him back.

If we focus too quickly on the drama of Satan's three temptations of Jesus, we may miss the Spirit's murmuring to us to take time out during Lent to pray and to be silent in the presence of God. Quieting our minds in the wilderness of everyday life, our own wild beasts will fill the emptiness—our troubles, regrets, fears, cravings, and oversized hopes. What are our temptations: food, sex, the best of this or that, power, wealth, prestige, or even to exude confidently that we have God figured out?

Is this why we should take time out to pray during Lent? Deuteronomy reminds us today to be grateful to God always. St. Paul urges us to bring our faith into our hearts. Lent's forty days allow God's Spirit to help us to do this and to confront our afflictions, to accept them as our thoughts, and (we pray) to watch them go away.

John Borelli

John Borelli, a historian of religions and a theologian, serves as special assistant for Catholic identity and dialogue to the president of Georgetown University.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 141:1-5, 8-10

I have called to you, LORD; O hasten to help me!
Hear my voice when I cry to you.
Let my prayer be as incense before you,
the raising of my hands like an evening oblation.

Set, O LORD, a guard on my mouth;
keep watch at the door of my lips!
Do not turn my heart to things that are evil,
to wicked deeds with those who are sinners.

Never allow me to share in their feasting.
If someone righteous strikes me it is kindness;
but let the oil of the wicked not anoint my head.
Let my prayer be ever against their malice.

To you my eyes are turned, O LORD, my Lord.
In you I take refuge; spare my soul!
From the trap they have laid for me, keep me safe;
keep me from the snares of those who do evil.

Let the wicked together fall into their traps,
while I pursue my way unharmed.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who

is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of blessing, in Jesus you sympathize with our weakness and uphold us by your grace. We praise you and pray: *R.* God, come to our aid.

Inspire global efforts to heed scientific discoveries and stop the spread of infectious diseases. *R.*

Rescue those who experience the threat of natural or environmental disasters. *R.*

Relieve the plight of refugees and unaccompanied migrant children, and help them to find safety and welcome. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God make us strong in Christ and bring to completion the good work begun in us, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

March 9–15

First Week of Lent

Within the Word

Time-honored Practices

How can fasting bring us closer to right relationship with God? Is this self-imposed deprivation only going to make us more preoccupied with ourselves (Matt 6:16-18)? This time-honored practice wagers that a sincere attempt to seek God through fasting will open us more to God's assistance (Jonah 3:5-10). This divine accompaniment promises to help us to avoid major missteps. We declare through our embodied actions that we are limited. We acknowledge communally and individually that we can find our proper freedom only with God's walking with us (Matt 7:7-8).

Just as the Torah aims to guide us to live into God's presence through making decisions in which God is a player, so also the Gospels aim to teach us by Jesus' example to strive to worship God alone. In the first of his three temptations in Luke 4:1-13, the devil tries to beguile the hungry Jesus into changing stone into bread. But Jesus teaches that we humans are not nourished by bread alone but also by God's life-giving words (Isa 55:10-11; Matt 7:9). When material wants grow strong, we are called to counter these physical drives with a felt awareness or a strong memory of how we have seen things differently as a result of an encouraging word from a friend or a respected authority. Jesus does not try to demonstrate his power over nature by changing stones into food. In the face of the next two temptations—the devil's promise of sovereignty over all lands and his suggestion that Jesus should test God's promise of protection by jumping from the parapet

of the temple—Jesus again steps back from exercising divine power. He shows how right relationship of the creature to the Creator maintains sacred space in one's heart for God to enter (Lev 19:1-2). This divine accompaniment is crucial for balancing one's conflicted emotions and drives.

Another time-honored Christian spiritual practice is the repetitive recitation of the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." The experience of letting these words sink into one's mind and heart allows one to be attentive to those others with whom we live (Matt 25:34-40). The words of this prayer can help us to appreciate others and not to expect them to supply our every need, or, even worse, to take what they offer and then pay no further attention to them (Lev 19:11-18). We can live well with others when we are grateful for what we are given, which ultimately goes back to God who has given us life itself. Thus, the ritual of giving the firstfruits of the harvest to God in Deuteronomy 26:4-10 provides the occasion to recall how God has given our ancestors in the faith a land on which to live and the freedom to flourish upon it. We are given a place by God within God's creation. When we acknowledge this by confessing our sins (Ezek 18:21) and sincerely professing Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:9-10), we gain the security of heart that allows us to let others have their place. Such alignment with Jesus allows us to be attentive to the poor (Matt 25:40). We can be merciful to the extent that we invite Jesus to show his justice and mercy through us (Ezek 18:22-28).

—Fr. Dale Launderville, OSB

Dale Launderville, OSB, is professor of theology at Saint John's University School of Theology and Seminary, Collegeville, Minnesota.

Monday, March 10

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 37:23-29

By the LORD are the steps of a warrior
made firm in delight of God's ways.
Though they stumble they shall never fall,
for the LORD will hold them by the hand.

I was young and now I am old,
but I have never seen the righteous forsaken
nor their children begging for bread.
All the day they are generous and lend,
and their children become a blessing.

Then turn away from evil and do good,
and you may abide forever;
for indeed, the LORD loves justice,
and will never forsake the faithful.

The unjust shall be wiped out forever,
and the descendants of the wicked cut off.
The righteous shall inherit the land;
there they shall abide forever.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 22:20-22, 24-25, 26ac

You shall not oppress or afflict a resident alien, for you
were once aliens residing in the land of Egypt. You

shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely listen to their cry.

If you lend money to my people, the poor among you, you must not be like a money lender; you must not demand interest from them. If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you shall return it to him before sunset; for this is his only covering. What will he sleep in? If he cries out to me, I will listen; for I am compassionate.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Righteous God, you delight those who wait for you. In hope we pray: **R.** Receive our prayer, O God.

Inscribe your law of love on our hearts, and make us wise through our attention to nature. **R.**

Transform the desires of those who are tempted to harm others or themselves. **R.**

Help us to protect air, waters, and soil from further pollution. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God strengthen us for the practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, through Jesus, the Lamb of God. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

Marie-Joseph Lagrange

Dominican, Founder, École Biblique (1855–1938)

Père Lagrange, a French Dominican priest, was one of the outstanding Scripture scholars in the Catholic Church. In 1890 the Dominicans sent him to Jerusalem to found the École Biblique, the first modern Catholic school of biblical and archeological research. Under his leadership, the École became a haven for the renewal of Catholic biblical studies.

He found encouragement from Pope Leo XIII, who in 1893 issued an encyclical offering the first modest encouragement of modern biblical criticism. Lagrange worked tirelessly on such subjects as the authorship and dating of the Pentateuch, at a time when the Church maintained that the first five books of the Bible were written by Moses. Unsurprisingly, he faced relentless criticism, occasional censorship, and the frequent threat of condemnation. This was the razor's edge on which any serious Catholic biblical scholar was then forced to walk. Lagrange worked quietly in service of the Church he loved, widening a path that others might follow.

Biblical criticism would later become the storm center of Catholic theology. Lagrange weathered the storm. But he did not live to see his work vindicated by the teaching of Pope Pius XII and later by the Second Vatican Council; still, he stands as a heroic example of the Catholic scholar equally committed to tradition, the community of faith, and the pursuit of truth. He died on March 10, 1938.

“Is this really how truth is served? Is it not the task of the present to prepare for the future? Can we ever move forward without taking steps?”

—Marie-Joseph Lagrange, to colleagues who urged caution

Mass

Monday of the First Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 123 (122):2-3

Like the eyes of slaves on the hand of their lords, / so our eyes are on the Lord our God, till he show us his mercy. / Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.

COLLECT

Convert us, O God our Savior,
and instruct our minds by heavenly teaching,
that we may benefit from the works of Lent.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Leviticus

19:1-2, 11-18

Judge your fellow man justly.

The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the whole assembly of the children of Israel and tell them: Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy.

“You shall not steal. You shall not lie or speak falsely to one another. You shall not swear falsely by my name, thus profaning the name of your God. I am the LORD.

“You shall not defraud or rob your neighbor. You shall not withhold overnight the wages of your day laborer. You shall not curse the deaf, or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but you shall fear your God. I am the LORD.

“You shall not act dishonestly in rendering judgment. Show neither partiality to the weak nor deference to the mighty, but judge your fellow men justly. You shall not go about spreading slander among your kin; nor shall you stand by idly when your neighbor’s life is at stake. I am the LORD.

“You shall not bear hatred for your brother in your heart. Though you may have to reprove him, do not incur sin because of him. Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your fellow countrymen. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

19:8, 9, 10, 15

R. (John 6:63b) Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.

The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.

The decree of the LORD is trustworthy,
giving wisdom to the simple. **R.**

The precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart.

The command of the LORD is clear,
enlightening the eye. **R.**

The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever;

The ordinances of the LORD are true,
all of them just. **R.**

Let the words of my mouth and the thought of my heart
find favor before you,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

2 Corinthians 6:2b

Behold, now is a very acceptable time;
behold, now is the day of salvation.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

25:31-46

*Whatever you have done to the very least of my brothers,
you have done to me.*

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of

these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May this devout oblation be acceptable to you, O Lord, that by your power it may sanctify our manner of life and gain for us your conciliation and pardon. Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Matthew 25:40, 34

Amen, I say to you: / Whatever you did for one of the least of my brethren, / you did it for me, says the Lord. / Come, you blessed of my Father, / receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We pray, O Lord, that, in receiving your Sacrament, we may experience help in mind and body so that, kept safe in both, we may glory in the fullness of heavenly healing. Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Toward Right Relationship

The kingdom of God in the experience of Jesus has at its roots the ancient hope of Israel, this dream that there would come a time in the life of humanity when God would actively take possession and control of the life of his chosen, and through them establish a sovereignty inclusive of the entire human

race. The prophets felt that this dream was being worked out in the creative movement of human history. There were others who felt that humanity had become so degenerate and evil that God had withdrawn from humanity but that there would come a time when the age would end and all of the contamination would be wiped out and the new era would be brought in by this apocalyptic movement of God. This is the root. God is the creator of life and the living substance. God is the creator of existence; therefore everything lives under God. The logic of this is that the individual is under obligation to let their life flow out from their center. This center has its core the yielding to the will of God, so that the action that flows out from this center that is always accessible to the will of God will be right action, the relationship will be right relationship. When Jesus announces that the kingdom of God is at hand, this is the announcement that he is making.

..... Howard Thurman, *Sermons on the Parables*

Howard Thurman (1899–1981) was an American author, philosopher, theologian, educator, and civil rights leader. His theology of radical nonviolence shaped a generation of civil rights activists.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 31:2-9

In you, O LORD, I take refuge.
Let me never be put to shame.
In your righteousness, set me free;
incline your ear to me, and speedily rescue me.

Be a rock of refuge for me,
a mighty stronghold to save me.
For you are my rock, my stronghold!
Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

Release me from the snare they have hidden,
for you indeed are my refuge.
Into your hands I commend my spirit.
You will redeem me, O LORD, O faithful God.


You detest those who serve empty idols.
As for me, I trust in the LORD.

Let me be glad and rejoice in your love,
for you who have seen my affliction
and taken heed of my soul's distress,
have not left me in the hands of the enemy,
but set my feet at large.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Romans 13:8-10

 we nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for
the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The

commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, [namely] “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Whatever kindness you showed to these least ones, you showed to me.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Redeeming God, you are our refuge. With undying trust we pray: **R.** Be our rock of safety, God.

Rescue those who suffer domestic abuse. **R.**

Protect children from violence, unjust labor, and environmental harm. **R.**

Shine truth on lies, slander, and deceitful speech. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May the Spirit of God inspire us to run the path of God’s commands with the inexpressible delights of love, in Jesus our brother. Amen.

Tuesday, March 11

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 119:1-8

Blessed are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD!
Blessed are those who keep his decrees!
With all their hearts they seek him.

They never do anything evil,
but walk in God's ways.
You have laid down your precepts
to be carefully kept.

May my ways be firm
in keeping your statutes.
Then I shall not be put to shame
as I fix my eyes on all your commands.

I will thank you with an upright heart,
as I learn your righteous judgments.
I will keep your statutes;
do not ever forsake me.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 30:5-9

Every word of God is tested; / he is a shield to those who
take refuge in him. / Add nothing to his words, / lest
he reprimand you, and you be proved a liar.

Two things I ask of you, / do not deny them to me before
I die: / Put falsehood and lying far from me, / give me nei-
ther poverty nor riches; / provide me only with the food I
need; / Lest, being full, I deny you, / saying, “Who is the
LORD?” / Or, being in want, I steal, / and profane the name
of my God.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or
another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Your Father knows what you need before you ask.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Gracious God, you reveal yourself to us in truth and love.
With confidence we pray: *R.* God of tender mercy, hear
our prayer.

Help us to create opportunities for intergenerational faith
sharing in parishes. *R.*

Reignite the fire of faith in those who are discouraged or
troubled in spirit. *R.*

Advance research and treatment for Parkinson’s disease
and diabetes. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God enkindle in us the fire of divine love and re-
create us in Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Oengus

Abbot-Bishop (d. ca. 824)

St. Oengus was born sometime in the middle of the eighth century in northern Ireland. He was educated in the monastery of Clonenagh and was said to be unrivaled in his sacred knowledge. Seeking greater solitude, however, he retired to a hermitage some miles away, where he practiced his austere devotions. These included daily recital of the entire psalter, at least part of the time submerged in a frigid pond. Gradually, his reputation attracted visitors, and he chose to seek a place that would afford greater anonymity.

Eventually, in his wandering, he came upon the monastery of Tallaght, near Dublin. There he was accepted as a simple servant and spent the next years performing the hardest and humblest tasks. All the time, unbeknownst to anyone, he was engaged in a great project: a metrical celebration of the saints—365 verses in all, a task that occupied the rest of his life. In time his identity was discovered by the holy abbot, St. Maelruain. Upbraided for having hidden his talents, he agreed to collaborate in compiling a comprehensive collection of Irish saints—the first of its kind.

After the death of the abbot, Oengus returned to Clonenagh, where he became abbot and was ordained as bishop.

“The troop of the noble saints of Erin, with Patrick who is highest . . . the final vast troop, which ends a bright chain. . . . All these troops with noble overkings, to help me, a bright white following, the vast host of saints.”

—Martyrology of St. Oengus

Mass

Tuesday of the First Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 90 (89):1-2

O Lord, you have been our refuge, from generation to generation; / from age to age, you are.

COLLECT

Look upon your family, Lord,
that, through the chastening effects of bodily discipline,
our minds may be radiant in your presence
with the strength of our yearning for you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 55:10-11

My word will do whatever I will.

Thus says the LORD: / Just as from the heavens / the rain
and snow come down / And do not return there / till
they have watered the earth, / making it fertile and fruitful,
/ Giving seed to the one who sows / and bread to the one
who eats, / So shall my word be / that goes forth from my
mouth; / It shall not return to me void, / but shall do my
will, / achieving the end for which I sent it.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19

R. (18b) From all their distress God rescues the just.

Glorify the LORD with me,
let us together extol his name.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears. **R.**

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,
and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him. *R.*

The LORD has eyes for the just,
and ears for their cry.
The LORD confronts the evildoers,
to destroy remembrance of them from the earth. *R.*

When the just cry out, the LORD hears them,
and from all their distress he rescues them.
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;
and those who are crushed in spirit he saves. *R.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matthew 4:4b

One does not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

6:7-15

This is how you are to pray.

Jesus said to his disciples: “In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“This is how you are to pray: / Our Father who art in heaven, / hallowed be thy name, / thy Kingdom come, / thy will be done, / on earth as it is in heaven. / Give us this day our daily bread; / and forgive us our trespasses, / as we forgive those who trespass against us; / and lead us not into temptation, / but deliver us from evil.

“If you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Creator, almighty God,
what we bring from your bountiful goodness,
and be pleased to transform
this temporal sustenance you have given us,
that it may bring us eternal life.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 4:2

When I called, the God of justice gave me answer; / from
anguish you released me; / have mercy, O Lord, and hear
my prayer!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant us through these mysteries, Lord,
that by moderating earthly desires
we may learn to love the things of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Let Prayer Flow

My father converted to Catholicism when I was in the third grade. I remember how proud I was and eager to help. After all, I had three years studying Catholicism while Dad had only a few meetings with the parish priest. I remember the

day I asked whether he had studied the rosary yet, eagerly explaining how it is prayed. I still recall Dad's gentle, almost curious response. "Why would I say something fifty times to God, when I know he heard me the first time?" I was left speechless, my theological studies to date leaving me unprepared for the question.

I am reminded of that moment when reading today's Gospel, "Your Father knows what you need before you ask . . ." and its clear guidance about prayer.

Our familiarity with the Lord's Prayer might cause us to miss the amazing flow present throughout the prayer—starting from the grand and vast, and moving to the personal and daily. We begin with awe and wonder at the coming reign of God's love on earth as in heaven. The prayer then moves to the personal: bread for this day, our failings acknowledged, and forgiveness sought, before turning outward to the need to forgive others. We pray for our own safety, and again, turn outward and pray that all people be delivered from evil.

This inward-outward turning, like the intake and release of breath, is the stuff of prayer. Both movements are needed in prayer; they nurture and support each other. The next time we pray, what if we pay attention to our breath, and allow this breath to support the inward-outward hopes of our prayer? This prayer and the next, like this and every breath.

----- Sr. Pat Kozak

Pat Kozak, CSJ, is a process facilitator and consultant for religious congregations across the United States and Canada.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 26:1-8

Give judgment for me, O LORD,
for I have walked in my integrity.
I have trusted in the LORD; I have not wavered.

Examine me, LORD, and try me.
O test my heart and my mind.
Your faithful love is before my eyes,
and I walk according to your truth.

I never take my seat with liars,
and with hypocrites I shall not go.
I hate the evildoer's company;
I will not take my seat with the wicked.

I wash my hands in innocence
and take my place around your altar,
singing a song of thanksgiving,
recounting all your wonders.
O LORD, I love the house where you dwell,
the place where your glory abides.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:12-15

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these

put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Forgive us our sins as we forgive one another.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of wonders, you are forever merciful and forgiving.
In trust we pray: *R.* God, in your faithful love, hear our prayer.

Inspire us to address food waste and to secure food for those who hunger. *R.*

Come to the aid of women in crisis pregnancies. *R.*

Safeguard all who are homeless and those who minister to them. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May the Lord make us thankful and strengthen us to never lose hope in God's mercy, through Jesus our peace.
Amen.

Wednesday, March 12

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 41:2-6, 11-13

Blessed are they who have concern for the poor.
In time of trouble, the LORD will rescue them.

The LORD will guard them, preserve their life,
and make them blessed in the land,
not give them up to the will of their foes.

The LORD will help them on their bed of pain;
in their sickness, you tend even to their bedding.

As for me, I said, “LORD, have mercy on me;
heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.”
My foes speak evil against me and wonder,
how long before I die and my name is forgotten?

But you, O LORD, have mercy on me.
Raise me up and I will repay them.
By this I know your favor:
that my foes do not triumph over me.
In my integrity you have upheld me,
and have set me in your presence forever.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 26:2-3, 13

Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the house of
the LORD and speak to the inhabitants of all the cities

of Judah who come to worship in the house of the LORD; whatever I command you, tell them, and hold nothing back. Perhaps they will listen and turn, all of them from their evil way, so that I may repent of the evil I plan to inflict upon them for their evil deeds.

Now, therefore, reform your ways and your deeds; listen to the voice of the LORD your God, so that the LORD will have a change of heart regarding the evil he has spoken against you.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

When the people turned from their evil way God repented and did not punish them.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Lover of the poor in spirit, you take pity on all who turn toward you. With longing we pray: *R.* God, come to our aid.

You rescue those who are in trouble: uncover all attempts to traffic people, and heal those who have suffered abuse. *R.*

You speak with authority: give us words to sing your praise and proclaim your mercy. *R.*

You tend to the sick: work your healing power through the skill of surgeons, doctors, and nurses. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May integrity and truth stand guard over our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord, now and forever. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Maximilian

Martyr (d. 295)

St. Maximilian, a third-century martyr in North Africa, was killed for refusing to serve in the Roman army. He was twenty-one when he was brought before the court of the Roman proconsul and charged with refusing conscription. Maximilian explained: “I cannot enlist for I am a Christian. I cannot serve, I cannot do evil.” When told that he must serve or die, Maximilian replied, “I will never serve. You can cut off my head but I will not be a soldier of this world, for I am a soldier of Christ.” Asked who had put such wild ideas in his head, Maximilian answered, “My conscience and He who has called me.” When the proconsul warned that in punishment for this disobedience he could be “sent to your Christ at once,” Maximilian said that he could ask for nothing better: “Do it quickly, for there is my glory.”

In worshiping Christ, Maximilian was charged not only with disobeying his military office but with impiety—disrespect for the gods of Rome. His sentence read: “Maximilian has refused the military oath through impiety.” After hearing that he was to be beheaded, Maximilian cried out: “God liveth.”

The sentence was carried out immediately.

“My army is the army of God, and I cannot fight for this world.”

—St. Maximilian

Mass

Wednesday of the First Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 25 (24):6, 2, 22

Remember your compassion, O Lord, / and your merciful love, for they are from of old. / Let not our enemies exult over us. / Redeem us, O God of Israel, from all our distress.

COLLECT

Look kindly, Lord, we pray,
on the devotion of your people,
that those who by self-denial are restrained in body
may by the fruit of good works be renewed in mind.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jonah

3:1-10

The Ninevites turned from their evil way.

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: "Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you." So Jonah made ready and went to Nineveh, according to the LORD's bidding. Now Nineveh was an enormously large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began his journey through the city, and had gone but a single day's walk announcing, "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed," when the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in the ashes. Then he had this proclaimed throughout Nineveh, by decree of the king and his nobles:

“Neither man nor beast, neither cattle nor sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water. Man and beast shall be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; every man shall turn from his evil way and from the violence he has in hand. Who knows, God may relent and forgive, and withhold his blazing wrath, so that we shall not perish.” When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil that he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19

R. (19b) A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me. **R.**

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
and your Holy Spirit take not from me. **R.**

For you are not pleased with sacrifices;
should I offer a burnt offering, you would not accept it.
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not
spurn. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Joel 2:12-13

Even now, says the LORD,
return to me with your whole heart
for I am gracious and merciful.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 11:29-32

No sign will be given to this generation except the sign of Jonah.

While still more people gathered in the crowd, Jesus said to them, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. At the judgment the queen of the south will rise with the men of this generation and she will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and there is something greater than Solomon here. At the judgment the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation and condemn it, because at the preaching of Jonah they repented, and there is something greater than Jonah here." The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We offer to you, O Lord,
 what you have given to be dedicated to your name,
 that, just as for our benefit you make these gifts a
 Sacrament,
 so you may let them become for us an eternal remedy.
 Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 5:12

All who take refuge in you shall be glad, O Lord, / and
 ever cry out their joy, and you shall dwell among them.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who never cease to nourish us by your Sacrament,
 grant that the refreshment you give us through it
 may bring us unending life.
 Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Begin Again

It is tempting to think, after a lifetime of spiritual practice, that the call to repentance applies only to beginners. But Jonah and Jesus remind us that from priest to prophet, from king to cow, from God to the entire People of God, all of us are to repent, to change, to begin again.

Jonah, a prophet of the Lord, needed repentance. Only a Godsent storm and a few days in the darkness of a digestive tract were enough to get him to change his mind. In the misery of that imagery, there is a deeply resonant spiritual reality: Sometimes the only way we are opened to change is when we sit in the mess of our own making, when we are left alone in the “belly of the beast” to think about what got us here, what and how we are called to change, and what hope and plans God has for us in the future.

Jonah is spit out upon the beach and, seeing the light of day again, finally answers God’s call. He preaches to the Ninevites, whom he despised, and they repent, from king to cow, at the Word of the Lord among them. And the Scriptures tell that, in the end, even “God repented of the evil that he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.”

Jonah, Jesus, and God remind us, each again anew, that it is never too late to change: Repent, change your heart, begin again!

Michael J. Sanem

*Michael J. Sanem ministers in Kansas City, where he lives with his wife and three sons. Author of *Becoming the Good News: A New Approach to Parish Evangelization* and the forthcoming *Growing into God*, he writes at incarnationiseverywhere.com.*

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 55:2-9

Give ear, O God, to my prayer;
do not hide from my pleading.
Attend to me and reply;
with my cares, I cannot rest.

I tremble at the shouts of the foe,
at the cries of the wicked,
for they pile up evil upon me;
in anger they malign me.

My heart is stricken within me;
death's terror falls upon me.
Trembling and fear come over me,
and horror overwhelms me.

I say, "O that I had wings like a dove,
to fly away and be at rest!
I would indeed escape far away,
and take refuge in the desert.
I would hasten to find my shelter
from the raging wind and tempest."

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Revelation 2:1b-2a, 3-5

The one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks in the midst of the seven gold lampstands says this: "I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate the wicked. Moreover, you have

endurance and have suffered for my name, and you have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: you have lost the love you had at first. Realize how far you have fallen. Repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

At the preaching of Jonah the Ninevites repented, and there is something greater than Jonah here.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Holy God, you alone are judge. In faith we pray: **R/**. O God, listen to our prayer.

Help us to stop all forms of torture. **R/**.

Heal misunderstandings and divisions in families. **R/**.

Give peace to the dying and comfort to those who wait with them. **R/**.

Our Father . . .

May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts, now and always. Amen.

Thursday, March 13

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 16:1-2, 5-8, 11

Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord.

You are my good, you alone.”

O LORD, it is you who are my portion and cup;

it is you yourself who secure my destiny.

Pleasant places are marked out for me:

a fair heritage indeed is my lot!

I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel,

who even at night directs my heart.

I keep the LORD before me always;

with God at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

You will show me the path of life,

the fullness of joy in your presence,

at your right hand, bliss forever.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 37:15-20

Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: / “LORD of hosts, God of Israel, / enthroned on the cherubim! / You alone are God / over all the kingdoms of the earth. / It is you who made / the heavens and the earth. / Incline your ear, LORD, and listen! / open your eyes, LORD, and see! / Hear all the words Sennacherib has sent / to taunt the living God. / Truly, O

LORD, / the kings of Assyria have laid waste / the nations and their lands. / They gave their gods to the fire /—they were not gods at all, / but the work of human hands—/ Wood and stone, they destroyed them. / Therefore, LORD, our God, / save us from this man’s power, / That all the kingdoms of the earth may know / that you alone, LORD, are God.”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Lord, save us from our enemies; turn our mourning into gladness.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Merciful God of our ancestors, you are our inheritance. In confidence we pray: *R.* Show us the path of life, O God.

Guide your Church in ways of transparency, truth, and compassion. *R.*

Counsel those entrusted with spiritual leadership. *R.*

Inspire initiatives for equality, inclusion, and diversity in communities and leadership. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God kindle hope in us and turn our mourning into joyful trust, through Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

Blessed Agnellus of Pisa

Franciscan (1195–1236)

Agnellus, the son of a wealthy family in Pisa, was personally recruited by St. Francis to join his order. In quick succession he was entrusted with two significant missions: first, to establish a house in Paris, and then to lead the first Franciscan province in England. His commission, from the hand of Francis himself, was simple: “By the merit of wholesome obedience, I command thee to go to England and there to exercise the office of Minister Provincial. Farewell.”

In 1224, Agnellus and a small band of friars set out for Dover. They arrived without any funds. Nevertheless, their reputation having preceded them, they were warmly welcomed in Canterbury. In light of their faithfulness to the Gospel, the archbishop dubbed them affectionally “the Order of the Apostles.” From there they advanced to London and then to Cambridge and Oxford. Though Agnellus was not a learned man, he respected study, and through these houses the English province would produce some of the great scholars of the age: John Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, and Robert Grosseteste.

Agnellus was zealous in guarding the spirit of poverty. It was said that “he would never permit any ground to be enlarged or any house to be built except as inevitable necessity required.” In designing an infirmary in Oxford, he decreed that the ceiling should be no higher than a man’s height—though unfortunately this did not leave provision for any man taller than himself. Nevertheless, under his leadership the English province quickly spread and established deep roots. Agnellus died of dysentery in 1236. His feast is March 13.

“Come, sweetest Jesus.” —Last words of Blessed Agnellus of Pisa

Mass

Thursday of the First Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 5:2-3

To my words give ear, O Lord; give heed to my sighs. /
Attend to the sound of my cry, my King and my God.

COLLECT

Bestow on us, we pray, O Lord,
a spirit of always pondering on what is right
and of hastening to carry it out,
and, since without you we cannot exist,
may we be enabled to live according to your will.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Esther

C:12, 14-16, 23-25

I have no protector other than you, LORD.

Queen Esther, seized with mortal anguish, had recourse to the LORD. She lay prostrate upon the ground, together with her handmaids, from morning until evening, and said: "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, blessed are you. Help me, who am alone and have no help but you, for I am taking my life in my hand. As a child I used to hear from the books of my forefathers that you, O LORD, always free those who are pleasing to you. Now help me, who am alone and have no one but you, O LORD, my God.

"And now, come to help me, an orphan. Put in my mouth persuasive words in the presence of the lion and turn his heart to hatred for our enemy, so that he and those who are in league with him may perish. Save us from the hand of

our enemies; turn our mourning into gladness and our sorrows into wholeness.”

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8

R. (3a) Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart,
for you have heard the words of my mouth;
in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;
I will worship at your holy temple
and give thanks to your name. *R.*

Because of your kindness and your truth;
for you have made great above all things
your name and your promise.
When I called, you answered me;
you built up strength within me. *R.*

Your right hand saves me.

The LORD will complete what he has done for me;
your kindness, O LORD, endures forever;
forsake not the work of your hands. *R.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Psalms 51:12a, 14a

A clean heart create for me, O God;
give me back the joy of your salvation.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

7:7-12

Everyone who asks, receives.

Jesus said to his disciples: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door

will be opened. Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asked for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asked for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him.

“Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be merciful, O Lord, to those who approach you in supplication,
and, accepting the oblations and prayers of your people,
turn the hearts of us all towards you.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Matthew 7:8

Everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds;
/ and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We pray, O Lord our God,
that, as you have given these most sacred mysteries
to be the safeguard of our salvation,
so you may make them a healing remedy for us,
both now and in time to come.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

God's Sincere Love

I would have you know that every [good], whether perfect or imperfect, is acquired and made manifest in me. And it is acquired and made manifest by means of your neighbor. . . . If you have received my love sincerely without self-interest, you will drink your neighbor's love sincerely. It is just like a vessel that you fill at the fountain. If you take it out of the fountain to drink, the vessel is soon empty. But if you hold your vessel in the fountain while you drink, it will not get empty: indeed, it will always be full. So the love of your neighbor, whether spiritual or temporal, is meant to be drunk in me, without any self-interest.

I ask you to love me with the same love with which I love you. But for me you cannot do this, for I loved you without being loved.

. . . So your love should be sincere: You should love your neighbors with the same love with which you love me.

St. Catherine of Siena, *Passion for the Truth*

Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) was a mystic and Dominican tertiary who counseled and challenged popes and rulers. She is known for her many spiritual writings and is a Doctor of the Church.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 68:2-7, 36

Let God arise; let all foes be scattered.
Let those who hate the Lord flee from the presence.
As smoke is driven away, so drive them away;
like wax that melts before the fire,
so the wicked shall perish at the presence of God.

But the righteous shall rejoice at the presence of God;
they shall exult with glad rejoicing.
O sing to God; make music to God's name.
Extol the One who rides on the clouds,
whose name is the LORD, in whose presence we exult.

Father of orphans, defender of widows:
such is God in the holy place.
God gives the desolate a home to dwell in,
and leads the prisoners forth into prosperity,
while rebels must dwell in a parched land.

Awesome are you, O God, in your holy place,
You who are the God of Israel.
You give strength and power to your people.
Blest be God!

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 John 5:11b-15

God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever possesses the Son has life; whoever does not possess the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you so that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God. And we have this confidence in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in regard to whatever we ask, we know that what we have asked him for is ours.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Saving God, you are our constant hope. In faith we pray:

R. Heed our prayer, O God.

Advance research and treatment for cancer. **R.**

Make us wise in our use of social media. **R.**

Uphold efforts toward sustainable construction and food sourcing. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God open the door of grace for us when we knock and grant us perseverance in prayer, through Jesus our Savior. Amen.

Friday, March 14

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 69:17-19, 31-35

LORD, answer, for your love is kind;
in your abundant compassion, turn towards me.
Do not hide your face from your servant;
answer me quickly, for I am in distress.
Come close to my soul and redeem me;
ransom me because of my foes.

Then I will praise God's name with a song;
I will glorify the Lord with thanksgiving:
a gift pleasing the LORD more than oxen,
more than a bull with horns and hooves.

The poor when they see it will be glad,
and God-seeking hearts will revive;
for the LORD attends the needy,
and does not spurn those in their chains.
Let the heavens and the earth give praise to God,
the seas and everything that moves in them.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Sirach 28:2-5

Forgive your neighbor the wrong done to you; / then
when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven. / Does
anyone nourish anger against another / and expect healing
from the LORD? / Can one refuse mercy to a sinner like

oneself, / yet seek pardon for one's own sins? / If a mere mortal cherishes wrath, / who will forgive his sins?

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Everlasting God, you satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love. In hope we pray: **R.** Hear us, O God.

Give us a thirst for your life-giving Word. **R.**

Revive the bodies and spirits of those who are overwhelmed or overextended. **R.**

Support efforts to protect ecosystems in the Amazon rainforest and all places of biodiversity. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God breathe new life into us by the power of the Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

Chiara Lubich

Founder, Focolare Movement (1920–2008)

Chiara Lubich, a schoolteacher and Third Order Franciscan, was born in Trent, Italy. Her true vocation took form in 1943 under the Allied bombing of her city when she and a number of other women determined that love was the fundamental reality of life and the purpose of their existence. In the next months, while caring for victims of the war, Lubich conceived of a new movement, the Focolare (meaning “hearth”), to promote unity, reconciliation, and the spirit of love.

The message of the Focolare was simple, but it spread quickly in Italy and elsewhere in war-torn Europe. With its joyful spirit, its emphasis on the role of the laity, the promotion of Scripture, liturgical renewal, and ecumenism, it fostered the spirit of renewal that took definite shape in Vatican II. Based in small communities of both married families and single people, the Focolare eventually spread to 180 countries, promoting a unity across all borders of religion, race, and nation. Lubich was embraced by Pope John Paul II and always remained rooted in her Catholic faith, but she gladly accepted invitations to speak to Buddhist, Muslim, and Jewish audiences around the world. She died on March 14, 2008.

“What is the secret? It is that we risked our life at the beginning for a great Ideal, the greatest: God. It is that we believed in His love and then we abandoned ourselves moment by moment to His will. If we had done our own will there would have been nothing of all this today. Instead we plunged ourselves into the divine adventure.”

—Chiara Lubich

Mass

Friday of the First Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 25 (24):17-18

Set me free from my distress, O Lord. / See my lowliness and suffering, / and take away all my sins.

COLLECT

Grant that your faithful, O Lord, we pray,
may be so conformed to the paschal observances,
that the bodily discipline now solemnly begun
may bear fruit in the souls of all.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel 18:21-28

Do I derive any pleasure from the death of the wicked and not rejoice when he turns from his evil way that he may live?

Thus says the Lord GOD: If the wicked man turns away from all the sins he committed, if he keeps all my statutes and does what is right and just, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of the crimes he committed shall be remembered against him; he shall live because of the virtue he has practiced. Do I indeed derive any pleasure from the death of the wicked? says the Lord GOD. Do I not rather rejoice when he turns from his evil way that he may live?

And if the virtuous man turns from the path of virtue to do evil, the same kind of abominable things that the wicked man does, can he do this and still live? None of his virtuous deeds shall be remembered, because he has broken faith and committed sin; because of this, he shall die. You say, "The LORD's way is not fair!" Hear now, house of Israel: Is

it my way that is unfair, or rather, are not your ways unfair? When someone virtuous turns away from virtue to commit iniquity, and dies, it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must die. But if the wicked, turning from the wickedness he has committed, does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life; since he has turned away from all the sins that he committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8

R. (3) If you, O Lord, mark iniquities, who can stand?

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;

LORD, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to my voice in supplication. **R.**

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,

LORD, who can stand?

But with you is forgiveness,

that you may be revered. **R.**

I trust in the LORD;

my soul trusts in his word.

My soul waits for the LORD

more than sentinels wait for the dawn.

Let Israel wait for the LORD. **R.**

For with the LORD is kindness

and with him is plenteous redemption;

And he will redeem Israel

from all their iniquities. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Ezekiel 18:31

Cast away from you all the crimes you have committed,
says the Lord,
and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

5:20-26

Go first and be reconciled with your brother.

Jesus said to his disciples: "I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, *You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.* But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, *Raqa*, will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept the sacrificial offerings, O Lord,
by which, in your power and kindness,
you willed us to be reconciled to yourself
and our salvation to be restored.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Ezekiel 33:11

As I live, says the Lord, I do not desire the death of the sinner, / but rather that he turn back and live.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the holy refreshment of your Sacrament
restore us anew, O Lord,
and, cleansing us of old ways,
take us up into the mystery of salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Go and Reconcile

I once heard the story of a parish in a dense urban neighborhood where the pews were removed and churchgoers sat in circles of chairs facing their neighbors. At each Sunday's penitential rite, as the congregation asked God for pardon, the churchgoers looked into their neighbors' eyes—right at someone they might have annoyed with loud music or cut off in traffic during the week. That's a much more concrete experience of penitence than the "Lord, have mercy" I repeat after the priest during the liturgy, which usually feels rote and abstract.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples how important it is to repair ruptured human relationships. Even if it means postponing religious offerings, do it—go and reconcile. The church community from my story seems to have taken this passage seriously. To be honest, I don't think most of us in the comfortable, individualistic West know our neighbors or fellow parishioners well enough to have anything about which to reconcile in the first place. It takes trusting closeness

Michael Jordan Laskey is the communications director for the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States and the author of The Ministry of Peace and Justice.

[illegible]

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 22:2-12

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you far from saving me,
so far from my words of anguish?
O my God, I call by day and you do not answer;
I call by night and I find no relief.

Yet you, O God, are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
In you our ancestors put their trust;
they trusted and you set them free.
When they cried to you, they escaped;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, not even human,
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.
All who see me deride me;
they curl their lips, they shake their heads:
“You trusted in the LORD, may you now be saved,
yes, released, for in you God delights.”

Yes, it was you who took me from the womb,
kept me safe on my mother’s breast.
To you I was committed from birth;
from my mother’s womb, you have been my God.
Stay not far from me;
trouble is near, and there is no one to help.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

2 Peter 3:8-10

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard “delay,” but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

If the wicked turn away from all their sins, they shall live.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Ever-present God, your love is kind. In faith we pray:

R. God, in your compassion, hear our prayer.

Rescue those who are in danger. **R.**

Awaken us to your Spirit. **R.**

Help us ensure that mothers and infants receive maternal and neonatal care. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God make us ready to receive the graces we need to live in wisdom and love, through Jesus, our saving hope. Amen.

Saturday, March 15

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 121

I lift up my eyes to the mountains;
from where shall come my help?
My help shall come from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

The Lord will keep your foot from stumbling.
Your guard will never slumber.
No, the guardian of Israel
neither sleeps nor slumbers.

The LORD your guard, the LORD your shade
at your right hand.
By day the sun shall not smite you,
nor the moon in the night.

The LORD will guard you from evil,
will guard your soul.
The LORD will guard your going and coming,
both now and forever.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 8:56-58, 60

Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, just as he promised. Not a single word has gone unfulfilled of the entire gracious promise he made through Moses his servant. May the LORD, our God, be with us as

he was with our ancestors and may he not forsake us nor cast us off. May he draw our hearts to himself, that we may walk in his ways and keep the commands, statutes, and ordinances that he enjoined on our ancestors, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and there is no other.”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

You will be a people holy to the Lord our God as God has promised.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of heaven and earth, you guard us forever. In trust we pray: *R/*. God, in your wisdom, hear our prayer.

Deepen love and understanding between engaged and newly married couples, and help them find support. *R/*.

Protect those who work in jobs that are dangerous or tedious. *R/*.

Imbue judges with integrity, fairness, and a passion for justice. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May God bless us and guard our coming and going, now and always, through Jesus our Shepherd. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Louise de Marillac

Cofounder, Daughters of Charity (1591–1660)

Following the death of her father when she was fifteen, Louise de Marillac agreed to marry a wealthy courtier in the household of the French queen. She was a happy wife and mother, but when her husband died she vowed she would devote the rest of her life to the service of God. After some years searching for her vocation, she was introduced to Fr. Vincent de Paul, who became her spiritual director and with whom she went on to form one of the great partnerships in the history of religious life.

Monsieur Vincent, as he was called, was widely known for the extraordinary range of his charitable projects. These included a circle of aristocratic ladies who joined him to work in the Parisian slums among the sick and destitute. Louise committed herself to this work. But soon they formed the notion of a community of women completely committed to loving service among the poor. Thus were born the Daughters of Charity. Rome's recognition of a congregation of women living outside an enclosed convent and engaged in apostolic work in the world was a novel achievement. In their spiritual formation the sisters were constantly reminded that the poor were their masters. She admonished her sisters to be "diligent in serving the poor . . . to love the poor, honor them, my children, as you would honor Christ himself."

Louise died on March 15, 1660, followed six months later by Vincent. By the time of her canonization in 1934, the Daughters of Charity numbered more than 50,000 worldwide.

"[A Daughter of Charity] is well aware that we are leaving God for God if we leave one of our spiritual exercises for the service of the poor."

—St Louise de Marillac

Mass

Saturday of the First Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 19 (18):8

The law of the Lord is perfect; it revives the soul. / The decrees of the Lord are steadfast; they give wisdom to the simple.

COLLECT

Turn our hearts to you, eternal Father,
and grant that, seeking always the one thing necessary
and carrying out works of charity,
we may be dedicated to your worship.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

26:16-19

You will be a people sacred to the LORD God.

Moses spoke to the people, saying: "This day the LORD, your God, commands you to observe these statutes and decrees. Be careful, then, to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. Today you are making this agreement with the LORD: he is to be your God and you are to walk in his ways and observe his statutes, commandments and decrees, and to hearken to his voice. And today the LORD is making this agreement with you: you are to be a people peculiarly his own, as he promised you; and provided you keep all his commandments, he will then raise you high in praise and renown and glory above all other nations he has made, and you will be a people sacred to the LORD, your God, as he promised."

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8

R. (1b) Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

Blessed are they whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD.

Blessed are they who observe his decrees,
who seek him with all their heart. **R.**

You have commanded that your precepts
be diligently kept.

Oh, that I might be firm in the ways
of keeping your statutes! **R.**

I will give you thanks with an upright heart,
when I have learned your just ordinances.

I will keep your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

2 Corinthians 6:2b

Behold, now is a very acceptable time;
behold, now is the day of salvation.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

5:43-48

Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Jesus said to his disciples: "You have heard that it was said, *You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.* But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers and sisters only, what is unusual about that? Do

not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May these blessed mysteries
by which we are restored, O Lord, we pray,
make us worthy of the gift they bestow.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Matthew 5:48

Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect, says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Show unceasing favor, O Lord,
to those you refresh with this divine mystery,
and accompany with salutary consolations
those you have imbued with heavenly teaching.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

The Divine Heart

I'm glad Jesus did not say, "*Like* your enemies." Liking someone involves feeling a positive attraction and enjoyment about them. Not everyone presents appealing qualities, and some are unsafe persons who [can] hurt us if we allow them into our lives. The surface qualities and destructive behaviors of certain individuals disturb my equanimity. Their actions plummet my heart into caution and fear. I cannot manage *liking* these people, nor do I have to do so. But I *can* love them because

divine love insists that I not despise them nor deliberately wish them any injury. The Way requires me to believe in the core goodness at the heart of those who exist as enemies—persons or groups whose actions deliberately attempt to harm others or myself.

[Scripture scholar] Clarence Jordan puts it this way: “Don’t tell me Jesus didn’t know about enemies that were bad and unlovable. He knew them quite well. He knew what they’d do to you. He knew they’d come out and hang you on a cross if you loved ‘em. But he still says you’re going to have to love them.” That certainly sums up the difficult obligation to love our enemies. So when I feel disturbed, angry, or fearful about those who act unjustly or with cruelty, I can turn toward the deep well of love where Jesus assures us we each find a home in the divine heart.

Joyce Rupp, *Jesus, Guide of My Life*

Joyce Rupp is a writer, international retreat leader, and conference speaker. She is the author of numerous bestselling books, including Praying Our Goodbyes, Open the Door, and Fly While You Still Have Wings.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 48:9-15

As we have heard, so we have seen
in the city of our God,
in the city of the LORD of hosts,
which God establishes forever.

Your faithful love, O God,
we ponder in your temple.
Your praise, O God, like your name,
reaches the ends of the earth.

Your right hand is filled with saving justice.
Mount Zion rejoices.
The daughters of Judah rejoice
at the sight of your judgments.

Walk through Zion, walk all around her;
count the number of her towers.
Consider all her ramparts;
examine her castles,

That you may tell the next generation
that such is our God,
Our God forever and always,
who will guide us forever.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:35-39

What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? As it is written: / “For your sake we are being slain all the day; / we are looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered.” / No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Let us love one another as Christ has loved us.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of unconditional love, you are just and forever kind. In faith we pray: *R.* Deliver us into your hands, O God.

Protect innocent people caught in war and political violence. *R.*

Rejoin hostages with their loved ones. *R.*

Give light, joy, and peace to those who are near death. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God give us blessings that last forever and be always near to us, through Jesus our brother. Amen.



Ис

Ис

ПЕРЕ
ОБРА
ЖЕНА

Sunday, March 16

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 96:1-6, 8b-10

O sing a new song to the LORD;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
O sing to the LORD; bless God's name.
Proclaim divine salvation day by day.
Tell among the nations God's glory,
divine wonders among all the peoples.

For the LORD is great and highly to be praised,
to be feared above all gods.
For the idols of the nations are naught.
It was the LORD who made the heavens.
Greatness and splendor abound in God's presence,
strength and honor in the holy place.

Bring an offering and enter God's courts;
worship the LORD in holy splendor.
O tremble before God, all the earth.

Say to the nations, "The LORD is king,"
who made firm the world in its place,
and who will judge the peoples in fairness.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 Maccabees 2:51-52, 58, 64

Remember the deeds that our ancestors did in their times, / and you shall win great honor and an everlasting name. / Was not Abraham found faithful in trial, / and it was credited to him as righteousness? / Elijah, for his burning zeal for the law, / was taken up to heaven. / Children! be courageous and strong in keeping the law, / for by it you shall be honored.”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

If we would be Abraham's heirs we must have Abraham's faith.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Sovereign God, you rule with mercy. In hope we pray:

R. God of love, hear our prayer.

You will to establish everything in Christ: strengthen the elect and seal them with your Spirit. **R.**

Greatness and splendor abound in your presence: awaken us to the beauty and responsibility of our Christian faith. **R.**

You make us heirs of Abraham's faith: help us appreciate catechists, pastors, and all who nurture faith in us. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God deepen our faith, hope, and love in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Mass

Second Sunday of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 27 (26):8-9

Of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face. / It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; / hide not your face from me.

Or:

Cf. Psalm 25 (24):6, 2, 22

Remember your compassion, O Lord, / and your merciful love, for they are from of old. / Let not our enemies exult over us. / Redeem us, O God of Israel, from all our distress.

(The Gloria is omitted.)

COLLECT

O God, who have commanded us
to listen to your beloved Son,
be pleased, we pray,
to nourish us inwardly by your word,
that, with spiritual sight made pure,
we may rejoice to behold your glory.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Genesis

15:5-12, 17-18

God made a covenant with Abraham, his faithful servant.

The Lord God took Abram outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so," he added, "shall your descendants be." Abram put his faith in the LORD, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.

He then said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as a possession." "O Lord God," he asked, "how am I to know that I shall possess it?" He answered him, "Bring me a three-year-old

heifer, a three-year-old she-goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” Abram brought him all these, split them in two, and placed each half opposite the other; but the birds he did not cut up. Birds of prey swooped down on the carcasses, but Abram stayed with them. As the sun was about to set, a trance fell upon Abram, and a deep, terrifying darkness enveloped him.

When the sun had set and it was dark, there appeared a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch, which passed between those pieces. It was on that occasion that the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Great River, the Euphrates.”

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14

R. (1a) The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid? **R.**

Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call;
have pity on me, and answer me.
Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks. **R.**

Your presence, O LORD, I seek.
Hide not your face from me;
do not in anger repel your servant.
You are my helper: cast me not off. **R.**

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD with courage;
be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD. **R.**

**A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul
to the Philippians**

3:17–4:1 (Shorter Form [], 3:20–4:1)

*Christ will change our lowly body to conform
with his glorified body.*

Join with others in being imitators of me, [brothers and sisters,] and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us. For many, as I have often told you and now tell you even in tears, conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction. Their God is their stomach; their glory is in their “shame.” Their minds are occupied with earthly things. But [our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, beloved].

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Cf. Matthew 17:5

From the shining cloud the Father’s voice is heard:
This is my beloved Son, hear him.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 9:28b–36

*While he was praying his face changed in appearance
and his clothing became dazzling white.*

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter

and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

The Gospel of the Lord.

CREED (p. 340)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May this sacrifice, O Lord, we pray,
 cleanse us of our faults
 and sanctify your faithful in body and mind
 for the celebration of the paschal festivities.
 Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Matthew 17:5

This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; /
 listen to him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we receive these glorious mysteries,
 we make thanksgiving to you, O Lord,
 for allowing us while still on earth
 to be partakers even now of the things of heaven.
 Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Jesus: Wired for Connection

We typically understand the Transfiguration as a moment when Jesus revealed his divinity. But I think, paradoxically, that the Transfiguration also powerfully reveals his *humanity*, his human need for connection.

Consider the sequence: Jesus has just miraculously fed the five thousand. So the people know he's someone special, but they're confused about who he is and what he's come for. Shortly afterward, he asks his disciples in private who people are saying he is. They offer various possibilities—the Baptist, Elijah, another prophet. It's Peter who gets it: "You are the Christ of God." Jesus tells them there are hard days ahead, but they don't understand, don't seem to be listening.

You can sense his frustration, his very human desire to have someone, even just his three closest friends, know him for who he really is. Don't we all long for that—to be loved, yes, but also to be fully known? So he takes them well away from the others, and his true identity just bursts from him. He shows them because he can't *not* show them. His true self simply springs forth in the intensity and urgency of his longing for human connection.

He still longs for connection with us, for intimacy, which requires both knowing and loving. One without the other is either rejection or a sham. This Lent, let's take time to draw closer to the One who loves us infinitely more than we can imagine or even desire.

Susan Pitchford

Susan Pitchford is a retired sociologist and a Third Order Franciscan. She is the author of The Sacred Gaze, God in the Dark, and Following Francis. She is a frequent speaker and retreat leader, and the Guardian for Lifelong Faith Formation for the Third Order, Society of St. Francis' Province of the Americas.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 23

The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where you give me repose.
Near restful waters you lead me;
to revive my soul.

You guide me along the right path,
for the sake of your name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort.

You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the LORD's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-6

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing
in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation

of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Our citizenship is in heaven.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Shepherding God, you provide us with all we need. In trust we pray: **R/**. God, in your kindness, grant us grace.

Safeguard those who live in the midst of war or political conflict. **R/**.

Support single parents. **R/**.

Prosper efforts to prevent drug overdose and opioid addiction. **R/**.

Our Father . . .

May God show us mercy and kindness and grant us salvation, through Jesus the Beloved. Amen.

March 16–22

Second Week of Lent

Within the Word

Covenant

Sunday's first reading invites us to reflect on two conversations between God and Abram, whose name God later changed to Abraham. In these conversations, God makes two significant promises to Abram. God promises him, a childless husband, as many descendants as the stars in the sky. This promise follows Abram's numerous pleas for descendants, a serious necessity for the survival of ancient people. In addition, God promises a significant parcel of land to this leader of an itinerant people. God replies to Abram's puzzled question with instructions that highlight the seriousness of God's promises. Then the passage specifies, "The LORD made a covenant with Abram."

The word "covenant" appears frequently in the Bible, indicating the formal relationship between God and the chosen people. We find the theme in stories, metaphors, and formal lessons that highlight the relationship between God and all the Chosen People—all of us. Several of these references appear in the Liturgy of the Word during this Second Week of Lent. In Monday's first reading (Daniel 9:4b-12), Daniel acknowledges that the people have sinned in disobeying the covenant (the Commandments). Daniel prays gratefully, "But yours, O Lord, our God, are compassion and forgiveness!" In the responsorial psalm we pray, "Then we, your people and the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever" (Psalm 79:13), highlighting our dependence on God our caregiver.

On Wednesday, the feast of St. Joseph, we are reminded that God cares for the king, who in turn leads the people. We find in the first reading (2 Samuel 7:4-51, 12-14a, 16) God's

request to the prophet Nathan to remind King David of the terms of covenant: “I will raise up your heir after you . . . and I will make his kingdom firm.” And in the responsorial psalm (89:4, 29) we find “I have made a covenant with my chosen one . . . and my covenant with him stands firm.” The second reading (Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22) reiterates God’s promise, “I have made you father of many nations.” God supports King David in his efforts to lead the people.

The first reading on Thursday reminds us, “Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose hope is the LORD” (Jeremiah 17:5-10), and the responsorial psalm (1:1-4, 6) contrasts people who are faithful with the unfaithful ones.

On Friday we read about the complicated relationship among Joseph, his brothers, and their father Jacob (Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a). In the Gospel acclamation (John 3:16) we pray, “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son; so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.”

Saturday’s first reading (Micah 7:14-15, 18-20) repeats the shepherd theme, referring to “the flock of your inheritance”; and the Gospel describes another complicated family relationship in the story of the prodigal son (Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46), highlighting the father-son relationship: the father reminds his jealous son, “We must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.” These and all the readings for this week offer food for reflection and invite us to deepen our understanding of our covenant relationship with God.

—Sr. Joan E. Cook

Joan E. Cook, SC, a Scripture scholar and a past president of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, writes about how the Bible speaks to us in the twenty-first century. She has written several works on Hannah and Samuel, and is the author of the Genesis volume in the New Collegeville Bible Commentary.

Monday, March 17

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 61

Listen, O God, to my cry!

Attend to my prayer!

From the end of the earth I call you;
my heart is faint.

Set me high upon the rock
too high for me to reach,
you, my refuge and mighty tower
against the foe.

Then will I dwell in your tent forever,
and hide in the shelter of your wings.
For you, O God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage
of those who fear your name.

Day upon day you will add to the king;
his years as age upon age.
May he ever sit enthroned before God:
bid mercy and truth be his protection.
So I will sing to your name forever,
and day after day fulfill my vows.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 8:46a, 47b, 49-50a, 51a

When [your people] sin against you (for there is no one who does not sin), and in your anger against them you deliver them to an enemy and they turn and entreat you in the land of their captors and say, ‘We have sinned and done wrong; we have been wicked’; listen in heaven, your dwelling place, to their prayer and petition, and uphold their cause. Forgive your people who have sinned against you and all the offenses they have committed against you. For they are your people and your heritage.”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

To you, O Lord, belong compassion and forgiveness.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Gracious God, your name stands forever. In company with St. Patrick we pray: *R/*. Accomplish your will in us, O God.

Let your Word bring forth a harvest of peace and unity in Ireland. *R/*.

Inspire catechists, parents, pastors, and all who nurture the faith of the young. *R/*.

Animate efforts to assist those who hunger or suffer from drought and famine. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May Christ be before us, behind us, within us, and around us, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Patrick

Apostle to Ireland (389–461)

St. Patrick is remembered for his role in implanting the Church in Ireland. But his first introduction to Ireland was involuntary. At the age of sixteen he was kidnapped from his village in Roman Britain and taken to Ireland as a slave. Sold to a local king, he spent six years in menial occupations. His life was not valued more highly than the beasts he tended.

All the while he clung to his Christian faith and dreamed of home. Eventually, an opportunity arose for him to escape, and he made his way back home. But he had changed. Apart from the scars of his ordeal, he bore the zeal of a profound faith. He believed his sufferings and deliverance had been ordained for some purpose.

After studying for the priesthood in Gaul, he had a dream in which Irish voices, the voices of those who had stolen his youth, cried out for him to return. In 432, by now a bishop, he returned to the land of his oppressors to devote himself to their salvation.

Patrick's thirty years as a wandering bishop are the stuff of legend. He is justly honored as the patron of Ireland. But it is well to remember that Patrick was the victim of Irish injustice before he became the symbol of Irish pride. His extraordinary return to the site of his oppression—not to wreak vengeance but to implant the reconciling seeds of his own hard-won faith—deserves commemoration. His spiritual conquest of Ireland followed the prior victory of love over the anger and bitterness in his own heart.

“Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me.”

—St. Patrick

Mass

Monday of the Second Week of Lent

[*St. Patrick, opt. memorial*]

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 26 (25):11-12

Redeem me, O Lord, and have mercy on me. / My foot stands on level ground; / I will bless the Lord in the assembly.

COLLECT

O God, who have taught us
to chasten our bodies
for the healing of our souls,
enable us, we pray,
to abstain from all sins,
and strengthen our hearts
to carry out your loving commands.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel 9:4b-10

We have sinned, been wicked and done evil.

Lord, great and awesome God, you who keep your merciful covenant toward those who love you and observe your commandments! We have sinned, been wicked and done evil; we have rebelled and departed from your commandments and your laws. We have not obeyed your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers, and all the people of the land. Justice, O Lord, is on your side; we are shamefaced even to this day: we, the men of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, and all Israel, near and far, in all the countries to which you have scattered

them because of their treachery toward you. O LORD, we are shamefaced, like our kings, our princes, and our fathers, for having sinned against you. But yours, O Lord, our God, are compassion and forgiveness! Yet we rebelled against you and paid no heed to your command, O LORD, our God, to live by the law you gave us through your servants the prophets.”

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

79:8, 9, 11 and 13

R/. (see 103:10a) Lord, do not deal with us according to our sins.

Remember not against us the iniquities of the past;
may your compassion quickly come to us,
for we are brought very low. **R/.**

Help us, O God our savior,
because of the glory of your name;
Deliver us and pardon our sins
for your name's sake. **R/.**

Let the prisoners' sighing come before you;
with your great power free those doomed to death.
Then we, your people and the sheep of your pasture,
will give thanks to you forever;
through all generations we will declare your praise. **R/.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

See John 6:63c, 68c

Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life;
you have the words of everlasting life.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 6:36-38

Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Jesus said to his disciples: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept in your goodness these our prayers, O Lord,
and set free from worldly attractions
those you allow to serve the heavenly mysteries.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Luke 6:36

Be merciful, as your Father is merciful, says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this Communion, O Lord,
cleanse us of wrongdoing
and make us heirs to the joy of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

The Light of Spiritual Grace

[Jesus] saw a publican, and because as he saw [him], he felt compassion for him and chose him, he said to him ‘Follow me.’ By ‘follow’ he meant imitate; by ‘follow’ he meant not so much the movement of feet as the carrying out of a way of life. For one who says that he abides in Christ ought himself to walk just as he walked . . .

And he arose and followed him. We should not marvel that a publican, upon first [hearing] the Lord’s voice ordering him, left the earthly gains that he cared about. Disregarding his property, he attached himself to the band of followers of one whom he perceived to have no riches. For the Lord himself, who outwardly called him by a word, taught him inwardly with an invisible impulse so that he followed [him]. He poured into his mind the light of spiritual grace, by which he could understand that the one who was calling him from temporal things on earth was capable of giving him incorruptible treasures in heaven.

He arose and followed him. He arose in order to follow. He dismissed the perishable things in which he was involved in order to secure the eternal things to which Truth was inviting him . . . *Arise, you who are asleep, and rise from among the dead, and Christ will enlighten you.*

St. Bede the Venerable, *Homilies on the Gospels, Book One*

Bede the Venerable (ca. 673–735) devoted his life to the study of Scripture, to teaching and writing, and to prayer. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1899.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 43

Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause
against a nation that is faithless.
From those who are deceitful and cunning
rescue me, O God.

You, O God, are my strength;
why have you rejected me?
Why do I go mourning,
oppressed by the foe?

O send forth your light and your truth;
they will guide me on.
They will bring me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you dwell.

And I will come to the altar of God,
to God, my joy and gladness.
To you will I give thanks on the harp,
O God, my God.

Why are you cast down, my soul;
why groan within me?
Hope in God, whom I will praise yet again,
my saving presence and my God.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

James 2:12-17

So speak and so act as people who will be judged by the law of freedom. For the judgment is merciless to one who has not shown mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

What good is it . . . if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

The measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of the covenant, we rejoice in your saving power throughout human history. With longing we pray: *R.* Let us see your mercy, O God.

For those who are unable to worship with their faith community, we pray: *R.*

For those who seek forgiveness, we pray: *R.*

For those who struggle financially, we pray: *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God guide us by the light of truth and lead us to the fullness of joy in Christ Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

Tuesday, March 18

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 84:2-8

How lovely is your dwelling place,
O LORD of hosts.

My soul is longing and yearning
for the courts of the LORD.

My heart and my flesh cry out
to the living God.

Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself
in which she sets her young, at your altars,
O LORD of hosts, my king and my God.

Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
forever singing your praise.

Blessed the people whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on the pilgrimage.

As they go through the Baca Valley,
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rain covers it with pools.
They walk with ever-growing strength;
the God of gods will appear in Zion.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 10:12, 17-19

Now, therefore, Israel, what does the LORD, your God,
ask of you but to fear the LORD, your God, to follow in

all his ways, to love and serve the LORD, your God, with your whole heart and with your whole being. For the LORD, your God, is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who has no favorites, accepts no bribes, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving them food and clothing. So you too should love the resident alien, for that is what you were in the land of Egypt.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Make justice your aim: hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Sheltering God, we find life in your presence. In trust we pray: *R.* God, in your goodness, hear our prayer.

Strengthen caregivers of family members and loved ones with mental illness. *R.*

Defend women and children who are trapped in oppressive regimes. *R.*

Advance fruitful dialogue and respect among Christians, Muslims, and Jews. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God fix our hearts on eternal treasures and strengthen us for our life of faith, through Jesus, the Love of God. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Salvador of Horta

Franciscan Friar (1520–1567)

Salvador was born to a poor family in Spain. After the death of his parents when he was a child, he moved with his sister to Barcelona, where he supported them both as a shoemaker. At the age of twenty, after a brief stint in a Benedictine monastery, he entered the Franciscan Order. He made his profession of vows in 1542 and was assigned to a series of humble tasks as a cook, porter, or beggar.

It was in his capacity as beggar that he particularly distinguished himself. In addition to the blessings he bestowed, it was found that he might also confer miraculous healings. As a result, his reputation spread, and soon large crowds began flocking to the friary, demanding to see Brother Salvador. His superiors, alarmed by this attention, sent Salvador under a different name to a distant community near the town of Horta. There he remained for the next twelve years. Yet the same thing happened. Gradually, enormous crowds—as many as 2,000 pilgrims every week—found their way to the friary.

At one point, reports of miraculous happenings at the friary prompted an investigation by the Inquisition, though the matter was concluded without further action. Instead, he was merely transferred to other friaries in Reus, Madrid (where even King Phillip II came to see him), back to Barcelona, and finally to Sardinia, where he died in 1567 at the age of forty-six. He was canonized in 1938.

“I am but a sack of straw, whose value remains the same whether it be in the attic, or in the basement, or in the stable.”

—St. Salvador of Horta

Mass

Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent

[*St. Cyril of Jerusalem, opt. memorial*]

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 13 (12):4-5

Give light to my eyes lest I fall asleep in death, / lest my enemy say: I have overcome him.

COLLECT

Guard your Church, we pray, O Lord, in your unceasing mercy,

and, since without you mortal humanity is sure to fall, may we be kept by your constant helps from all harm and directed to all that brings salvation.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 1:10, 16-20

Learn to do good; make justice your aim.

Hear the word of the LORD, / princes of Sodom! / Listen to the instruction of our God, / people of Gomorrah!

Wash yourselves clean! / Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; / cease doing evil; learn to do good. / Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, / hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.

Come now, let us set things right, / says the LORD: / Though your sins be like scarlet, / they may become white as snow; / Though they be crimson red, / they may become white as wool. / If you are willing, and obey, / you shall eat the good things of the land; / But if you refuse and resist, /

the sword shall consume you: / for the mouth of the LORD
has spoken!

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21 and 23

R. (23b) To the upright I will show the saving power of God.

“Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you,
for your burnt offerings are before me always.
I take from your house no bullock,
no goats out of your fold.” **R.**

“Why do you recite my statutes,
and profess my covenant with your mouth,
Though you hate discipline
and cast my words behind you?” **R.**

“When you do these things, shall I be deaf to it?
Or do you think that I am like yourself?
I will correct you by drawing them up before your eyes.
He that offers praise as a sacrifice glorifies me;
and to him that goes the right way I will show the
salvation of God.” **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Ezekiel 18:31

Cast away from you all the crimes you have committed,
says the Lord,
and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

23:1-12

They preach but they do not practice.

Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying,
“The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on
the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things

whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.' As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased to work your sanctification within us
by means of these mysteries, O Lord,
and by it may we be cleansed of earthly faults
and led to the gifts of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Psalm 9:2-3

I will recount all your wonders. / I will rejoice in you and
be glad, / and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the refreshment of this sacred table,
O Lord, we pray,
bring us an increase in devoutness of life
and the constant help of your work of conciliation.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Whom Are You Following?

In Jesus' time, following someone meant proximity. Sitting at the feet of the master had both a physical and a metaphorical meaning, for the only way one could learn was to listen to and hear what a teacher had to say. In the case of an itinerant teacher, that suggested walking along, traveling the same path, living according to the teacher's ways.

"Following" has taken on a particular meaning in our cultural context today. I can follow people on different social media platforms regardless of our strength of connection. They might be my close kin or people I have never met. To the degree I allow, they influence how I live. While their titles might not be that of scribes or pharisees (and they might lack the kind of authority accorded those Jewish leaders), influencers, celebrities, and idols function similarly in our culture and can also shape my choices and way of life. To the degree I allow.

Jesus instructs the disciples to "do and observe all things" the religious authorities tell them. However, he sets a limit: the crowds and disciples are not to follow the example set by these authorities, for their words and actions are weighing down lives rather than building up community. Whatever they do, they do it for show, for pride and ego—all that is antithetical to followers of Christ.

Jesus' warning to the disciples applies to us, as well. During this Lent, we have an opportunity to examine to what degree we follow someone other than Christ.

Agnes M. Kovacs

Agnes M. Kovacs is a religious educator, workshop leader, and author who works at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 119:89-96

Forever is your word, O LORD,
standing firm in the heavens.
From age to age is your truth;
like the earth, it stands firm.

Your judgments endure to this day,
for all things are your servants.
Had your law not been my delight,
I would have died in my affliction.

I will never forget your precepts,
for with them you give me life.
Save me, I am yours,
for I seek your precepts.

Though the wicked lie in wait to destroy me,
yet I ponder your decrees.
I have seen that all perfection has an end,
but your command is boundless.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 John 3:17-20, 23

If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need
and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God
remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech
but in deed and truth.

[Now] this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

The greatest among you must be your servant.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Holy God, you alone are worthy of honor and glory and praise. We humbly pray: *R/*. Teach us your ways of love, O God.

Prosper efforts to secure affordable and safe housing for all people. *R/*.

Help us to support those who grieve or struggle to recover from the pandemic. *R/*.

Strengthen leaders in integrity and truth. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May the Word of God be on our lips and in our hearts, through Jesus, the Living Son of God. Amen.

Wednesday, March 19

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 112:1b-9

Blessed are those who fear the LORD,
who take great delight in God's commands.
Their descendants shall be powerful on earth;
the generation of the upright will be blest.

Riches and wealth are in their houses;
their righteousness stands firm forever.
A light rises in the darkness for the upright;
they are generous, loving and righteous.

It goes well for those who deal generously and lend,
who conduct their affairs with justice.
They will never be moved;
forever shall the righteous be remembered.

They have no fear of evil news;
with a firm heart, they trust in the LORD.
With steadfast hearts they will not fear;
they will see the downfall of their foes.

Openhanded, they give to the poor;
their righteousness stands firm forever.
Their might shall be exalted in glory.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Sirach 14:20; 15:1-4, 6

Happy those who meditate on Wisdom, / and fix their
gaze on knowledge.

Whoever fears the LORD will do this; / whoever is practiced in the Law will come to Wisdom. / She will meet him like a mother; / like a young bride she will receive him, / She will feed him with the bread of learning, / and give him the water of understanding to drink. / He will lean upon her and not fall; / he will trust in her and not be put to shame. / Joy and gladness he will find, / and an everlasting name he will inherit.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

His faith was credited to him as righteousness.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Holy Wisdom, we stand in the company of your humble and faith-filled servant Joseph and pray: *R.* Make us steadfast in your love, O God.

Advance your Church's efforts to advocate for justice and care for the earth. *R.*

Give gladness and joy to parents, guardians, and all who place their trust in you. *R.*

Help us to appreciate the cycle of life, death, and rebirth present in all of creation. *R.*

Our Father . . .

Through the intercession of St. Joseph, husband of Mary, may God strengthen us in our vocation to love in Jesus' name. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Joseph

(First Century)

St. Joseph's part in the nativity story is a familiar feature of every Christmas pageant. But for many centuries the Church paid him scant attention. Only in the sixteenth century did the Church officially encourage his cult, as he began to figure as an ideal "provider and protector" of the Holy Family. In 1870, Pius IX declared him Patron of the Universal Church. Besides his feast day on March 19, an additional feast for St. Joseph the Worker was assigned by Pope Pius XII on May 1.

After Joseph and Mary were betrothed, Mary was discovered to be pregnant. Matthew's Gospel relates the story from Joseph's perspective. Here, the discovery of Mary's pregnancy precedes any divine reassurance, thus presenting Joseph with a terrible dilemma. According to the law, Mary should be stoned to death. But Joseph, "being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame," resolves to divorce her quietly. Fortunately, an angel appears in Joseph's sleep to explain the source of Mary's condition, and he is apparently satisfied. After Jesus' birth, Joseph is alerted in another dream to the threat from King Herod, and so leads his family to safety in Egypt, returning to Israel only following assurance in a dream that "those who sought the child's life are dead."

Aside from his virtues as a father and man of faith, Joseph is also a poor workingman—a detail not without significance in the Gospels. Though linked to the house of David, he remains a carpenter from a Galilean town so miniscule that it serves as the butt of jokes. Thus, while Joseph recedes from the Gospel story, he remains a reminder of Jesus' humble origins—and an enduring reminder of his humanity.

"Is this not the carpenter's son?"

—Matthew 13:55

Mass

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

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Luke 12:42

Behold, a faithful and prudent steward, / whom the Lord set over his household.

GLORIA (p. 339)

COLLECT

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that by Saint Joseph's intercession
your Church may constantly watch over
the unfolding of the mysteries of human salvation,
whose beginnings you entrusted to his faithful care.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the second Book of Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16

*The Lord God will give him the throne of David, his father
(Luke 1:32).*

The LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'When your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. It is he who shall build a house for my name. And I will make his royal throne firm forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever.'"
The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29

R. (37) The son of David will live for ever.

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever;
through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your
faithfulness,

For you have said, "My kindness is established forever";
in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness. **R.**

"I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant:
Forever will I confirm your posterity
and establish your throne for all generations." **R.**

"He shall say of me, 'You are my father,
my God, the Rock, my savior.'
Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him,
and my covenant with him stands firm." **R.**

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

4:13, 16-18, 22

Abraham believed, hoping against hope.

Brothers and sisters: It was not through the law that the promise was made to Abraham and his descendants that he would inherit the world, but through the righteousness that comes from faith. For this reason, it depends on faith, so that it may be a gift, and the promise may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not to those who only adhere to the law but to those who follow the faith of Abraham, who is the father of all of us, as it is written, *I have made you father of many nations*. He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into being what does not exist. He believed, hoping against hope, that he would become *the father of many nations*, according

to what was said, *Thus shall your descendants be.* That is why *it was credited to him as righteousness.*

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Psalm 84:5

Blessed are those who dwell in your house, O Lord;
they never cease to praise you.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

1:16, 18-21, 24a (alt. Luke 2:41-51a)

Joseph did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him.

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ.

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. The Gospel of the Lord.

CREED (p. 340)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We pray, O Lord,
that, just as Saint Joseph served with loving care
your Only Begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary,
so we may be worthy to minister
with a pure heart at your altar.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Matthew 25:21

Well done, good and faithful servant. / Come, share your
master's joy.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Defend with unfailing protection,
O Lord, we pray,
the family you have nourished
with food from this altar,
as they rejoice at the Solemnity of Saint Joseph,
and graciously keep safe your gifts among them.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Spontaneous Love

In a talk on generosity, I once heard a teacher say that if you have the impulse to do something good, you should do it immediately; don't think about it or dawdle, but act on that compulsion of kindness. I've thought of this often when such an impulse arises, and sometimes have acted. Too often, though, doubt or insecurity arises, and the chance to help another person sadly passes by.

That energy of spontaneous love is what comes to mind when I reflect on the immediacy of Joseph's response to his dream. Part of me wants to imagine that before getting out of bed, Joseph lay in bed reflecting, "Did that really happen? Is that correct—it should be Jesus?" However, based on the scriptures, Joseph pops out of bed to quickly tell Mary of his decision.

Only a few of us will ever receive such a clear directive from God. However, all of us are receiving messages, perhaps subtle, to do God's will. Inspired by Joseph, can we respond wholeheartedly when God is calling us to act, however small or big? Perhaps to offer a prayer, say a kind word to a stranger, or give ourselves a break.

Like Joseph, these small matters might be preparing us for a bigger ask that could change the course of history. Or not. As St. Mother Teresa once said, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." And for God, this is enough.

Christina Leaña

Christina Leaña is a retreat and spiritual director and staff member of the Laudato Si' Movement. Her interest lies in the intersection of contemplative spirituality and social and ecological justice. christinaleano.net.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 111:1b-2, 5-10

I will thank the LORD with all my heart,
in the meeting of the just and the assembly.
Great are the works of the LORD,
to be pondered by all who delight in them.

You give food to those who revere you;
you are mindful of your covenant forever.
You have shown mighty works to your people
by giving them the heritage of nations.

Your handiwork is justice and truth,
your precepts are all of them sure,
standing firm forever and ever,
wrought in uprightness and truth.

You have sent redemption to your people,
and established your covenant forever.
Holy your name, to be feared.

Fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
understanding marks all who live by it.
Your praise endures forever!

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:28-30

We know that all things work for good for those who
love God, who are called according to his purpose.
For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed

to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Great are the works of the Lord, to be pondered by all who delight in them.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of love, you entrusted Jesus to the care of Joseph and Mary. In hope we pray: *R.* Guide us by your truth, O God.

Inspire the work of carpenters, architects, and engineers. *R.*

Fortify the faith of the elect, their sponsors, and catechists. *R.*

Strengthen the bonds of love in families and between friends. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God fill us with peace and, at our life's ending, grant us a happy death, through Jesus our brother. Amen.

Thursday, March 20

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 108:2-7

My heart is ready, O God;
my heart is ready.
I will sing, I will sing your praise.
Awake, my soul;
Awake, O lyre and harp.
I will awake the dawn.

I will praise you, LORD, among the peoples;
I will sing psalms to you among the nations,
for your faithful love is higher than the heavens,
and your truth reaches the skies.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
may your glory shine on all the earth!
With your right hand, grant salvation and give answer;
O come and deliver your friends.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 12:1-4

On that day, you will say: / I give you thanks, O LORD; /
though you have been angry with me, / your anger has
abated, and you have consoled me. / God indeed is my sal-
vation; / I am confident and unafraid. / For the LORD is my
strength and my might, / and he has been my salvation. /
With joy you will draw water / from the fountains of salva-

tion, / And you will say on that day: / give thanks to the LORD, acclaim his name; / Among the nations make known his deeds, / proclaim how exalted is his name.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Mighty God, your great works are cause for our joy. In faith we pray: **R.** God, grant us salvation.

Awaken us to promises of spring, and help us to see your glory in all creation. **R.**

Deliver those who are surrounded by war, poverty, or disease. **R.**

Comfort and console those who experience grief, betrayal, or grave disappointment. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God show us mercy and love and lead us to eternal happiness in Jesus, the Wisdom of God. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Maria Josefa de Guerra

Founder, Institute of the Servants of Jesus

(1842–1912)

Maria Josefa de Guerra was born in Vitoria, Spain, the daughter of a chairmaker who died when she was seven. As she later liked to say, she was “born with a religious vocation.” But she struggled for some time to find her way, trying one congregation and then another. Before taking vows with the Handmaids of Mary Serving the Sick, she experienced doubts. After months of consultation with her archbishop and other spiritual advisors, she decided to found her own institute, the Servants of Jesus.

The mission of the institute was to offer care for the sick and dying, whether in hospitals or in their homes. The Servant of Jesus was instructed to “provide for the sick, whom she accompanies unto the door of eternity, a blessing better than that of a missionary, who, with his preaching, calls those who are lost to the right path of life.” The institute made its first foundation in Bilbao in 1871. Maria remained the superior for the next forty years, during which time she founded forty-three houses and welcomed over one thousand sisters.

She died on March 20, 1912. She was canonized in 2000, becoming the first Basque woman saint.

“Don’t believe, sisters, that assistance consists only in giving medicines and food to the sick. There is another type of assistance . . . the assistance of the heart that enters in sympathy with the person who suffers and goes to meet his necessities.”

—St. Maria Josefa de Guerra

Mass

Thursday of the Second Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 139 (138):23-24

Test me, O God, and know my thoughts. / See that my path is not wicked, / and lead me in the way everlasting.

COLLECT

O God, who delight in innocence and restore it,
direct the hearts of your servants to yourself,
that, caught up in the fire of your Spirit,
we may be found steadfast in faith
and effective in works.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 17:5-10

*A curse on those who trust in mortals;
a blessing on those who trust in the Lord God.*

Thus says the LORD: / Cursed is the man who trusts in human beings, / who seeks his strength in flesh, / whose heart turns away from the LORD. / He is like a barren bush in the desert / that enjoys no change of season, / But stands in a lava waste, / a salt and empty earth. / Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, / whose hope is the LORD. / He is like a tree planted beside the waters / that stretches out its roots to the stream: / It fears not the heat when it comes, / its leaves stay green; / In the year of drought it shows no distress, / but still bears fruit. / More tortuous than all else is the human heart, / beyond remedy; who can understand it? / I, the LORD, alone probe the mind / and

test the heart, / To reward everyone according to his ways,
/ according to the merit of his deeds.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6

R. (40:5a) Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Blessed the man who follows not
the counsel of the wicked
Nor walks in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the company of the insolent,
But delights in the law of the LORD
and meditates on his law day and night. **R.**

He is like a tree
planted near running water,
That yields its fruit in due season,
and whose leaves never fade.
Whatever he does, prospers. **R.**

Not so, the wicked, not so;
they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
For the LORD watches over the way of the just,
but the way of the wicked vanishes. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

See Luke 8:15

Blessed are they who have kept the word with a generous
heart and yield a harvest through perseverance.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 16:19-31

*Good things came to you and bad things to Lazarus;
now he is comforted while you are in agony.*

Jesus said to the Pharisees: "There was a rich man who
dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined
sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor

man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.' Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.' He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.' But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

By this present sacrifice, we pray, O Lord,
 sanctify our observance,
 that what Lenten discipline outwardly declares
 it may inwardly bring about.
 Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Psalm 119 (118):1

Blessed are those whose way is blameless, / who walk in the law of the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May this sacrifice, O God,
remain active in its effects
and work ever more strongly within us.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

The Blessed and the Cursed

Today's readings are a study in vivid contrasts.

In the first reading, Jeremiah uses the metaphor of trees to express the contrast between those who are cursed and those who are blessed. The cursed trust only in human beings. One can feel how shriveled up, bent, and closed in upon themselves are those whose hearts have turned away from God. Fiction's Uriah Heap, Ebenezer Scrooge, and any number of wicked stepmothers immediately come to my mind.

By contrast, those who are rooted in God, hope in the Lord, stand upright with hearts and arms open to others in the endless stream of life. One can feel the energy and freshness of life they breathe into the world.

In the last parable in chapter 16 of Luke's Gospel, we hear another set of contrasts from the best narrator in the New Testament from my perspective. In graphic detail, Luke describes the nameless rich man, dressed in purple garments and fine linen, dining sumptuously each day while just outside his door lies the wretchedly poor and tormented Lazarus.

The wealthy person, whom we might consider blessed, in the end is cursed for such egregious neglect of the poor right outside the door; while Lazarus, cursed in life, is blessed in death. With a sudden change of heart, the rich man begs Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers still living to change their ways so as to not suffer the same fate. With a poignant yet pointed dash of foreshadowing, Luke has Abraham reply, "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead." Touché!

Lord, may we always listen to the One whom you raised from the dead, and make us always steadfast in faith and effective in works.

Sr. Julia Upton

Julia Upton, RSM, is provost emerita at St. John's University in New York. She is the author of Worship in Spirit and Truth: The Life and Legacy of H. A. Reinhold.



Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 115:9-18

House of Israel, trust in the LORD:
their help and their shield is God.
House of Aaron, trust in the LORD:
their help and their shield is God.
You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD:
your help and your shield is God.

The LORD remembers us and will bless us,
will bless the house of Israel.
God will bless the house of Aaron.

Those who fear the LORD will be blest,
the little no less than the great.
To you may the LORD grant increase,
to you and all your children.

May you be blest by the LORD,
the maker of heaven and earth.
The heavens, the heavens belong to the LORD,
but to the human race God has given the earth.

The dead shall not praise the LORD,
nor those who go down into silence.
But we who live bless the LORD
both now and forevermore.

Alleluia!

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Revelation 3:20-22

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me. I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne, as I myself first won the victory and sit with my Father on his throne.

“Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

The angels took Lazarus up to the bosom of Abraham.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of majesty and mystery, you alone are worthy of praise. In hope we pray: *R.* God, help us.

Strengthen and prosper collaboration in peacemaking, reconciliation, and healing. *R.*

Give knowledge and compassion to veterinarians, zookeepers, and all who care for animals. *R.*

Inspire teachers, coaches, mentors, and all who deepen our love for learning. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God bless us with peace, now and forever, through Jesus, the Sun of Justice. Amen.

Friday, March 21

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 62:2-4, 6-9

In God alone is my soul at rest,
my salvation comes from the Lord.
God alone is my rock, my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not greatly falter.

How long will you attack one alone,
break down your victim,
as you would a tottering wall,
or a tumbling fence?

Be at rest, my soul, in God alone,
from whom comes my hope.
God alone is my rock, my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not falter.

In God is my salvation and my glory,
my rock of strength;
in God is my refuge.
Trust at all times, O people;
pour out your hearts to God, our refuge.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 5:3-4, 7

Now, inhabitants of Jerusalem, people of Judah, / judge
between me and my vineyard: / What more could be
done for my vineyard / that I did not do? / Why, when I

waited for the crop of grapes, / did it yield rotten grapes? /
The vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, /
the people of Judah, his cherished plant; / He waited for
judgment, but see, bloodshed! / for justice, but hark, the
outcry!

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or
another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

The kingdom of God will be given to a people that will
produce fruit.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Holy God, you inspire us by the faith-filled lives of holy
men and women. In company with St. Benedict and all
the saints we pray: *R.* O God, lead us to life.

Make your Church a place of welcome and a refuge of
rest for all people. *R.*

Give courage to those who experience a call to the
monastic or apostolic religious life. *R.*

Transform the hearts and minds of all the baptized by the
light of your grace. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May we prefer nothing to the love of Christ, and may he
bring us together to everlasting life. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Benedetta Frassinello

Founder, Benedictine Sisters of Providence
of Rocco Scriva (1791–1858)

Benedetta Cambiagio grew up in Pavia, Italy. Though as a child she had dreamed of a life of prayer, her parents insisted that she marry a good Christian man—Giovanni Frassinello. As it turned out, Giovanni willingly complied with her wish that they live as brother and sister, and that they should care for Benedetta's sister, Maria, who suffered from incurable cancer. When Maria died in 1825, the Frassinellos felt they were now free to pursue the vocations they both desired. With permission from the Church, Giovanni joined the Somaschi Canons, while Benedetta entered a Capuchin convent.

Her time in the convent did not last long. As a result of ill health, she was asked to return to her family. But then, in a deep vision, she received the conviction that she must dedicate herself to the rescue of young girls whose poverty put them in danger of prostitution. The bishop encouraged Giovanni to leave his community and return to help Benedetta in her mission. And so they resumed their chaste, and unusual, partnership.

Together they organized orphanages, schools, and workshops where poor girls could receive education, skills, and formation in Christian values. Eventually Benedetta founded a new Congregation, the Benedictine Sisters of Providence of Rocco Scriva. She died on March 21, 1858, and was canonized in 2002.

“With boundless confidence in the Lord’s goodness, she abandoned herself to his ‘loving Providence,’ deeply convinced, as she liked to repeat, that one must ‘do everything for love of God and to please him.’ ”

—Pope John Paul II

Mass

Friday of the Second Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 31 (30):2, 5

In you, O Lord, I put my trust, let me never be put to shame; / release me from the snare they have hidden for me, / for you indeed are my refuge.

COLLECT

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, purifying us by the sacred practice of penance,
you may lead us in sincerity of heart
to attain the holy things to come.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a

Here comes the man of dreams; let us kill him.

Israel loved Joseph best of all his sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he had made him a long tunic. When his brothers saw that their father loved him best of all his sons, they hated him so much that they would not even greet him.

One day, when his brothers had gone to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem, Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers, you know, are tending our flocks at Shechem. Get ready; I will send you to them."

So Joseph went after his brothers and caught up with them in Dothan. They noticed him from a distance, and before he came up to them, they plotted to kill him. They said to one another: "Here comes that master dreamer! Come on, let us kill him and throw him into one of the

cisterns here; we could say that a wild beast devoured him. We shall then see what comes of his dreams.”

When Reuben heard this, he tried to save him from their hands, saying, “We must not take his life. Instead of shedding blood,” he continued, “just throw him into that cistern there in the desert; but do not kill him outright.” His purpose was to rescue him from their hands and return him to his father. So when Joseph came up to them, they stripped him of the long tunic he had on; then they took him and threw him into the cistern, which was empty and dry.

They then sat down to their meal. Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, their camels laden with gum, balm and resin to be taken down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers: “What is to be gained by killing our brother and concealing his blood? Rather, let us sell him to these Ishmaelites, instead of doing away with him ourselves. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh.” His brothers agreed. They sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

105:16-17, 18-19, 20-21

R. (5a) Remember the marvels the Lord has done.

When the LORD called down a famine on the land
and ruined the crop that sustained them,
He sent a man before them,
Joseph, sold as a slave. **R.**

They had weighed him down with fetters,
and he was bound with chains,
Till his prediction came to pass
and the word of the LORD proved him true. **R.**

The king sent and released him,
 the ruler of the peoples set him free.
 He made him lord of his house
 and ruler of all his possessions. *R.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 3:16

God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son;
 so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

21:33-43, 45-46

This is the heir; let us kill him.

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: "Hear another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey. When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to obtain his produce. But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed, and a third they stoned. Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones, but they treated them in the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.' They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?" They answered him, "He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times." Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures: / *The stone that the builders rejected / has become the cornerstone; / by the Lord has this been done, / and it is wonderful in our eyes?* / Therefore, I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away

from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he was speaking about them. And although they were attempting to arrest him, they feared the crowds, for they regarded him as a prophet.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May your merciful grace prepare your servants, O God,
for the worthy celebration of these mysteries,
and lead them to it by a devout way of life.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

1 John 4:10

God loved us, and sent his Son / as expiation for our sins.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received this pledge of eternal salvation,
we pray, O Lord,
that we may set our course so well
as to attain the redemption you promise.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Into Communion

Excluding is a well-documented human habit. On every level of our being we push things away. It seems the right thing to do. It is a purifying process. If we have thoughts that disturb us, we do our best not to think them. If there are people who are undesirable, we make sure they are not welcomed into

our homes, schools, clubs, and churches. We clear a space where we think we can breathe pure air.

. . . Jesus' name means "he will *save* his people from their sins" (Matt 1:21). In classical theology sin is considered to be a process of separation. Through the use of their freedom, people separate themselves from God and from other people. In doing this, they also separate themselves from their own souls. This exclusionary process results in a false and isolated sense of themselves. . . .

Therefore, to save people from their sins is to bring them out of separation into communion, to connect them with God, neighbor, and self. This is the offer of Jesus to the religious leadership of his day. His liberating consciousness and inclusive behavior are what they need. Jesus is asking them to relate to the God of all people by including all people.

John Shea, *The Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospels for Christian Preachers and Teachers*

John Shea is a theologian, author, and storyteller who lectures nationally and internationally on storytelling in world religions, faith-based health care, and contemporary spirituality.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 80:2-8

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
you who lead Joseph like a flock:
enthroned on the cherubim, shine forth
upon Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh.
Rouse up your might and come to save us.

Bring us back, O God;
let your face shine forth, that we might be saved.

How long, O LORD, God of hosts,
will you be angry at the prayer of your people?
You have fed them with tears for their bread,
an abundance of tears for their drink.
You have made us the taunt of our neighbors;
our foes mock us among themselves.

Bring us back, O God;
let your face shine forth, that we might be saved.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Acts 7:9-15a

The patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into slavery in Egypt; but God was with him and rescued him from all his afflictions. He granted him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, who put him in charge of Egypt and [of] his entire household. Then a famine and great affliction struck all Egypt and Canaan, and our ancestors could find no food; but when Jacob heard that there was

grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors there a first time. The second time, Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent for his father Jacob, inviting him and his whole clan, seventy-five persons; and Jacob went down to Egypt."

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

God sent Joseph ahead of Israel to save them from destruction.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Righteous God, you justify believers through their faith in Jesus Christ. In awe we pray: *R/*. Gracious God, hear our prayer.

Inspire our sense of humor, and give us patience with ourselves and with one another. *R/*.

Help us to hear hard truths, and give us courage to defend those who are most vulnerable. *R/*.

Refresh those who care for loved ones with mental or emotional illness. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May God bless us with good zeal and strengthen us to run the way that leads to life with the Gospel as our guide. Amen.

Saturday, March 22

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 75:2-8, 10

We give praise to you, O God;

we give praise, for your name is near.

We recount your wonderful deeds.

“When I establish the appointed time,

then I myself will judge with fairness.

Though the earth and all who dwell in it may rock,

it is I who set firm its pillars.

To the boastful I say, ‘Do not boast’;

to the wicked, ‘Do not flaunt your strength,

do not exalt your strength on high.

Do not speak with insolent pride.’”

For neither from the east nor from the west,

nor from the desert comes exaltation.

For God alone is the judge,

who humbles one and exalts another.

As for me, I will rejoice forever,

and sing psalms to the God of Jacob.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 63:15-17

Look down from heaven and regard us / from your holy
and glorious palace! / Where is your zealous care and

your might, / your surge of pity? / Your mercy hold not back! / For you are our father. / Were Abraham not to know us, / nor Israel to acknowledge us, / You, LORD, are our father, / our redeemer you are named from of old. / Why do you make us wander, LORD, from your ways, / and harden our hearts so that we do not fear you? / Return for the sake of your servants, / the tribes of your heritage.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Who is a God like you, who delights in mercy!

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Redeeming God, you alone are judge. In hope we pray:

R. God of love, hear our prayer.

Rouse our hearts to praise you in every blessing and grace we receive. **R.**

Give listening, humble hearts to those entrusted with leadership. **R.**

Shower mercy on those who are far from their homeland. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God favor us with protection, joy, and peace, through Jesus our life. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

Johan van Hulst

Righteous Among the Nations (1911–2018)

In 1943, during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, Jewish families who had received deportation orders were housed in a theater in Amsterdam. Children were separated from their families and housed in a nearby Jewish nursery run by Henriette Pimentel. Behind the nursery was a garden, separated only by a hedge from the Reformed Teachers' Training College, a Protestant school directed by Johan van Hulst. Working with Pimentel and members of the Dutch Resistance, Hulst arranged for children, ranging in age from infants to twelve-year-olds, to be snuck into his school and hidden until they could be smuggled to the countryside. Altogether he is credited with rescuing as many as 600 children.

The dangers of the work were obvious. It was impossible to save all the children. The most difficult task was selecting as many as they could without attracting attention, knowing that the rest faced certain death. When Pimentel was arrested and the nursery was slated to be closed, Hulst was asked how many more he could accept. He took twelve. "That was the most difficult day of my life," he said. "Later on, I asked myself, 'Why not thirteen?'"

Hulst spent the last months of the war in hiding. Yet he survived and went on to serve in the Dutch Senate. In 1972, in a ceremony in Israel, he was added to the list of Righteous Among the Nations—Gentiles who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. He died on March 22, 2018, at the age of 107.

"I was at the center of a particular activity. It's not about me. I don't want to put myself in the foreground or play Resistance hero. All I really think about is the things I couldn't do—the few thousand children I wasn't able to save."

—Johan van Hulst

Mass

Saturday of the Second Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Psalm 145 (144):8-9

The Lord is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger,
abounding in mercy. / How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

COLLECT

O God, who grant us by glorious healing remedies while
still on earth
to be partakers of the things of heaven,
guide us, we pray, through this present life
and bring us to that light in which you dwell.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Micah

7:14-15, 18-20

God will cast our sins into the depths of the sea.

Shepherd your people with your staff, / the flock of your
inheritance, / That dwells apart in a woodland, / in the
midst of Carmel. / Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, /
as in the days of old; / As in the days when you came from
the land of Egypt, / show us wonderful signs.

Who is there like you, the God who removes guilt / and
pardons sin for the remnant of his inheritance; / Who does
not persist in anger forever, / but delights rather in clem-
ency, / And will again have compassion on us, / treading
underfoot our guilt? / You will cast into the depths of the
sea all our sins; / You will show faithfulness to Jacob, / and

grace to Abraham, / As you have sworn to our fathers / from days of old.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12

R. (8a) The Lord is kind and merciful.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits. *R.*

He pardons all your iniquities,
he heals all your ills.

He redeems your life from destruction,
he crowns you with kindness and compassion. *R.*

He will not always chide,
nor does he keep his wrath forever.

Not according to our sins does he deal with us,
nor does he requite us according to our crimes. *R.*

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he put our transgressions from us. *R.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Luke 15:18

I will get up and go to my father and shall say to him,
Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

15:1-3, 11-32

Your brother was dead and has come to life.

T ax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to com-

plain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them Jesus addressed this parable. "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly, bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has

slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Through these sacred gifts, we pray, O Lord,
may our redemption yield its fruits,
restraining us from unruly desires
and leading us onward to the gifts of salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Luke 15:32

You must rejoice, my son, / for your brother was dead
and has come to life; / he was lost and is found.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May your divine Sacrament, O Lord, which we have
received,
fill the inner depths of our heart
and, by its working mightily within us,
make us partakers of its grace.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

As the Parable Turns

The Prodigal Son has the makings of a soap opera—selfishness, blatant disrespect, wanton dissipation, jealousy, resentment, and alienation. No wonder Scripture scholar Luke Timothy Johnson calls this parable a virtual novella.

We know the story especially for the surprising and magnanimous mercy of the father. Preempting the son's apology, he forgives without hesitation and orders a feast to celebrate, “. . . because this son of mine was dead and has come to life again.”

But the parable also contrasts the mercy of the father with the resentment of his elder son. The firstborn's anger seems understandable. After all, his sibling has been outrageously selfish and disrespectful. But the older brother has nursed his resentment into a bitter grudge. No distant region for him—he has alienated himself from father and family without leaving home.

As with the prodigal son, the father comes out to meet the elder son. He reasons with him and assures him of his place and privilege. The father once more says that the younger son “has come to life again.” And in this repetition the father also implies an invitation.

In classic soap opera fashion, the parable leaves us hanging. The younger has admitted his sins and returned to rebuild his life. Can the elder son admit his own failings and reconcile with his brother and his father? We are left to wonder. And, in wondering, to consider our own behaviors. For the invitation to “come to life again” is meant for each of us.

Peter Dwyer

Peter Dwyer was the longtime director of Liturgical Press and founding publisher of Give Us This Day.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 47

All peoples, clap your hands.
Cry to God with shouts of joy!
For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome,
the great king over all the earth.

God humbles peoples under us
and nations under our feet.
Our heritage God chose for us,
the pride of Jacob the beloved.

God has gone up with shouts of joy.
The LORD goes up with trumpet blast.
Sing praise for God; sing praise!
Sing praise to our king; sing praise!
For God is king of all the earth.
Sing praise with a hymn.

God is reigning over nations,
God sits upon a holy throne.
The leaders of the peoples are assembled
with the people of the God of Abraham.
For the rulers of the earth belong to God,
who is greatly exalted.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Acts 10:39-43

We are witnesses of all that [Jesus] did both in the country
of the Jews and [in] Jerusalem. They put him to death

by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised [on] the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Our loving God casts all our sins into the depths of the sea.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Sovereign God, you bring all things together for our good through Christ. In confidence we pray: *R/*. God of salvation, hear our prayer.

Inspire just ways to address medical ethics and the sanctity of life. *R/*.

Secure support, services, and provisions for those recently released from prison. *R/*.

Help us to transform neighborhoods into safe communities, and prosper the elimination of drug trafficking and cartels. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May God grant us a peaceful night and restful sleep, in Jesus' name. Amen.



Sunday, March 23

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 33:1-8

Ring out your joy to the LORD, O you righteous;
for praise is fitting from the upright.

Give thanks to the LORD upon the harp;
with a ten-stringed lute sing songs to God.

O sing a song that is new;
play skillfully, with shouts of joy.

For the word of the LORD is upright,
and all God's works to be trusted.

The LORD loves justice and right;
God's faithful love fills the earth.

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
by the breath of God's mouth, all their host.

As in a flask, God collects the waves of the ocean,
and stores up the depths of the sea.

Let all the earth fear the LORD,
all who live in the world show reverence.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Jonah 3:4b-5; 4:1-4

When [Jonah] had gone only a single day's walk announcing, "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown," the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.

But this greatly displeased Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said while I was still in my own country? This is why I fled at first toward Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in kindness, repenting of punishment. So now, LORD, please take my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live." But the LORD asked, "Are you right to be angry?"

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Let us turn to God who, perhaps, will again relent and forgive.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of marvelous deeds, you appeared to Moses in the burning bush. Hear us as we pray: *R.* Show us your face, O God.

Help your Church to recognize and serve you in our care for those who are in need of food, shelter, clothing, or friendship. *R.*

Open our minds to the Scriptures, and guide all who preach and proclaim your Word. *R.*

Inspire us to seek and find you in the beauty and magnificence of nature. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God comfort our hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word, through Jesus, the Love of God. Amen.

Mass

Third Sunday of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 25 (24):15-16

My eyes are always on the Lord, / for he rescues my feet
from the snare. / Turn to me and have mercy on me, / for
I am alone and poor.

Or:

Cf. Ezekiel 36:23-26

When I prove my holiness among you, / I will gather you
from all the foreign lands; / and I will pour clean water
upon you / and cleanse you from all your impurities, /
and I will give you a new spirit, says the Lord.

(The Gloria is omitted.)

COLLECT

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness,
who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving
have shown us a remedy for sin,
look graciously on this confession of our lowliness,
that we, who are bowed down by our conscience,
may always be lifted up by your mercy.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

(The readings for Year A, p. 243, may be used in place of the
following.)

A reading from the Book of Exodus

3:1-8a, 13-15

"I AM" sent me to you.

Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro,
the priest of Midian. Leading the flock across the

desert, he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There an angel of the LORD appeared to Moses in fire flaming out of a bush. As he looked on, he was surprised to see that the bush, though on fire, was not consumed. So Moses decided, "I must go over to look at this remarkable sight, and see why the bush is not burned."

When the LORD saw him coming over to look at it more closely, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." God said, "Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your fathers," he continued, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. But the LORD said, "I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and lead them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey."

Moses said to God, "But when I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' if they ask me, 'What is his name?' what am I to tell them?" God replied, "I am who am." Then he added, "This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you."

God spoke further to Moses, "Thus shall you say to the Israelites: The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. / "This is my name forever; / thus am I to be remembered through all generations."

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

103:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8, 11

R/. (8a) The Lord is kind and merciful.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits. **R/.**

He pardons all your iniquities,
heals all your ills.

He redeems your life from destruction,
crowns you with kindness and compassion. **R/.**

The LORD secures justice
and the rights of all the oppressed.

He has made known his ways to Moses,
and his deeds to the children of Israel. **R/.**

Merciful and gracious is the LORD,
slow to anger and abounding in kindness.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear
him. **R/.**

**A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul
to the Corinthians**

10:1-6, 10-12

*The life of the people with Moses in the desert
was written down as a warning to us.*

do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all of them were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was the Christ. Yet God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the desert.

These things happened as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil things, as they did. Do not grumble as some of them did, and suffered death by the destroyer. These things happened to them as an example, and they have been written down as a warning to us, upon whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matthew 4:17

Repent, says the Lord;
the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 13:1-9

If you do not repent, you will all perish as they did.

Some people told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. Jesus said to them in reply, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did! Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!”

And he told them this parable: “There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, ‘For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. So cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?’ He said to him in reply, ‘Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around

it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

CREED (p. 340)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings,
and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins,
may take care to forgive our neighbor.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

When the Gospel of the Samaritan Woman is read: John 4:13-14

For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord, / the water I
shall give will become in him / a spring welling up to
eternal life.

When another Gospel is read:

Cf. Psalm 84 (83):4-5

The sparrow finds a home, / and the swallow a nest for
her young: / by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and
my God. / Blessed are they who dwell in your house, / for
ever singing your praise.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we receive the pledge
of things yet hidden in heaven
and are nourished while still on earth
with the Bread that comes from on high,
we humbly entreat you, O Lord,
that what is being brought about in us in mystery
may come to true completion.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Tending to Our Roots

I am convinced that the longing to bear fruit—to live lives that matter—is embedded in us as deeply as the longing to eat, sleep, love, and be loved. The problem is that such lives don't happen automatically. They require a certain alertness to the way things really are, both in us and in the world; a certain willingness to make choices we would not make if we thought time would never run out; a certain awareness that we need all the help we can get, from any gardener willing to tend our roots. Today's Gospel teaching is given to us to remember why we are here—but what if we don't get around to it? What if the car crashes before we get where we are going? What if the diagnosis is terminal, or the young soldier is killed on her first tour of duty?

Whether our lives are cut short or we live until our branches grow moss on them, no one lives forever. And God knows the world needs fruit as much as we need to produce it.

The good news is that we do not know how today's story ends. The owner makes his case. The gardener makes his. The story ends with the fig tree still alive—never *more* alive—with maybe as much as a whole year to put more sweetness into the world.

Barbara Brown Taylor, *Always a Guest*

Barbara Brown Taylor is an acclaimed author, professor, and Episcopal priest.

*Readings for Year A***A reading from the Book of Exodus****17:3-7***Give us water, so that we may drink.*

In those days, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?” So Moses cried out to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? A little more and they will stone me!” The LORD answered Moses, “Go over there in front of the people, along with some of the elders of Israel, holding in your hand, as you go, the staff with which you struck the river. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb. Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink.” This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel. The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled there and tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD in our midst or not?” The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM**95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9****R.** (8) If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;

let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us joyfully sing psalms to him. **R.**

Come, let us bow down in worship;

let us kneel before the LORD who made us.

For he is our God,

and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides. **R.**

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:

“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah in the desert,

Where your fathers tempted me;

they tested me though they had seen my works.” *R.*

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

5:1-2, 5-8

*The love of God has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

Brothers and sisters: Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God.

And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Cf. John 4:42, 15

Lord, you are truly the Savior of the world;

give me living water, that I may never thirst again.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

4:5-42 (Shorter Form [], 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42)

The water that I shall give will become a spring of eternal life.

[J]esus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?"—For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.—Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."]

Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back." The woman answered and said to him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true." The woman said to him, "Sir, [I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but

you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one (who is) speaking with you.”]

At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, “What are you looking for?” or “Why are you talking with her?” The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, “Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Christ?” They went out of the town and came to him. Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” So the disciples said to one another, “Could someone have brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, ‘In four months the harvest will be here’? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. The reaper is already receiving payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here the saying is verified that ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work.”

[Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him] because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me everything I have done.” [When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, “We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world.”]

The Gospel of the Lord.



Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 139:1-10

O LORD, you search me and you know me.
You yourself know my resting and my rising;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down;
you know all my ways through and through.

Before ever a word is on my tongue,
you know it, O LORD, through and through.
Behind and before, you besiege me,
your hand ever laid upon me.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge;
too high, beyond my reach.

O where can I go from your spirit,
or where can I flee from your face?
If I climb the heavens, you are there.
If I lie in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the dawn
or dwell at the sea's furthest end,
even there your hand would lead me;
your right hand would hold me fast.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Romans 10:9-13

| If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and
| believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,
you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is

justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. For the scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

I am who I am; this is my name forever.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Merciful God of our ancestors, with a word you created all things. In faith we pray: *R/*. Love us, Lord.

Safeguard prisoners, and bolster efforts to treat them with respect and dignity. *R/*.

Enkindle wonder in all people, and help us to celebrate the newness of life and change of seasons. *R/*.

Give peace to the dying and comfort to those who mourn. *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May the Lord direct our hearts to the love of God and make us steadfast in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

March 23–29

Third Week of Lent

Within the Word

A Single Story

How do we make sense of all the stories and prophetic sayings we find in the Old Testament? What is their relationship to the New Testament? How does everything fit together into some sort of coherent whole? We discover considerable coherence and continuity among the various bits of the Bible when we understand it as a single story of God's covenant relationship with humanity, told to draw all people into this relationship. Many of the readings this week focus on a continuity between the past and the future, and invite us to consider our own present place in the covenant story.

In Sunday's reading from Exodus, God appears to Moses as "the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." God is determined to deliver Israel from slavery precisely because they are the *children* of Israel (Jacob's other name). God's past relationship with the ancestors is the foundation of their children's present deliverance, which opens the way to their covenant future. The various stories leading up to and stemming from the exodus relate God's persistent desire to maintain this covenant relationship, despite the frequent incomprehension and infidelity of God's human partners. In Thursday's reading from Jeremiah, God reminds Israel that "from the day that your fathers left the land of Egypt even to this day, I have sent you untiringly all my servants the prophets." The oracles of Hosea we hear on Friday and Saturday express God's frustration with infidelity, yet God's plea for Israel to "return to the LORD" resounds. God wants to "heal their defection" and "love them freely," binding Israel's self-

inflicted wounds. Even though the past has been one of faithlessness, the present always offers the hope of a future.

The intimate link between the past and the future is seen especially on the feast of the Annunciation (Tuesday). Isaiah assures King Ahaz that a royal son and heir to the throne of David will be born, keeping the promise made to David centuries before (2 Sam 7:11-16). That same promise will be fulfilled again, definitively, with the advent of Christ, to whom God will give “the throne of David his father . . . and of his Kingdom there will be no end.” Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. He is the future promises to God’s people from ages past.

Moses warns Israel not to forget the things God has done for them, but to “teach them to your children and your children’s children” (from Deuteronomy on Wednesday). Paul echoes this when he tells the Corinthians that the stories of Israel were written down so that we might avoid the mistakes of the past (Sunday’s second reading).

But Paul also tells the Romans that the Scriptures have been written to encourage us and give us hope (Rom 15:4). In its presentation of our checkered past and uneven present, the Bible assures us that each of us individually and all of us together remain in God’s heart. This faithful love ensures our future. No matter how much we move back and forth, toward God and then away again, our past does not need to be a burden, because God’s good will for us transcends time. God is for us “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8).

—Br. John R. Barker

John R. Barker, OFM, is a member of the Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe and pastor of Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg, Indiana. He has a doctorate in Scripture from Boston College and, besides writing for pastoral and academic publications, offers workshops and retreats on Scripture, the Catholic faith, and Franciscan spirituality.

Monday, March 24

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 57:2-4, 8-11

Have mercy on me, God, have mercy,
for in you my soul has taken refuge.

In the shadow of your wings I take refuge,
till the storms of destruction pass by.

I call to you, God the Most High,
to God who provides for me.

O send from heaven and save me,
and put to shame those who assail me.

O send your loving mercy and faithfulness.

My heart is ready, O God;
my heart is ready.

I will sing, I will sing your praise.

Awake, my soul!

Awake, O lyre and harp!

I will awake the dawn.

I will praise you, Lord, among the peoples,
among the nations sing psalms to you,
for your mercy reaches to the heavens,
and your truth to the skies.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 17:8-9, 10b-11, 13b, 14

So the word of the LORD came to [Elijah]: Arise, go to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow there to feed you. When he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called out to her, "Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink." She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a crust of bread. Do not be afraid. For the LORD, the God of Israel, says: The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth."

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

No prophet is accepted in his own native place.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Nurturing God, you provide us with what we need. In faith we pray: **R/**. God, in your wisdom, hear our prayer.

Inspire those entrusted with the teaching and proclamation of your Word. **R/**.

Uphold messengers who must deliver the truth when it is unpopular or alarming. **R/**.

Expand our hearts toward greater sacrifice for the good of others and the well-being of the earth. **R/**.

Our Father . . .

May the love of God be always at the center of our thoughts, words, and actions, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Oscar Romero

Archbishop and Martyr (1917–1980)

In 2015, the Vatican decreed that Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador had died as a martyr “in hatred of the faith,” opening the way for his beatification, and ultimately his canonization in 2018. For an archbishop slain at the altar while saying Mass, this decree might have seemed unremarkable. But for many years Romero’s cause was blocked by powerful prelates who claimed he had not died for his faith but for mixing himself up in politics. This charge was answered by the postulator of Romero’s cause who said his assassination “was not caused by motives that were simply political, but by hatred for a faith that, imbued with charity, would not be silent in the face of the injustices that relentlessly and cruelly slaughtered the poor and their defenders.”

Romero’s canonization did not simply enlarge the Church’s understanding of martyrdom; he offered a powerful example of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in a world marked by violence and injustice. While many saints have exemplified a model of holiness in the form of escape from a sinful world, Romero’s holiness was expressed in solidarity with a wounded world. Many saints practiced charity, but Romero combined charity with a passion for justice. He answered the call for holy witnesses who are faithful to the end, who challenge both the Church and the world, and who are willing to speak the truth and pay up personally.

“I must tell you, as a Christian, I do not believe in death without resurrection. If I am killed, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people.”

—St. Oscar Romero

Mass

Monday of the Third Week of Lent*

*The following readings may be used on any Lenten day this week, especially in Years B and C when the Gospel of the Samaritan woman is not read on the Third Sunday of Lent: Exod 17:1-7; John 4:5-42.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Psalm 84 (83):3

My soul is longing and yearning for the courts of the Lord. / My heart and my flesh cry out to the living God.

COLLECT

May your unfailing compassion, O Lord,
cleanse and protect your Church,
and, since without you she cannot stand secure,
may she be always governed by your grace.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the second Book of Kings

5:1-15ab

There were many people with leprosy in Israel, but none were made clean, except Naaman the Syrian (Luke 4:27).

Naaman, the army commander of the king of Aram, was highly esteemed and respected by his master, for through him the LORD had brought victory to Aram. But valiant as he was, the man was a leper. Now the Arameans had captured in a raid on the land of Israel a little girl, who became the servant of Naaman's wife. "If only my master would present himself to the prophet in Samaria," she said to her mistress, "he would cure him of his leprosy." Naaman went and told his lord just what the slave girl from the land of Israel had said. "Go," said the king of Aram. "I will send along a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman set out,

taking along ten silver talents, six thousand gold pieces, and ten festal garments. To the king of Israel he brought the letter, which read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy."

When he read the letter, the king of Israel tore his garments and exclaimed: "Am I a god with power over life and death, that this man should send someone to me to be cured of leprosy? Take note! You can see he is only looking for a quarrel with me!" When Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his garments, he sent word to the king: "Why have you torn your garments? Let him come to me and find out that there is a prophet in Israel."

Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. The prophet sent him the message: "Go and wash seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will heal, and you will be clean." But Naaman went away angry, saying, "I thought that he would surely come out and stand there to invoke the LORD his God, and would move his hand over the spot, and thus cure the leprosy. Are not the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be cleansed?" With this, he turned about in anger and left.

But his servants came up and reasoned with him. "My father," they said, "if the prophet had told you to do something extraordinary, would you not have done it? All the more now, since he said to you, 'Wash and be clean,' should you do as he said." So Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times at the word of the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

He returned with his whole retinue to the man of God. On his arrival he stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel."

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

42:2, 3; 43:3, 4

R. (see 42:3) Athirst is my soul for the living God. When
shall I go and behold the face of God?

As the hind longs for the running waters,
so my soul longs for you, O God. **R.**

Athirst is my soul for God, the living God.
When shall I go and behold the face of God? **R.**

Send forth your light and your fidelity;
they shall lead me on
And bring me to your holy mountain,
to your dwelling-place. **R.**

Then will I go in to the altar of God,
the God of my gladness and joy;
Then will I give you thanks upon the harp,
O God, my God! **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

See Psalm 130:5, 7

I hope in the LORD, I trust in his word;
with him there is kindness and plenteous redemption.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 4:24-30

Like Elijah and Elisha, Jesus was sent not only to the Jews.

Jesus said to the people in the synagogue at Nazareth:
“Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own
native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in
Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three
and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire
land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only
to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there
were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the
prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman
the Syrian.” When the people in the synagogue heard this,

they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May what we offer you, O Lord,
in token of our service,
be transformed by you into the sacrament of salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Psalm 117 (116):1, 2

O praise the Lord, all you nations, / for his merciful love
towards us is great.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May communion in this your Sacrament,
we pray, O Lord,
bring with it purification and the unity that is your gift.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Managing our Expectations

In both readings today, we encounter people whose rigid expectations nearly impede a miracle. The King of Israel receives a surprising and seemingly misdirected note; Naaman receives an instruction; the people of Nazareth, an admonishment. These messages and their sources fail to conform to expectations of what should be asked of us, how we should be treated, and what we deserve, and so elicit anger and offense.

How often my own expectations have gotten in my way—from what I expected motherhood to be like to how I expected a single conversation to play out. And how easily, when life unfolded differently from my script, it felt like an injustice, like an affront. Perhaps we all, like Naaman, have experienced asking for something and then refusing to accept the instructions for getting what we want. Hopefully, like him too, we have a calm and wise soul beside us to say, *reconsider*.

Expectation is not the same as hope. Expectation leaves no room for surprise or delight. It only holds the world up against our limited imagination and our ego, demanding compliance. Rigid expectations cause us to rage as our prayer is being answered or while God stands right in front of us.

It is always the surprises—my daughters' growing independence, a new season of marriage, a mid-life career change—that show me my scripts need to be set down so that I can hope and receive.

..... Melody S. Gee

Melody S. Gee is a poet and essayist, and the author of We Carry Smoke and Paper: Essays on the Grief and Hope of Conversion. She lives in St. Louis, Missouri.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 70

O God, come to my assistance;
O LORD, make haste to help me!
Let there be shame and confusion
on those who seek my life.

O let them turn back in confusion,
who delight in my harm;
let them turn because of their shame,
who jeer at me and mock.

O let there be rejoicing and gladness
for all who seek you.
Let them say forever, “God is great,”
who love your saving help.

As for me, who am wretched and poor,
hasten to me, O God.
You are my rescuer, my help;
O LORD, do not delay.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Romans 3:21–26

Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, though testified to by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in

Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as an expiation, through faith, by his blood, to prove his righteousness because of the forgiveness of sins previously committed, through the forbearance of God—to prove his righteousness in the present time, that he might be righteous and justify the one who has faith in Jesus.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Liberating God, in Jesus you free us from death. We humbly pray: *R.* O God, come to our assistance.

Give courage to those who experience transition, challenging decisions, or declining health. *R.*

Sharpen our thinking skills and expand our capacity for compassion. *R.*

Open the gates of heaven to those who have gone before us in faith. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God increase our faith, hope, and love, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tuesday, March 25

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 138:1-3, 6-8

I thank you, LORD, with all my heart;
you have heard the words of my mouth.
In the presence of the angels I praise you.
I bow down toward your holy temple.

I give thanks to your name
for you have exalted over all
your name and your promise.
On the day I called, you answered me;
you increased the strength of my soul.

The LORD is high, yet looks on the lowly,
and the haughty God knows from afar.
You give me life though I walk amid affliction;
you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes.

With your right hand you save me;
the LORD will accomplish this for me.
O LORD, your merciful love is eternal;
discard not the work of your hands.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Zephaniah 3:14, 15b-18a

Shout for joy, daughter Zion! / sing joyfully, Israel! / Be
glad and exult with all your heart, / daughter Jeru-
salem! / The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst, / you

have no further misfortune to fear. / On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: / Do not fear, Zion, / do not be discouraged! / The LORD, your God, is in your midst, / a mighty savior, / Who will rejoice over you with gladness, / and renew you in his love, / Who will sing joyfully because of you, / as on festival days.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

You will conceive and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of salvation, Mary's trust in you is our source of redemption. In hope we pray: *R.* Deepen our faith, O God.

Animate your Church to joyfully proclaim the infinite manifestations of your love. *R.*

Help those who are discerning to acknowledge the prompting and guidance of the Holy Spirit. *R.*

Enlighten us to know the blessedness of holy leisure, manual labor, and service to our brothers and sisters. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God fill us with songs of praise and thanksgiving and increase the strength of our soul, through Jesus, the Son of Mary. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

St. Marie-Alphonsine Danil Ghattas

Founder, Sisters of the Holy Rosary, Jerusalem

(1843–1927)

Sultana Danil Ghattas was born to a devout Christian family in Jerusalem. At seventeen, on Mount Golgotha in Jerusalem, she was received into the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition and received the name Marie-Alphonsine. Before long, she began to receive her own apparitions of the Blessed Mother, who instructed her to found a new congregation for Arab girls. Choosing to conceal the source of her inspiration from all but her spiritual director, she endured much criticism for abandoning her congregation. Still, she persisted. As she remarked, “Love is greater than death.”

Having eventually received permission to leave her congregation, she embarked on establishing her new congregation, the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, receiving her new habit in 1883. She lived a quiet life of prayer and service in the very land where Jesus and his Mother had lived, founding schools and orphanages. When she sensed that death was near, she asked one of her sisters to fetch two notebooks, sealed with red wax, and deliver them to the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem. They described in detail the apparitions she had received many years ago, thus, to the astonishment of her Sisters, revealing the secret origins of their congregation.

Mother Marie-Alphonsine died on March 25, 1927. She was canonized in 2015.

“I decided through love to Mary, and in her veneration, to obey her voice and to sacrifice my life in the Congregation of the Rosary, putting my trust in the help which my Mother will bestow on me, believing that she will always walk along with me and will support me.”

—St. Marie-Alphonsine Danil Ghattas

Mass

The Annunciation of the Lord, Solemnity

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Hebrews 10:5, 7

The Lord said, as he entered the world: / Behold, I come to do your will, O God.

GLORIA (p. 339)

COLLECT

O God, who willed that your Word should take on the reality of human flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, grant, we pray, that we, who confess our Redeemer to be God and man, may merit to become partakers even in his divine nature. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10

Behold, the virgin shall conceive.

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying: Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God; let it be deep as the nether world, or high as the sky! But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!" Then Isaiah said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary people, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us!"

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 11

R. (8a and 9a) Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

Sacrifice or oblation you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;
then said I, "Behold I come." **R.**

"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,
To do your will, O my God, is my delight,
and your law is within my heart!" **R.**

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know. **R.**

Your justice I kept not hid within my heart;
your faithfulness and your salvation I have spoken of;
I have made no secret of your kindness and your truth
in the vast assembly. **R.**

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

10:4-10

*As is written of me in the scroll, behold,
I come to do your will, O God.*

Brothers and sisters: It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats take away sins. For this reason, when Christ came into the world, he said: / "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, / but a body you prepared for me; / in holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight. / Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, / behold, I come to do your will, O God.'" / First he says, "Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts and sin offerings, you neither desired nor delighted in." These are offered according to the law. Then he says, "Behold, I come to do your will." He takes away the first to establish the second. By this "will," we have been consecrated through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 1:14ab

The Word of God became flesh and made his dwelling
among us;
and we saw his glory.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 1:26-38

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son.

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, almighty God,
to accept your Church's offering,
so that she, who is aware that her beginnings
lie in the Incarnation of your Only Begotten Son,
may rejoice to celebrate his mysteries on this Solemnity.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Isaiah 7:14

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; / and his
name will be called Emmanuel.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Confirm in our minds the mysteries of the true faith,
we pray, O Lord,
so that, confessing that he who was conceived of the
Virgin Mary
is true God and true man,
we may, through the saving power of his Resurrection,
merit to attain eternal joy.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Infused by Grace

In recent decades, science has unveiled an amazing finding: Fetal cells and DNA from a growing baby can be found in a mother's body not only during but well after the pregnancy. In the language of science, we see here the profound intimacy present between two persons, mother and child, in the context of pregnancy.

In today's collect for the Annunciation, theology gives this closeness another language: *grant, we pray, that we, who confess our Redeemer to be God and man, may merit to become partakers even in his divine nature.* While prayers like the Litany of Loreto hold many beautiful titles for the Blessed Mother, including Vessel, Ark, House, and Tower, the closeness to the Lord she experienced during her pregnancy was even more intimate. It was a closeness that *infused* her. She was indeed full of grace, and that grace worked upon her. In God's mysterious wisdom, we might say it became part of her DNA.

We are called into that closeness and to be partakers in nature with Christ. In a sacramental way, we too are invited to receive him, and to have his grace and life infuse us from the inside out.

May it be done according to your Word.

..... Daniella Zsupan-Jerome

Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, PhD, teaches pastoral theology at St. John's School of Theology and Seminary in Collegeville, Minnesota. She is author of Connected Toward Communion: The Church and Social Communication in the Digital Age and Speak Lord, Your Servant Is Listening.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 87

Founded by God on the holy mountain,
the LORD loves the gates of Zion,
more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
Of you are told glorious things,
you, O city of God!

“Rahab and Babylon I will count
among those who know me;
Of Tyre, Philistia, Ethiopia, it is told,
‘There was this one born.’
But of Zion it shall be said,
‘Each one was born in her.’”

God, the Most High, will establish her.
In the register of peoples the LORD writes,
“Here was this one born.”
The singers cry out in chorus,
“All my wellsprings are in you.”

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:11-14

In [Christ] we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ. In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed

with the promised holy Spirit, which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God's possession, to the praise of his glory.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened to know the hope to which we are called.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of our ancestors, in Christ you have chosen us.
We praise you and pray with Mary: **R.** Your will be done,
O God.

Prosper efforts to protect the unborn and to ensure that all infants and children are loved. **R.**

Seal all believers with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. **R.**

Inspire us to recall and celebrate the blessings and graces in our lives. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts, and may the love of Christ be the foundation of our lives. Amen.

Wednesday, March 26

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 119:97-104

O LORD, how I love your law:
my meditation all the day!
Your command makes me wiser than my foes,
for it is with me always.

I have more insight than all who teach me,
for I ponder your decrees.
I have gained more understanding than my elders,
for I keep your precepts.

I keep my feet from every evil path,
to obey your word.
I have not turned away from your decrees;
you yourself have taught me.

How sweet is your promise to my tongue,
more than honey in the mouth.
I gain understanding from your precepts,
and so I hate all false ways.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Sirach 24:23-29

All this is the book of the covenant of the Most High God, / the Law which Moses commanded us / as a heritage for the community of Jacob. / It overflows, like the Pishon, with wisdom, / and like the Tigris at the time of

first fruits. / It runs over, like the Euphrates, with understanding, / and like the Jordan at harvest time. / It floods like the Nile with instruction, / like the Gihon at vintage time. / The first human being never finished comprehending wisdom, / nor will the last succeed in fathoming her. / For deeper than the sea are her thoughts, / and her counsels, than the great abyss.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

The law of the Lord is sweeter than honey; it refreshes the soul.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Gracious God, Wisdom calls us to seek you. In gratitude we pray: **R/**. Increase our understanding, O God.

Lead us to deeper encounter with Christ. **R/**.

Enlighten your Church to effectively respond to violence and injustice. **R/**.

Heal intolerance of religious identities, cultures, and belief systems. **R/**.

Our Father . . .

May the Word of God lead us to right relationship with our brothers and sisters and all of creation, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

Servant of God Joseph Dutton

Servant of Molokai (1843–1931)

The island of Molokai in Hawaii, where those suffering from leprosy (Hansen's disease) were banished under mandatory quarantine, became famous through the story of Father (now Saint) Damien de Veuster, a Belgian priest who accepted the perilous mission to serve there as chaplain. Within years of his arrival in 1873, this place of squalor and hopelessness had been transformed into a joyful community.

In 1886, one of the stories about Fr. Damien found its way to Joseph Dutton, a Civil War veteran and recent Catholic convert who had been searching for some new beginning in his life. Molokai seemed the perfect place. Upon arriving on the island, he introduced himself to Fr. Damien, by then suffering from leprosy, and pronounced: "My name is Joseph Dutton; I've come to help, and I've come to stay." And so he did, for over forty years.

Born Ira Barnes Dutton in Stowe, Vermont, he had taken the name Joseph upon his baptism as a Catholic on his fortieth birthday. This followed years marked by what he called "sin and error," a failed marriage, and years of alcoholism. After twenty months at the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani, he sought a life of work, penance, and "separation from scenes of past experiences." He found all that on Molokai, and more. In serving the poorest of God's children, he also found happiness.

His various duties included caring for Fr. Damien, who said: "I can die now. Brother Joseph will take care of my orphans." In his later years, Dutton became a secular Third Order Franciscan. He died on March 16, 1931. His cause for canonization is in process.

"It has been a happy place—a happy life."

—Servant of God Joseph Dutton

Mass

Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 119 (118):133

Let my steps be guided by your promise; may evil never rule me.

COLLECT

Grant, we pray, O Lord,
that, schooled through Lenten observance
and nourished by your word,
through holy restraint
we may be devoted to you with all our heart
and be ever united in prayer.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

4:1, 5-9

Keep the commandments and your work will be complete.

Moses spoke to the people and said: "Now, Israel, hear the statutes and decrees which I am teaching you to observe, that you may live, and may enter in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. Therefore, I teach you the statutes and decrees as the LORD, my God, has commanded me, that you may observe them in the land you are entering to occupy. Observe them carefully, for thus will you give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations, who will hear of all these statutes and say, 'This great nation is truly a wise and intelligent people.' For what great nation is there that has gods so close to it as the LORD, our God, is to us whenever we call upon him? Or what great nation has statutes and

decrees that are as just as this whole law which I am setting before you today?

“However, take care and be earnestly on your guard not to forget the things which your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your memory as long as you live, but teach them to your children and to your children’s children.”

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20

R. (12a) Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem;
praise your God, O Zion.

For he has strengthened the bars of your gates;
he has blessed your children within you. **R.**

He sends forth his command to the earth;
swiftly runs his word!

He spreads snow like wool;
frost he strews like ashes. **R.**

He has proclaimed his word to Jacob,
his statutes and his ordinances to Israel.

He has not done thus for any other nation;
his ordinances he has not made known to them. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

See John 6:63c, 68c

Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life;
you have the words of everlasting life.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

5:17-19

Whoever keeps and teaches the law will be called great.

Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come

not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the prayers of your people
along with these sacrificial offerings,
and defend those who celebrate your mysteries
from every kind of danger.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 16 (15):11

You will show me the path of life, / the fullness of joy in
your presence, O Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the heavenly banquet, at which we have been fed,
sanctify us, O Lord,
and, cleansing us of all errors,
make us worthy of your promises from on high.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

A Divine Proclamation

In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel Jesus says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." This is a proclamation of who Jesus is, and of the eternal will of God. "I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." It is an announcement of the world-changing event of the birth of the one who the angel told Joseph was going to save his people from their sins.

Jesus fulfills the Law by rooting the intention of the Law in the eternal will, that is, in the intention, of God. But now, in your midst, in your hearing, the intention of God is here: as Jesus will say, "on earth as in heaven." The inner dynamism of Torah is realized; the external forms are rendered relative. . . . By fulfilling the Law, Jesus abolishes the Law.

His fulfillment of the Law, through his personally fulfilling the will of God, Jesus shares with Christians of every age. We can make our own the words of Paul and rejoice in our sufferings, and in our own flesh fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his Body, which is the Church. Let us be careful not to build up again those things that Christ tore down.

Mark A. Scott, OCSO, *Loving Jesus*

Mark A. Scott, OCSO, is a monk of the Trappist-Cistercian Abbey of New Clairvaux, Vina, California. From 2000 to 2008 he served as appointed superior and then abbot of Assumption Abbey in Ava, Missouri.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 76:2-10

O God, you are renowned in Judah;
in Israel your name is great.
You set up your tent in Salem,
and your dwelling place in Zion.
It was there you broke the flaming arrows,
the shield, the sword, the armor.

Resplendent are you, more majestic
than the everlasting mountains.
The stouthearted, despoiled, sank into slumber;
none of the soldiers could lift a hand.
At your threat, O God of Jacob,
horse and rider lay stunned.

You, you alone, strike terror.
Who can stand in your presence,
against the might of your wrath?

You uttered your sentence from the heavens;
the earth in terror was still
when you arose, O God, to judge,
to save all the humble of the earth.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 1:22-25

Since you have purified yourselves by obedience to the truth for sincere mutual love, love one another intensely from a [pure] heart. You have been born anew, not

from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God, for: / “All flesh is like grass, / and all its glory like the flower of the field; / the grass withers, / and the flower wilts; / but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

This is the word that has been proclaimed to you.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

The word of the Lord remains forever.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Glorious God, your radiance shines throughout the earth. In awe we pray: *R.* Light our way, O God.

Strengthen us to extend respect, reverence, forgiveness, and reconciliation to one another. *R.*

Rescue us from the seductions of consumerism. *R.*

Kindle hope in us, and spark creativity for the vitality of Christian communities. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God purify our hearts through the power of the Word and the practice of mutual love. Amen.

Thursday, March 27

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 27:1-4

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
whom should I dread?

When those who do evil draw near
to devour my flesh,
it is they, my enemies and foes,
who stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me,
my heart would not fear.
Though war break out against me,
even then would I trust.

There is one thing I ask of the LORD,
only this do I seek:
to live in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD,
to inquire at his temple.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 9-10a

Now, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD, your
God, carefully observing all his commandments which

I give you today, the LORD, your God, will set you high above all the nations of the earth. All these blessings will come upon you and overwhelm you when you obey the voice of the LORD, your God.

The LORD will establish you as a holy people, as he swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD, your God, and walk in his ways. All the peoples of the earth will see that the name of the LORD is proclaimed over you.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Listen to my voice: I will be your God and you will be my people.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Gracious God, you instruct us through the voice of Jesus. In faith we pray: **R/**. God, in your goodness, hear our prayer.

Help your Church to listen to the needs and desires of adolescents and young adults. **R/**.

Inspire the formation of a just social and global order. **R/**.

Heal our grief, and give us patience in life's transitions, twists, and turns. **R/**.

Our Father . . .

May God open our minds and hearts to know the power of our calling in Christ Jesus, our Light and Salvation.
Amen.

Blessed Among Us

Mothers of the Disappeared

Argentina (1977–1983)

Following a period of economic crisis and political instability in Argentina, many members of the middle class, including Church leaders, openly welcomed the military coup of March 24, 1976, hoping in the promise of stability and order. Few anticipated the savage repression that would follow.

In their “war against subversion” the military unleashed a reign of terror. But rather than fill stadiums and prisons with political prisoners, they perfected the tactic of kidnapping their victims, murdering them in secret, and disposing of their bodies. In this manner 20,000 men and women joined the *desaparecidos*—the “disappeared.”

The aim of this repression was to silence all protest, and it was largely successful. It fell to a group of women—the so-called Mothers of the Disappeared—to break this silence. In their grief they found each other. They began to offer a silent vigil in the Plaza de Mayo, the public square of Buenos Aires. They were called “crazy.” They were subjected to arrest and bullying. Some themselves were added to the “disappeared.” But they carried on. What gave them such courage? As one said, “When a woman gives birth to a child, she gives life and then at the same time, when they cut the cord, she gives freedom. We were fighting for life and for freedom.”

At a time when truth was everywhere suppressed, the Mothers became the conscience of the nation. They lived in hope of the day when the discredited military would be swept from power. That day came in 1983. But their missing children never returned.

“When everyone was terrorized we didn’t stay at home crying—we went to the streets. We were mad, but it was the only way to stay sane.”

—One of the Mothers of the Disappeared

Mass

Thursday of the Third Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord. / Should they cry to me in any distress, / I will hear them, and I will be their Lord for ever.

COLLECT

We implore your majesty most humbly, O Lord, that, as the feast of our salvation draws ever closer, so we may press forward all the more eagerly towards the worthy celebration of the Paschal Mystery. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 7:23-28

*This is the nation that will not listen
to the voice of the LORD God.*

Thus says the LORD: This is what I commanded my people: Listen to my voice; then I will be your God and you shall be my people. Walk in all the ways that I command you, so that you may prosper.

But they obeyed not, nor did they pay heed. They walked in the hardness of their evil hearts and turned their backs, not their faces, to me. From the day that your fathers left the land of Egypt even to this day, I have sent you untiringly all my servants the prophets. Yet they have not obeyed me nor paid heed; they have stiffened their necks and done worse than their fathers. When you speak all these words to them, they will not listen to you either; when you call to them, they will not answer you. Say to them: This is the

nation that does not listen to the voice of the LORD, its God, or take correction. Faithfulness has disappeared; the word itself is banished from their speech.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

R. (8) If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;

let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us joyfully sing psalms to him. **R.**

Come, let us bow down in worship;

let us kneel before the LORD who made us.

For he is our God,

and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides. **R.**

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:

“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,

as in the day of Massah in the desert,

Where your fathers tempted me;

they tested me though they had seen my works.” **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Joel 2:12-13

Even now, says the LORD,

return to me with your whole heart,

for I am gracious and merciful.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 11:14-23

Whoever is not with me is against me.

Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute, and when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke and the crowds were amazed. Some of them said, “By the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he drives out demons.”

Others, to test him, asked him for a sign from heaven. But he knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house. And if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that it is by Beelzebul that I drive out demons. If I, then, drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own people drive them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man fully armed guards his palace, his possessions are safe. But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he takes away the armor on which he relied and distributes the spoils. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Cleanse your people, Lord, we pray,
from every taint of wickedness,
that their gifts may be pleasing to you;
and do not let them cling to false joys,
for you promise them the rewards of your truth.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Psalms 119 (118):4-5

You have laid down your precepts to be carefully kept; /
may my ways be firm in keeping your statutes.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously raise up, O Lord,
those you renew with this Sacrament,
that we may come to possess your salvation
both in mystery and in the manner of our life.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Harden Not Your Heart

Obsculta. Listen. With this single admonition, Saint Benedict begins his holy *Rule*. Listen to the master's instructions, he continues, and attend to them with the ear of your heart. By the labor of obedience to that instruction, we will be brought back to God, from whom we became separated by our disobedience (Prol. 1-3).

Benedict seems to be channeling Jeremiah, God's prophet, who is delivering a similar message from the Lord. *Listen to my voice . . . Walk in all the ways that I command you, so that you may prosper. But they obeyed not, nor did they pay heed* (Jer 7:23-24).

We hear a lot of things each day. A “Vesuvius” of words bombards us from twenty-four-hour news cycles, talk radio, podcasts, and live streams. We can become so saturated with data that we go numb to the reality of it all: another mass shooting; tens of thousands of women and children killed, deported, or starving in refugee camps; the casualties of war. We mumble something about “thoughts and prayers” and go back to business as usual.

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Perhaps it is intentional, and not coincidental, that this verse of Psalm 95 is prayed each morning as part of the invitatory for the Office of Readings. Daily we need to ask God to heal the hardness and numbness of our hearts, which prevents us from hearing the voice of God's agony and grief and seeing the face of God in the suffering men, women, and children of the world, and then responding.

John Meoska, OSB

Fr. John Meoska, OSB, is a monk of Saint John's Abbey and an avid woodworker.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 82

God stands in the divine assembly,
in the midst of the gods gives judgment.

“How long will you judge unjustly,
and favor the cause of the wicked?
Do justice for the weak and the orphan;
give justice to the poor and afflicted.
Rescue the weak and the needy;
set them free from the hand of the wicked.”

They neither know nor understand;
they walk about in darkness,
and all the earth’s foundations are shaken.

I have said to you, “You are gods,
and all of you, children of the Most High.
And yet, like human beings you shall die;
you shall fall, like any earthly ruler.”

Arise, O God; judge the earth!
For all the nations are yours.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 1:21-25

Since in the wisdom of God the world did not come to know God through wisdom, it was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who have faith. For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for

wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

The kingdom of God has come upon you.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Mighty God, all nations are yours. In awe we pray:

R. God, in your justice, hear our prayer.

Unite people of faith in advocacy for the rights of all people and for the well-being of the earth. **R.**

Direct the gifts of charitable organizations toward those who are in need. **R.**

Help us restore truth-telling and respect in our social order. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us forever. Amen.

Friday, March 28

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 32:1-5, 7

Blessed is one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is remitted.

Blessed the one to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,
in whose spirit is no guile.

I kept it secret and my frame was wasted.

I groaned all day long,

For your hand, by day and by night,
lay heavy upon me.

Indeed, my strength was dried up
as by the summer's heat.

To you I have acknowledged my sin;
my guilt I did not hide.

I said, "I will confess my transgression to the LORD."
And you have forgiven the guilt of my sin.

You are a hiding place for me;
you keep me safe from distress;
you surround me with cries of deliverance.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 31:1, 4a-d, 5

Ah! Those who go down to Egypt for help, / who rely on
horses; / Who put their trust in chariots because of their
number, / and in horsemen because of their combined power,

/ But look not to the Holy One of Israel / nor seek the LORD!
 / For thus says the LORD to me: / As a lion or its young /
 growling over the prey, / With a band of shepherds / assem-
 bled against it, / Is neither dismayed by their shouts / nor
 cowed by their noise, / So shall the LORD of hosts come down.
 / Like hovering birds, so the LORD of hosts / shall shield Je-
 rusalem, / To shield and deliver, / to spare and rescue.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or
 another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Forgiving God, you absolve our sin and shield us from harm.
 Rejoicing we pray: *R.* God, save us by your holy name.

Reveal to us your hidden wisdom, and give us courage to
 speak truthfully. *R.*

Exonerate those who are unjustly imprisoned or
 accused. *R.*

Shelter those who are without protection or are
 endangered in any way. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May God give us the cup of salvation and answer us on
 the day we call, through Jesus, our saving help. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

Maria von Trapp

Matriarch of the Trapp Family Singers (1905–1987)

Maria Kutschera, who was orphaned at seven, grew up with no interest in religion; for the “holy water girls” in her class, she felt only scorn. Yet, while studying to be a teacher, she stepped into a church one Palm Sunday and heard a sermon that changed her life. Opening her heart to God, she decided at once to become a nun.

In 1924 she entered Nonnberg Abbey, where, despite her good intentions, her lively personality raised eyebrows. Frequently she was reminded not to whistle in the cloister, or slide down banisters, or skip up the stairs. In 1926 the mother superior tested her vocation by sending her to serve a spell as tutor to one of the seven children of a widowed naval commander, Georg von Trapp. In time, and with the blessing of her abbess, she left the convent, married Georg, and bore three additional children.

Their story inspired the popular musical *The Sound of Music*—though with some poetic license. Yes, they fled Nazi rule in Austria, but there was no climb over the Alps; instead, a train to Italy and a boat to America. Maria consoled the children by recalling the Holy Family’s flight from Herod to Egypt. After that, she felt that “Jesus was a member of the family.” After Georg’s death, Maria and three of her children became missionaries in Papua New Guinea. She died in Vermont on March 28, 1987.

“It will be very interesting one day to follow the pattern of our life as it is spread out like a beautiful tapestry. . . . In looking back we can discover how a red thread goes through the pattern of our life: the Will of God.”

—Maria von Trapp

Mass

Friday of the Third Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Psalm 86 (85):8, 10

Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord, / for you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.

COLLECT

Pour your grace into our hearts, we pray, O Lord,
that we may be constantly drawn away from unruly desires
and obey by your own gift the heavenly teaching you give us.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Hosea 14:2-10

We will not say to the work of our hands: our god.

Thus says the LORD: / Return, O Israel, to the LORD, your God; / you have collapsed through your guilt. / Take with you words, / and return to the LORD; / Say to him, “Forgive all iniquity, / and receive what is good, that we may render / as offerings the bullocks from our stalls. / Assyria will not save us, / nor shall we have horses to mount; / We shall say no more, ‘Our god,’ / to the work of our hands; / for in you the orphan finds compassion.”

I will heal their defection, says the LORD, / I will love them freely; / for my wrath is turned away from them. / I will be like the dew for Israel: / he shall blossom like the lily; / He shall strike root like the Lebanon cedar, / and put forth his shoots. / His splendor shall be like the olive tree / and his fragrance like the Lebanon cedar. / Again they shall dwell in his shade / and raise grain; / They shall blossom like the vine, / and his fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

Ephraim! What more has he to do with idols? / I have humbled him, but I will prosper him. / “I am like a verdant cypress tree”— / Because of me you bear fruit!

Let him who is wise understand these things; / let him who is prudent know them. / Straight are the paths of the LORD, / in them the just walk, / but sinners stumble in them. The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 81:6c-8a, 8bc-9, 10-11ab, 14 and 17
R. (see 11 and 9a) I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.

An unfamiliar speech I hear:

“I relieved his shoulder of the burden;
 his hands were freed from the basket.
 In distress you called, and I rescued you.” *R.*

“Unseen, I answered you in thunder;
 I tested you at the waters of Meribah.
 Hear, my people, and I will admonish you;
 O Israel, will you not hear me?” *R.*

“There shall be no strange god among you
 nor shall you worship any alien god.
 I, the LORD, am your God
 who led you forth from the land of Egypt.” *R.*

“If only my people would hear me,
 and Israel walk in my ways,
 I would feed them with the best of wheat,
 and with honey from the rock I would fill them.” *R.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matthew 4:17

Repent, says the Lord;
 the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

12:28-34

*The Lord our God is one Lord,
and you shall love the Lord your God.*

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replied, “The first is this: *Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* The second is this: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* There is no other commandment greater than these.” The scribe said to him, “Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, *He is One and there is no other than he. And to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself* is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look with favor, we pray, Lord,
on the offerings we dedicate,
that they may be pleasing in your sight
and always be salutary for us.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Mark 12:33

To love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself, / is worth more than any sacrifice.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May your strength be at work in us, O Lord,
pervading our minds and bodies,
that what we have received
by participating in this Sacrament
may bring us the fullness of redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

One God

“Return to God!” Each year, the season of Lent calls us to examine our lives, our thoughts, and our actions, and to set aside sinful ways in order to be converted to God once again.

When the prophet Hosea tells the people to return to God, he also tells them to “take with you words.” Why words? Perhaps the answer can be found in today’s Gospel reading in which Jesus recites the *Shema* in answer to the question of what is the first of all the commandments. In reciting the *Shema* daily, the devout Jew affirms that God is one, the only God, and that we are called to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The Israelites to whom Hosea was speaking had turned to other gods, the gods of Assyria, and the work of their own hands. While we may think that we do not worship idols, if we truly examine our lives, we will probably find various things that we treat as gods: money, possessions, fame, or our reputation are some examples.

This midway point of Lent is a good time to reexamine our lives and look for those things that take precedence over our relationship with God. In acknowledging that, let us then

turn back to God and take with us the words of the *Shema*, the words that Jesus himself prayed daily: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone!” May the love of God and of neighbor again become primary in our lives.

Sr. Anita Louise Lowe

Anita Louise Lowe, OSB, is prioress of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana.

[illegible]

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 109:1-2, 21-23, 26-27, 30-31

O God whom I praise, do not be silent,
for the mouths of deceit and wickedness
are opened against me.

But you, O LORD, my Lord,
do with me as befits your name.
How good your faithful love! Deliver me.

For I am poor and needy,
and my heart is pierced within me.
I fade like an evening shadow;
I am shaken off like a locust.

Help me, LORD my God;
save me with your faithful love.
Let them know that this is your hand,
that this is your doing, O LORD.

Loud thanks to the LORD are on my lips,
with praise in the midst of the throng,
for the Lord stands at the right hand of the poor,
to save their souls from those who condemn them.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

2 John 3-6

Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son in truth and love.

I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth just as we were commanded by the Father. But now, Lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing a new commandment but the one we have had from the beginning: let us love one another. For this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, as you heard from the beginning, in which you should walk.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Love of God and neighbor is the greatest commandment.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of faithful love, you stay close to those in need. In faith we pray: **R.** God, in your goodness, give us life.

Heal those who are afflicted in mind, body, or spirit. **R.**

Free those who are surrounded by oppression, war, poverty, or political unrest. **R.**

Give grace, mercy, and peace to those for whom we have promised to pray. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May the love of God, which is beyond all understanding, stand guard over our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Saturday, March 29

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 84:9-13

O LORD, God of hosts, hear my prayer;

give ear, O God of Jacob.

Behold our shield, O God;

look on the face of your anointed.

One day within your courts

is better than a thousand elsewhere.

The threshold of the house of my God

I prefer to the tents of the wicked.

For the LORD God is a sun, a shield;

the LORD will give us favor and glory,

And will not withhold any good

from those who walk without blame.

O LORD of hosts, how blessed

is the one who trusts in you!

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Sirach 7:9-11, 14-17

Do not say, “[God] will appreciate my many gifts; / the Most High God will accept my offerings.” / Do not be impatient in prayer / or neglect almsgiving. / Do not ridicule the embittered; / Remember: there is One who exalts and humbles. / Do not babble in the assembly of the elders / or repeat the words of your prayer. / Do not hate hard

work; / work was assigned by God. / Do not esteem yourself more than your compatriots; / remember, his wrath will not delay. / More and more, humble your pride; / what awaits mortals is worms.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

O God, be merciful to me a sinner.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of heaven and earth, you alone are holy. In hope we pray: **R.** God, in your great love, hear us.

Give gladness and goodness to coaches, athletes, and spectators. **R.**

Lead all people to find work that befits their dignity and pays just wages. **R.**

Inspire architects who design churches and other sacred spaces. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God lavish us with plenty and favor us with love all our days, through Jesus, the Son of Mary. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

Lev Gillet

Monk of the Eastern Church (1893–1980)

While serving as a French soldier in World War I, Lev Gillet was taken prisoner and spent three years among mostly Russian POWs. Through this experience he was deeply drawn to Orthodox spirituality. After the war he entered a Benedictine monastery in Luxembourg but then moved to a monastery in Galicia (now Ukraine) affiliated with the Greek Catholic Church. Still restless in 1928, he entered the Orthodox Church in Paris and was ordained a priest.

Relatively little of Gillet's life was spent in an actual monastery, but he continued to think of himself as "a Monk of the Eastern Church," the name under which he published his many books. Apart from serving as rector of the first French-language Orthodox parish in Paris, he also lived in Lebanon and London, endeavoring to open dialogue between the Churches of the East and West.

Gillet wrote widely on prayer, striving to overcome walls of separation and entering into dialogue with those who felt excluded from the Church or conventional religious faith. Jesus himself, he noted, was a man drawn to the margins. To those for whom the very word "God" had become empty, he tried to substitute a new name: "You ask what my name is," he wrote in the voice of this God. "I am Being . . . I am the Gift that never ceases to give itself . . . I am Limitless Love."

Gillet died in London on March 29, 1980.

"My beloved ones, I am 'Boundless Love,' 'Love without limits.'"

—From *Love without Limits* by Lev Gillet

Mass

Saturday of the Third Week of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Psalm 103 (102):2-3

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits; / it is he who forgives all your sins.

COLLECT

Rejoicing in this annual celebration
of our Lenten observance,
we pray, O Lord,
that, with our hearts set on the paschal mysteries,
we may be gladdened by their full effects.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Hosea

6:1-6

What I want is love, not sacrifice.

Come, let us return to the LORD, / it is he who has rent,
but he will heal us; / he has struck us, but he will bind
our wounds. / He will revive us after two days; / on the third
day he will raise us up, / to live in his presence. / Let us
know, let us strive to know the LORD; / as certain as the dawn
is his coming, / and his judgment shines forth like the light
of day! / He will come to us like the rain, / like spring rain
that waters the earth."

What can I do with you, Ephraim? / What can I do with
you, Judah? / Your piety is like a morning cloud, / like the
dew that early passes away. / For this reason I smote them
through the prophets, / I slew them by the words of my

mouth; / For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, / and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

51:3-4, 18-19, 20-21ab

R. (see Hosea 6:6) It is mercy I desire, and not sacrifice.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my
offense.

Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me. *R.*

For you are not pleased with sacrifices;
should I offer a burnt offering, you would not accept it.
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not
spurn. *R.*

Be bountiful, O LORD, to Zion in your kindness
by rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem;
Then shall you be pleased with due sacrifices,
burnt offerings and holocausts. *R.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Psalm 95:8

If today you hear his voice,
harden not your hearts.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 18:9-14

The tax collector went home justified, not the Pharisee.

Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. "Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to

himself, ‘O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.’ But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, ‘O God, be merciful to me a sinner.’ I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, by whose grace it comes to pass
that we may approach your mysteries
with minds made pure,
grant, we pray,
that, in reverently handing them on,
we may offer you fitting homage.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Luke 18:13

The tax collector stood at a distance, beating his breast
and saying: / O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May we truly revere, O merciful God,
these holy gifts, by which you ceaselessly nourish us,
and may we always partake of them
with abundant faith in our heart.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

The Power of Paradox

Whenever a person is defined, categorized and made in an “other,” we are ignoring what is real about them. We are avoiding seeing their fullness, their hidden goodness.

What is it about our humanity that insists on stunting our openness to possibility and growth? Perhaps we can only feel confident when we are under the illusion that we know and understand. Perhaps sticking others into tidy containers is one way we try to control and navigate the mystery.

I don’t remember where I heard it or where I read it, but it’s been rattling around in my mind a lot lately that the healthiest and holiest people are the folks who are conscious of the power of paradox. These good ones can love those they disagree with and want goodness for those who have harmed them. They are the saints who can hold two contradictory truths together, who aren’t threatened by inconsistencies.

I wonder how different our church and our world might be if we were taught from a young age that prayer is a type of communion with the mystery, that it is the practice of embracing opposite truths as they coexist. Opening ourselves to seeing every side and knowing we will forever be limited in our knowing is another way we can touch the cross of mystery; it is a way we get to put our fingers into Christ’s side.

Sr. Julia Walsh, *Wisdom from the Global Sisterhood*

Sr. Julia Walsh is a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration and part of her congregation’s formation team, serving women who are discerning their vocation. She co-founded The Fireplace, an intentional community and house of hospitality on Chicago’s South Side. She blogs and podcasts at MessyJesusBusiness.com.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 107:1-3, 17-22

“O give thanks to the LORD who is good,
whose faithful love endures forever.”

Let the redeemed of the LORD say this,
those redeemed from the hand of the foe,
and gathered from far-off lands,
from east and west, north and south.

Some fell sick on account of their sins,
and were afflicted on account of their guilt.
They had a loathing for every food;
they drew near to the gates of death.

Then they cried to the LORD in their need,
and God rescued them from their distress,
sending forth a word to heal them,
saving their life from destruction.

Let them give thanks for the love of the LORD,
God’s wonders for the human race.
Let them offer a sacrifice of thanks,
and tell of God’s deeds with rejoicing.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

1 John 3:7-10

Children, let no one deceive you. The person who acts in righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous. Whoever sins belongs to the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. Indeed, the Son of God was

revealed to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is begotten by God commits sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot sin because he is begotten by God. In this way, the children of God and the children of the devil are made plain; no one who fails to act in righteousness belongs to God, nor anyone who does not love his brother.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

It is loyalty that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of the covenant, you have redeemed us and gathered us together as one in Christ. In trust we pray: *R.* Teach us your love, O God.

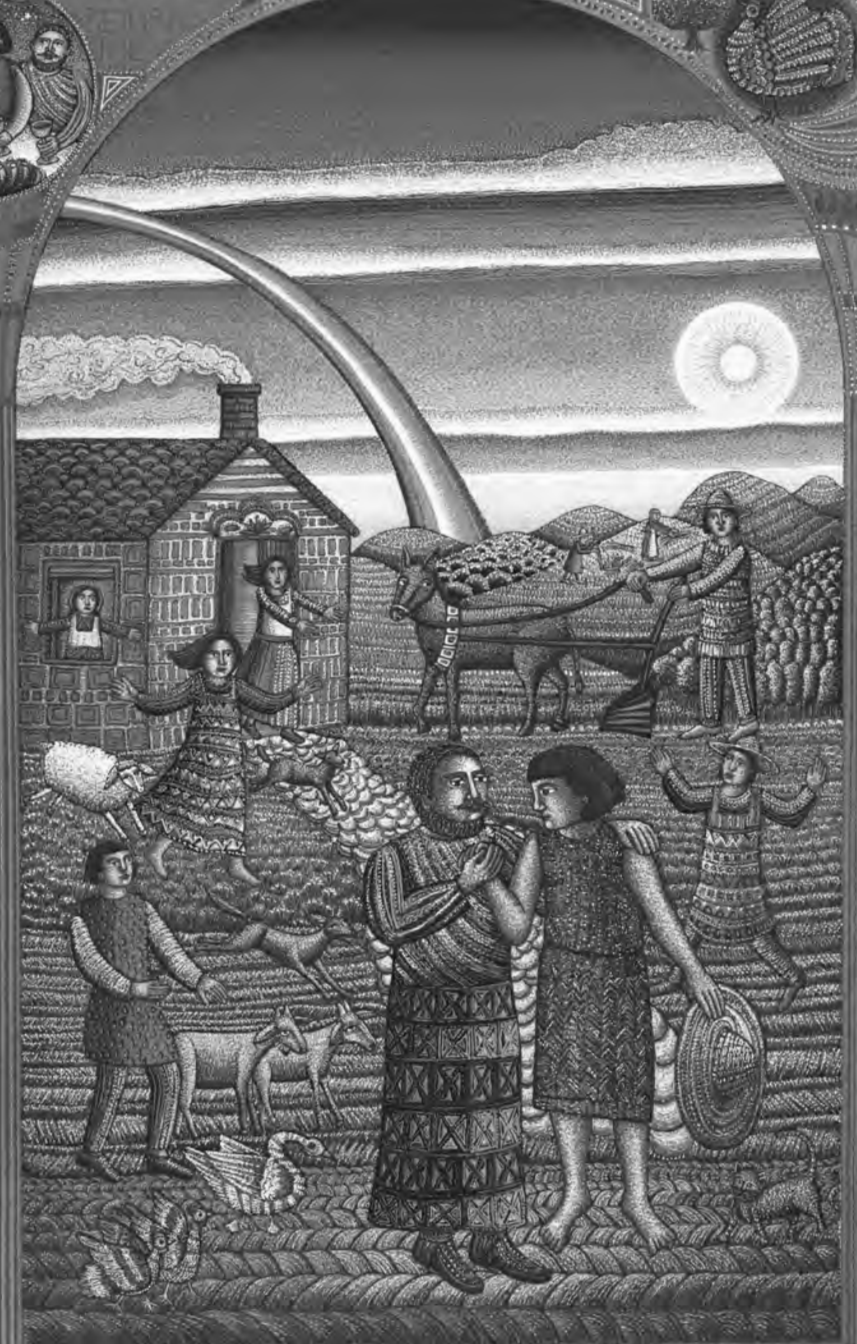
Help us to let go of unfair expectations, judgments, and grudges. *R.*

Widen your Church's circle of inclusion and welcome. *R.*

Spark creativity in disciples who watch out for those who are homeless, jobless, or without necessary provisions. *R.*

Our Father . . .

May almighty God show us mercy, forgive our sin, and lead us to everlasting life, through Jesus, our Redeemer.
Amen.



Sunday, March 30

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.
And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 100

Cry out with joy to the LORD, all the earth.
Serve the LORD with gladness.
Come before God, singing for joy.

Know that the LORD is God,
who made us, to whom we belong.
We are God's people, the sheep of God's flock.

Enter the temple gates with thanksgiving
and its courts with songs of praise.
Give thanks and bless God's name.

Indeed, how good is the LORD,
eternal God's merciful love.
God is faithful from age to age.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Micah 7:18-20

Who is a God like you, who removes guilt / and pardons sin for the remnant of his inheritance; / Who does not persist in anger forever, / but instead delights in mercy, / And will again have compassion on us, / treading underfoot our iniquities? / You will cast into the depths of the sea all our sins; / You will show faithfulness to Jacob, /

and loyalty to Abraham, / As you have sworn to our ancestors / from days of old.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

This son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Shepherding God, your love is forever. In confidence we pray: **R.** God of faithful love, hear us.

Make your Church a sign of your reconciliation and unity. **R.**

Strengthen and inspire missionaries and lay volunteers. **R.**

Give fortitude and courage to those who work to dismantle structural racial injustice. **R.**

Our Father . . .

May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Mass

Fourth Sunday of Lent

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Isaiah 66:10-11

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. / Be joyful, all who were in mourning; / exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

(The Gloria is omitted.)

COLLECT

O God, who through your Word
reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way,
grant, we pray,
that with prompt devotion and eager faith
the Christian people may hasten
toward the solemn celebrations to come.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

(The readings for Year A, pp. 319–23, may be used in place of the following.)

A reading from the Book of Joshua

5:9a, 10-12

*The people of God entered the promised land
and there kept the Passover.*

The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you.”

While the Israelites were encamped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they celebrated the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth of the month. On the day after the Passover, they ate of the produce of the land in the form of unleavened

cakes and parched grain. On that same day after the Passover, on which they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased. No longer was there manna for the Israelites, who that year ate of the yield of the land of Canaan.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7

R. (9a) Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad. **R.**

Glorify the LORD with me,
let us together extol his name.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears. **R.**

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,
and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him. **R.**

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul
to the Corinthians

5:17-21

God reconciled us to himself through Christ.

Brothers and sisters: Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were

appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Luke 15:18

I will get up and go to my Father and shall say to him:
Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

15:1-3, 11-32

Your brother was dead and has come to life again.

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So to them Jesus addressed this parable: “A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired

workers.”’ So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.’ But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, ‘Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, ‘Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.’ He said to him, ‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We place before you with joy these offerings,
which bring eternal remedy, O Lord,
praying that we may both faithfully revere them
and present them to you, as is fitting,
for the salvation of all the world.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

When the Gospel of the Man Born Blind is read: Cf. John 9:11, 38
The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed, / I saw and
I believed in God.

When the Gospel of the Prodigal Son is read: Luke 15:32
You must rejoice, my son, / for your brother was dead
and has come to life; / he was lost and is found.

When another Gospel is read: Cf. Psalm 122 (121):3-4
Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one together. / It is
there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, / to
praise the name of the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world,
illuminate our hearts, we pray,
with the splendor of your grace,
that we may always ponder
what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty
and love you in all sincerity.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

How Will the Story End?

For much of my life, like many other Christians, I assumed I understood what the parable known as the “Prodigal Son” was all about. Its meaning was found in the presumed change of heart of a selfish younger son. Or the moral of the story centered on the unconditional love of a generous father. Or, perhaps, the real insight was about the envious but loyal older son. And while all three of these characters and themes have merit, it wasn’t until I read a commentary about this passage by the renowned New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine that I suddenly saw Jesus’ message in a new light.

One thing that Levine points out is the way the story never reaches a resolution. It can be tempting to pretend the father’s last words to the older son represents a real conclusion, but it doesn’t. The parable ends without the reconciliation of seriously broken family relationships: between brothers, between parent and children, and perhaps between others (where’s the mother, for example?). Our desire for a happy ending may have led us to project one into an intentionally uncomfortable story.

Perhaps another way to think about this parable is to see Jesus setting up a complicated, dysfunctional, and fraught family dynamic that is far more relatable than we might realize. That the story isn’t wrapped up neatly at the end invites us to imagine how different scenarios might play out, and ask ourselves, what is God calling each person and the family collectively to do? Maybe this is one way we can enter into the parable ourselves, reflecting on the ways our own relationships need healing, and then do something about it.

Daniel P. Horan

Daniel P. Horan is a professor and director of the Center for the Study of Spirituality at Saint Mary’s College in Notre Dame, Indiana.

*Readings for Year A***A reading from the first Book of Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a***David is anointed as king of Israel.*

The LORD said to Samuel: “Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons.”

As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is here before him.” But the LORD said to Samuel: “Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart.” In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any one of these.” Then Samuel asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” Jesse replied, “There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here.” Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance. The LORD said, “There—anoint him, for this is the one!” Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM**23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6**

R. (1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul. **R.**

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
with your rod and your staff
that give me courage. *R.*

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. *R.*

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come. *R.*

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

5:8-14

Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.

Brothers and sisters: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says: / "Awake, O sleeper, / and arise from the dead, / and Christ will give you light."

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 8:12

I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

9:1-41 (Shorter Form [], 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38)

*The man who was blind went off and washed himself
and came back able to see.*

[As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth.] His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, [he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam”—which means Sent—. So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is,” but others said, “No, he just looks like him.” He said, “I am.”] So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?” He replied, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went there and washed and was able to see.” And they said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I don’t know.”

[They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see.” So some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a sinful man do such signs?” And there was a division among them. So they said

to the blind man again, "What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."]

Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?" His parents answered and said, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; question him."

So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner." He replied, "If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see." So they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" They ridiculed him and said, "You are that man's disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from." The man answered and said to them, "This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything." [They answered and said to him, "You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him.] Then Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind."

Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not also blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains."

The Gospel of the Lord.



Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 24:1-6

The LORD's is the earth and its fullness,
the world, and those who dwell in it.
It is the Lord who set it on the seas,
and made it firm on the rivers.

Who shall climb the mountain of the LORD?
Who shall stand in God's holy place?
The clean of hands and pure of heart,
whose souls are not set on vain things,
who have not sworn deceitful words.

Blessings from the LORD shall they receive,
and right reward from the God who saves them.
Such are the people who seek the Lord,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:25-27, 30-32

Putting away falsehood, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger, and do not leave room for the devil. And do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption. All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. [And] be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

God has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Forgiving God, your abundant goodness is the cause of our praise. In joy we pray: **R/**. God of life, hear our prayer.

Lead us to know our personal need for ongoing conversion, and fill us with your Spirit. **R/**.

Strengthen those who are in recovery from addiction. **R/**.

Bring an end to the death penalty, and inspire us to pray for our enemies. **R/**.

Our Father . . .

May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts, now and always. Amen.

March 30–31

Fourth Week of Lent

Within the Word

Love Set in Concrete

God . . . has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18). Although St. Paul's letters have a reputation for being difficult to understand (a sentiment that's even enshrined in Scripture in 2 Peter 3:16), his theology was grounded in real life. The good news he preached with his voice, pen, and life was *personal*; it was rooted in his own experience of the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Sunday's reading from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians is an excellent example of this concrete theology. The church at Corinth was founded by Paul. He spoke to them in maternal terms; they were "infants" he fed with "milk, not solid food" (1 Cor 3:1-2). And yet, his relationship with the Corinthians—a community characterized by rivalries, factions, and disagreements—was at times quite strained. It was out of Paul's complicated relationship with this complex community that the great theology of First and Second Corinthians emerged.

Part of this great theology is Paul's message about reconciliation. His understanding of reconciliation is quite simple: It is God's work. This is where Paul always begins, but it is never where he ends. For he is also clear: Reconciliation is our work, too. It is work—*diakonia*, ministry—that has been entrusted to each of us, to all who are "in Christ."

Indeed, God "has reconciled himself to us through Christ." *God* has taken this initiative; it is a gracious gift. But in the

same breath Paul says that God has given *us* this “ministry of reconciliation.” We are now “ambassadors” for Christ, and God is appealing to the world *through us*. The words of Jesus may echo in our ears: “To whom much has been given, much will be required” (Luke 12:48).

As challenging as Paul’s message is, it resonates with us deeply. We have known this gracious gift, and we have heard this awesome call. As Paul says elsewhere, the love of God has been poured into our hearts (Rom 5:5)! We’ve done nothing to earn or deserve it. But once we have opened ourselves to this flowing grace, we feel ourselves *compelled* to join in the ministry of reconciliation—to share in this good news of the reconciliation of God and human beings through Christ.

What does this ministry of reconciliation look like? It looks like love, lived in the concrete. For this is where Paul’s vision of reconciliation is rooted: in his own experience of God’s love—overwhelming and transformative love for a man traveling along a road on his way to Damascus, who heard the voice of the risen Christ speak his name (Acts 9:4). This is the love of which Paul said, “[he] loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20)—the love that Paul said compels us, or urges us on, or holds us fast (2 Cor 5:14). It is a forgiving love, an expansive love, a love set in stone.

Reconciliation is not a theory or an ideal. It is a way of life, a ministry. Who better to live it than us? And when better to live it than now? For as much as Paul, we too have been called by name to be ambassadors of Christ, emissaries of his concrete love.

—Amy Ekeh

Amy Ekeh is the director of Little Rock Scripture Study and special content editor at Liturgical Press. Her most recent book is Stretch Out Your Hand: Reflections on the Healing Ministry of Jesus. Visit her at amyekesh.com.

Monday, March 31

Morning

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 71:1-6

In you, O LORD, I take refuge;

let me never be put to shame.

In your righteousness, rescue me, free me;

incline your ear to me and save me.

Be my rock, my constant refuge,

a mighty stronghold to save me,

for you are my rock, my stronghold.

My God, free me from the hand of the wicked,

from the grip of the unjust, of the oppressor.

It is you, O Lord, who are my hope,

my trust, O LORD, from my youth.

On you I have leaned from my birth;

it was you who took me from my mother's womb.

At all times I give you praise.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Baruch 4:36–5:4

Look to the east, Jerusalem; / see the joy that comes to you
from God! / Here come your children whom you sent
away, / gathered in from east to west / By the word of the
Holy One, / rejoicing in the glory of God.

Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery;
/ put on forever the splendor of glory from God: / Wrapped

in the mantle of justice from God, / place on your head the diadem / of the glory of the Eternal One. / For God will show your splendor to all under the heavens; / you will be named by God forever: / the peace of justice, the glory of God's worship.

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today's Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

I will rejoice in Jerusalem and exult in my people.

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH (*inside front cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

God of the living, your faithful love is ever before us. In hope we pray: **R.** Comfort and heal us, O God.

For those who are undergoing cancer treatment, physical therapy, or rehabilitation for illness, we pray: **R.**

For those whose lives are weighed down by worries, lack of necessary resources, or grief, we pray: **R.**

For those who suffer because of abuse, bullying, or neglect, we pray: **R.**

Our Father . . .

May God lead us along the path of life and fill our hearts with the inexpressible delights of love, through Jesus, our happiness and peace. Amen.

Blessed Among Us

John Donne

Anglican Priest and Poet (1572–1631)

John Donne, an Anglican priest, is remembered as one of the greatest of the English metaphysical poets. Donne was raised in a family of recusant Catholics. At first he recoiled from religion and pursued a secular career. But in the face of personal and professional hardship, he chose ordination in the Anglican Church.

Unlike his contemporary George Herbert, whose poetry is marked by lightness and balance, Donne's work is marked by stress and strain, a fit commentary on his preoccupation with death and the struggle for salvation. "*Batter my heart, three person'd God; for, you / as yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend; / that I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee, and bend / Your force, to breake, blow, burn and make me new.*"

If for Herbert the encounter with God is a gentle caress, in Donne it is a wrestling match such as Jacob experienced in his encounter with the angel—a match one must pray to lose. Donne experienced much hardship and sorrow—particularly the death of his beloved wife, a crushing loss from which he never recovered. And yet he clung to the assurance that by sharing the cross of Christ we might also have a share in his resurrection: "*Be this my Text, my Sermon to mine owne, / Therefore, that he may raise the Lord throws down.*" His own death came on March 31, 1631.

"Death be not proud, though some have called thee / Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not soe, / For, those, whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow, / Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill me . . . / One short sleep past, wee wake eternally, / And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die."

—John Donne

Mass

*Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent**

*The following readings may be used on any day this week, especially in Years B and C when the Gospel of the Man Born Blind is not read on the Fourth Sunday of Lent: Mic 7:7-9; John 9:1-41.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Psalm 31 (30):7-8

As for me, I trust in the Lord. / Let me be glad and rejoice
in your mercy, / for you have seen my affliction.

COLLECT

O God, who renew the world
through mysteries beyond all telling,
grant, we pray,
that your Church may be guided by your eternal design
and not be deprived of your help in this present age.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 65:17-21

*No longer shall the sound of weeping
or the sound of crying be heard.*

Thus says the LORD: / Lo, I am about to create new heavens / and a new earth; / The things of the past shall not be remembered / or come to mind. / Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness / in what I create; / For I create Jerusalem to be a joy / and its people to be a delight; / I will rejoice in Jerusalem / and exult in my people. / No longer shall the sound of weeping be heard there, / or the sound of crying; / No longer shall there be in it / an infant who lives but a few days, / or an old man who does not round out his full lifetime; / He dies a mere youth who reaches but a hundred years, / and he who fails of a hundred

shall be thought accursed. / They shall live in the houses
they build, / and eat the fruit of the vineyards they plant.
The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a and 13b

R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew me clear
and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.

O LORD, you brought me up from the nether world;
you preserved me from among those going down into
the pit. **R.**

Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger lasts but a moment;
a lifetime, his good will.

At nightfall, weeping enters in,
but with the dawn, rejoicing. **R.**

“Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me;
O LORD, be my helper.”

You changed my mourning into dancing;
O LORD, my God, forever will I give you thanks. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Amos 5:14

Seek good and not evil so that you may live,
and the LORD will be with you.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 4:43-54

Go, your son will live.

At that time Jesus left [Samaria] for Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his native place. When he came into Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen all he had done in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves had gone to the feast.

Then he returned to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. Now there was a royal official whose son was ill in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, who was near death. Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe." The royal official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "You may go; your son will live." The man believed what Jesus said to him and left. While the man was on his way back, his slaves met him and told him that his boy would live. He asked them when he began to recover. They told him, "The fever left him yesterday, about one in the afternoon." The father realized that just at that time Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live," and he and his whole household came to believe. Now this was the second sign Jesus did when he came to Galilee from Judea.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May we receive, O Lord, we pray,
the effects of this offering dedicated to you,
so that we may be cleansed from old earthly ways
and be renewed by growth in heavenly life.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Ezekiel 36:27

I will place my spirit within you / and make you walk
according to my laws; / and my judgments you shall keep
and observe, says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May your holy gifts, O Lord, we pray,
give us life by making us new,
and, by sanctifying us, lead us to things eternal.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection

New Life in Christ

With the emphasis during Lent on the Sacraments of Initiation and the welcoming of new members, the Liturgy of the Word during the last three weeks emphasizes themes of healing and new life. We experience a crescendo of anticipation, evoking awe and hope, gradually building each day to the culmination of the Easter mystery in the celebration of the Paschal Triduum. The readings intentionally invite us to keep our eye on the new possibilities that arise from full participation in the Christian life.

Embracing the mystery of the suffering of Jesus in our daily lives, we believe that we already live in the new life offered us through Christ. As catechumens and candidates prepare to join the Church, we, too, prepare to renew our baptismal promises. Firmly rooted in the cross, we know that the cross is not the end of the story, but rather an entry into a new way of life offered to us by the Risen One, a life that will flourish as we preach the Good News through our words and actions.

As baptized faithful, we are called to proclaim to all what our readings teach us: the hope of new life from death; that the blind will see and the deaf hear; of living water within that will overflow into eternal life. New wine served at the wedding in Cana, and the cure of the royal official's son, are signs that announce this new life in Christ, offering hope to a world in which God initiates love—and invites us to do the same.

Sr. Patricia Parachini

Patricia Parachini, SNJM, a pastoral theologian and spiritual director, writes about spirituality, liturgy, and pastoral care.

Evening

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.

(opt. hymn, pp. 370–75)

PSALM 114:1b-8

When Israel came forth from Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a foreign people,
Judah became God's holy place,
Israel the Lord's domain.

The sea beheld them and fled;
the Jordan turned back on its course.
The mountains leapt like rams,
and the hills like yearling sheep.

Why was it, sea, that you fled;
that you turned back, Jordan, on your course?
O mountains, that you leapt like rams;
O hills, like yearling sheep?

Tremble, O earth, before the Lord,
in the presence of the God of Jacob,
who turns the rock into a pool,
and flint into a spring of water.

Glory to the Father . . .

SCRIPTURE

Revelation 21:1-3

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human

race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God].”

READ, PONDER, PRAY on a word or phrase from these readings or another of today’s Scriptures (*Lectio Divina*, p. 376)

ANTIPHON

Shout for joy and be glad forever in what I am creating.

CANTICLE OF MARY (*inside back cover*)

INTERCESSIONS

Living God, your mercies are new every day. In trust we pray: *R/*. Hear us and heal us, O God.

For those who yearn for someone to listen to their story, we pray: *R/*.

For those who suffer injuries from manual labor, we pray: *R/*.

For those who carry regrets, remorse, or debilitating anger, we pray: *R/*.

Our Father . . .

May God cover us with love, protection, and mercy, and fill our hearts with the peace of Christ. Amen.

The Order of Mass

■ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

■ Amen.

GREETING

A The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

And with your spirit.

B Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And with your spirit.

C The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins,
and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

(Pause)

A I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

And, striking their breast, they say:

through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;

Then they continue:

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

B Have mercy on us, O Lord.
For we have sinned against you.
Show us, O Lord, your mercy.
And grant us your salvation.

These or other invocations may be used.

C You were sent to heal the contrite of heart:
Lord, have mercy. **Or:** Kyrie, eleison.
Lord, have mercy. **Or:** Kyrie, eleison.
You came to call sinners:
Christ, have mercy. **Or:** Christe, eleison.
Christ, have mercy. **Or:** Christe, eleison.
You are seated at the right hand of the Father to
intercede for us:
Lord, have mercy. **Or:** Kyrie, eleison.
Lord, have mercy. **Or:** Kyrie, eleison.

■ May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

■ Amen.

KYRIE

The Kyrie, eleison (Lord, have mercy) invocations follow, unless they have just occurred in a formula of the Penitential Act.

■ Lord, have mercy. ■ Kyrie, eleison.

■ Lord, have mercy. ■ Kyrie, eleison.

■ Christ, have mercy. ■ Christe, eleison.

■ Christ, have mercy. ■ Christe, eleison.

■ Lord, have mercy. ■ Kyrie, eleison.

■ Lord, have mercy. ■ Kyrie, eleison.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
 have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
 receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
 have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT (OPENING PRAYER)

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

SECOND READING

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

GOSPEL

Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God,
that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel.

■ The Lord be with you.

■ And with your spirit.

■ A reading from the holy Gospel according to **N**.

■ Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end:

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

■ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Through the words of the Gospel
may our sins be wiped away.

HOMILY

PROFESSION OF FAITH

[The Apostles' Creed can be found on p. 368]

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

At the words that follow, up to and including and became man,
all bow.

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL (BIDDING PRAYERS)

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRESENTATION AND PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the bread we offer you:
fruit of the earth and work of human hands,
it will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

By the mystery of this water and wine
may we come to share in the divinity of Christ
who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the wine we offer you:
fruit of the vine and work of human hands,
it will become our spiritual drink.

Blessed be God for ever.

With humble spirit and contrite heart
may we be accepted by you, O Lord,
and may our sacrifice in your sight this day
be pleasing to you, Lord God.

Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

INVITATION TO PRAYER

Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters),
that my sacrifice and yours
may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.

**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good
and the good of all his holy Church.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

- The Lord be with you. ■ And with your spirit.
- Lift up your hearts. ■ We lift them up to the Lord.
- Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- It is right and just.

PREFACE II OF THE SUNDAYS IN ORDINARY TIME

The mystery of salvation

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

For out of compassion for the waywardness that is ours,
he humbled himself and was born of the Virgin;
by the passion of the Cross he freed us from unending death,
and by rising from the dead he gave us life eternal.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

COMMON PREFACE II

Salvation through Christ

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in goodness you created man
and, when he was justly condemned,
in mercy you redeemed him,
through Christ our Lord.

Through him the Angels praise your majesty,
Dominions adore and Powers tremble before you.
Heaven and the Virtues of heaven and the blessed Seraphim
worship together with exultation.
May our voices, we pray, join with theirs
in humble praise, as we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

PREFACE III OF LENT

The fruits of abstinence

(The following Preface is said in Masses of the weekdays of Lent and on days of fasting.)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you will that our self-denial should give you thanks,
humble our sinful pride,
contribute to the feeding of the poor,
and so help us imitate you in your kindness.

And so we glorify you with countless Angels,
as with one voice of praise we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

PREFACE OF THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

The Temptation of the Lord

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

By abstaining forty long days from earthly food,
he consecrated through his fast
the pattern of our Lenten observance
and, by overturning all the snares of the ancient serpent,
taught us to cast out the leaven of malice,
so that, celebrating worthily the Paschal Mystery,
we might pass over at last to the eternal paschal feast.

And so, with the company of Angels and Saints,
we sing the hymn of your praise,
as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

PREFACE OF THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

The Transfiguration of the Lord

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

For after he had told the disciples of his coming Death,
on the holy mountain he manifested to them his glory,
to show, even by the testimony of the law and the prophets,
that the Passion leads to the glory of the Resurrection.

And so, with the Powers of heaven,
we worship you constantly on earth,
and before your majesty
without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

PREFACE OF THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A

The Samaritan Woman

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

For when he asked the Samaritan woman for water to drink,
he had already created the gift of faith within her
and so ardently did he thirst for her faith,
that he kindled in her the fire of divine love.

And so we, too, give you thanks
and with the Angels
praise your mighty deeds, as we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

PREFACE OF THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A
The Man Born Blind

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

By the mystery of the Incarnation,
he has led the human race that walked in darkness
into the radiance of the faith
and has brought those born in slavery to ancient sin
through the waters of regeneration
to make them your adopted children.

Therefore, all creatures of heaven and earth
sing a new song in adoration,
and we, with all the host of Angels,
cry out, and without end acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

PREFACE I OF LENT

The spiritual meaning of Lent

(The following Preface is said in Masses of Lent, especially on
Sundays when a more specific Preface is not prescribed.)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

For by your gracious gift each year
your faithful await the sacred paschal feasts
with the joy of minds made pure,
so that, more eagerly intent on prayer
and on the works of charity,
and participating in the mysteries
by which they have been reborn,

they may be led to the fullness of grace
that you bestow on your sons and daughters.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

PREFACE OF THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

The mission of Saint Joseph

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
and on the Solemnity of Saint Joseph
to give you fitting praise,
to glorify you and bless you.

For this just man was given by you
as spouse to the Virgin Mother of God
and set as a wise and faithful servant
in charge of your household
to watch like a father over your Only Begotten Son,
who was conceived by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him the Angels praise your majesty,
Dominions adore and Powers tremble before you.
Heaven and the Virtues of heaven and the blessed Seraphim
worship together with exultation.
May our voices, we pray, join with theirs
in humble praise, as we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

PREFACE OF THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION

The mystery of the Incarnation

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

For the Virgin Mary heard with faith
that the Christ was to be born among men and for men's sake
by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit.
Lovingly she bore him in her immaculate womb,
that the promises to the children of Israel might come about
and the hope of nations be accomplished beyond all telling.
Through him the host of Angels adores your majesty
and rejoices in your presence for ever.
May our voices, we pray, join with theirs
in one chorus of exultant praise, as we acclaim:

SANCTUS

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dóminus Deus Sábaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra glória tua.
Hosáнна in excélsis.
Benedíctus qui venit in nómine Dómini.
Hosáнна in excélsis.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER I (Roman Canon)

To you, therefore, most merciful Father,
we make humble prayer and petition
through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord:
that you accept
and bless ✠ these gifts, these offerings,
these holy and unblemished sacrifices,
which we offer you firstly
for your holy catholic Church.
Be pleased to grant her peace,
to guard, unite and govern her
throughout the whole world,
together with your servant **N.** our Pope
and **N.** our Bishop,
and all those who, holding to the truth,
hand on the catholic and apostolic faith.
Remember, Lord, your servants **N.** and **N.**
and all gathered here,
whose faith and devotion are known to you.
For them, we offer you this sacrifice of praise
or they offer it for themselves
and all who are dear to them:
for the redemption of their souls,
in hope of health and well-being,
and paying their homage to you,
the eternal God, living and true.

In communion with those whose memory we venerate,
especially the glorious ever-Virgin Mary,
Mother of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ,
✠ and blessed Joseph, her Spouse,
your blessed Apostles and Martyrs,
Peter and Paul, Andrew,

(James, John,
Thomas, James, Philip,
Bartholomew, Matthew,
Simon and Jude;
Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus,
Cornelius, Cyprian,
Lawrence, Chrysogonus,
John and Paul,
Cosmas and Damian)
and all your Saints;
we ask that through their merits and prayers,
in all things we may be defended
by your protecting help.
(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)

Therefore, Lord, we pray:
graciously accept this oblation of our service,
that of your whole family;
order our days in your peace,
and command that we be delivered from eternal damnation
and counted among the flock of those you have chosen.
(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)

Be pleased, O God, we pray,
to bless, acknowledge,
and approve this offering in every respect;
make it spiritual and acceptable,
so that it may become for us
the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the day before he was to suffer,
he took bread in his holy and venerable hands,
and with eyes raised to heaven
to you, O God, his almighty Father,
giving you thanks, he said the blessing,

broke the bread

and gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,

FOR THIS IS MY BODY,

WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended,

he took this precious chalice

in his holy and venerable hands,

and once more giving you thanks, he said the blessing

and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,

FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,

THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,

WHICH WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY

FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

The mystery of faith.

A We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.

B When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.

C Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

Therefore, O Lord,

as we celebrate the memorial of the blessed Passion,

the Resurrection from the dead,

and the glorious Ascension into heaven

of Christ, your Son, our Lord,

we, your servants and your holy people,
offer to your glorious majesty
from the gifts that you have given us,
this pure victim,
this holy victim,
this spotless victim,
the holy Bread of eternal life
and the Chalice of everlasting salvation.

Be pleased to look upon these offerings
with a serene and kindly countenance,
and to accept them,
as once you were pleased to accept
the gifts of your servant Abel the just,
the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith,
and the offering of your high priest Melchizedek,
a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim.

In humble prayer we ask you, almighty God:
command that these gifts be borne
by the hands of your holy Angel
to your altar on high
in the sight of your divine majesty,
so that all of us, who through this participation at the altar
receive the most holy Body and Blood of your Son,
may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.
(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)

Remember also, Lord, your servants **N.** and **N.**,
who have gone before us with the sign of faith
and rest in the sleep of peace.

Grant them, O Lord, we pray,
and all who sleep in Christ,
a place of refreshment, light and peace.
(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)

To us, also, your servants, who, though sinners,
hope in your abundant mercies,
graciously grant some share
and fellowship with your holy Apostles and Martyrs:
with John the Baptist, Stephen,
Matthias, Barnabas,
(Ignatius, Alexander,
Marcellinus, Peter,
Felicity, Perpetua,
Agatha, Lucy,
Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia)
and all your Saints;
admit us, we beseech you,
into their company,
not weighing our merits,
but granting us your pardon,
through Christ our Lord.

Through whom
you continue to make all these good things, O Lord;
you sanctify them, fill them with life,
bless them, and bestow them upon us.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer, p. 364.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER II

Preface

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father most holy,
through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ,
your Word through whom you made all things,
whom you sent as our Savior and Redeemer,
incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin.

Fulfilling your will and gaining for you a holy people,
he stretched out his hands as he endured his Passion,
so as to break the bonds of death and manifest the resurrection.

And so, with the Angels and all the Saints
we declare your glory,
as with one voice we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

You are indeed Holy, O Lord,
the fount of all holiness.

Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray,
by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall,
so that they may become for us
the Body and ✠ Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the time he was betrayed
and entered willingly into his Passion,
he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended,
he took the chalice
and, once more giving thanks,
he gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

The mystery of faith.

A We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.

B When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.

C Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

Therefore, as we celebrate
the memorial of his Death and Resurrection,
we offer you, Lord,
the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation,
giving thanks that you have held us worthy
to be in your presence and minister to you.

Humbly we pray
that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ,
we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.

Remember, Lord, your Church,
spread throughout the world,
and bring her to the fullness of charity,
together with **N.** our Pope and **N.** our Bishop
and all the clergy.

Remember also our brothers and sisters
who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection,
and all who have died in your mercy:
welcome them into the light of your face.
Have mercy on us all, we pray,
that with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,
with blessed Joseph, her Spouse,
with the blessed Apostles,
and all the Saints who have pleased you throughout the ages,
we may merit to be coheirs to eternal life,
and may praise and glorify you
through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer, p. 364.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER III

You are indeed Holy, O Lord,
and all you have created
rightly gives you praise,
for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
by the power and working of the Holy Spirit,
you give life to all things and make them holy,
and you never cease to gather a people to yourself,
so that from the rising of the sun to its setting
a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.

Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you:
by the same Spirit graciously make holy
these gifts we have brought to you for consecration,

that they may become the Body and ✠ Blood
of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.

For on the night he was betrayed
he himself took bread,
and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing,
broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended,
he took the chalice,
and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing,
and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

The mystery of faith.

A We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.

B When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.

C Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial
of the saving Passion of your Son,
his wondrous Resurrection
and Ascension into heaven,
and as we look forward to his second coming,
we offer you in thanksgiving
this holy and living sacrifice.

Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church
and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death
you willed to reconcile us to yourself,
grant that we, who are nourished
by the Body and Blood of your Son
and filled with his Holy Spirit,
may become one body, one spirit in Christ.

May he make of us
an eternal offering to you,
so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect,
especially with the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,
with blessed Joseph, her Spouse,
with your blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs
(with Saint N.: the Saint of the day or Patron Saint)
and with all the Saints,
on whose constant intercession in your presence
we rely for unfailing help.

May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation,
we pray, O Lord,
advance the peace and salvation of all the world.
Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity
your pilgrim Church on earth,
with your servant N. our Pope and N. our Bishop,
the Order of Bishops, all the clergy,
and the entire people you have gained for your own.

Listen graciously to the prayers of this family,
whom you have summoned before you:
in your compassion, O merciful Father,
gather to yourself all your children
scattered throughout the world.

† To our departed brothers and sisters
and to all who were pleasing to you
at their passing from this life,
give kind admittance to your kingdom.
There we hope to enjoy for ever the fullness of your glory
through Christ our Lord,
through whom you bestow on the world all that is good. †
Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer, p. 364.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER IV

Preface

It is truly right to give you thanks,
truly just to give you glory, Father most holy,
for you are the one God living and true,
existing before all ages and abiding for all eternity,
dwelling in unapproachable light;
yet you, who alone are good, the source of life,
have made all that is,
so that you might fill your creatures with blessings
and bring joy to many of them by the glory of your light.
And so, in your presence are countless hosts of Angels,
who serve you day and night

and, gazing upon the glory of your face,
glorify you without ceasing.

With them we, too, confess your name in exultation,
giving voice to every creature under heaven,
as we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

We give you praise, Father most holy,
for you are great
and you have fashioned all your works
in wisdom and in love.

You formed man in your own image
and entrusted the whole world to his care,
so that in serving you alone, the Creator,
he might have dominion over all creatures.

And when through disobedience he had lost your friendship,
you did not abandon him to the domain of death.

For you came in mercy to the aid of all,
so that those who seek might find you.
Time and again you offered them covenants
and through the prophets
taught them to look forward to salvation.

And you so loved the world, Father most holy,
that in the fullness of time
you sent your Only Begotten Son to be our Savior.
Made incarnate by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary,
he shared our human nature
in all things but sin.

To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation,
to prisoners, freedom,
and to the sorrowful of heart, joy.
To accomplish your plan,
he gave himself up to death,

and, rising from the dead,
he destroyed death and restored life.

And that we might live no longer for ourselves
but for him who died and rose again for us,
he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father,
as the first fruits for those who believe,
so that, bringing to perfection his work in the world,
he might sanctify creation to the full.

Therefore, O Lord, we pray:
may this same Holy Spirit
graciously sanctify these offerings,
that they may become
the Body and ✠ Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
for the celebration of this great mystery,
which he himself left us
as an eternal covenant.

For when the hour had come
for him to be glorified by you, Father most holy,
having loved his own who were in the world,
he loved them to the end:
and while they were at supper,
he took bread, blessed and broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way,
taking the chalice filled with the fruit of the vine,
he gave thanks,
and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,

THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

The mystery of faith.

A We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.

B When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.

C Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

Therefore, O Lord,
as we now celebrate the memorial of our redemption,
we remember Christ's Death
and his descent to the realm of the dead,
we proclaim his Resurrection
and his Ascension to your right hand,
and, as we await his coming in glory,
we offer you his Body and Blood,
the sacrifice acceptable to you
which brings salvation to the whole world.

Look, O Lord, upon the Sacrifice
which you yourself have provided for your Church,
and grant in your loving kindness
to all who partake of this one Bread and one Chalice
that, gathered into one body by the Holy Spirit,
they may truly become a living sacrifice in Christ
to the praise of your glory.

Therefore, Lord, remember now
all for whom we offer this sacrifice:
especially your servant **N.** our Pope,
N. our Bishop, and the whole Order of Bishops,
all the clergy,
those who take part in this offering,
those gathered here before you,
your entire people,
and all who seek you with a sincere heart.

Remember also
those who have died in the peace of your Christ
and all the dead,
whose faith you alone have known.

To all of us, your children,
grant, O merciful Father,
that we may enter into a heavenly inheritance
with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,
with blessed Joseph, her Spouse,
and with your Apostles and Saints in your kingdom.
There, with the whole of creation,
freed from the corruption of sin and death,
may we glorify you through Christ our Lord,
through whom you bestow on the world all that is good.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

COMMUNION RITE

LORD'S PRAYER

At the Savior's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may be always free from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

SIGN OF PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins,
but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity

in accordance with your will.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And with your spirit.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

May this mingling of the Body and Blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ
bring eternal life to us who receive it.

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.**

**Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.**

**Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.**

**Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona nobis pacem.**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
who, by the will of the Father
and the work of the Holy Spirit,
through your Death gave life to the world,
free me by this, your most holy Body and Blood,
from all my sins and from every evil;
keep me always faithful to your commandments,
and never let me be parted from you.

Or:

May the receiving of your Body and Blood,
Lord Jesus Christ,
not bring me to judgment and condemnation,
but through your loving mercy
be for me protection in mind and body
and a healing remedy.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.**

If there is no singing, the communion antiphon is recited.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

CONCLUDING RITES

FINAL BLESSING

■ The Lord be with you.

■ **And with your spirit.**

■ May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

■ **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

A Go forth, the Mass is ended.

B Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

C Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

D Go in peace.

Thanks be to God.

Sunday Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word [With Holy Communion]

INTRODUCTORY RITES

INTRODUCTION

Deacon or lay leader:

We gather here to celebrate the Lord's Day.
Sunday has been called the Lord's Day because
it was on this day
that Jesus conquered sin and death and rose to new life.
Unfortunately, we are not able to celebrate the Mass today
because we do not have a Priest.
Let us be united in the spirit of Christ with
the Church around the world
and celebrate our redemption in Christ's suffering,
Death and Resurrection.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

STAND

Deacon or lay leader:

■ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

■ Amen.

GREETING

Deacon or lay leader:

■ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God for ever.

■ Blessed be God for ever.

COLLECT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

SIT

FIRST READING

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

SECOND READING

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

STAND

GOSPEL

HOMILY OR REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

SIT

PERIOD OF SILENCE

PROFESSION OF FAITH

STAND

[The Nicene Creed can be found on p. 340]

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

*At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin Mary,
all bow.*

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

COMMUNION RITE

LORD'S PRAYER

Deacon or lay leader:

The Father provides us with food for eternal life.
Let us pray for nourishment and strength.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

KNEEL

Deacon or lay leader:

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

COMMUNION

ACT OF THANKSGIVING

STAND

CONCLUDING RITE

INVITATION TO PRAY FOR VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Deacon or lay leader:

Mindful of the Lord's word, "Ask the Master of the harvest to send out laborers for the harvest," let us pray for an increase of vocations to the Priesthood. May our prayer hasten the day when we will be able to take part in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist every Sunday.

BLESSING

SIGN OF PEACE

O God of Faith, by You We Live

Lent—AM

Familiar Tune: On Jordan's Bank

1. O God of faith, by you we live;
 2. A - rise be - neath the morn - ing skies,
 3. May your re - demp - tion set us free

un - fail - ing is the hope you give.
 O Lamb pre - pared for sac - ri - fice.
 to fol - low you to Cal - va - ry.

Of your for - give - ness let us sing,
 We bear the cross a - long the way
 So help us ban - ish death and sin

and hearts of pen - ance let us bring.
 that leads to life from day to day.
 that you, O Lord, may dwell with - in.

Text: Unknown.

Music: WINCHESTER NEW, 88 88; adapt. from *Musikalisches Handbuch*, Hamburg, 1690.


O Merciful Redeemer, Hear

Lent—AM/PM

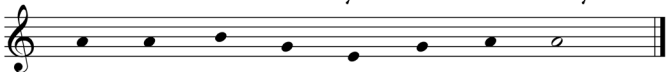
Familiar Tune: O Radiant Light, O Sun Divine

1. O mer - ci - ful Re - deem - er, hear:
 2. Our hearts are o - pen, Lord, to thee
 3. O, grant most ho - ly Trin - i - ty,

in pit - y now in - cline your ear;
 and know - ing our in - iq - ui - ty,
 in un - di - vid - ed u - ni - ty,



ac - cept the con - trite pray'rs we raise
 pour out on us your heal - ing grace,
 that these our ho - ly Lent - en days




in this our fast of for - ty days.
 re - store to life a fall - en race.
 in - crease our mer - it and your praise.

Text: Irvin Udulutsch, OFM, Cap., b. 1920, © 1959, 1977, Order of Saint Benedict,
 administered by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321. All rights reserved.

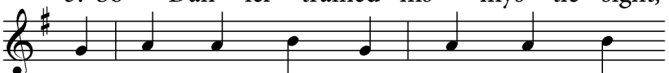
Music: JESU DULCIS MEMORIA, 88 88; Plainchant, Mode I.

The Glory of These Forty Days


Lent—AM/PM



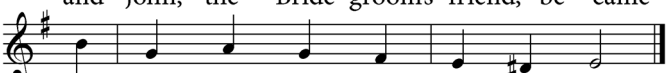
1. The glo - ry of these for - ty days
 2. A - lone and fast - ing, Mo - ses saw
 3. So Dan - iel trained his mys - tic sight,



we cel - e - brate with songs of praise;
 the lov - ing God who gave the law;
 de - liv - ered from the li - on's might;



for Christ, by whom all things were made,
 and to E - li - jah, fast - ing, came
 and John, the Bride-groom's friend, be - came



him - self has fast - ed and has prayed.
 the steeds and char - i - ots of flame.
 the her - ald of Mes - si - ah's name.

Text: *Clarum decus jejuni*; ascr. to Gregory the Great, c. 540–604; tr. Maurice F. Bell, 1862–1931.

Music: ERHALT UNS HERR, LM, Klug's *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543.

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

Lent—AM/PM

1. Lord, who through-out these for - ty days,
 2. As you with Sa - tan did con - tend
 3. As you did hun - ger and did thirst,

for us did fast and pray.
 and did the vic - t'ry win,
 so teach us, gra - cious Lord,

Teach us to o - ver - come our sins,
 O give us strength in you to fight,
 to die to self and so to live

and close by you to stay.
 in you to con - quer sin.
 by your most ho - ly word.

Text: Claudia F. Hernaman, 1838–1898, alt.

Music: ST. FLAVIAN, 86 86, adapt. from *John Day's Psalter*, 1562.

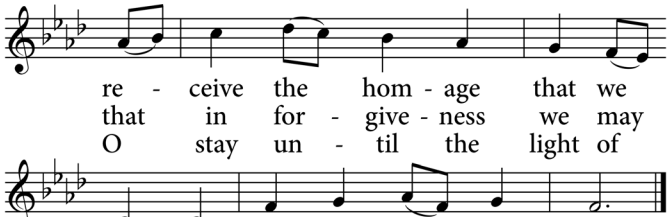
Lord Jesus, as We Turn from Sin

Lent—AM/PM

Familiar Tune: The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns

1. Lord Je - sus, as we turn from
 2. Reach out and touch with heal - ing
 3. Then stay with us when eve - ning

sin with strength and hope re - stored,
 pow'r the wounds we have re - ceived,
 comes and dark - ness makes us blind,



re - ceive the hom - age that we
 that in for - give - ness we may
 O stay un - til the light of

bring to you, our ris - en Lord.
 love and may no long - er grieve.
 dawn may fill both heart and mind.

Text: Ralph Wright, O.S.B. © 1980, International Commission on English in the
 Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Music: MORNING SONG, 86 86, *Kentucky Harmony*, 1816.

Forty Days and Forty Nights

Lent—PM



1. For - ty days and for - ty nights
 2. Shall not we, your sor - row share
 3. And if Sa - tan on us press,

you were fast - ing in the wild;
 and from world - ly joys ab - stain,
 flesh or spir - it to as - sail,

for - ty days and for - ty nights
 fast - ing with un - ceas - ing prayer,
 vic - tor in the wil - der - ness,

tempt - ed and yet un - de - filed.
 strong with you to suf - fer pain?
 grant we may not faint or fail!

Text: George Hunt Smytton, 1822–1890; tr. Francis Pott, 1832–1909, alt.

Music: HEINLEIN, 77 77, Martin Herbst, 1654–1681, attr.

All Creation Was Renewed

Marian—AM

Familiar Tune: Savior of the Nations, Come



1. All cre - a - tion was re - newed
2. By the Ho - ly Spir - it's love
3. Mo - ment of un - e - qualed faith,
4. Christ, the ho - ly one of God,



by the pow'r of God most high,
 God pro-nounced his sav - ing Word,
 here in an - y time or place:
 Son of Da - vid, light from light,



when his pro - mise was ful - filled
 then with free con - sent and trust
 thus did God put on our flesh
 dwells on earth, his glo - ry dimmed



Ad - am's race to jus - ti - fy.
 Ma - ry bore cre - a - tion's Lord.
 in his Vir - gin full of grace.
 till he comes a - gain with might.

Text: © 1974, 1995, Stanbrook Abbey, Wass, York, UK. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Music: NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND, 77 77; Erfurt *Enchiridia*, Wittenberg, 1524.

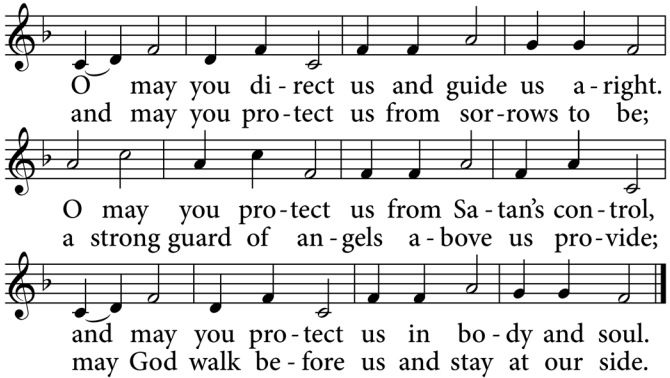
O Mary of Graces

Marian—AM/PM

Familiar Tune: How Firm a Foundation



1. O Ma - ry of gra - ces and mo - ther of Christ,
2. O may you pro - tect us by land and by sea,



O may you di-rect us and guide us a-right.
and may you pro-tect us from sor-rows to be;

O may you pro-ect us from Sa-tan's con-trol,
a strong guard of an-gels a-bove us pro-vide;

and may you pro-ect us in bo-dy and soul.
may God walk be-fore us and stay at our side.

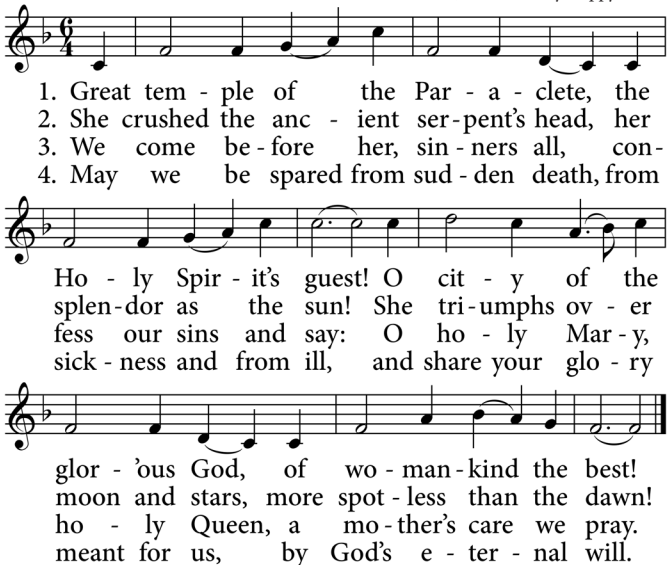
Text: Traditional Irish, alt.

Music: FOUNDATION, 11 11 11 11; Funk's *Compilation of Genuine Church Music*, 1832.

Great Temple of the Paraclete

Marian—AM/PM

Familiar Tune: Jerusalem, My Happy Home



1. Great tem - ple of the Par - a - clete, the
2. She crushed the anc - ient ser-pent's head, her
3. We come be-fore her, sin - ners all, con -
4. May we be spared from sud - den death, from

Ho - ly Spir - it's guest! O cit - y of the
splen-dor as the sun! She tri-umphs ov - er
fess our sins and say: O ho - ly Mar - y,
sick - ness and from ill, and share your glo - ry

glor - 'ous God, of wo - man-kind the best!
moon and stars, more spot - less than the dawn!
ho - ly Queen, a mo - ther's care we pray.
meant for us, by God's e - ter - nal will.

Text: Bernard Mischke, OSC, 1926-2012, © 1965, Crosier Fathers and Brothers, Phoenix, AZ.

All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Music: LAND OF REST, CM, American.

Guide to *Lectio Divina*

Choose a word or phrase of the Scriptures you wish to pray. It makes no difference which text is chosen, as long as you have no set goal of “covering” a certain amount of text. The amount of text covered is in God’s hands, not yours.

Read. Turn to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the “still, small voice” of a word or phrase that somehow says, “I am for you today.” Do not expect lightning or ecstasies. In *lectio divina*, God is teaching us to listen, to seek him in silence. God does not reach out and grab us but gently invites us ever more deeply into his presence.

Ponder. Take the word or phrase into yourself. Memorize it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas. Do not be afraid of distractions. Memories or thoughts are simply parts of yourself that, when they rise up during *lectio divina*, are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering, this rumination, to invite you into dialogue with God.

Pray. Whether you use words, ideas, or images—or all three—is not important. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you. Give to God what you have discovered during your experience of meditation. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

It is not necessary to assess the quality of your *lectio divina*, as if you were “performing” or seeking some goal. *Lectio divina* has no goal other than that of being in the presence of God by praying the Scriptures.

—Fr. Luke Dysinger

Luke Dysinger, OSB, is a Benedictine monk of Saint Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo, California.

Acknowledgments

Excerpts from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL); excerpts from the English translation of *Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, ICEL; excerpts from the English translation of *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* © 1988, ICEL; excerpts from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, ICEL; the English translation of the Invitatories for Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer from *The Liturgy of the Hours* © 1974, ICEL. All rights reserved.

The English translation of the *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, and *Nunc Dimittis* (Canticle of Simeon) by the International Consultation on English Texts.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition*. Copyright © 1970, 1986, 1997, 1998, 2001, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Excerpts from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Psalm texts for morning, evening, and night prayers from *The Ecumenical Grail Psalter*. Copyright © 2015, Conception Abbey/The Grail, admin. by GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

Texts contained in this work derived whole or in part from liturgical texts copyrighted by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) have been published here with the confirmation of the Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. No other texts in this work have been formally reviewed or approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

St. Bede, in *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels, Book One* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 207–8. Used with permission.

Catherine of Siena, in *Catherine of Siena: Passion for the Truth, Compassion for Humanity: Selected Spiritual Writings* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2005), 117. Used with permission.

“Communion Prayer” is from *The Glenstal Book of Prayer: A Benedictine Prayer Book* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 117. Used with permission.

Luke Dysinger, “Guide to *Lectio Divina*,” adapted from “Accepting the Embrace of God: The Ancient Art of *Lectio Divina*.” Used with permission.

Verna A. Holyhead, *Welcoming the Word in Year C: With Burning Hearts* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 102. Used with permission.

Dietrich Reinhardt and Michael Kwatera, *To Thank and Bless: Prayers at Meals*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 35. Used with permission.

“Lenten Prayer for Unity and Justice,” in *Prayer Without Borders: Celebrating Global Wisdom* (Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief Services, 2005), 40. Reprinted courtesy of Catholic Relief Services.

Diana Macalintal, “Prayer for Dreamers,” in *The Work of Your Hands: Prayers for Ordinary and Extraordinary Moments of Grace* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 22–23. Used with permission.

Megan McKenna, *Lent: Reflections and Stories on the Daily Readings* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 16–17. Used with permission of the author.

Henri Nouwen, *The Selfless Way of Christ* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 69–70. Used with permission.

Pope’s Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer), “Monthly Prayer Intention of Pope Francis: March 2025.” For more information, visit popesprayerusa.net.

“Prayer to Saint Joseph,” from *Blessings and Prayers for Home and Family*, copyright © Concacan Inc., 2004. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Visit cccpublications.ca.

Joyce Rupp, excerpted from *Jesus, Guide of My Life: Reflections for the Lenten Journey*. Copyright © 2023 by Ave Maria Press®, Inc., P.O. Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556. avemariapress.com. Used with the permission of the publisher.

Mark A. Scott, OCSO, adapted from *Loving Jesus: Monastery Talks on the Gospel According to Matthew* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2011), 63, 65, 66. Used with permission.

John Shea, adapted from *The Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospels for Christian Preachers and Teachers: On Earth as It Is in Heaven, Year A* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 294–95, 96. Used with permission.

Barbara Brown Taylor, *Always a Guest: Speaking of Faith Far From Home* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2020), 144–45. Used with permission.

Howard Thurman, adapted from *Sermons on the Parables*, edited by David B. Gowler and Kpitan E Jensen, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018), 91. Used with permission.

Julia Walsh, from *Wisdom from the Global Sisterhood: Contemporary Reflections by Catholic Sisters*, ed. Joyce Meyer et al. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2024), 26. Used with permission.

Art Credits

Front cover, carpet pages, and calendar art: *Lent* by Fr. Emanuel Franco, O.Carm., a friar of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Priory, Tucson, Arizona. © Emanuel Franco, O.Carm. manuocarm.org. Used with permission.

Pages 25, 309: Illustrations by Fr. Emanuel Franco, O.Carm., a friar of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Priory, Tucson, Arizona. © Emanuel Franco, O.Carm. manuocarm.org. Used with permission.

Page 26: *Blind Leading the Blind* by James B. Janknegt. © 2016 James B. Janknegt. bcartfarm.com. Used with permission.

Page 58: Byzantine silver cross, ca. 500–700. Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1955. Image courtesy of metmuseum.org. Public domain.

Page 96: *Jesus Transported by a Spirit onto a High Mountain* by James Tissot. Collection of the Brooklyn Museum, purchased by public subscription. Image courtesy of brooklynmuseum.org. Public domain.

Page 164: *Transfiguration of Jesus* (detail) by Hlafira Shcherbak. © 2020 Hlafira Shcherbak. iconart-gallery.com/en/artists/hlafira-shcherbak. Used with permission.

Pages 211, 247, 323: Illustrations by Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Indiana. Used with permission.

Page 234: *The Barren Fig Tree* by Ian Welch. © Ian Welch. paramentics.com. Used with permission.

Page 310: *The Story of the Prodigal Son* (detail) by John August Swanson. © 2004 John August Swanson Trust. JohnAugustSwanson.com. Used with permission.

Back cover: *The Prodigal Son* by Edward Riojas. © Edward Riojas. edriojasartist.com. Used with permission.

About the Cover

We are grateful to Fr. Emanuel Franco, O.Carm., for his spare and elegant illustration of the cross and palms, which quietly aids us in ushering in the season of Lent (manuocarm.org).

This month, however, let us examine the stark contrast presented by Edward Riojas (edriojasartist.com) on our back cover. *The Prodigal Son* brings to mind not only Jesus' parable but also an Old Testament verse: *I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live* (Deut 30:19). The young man is starving, weak, and dejected as he makes his way back to his father's estate, but he has made his choice—he would rather *live* as a servant in his father's house than *die* in a living hell. With the Holy Spirit as his guide, he has turned his back on the death that prevails in the valley he leaves behind. Symbols of death abound—the Scorpion card, a pair of skulls, the outline of a gibbet, and the silhouette of the crucified Savior—a reminder that Christ himself accepted death so we might have the fullness of life.

Though this parable is known as the “Parable of the Prodigal Son” for the young man's waste of his inheritance, we often fail to recognize the prodigality of the father, who freely gave his youngest son half of everything he had. He had plenty more for his family, after all. He is prodigal, too, with his love when the young man returns. In Riojas's painting, the father runs to greet his returning son, hurrying through fields of endless abundance. We, too, are free to choose. As we begin our Lenten journey, may we also choose life and surrender ourselves to the Father's infinite compassion and mercy.

—Br. Ælred Senna

Ælred Senna, OSB, is a monk of Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, and publisher of Give Us This Day.

Give Us
ThisDay[®]
DAILY PRAYER FOR TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Heidi Busse, *Editor*

Ælfred Senna, OSB, *Publisher*

Catherine Donovan, *Associate Publisher*

Kendra Richards Ohmann, *Publishing Coordinator*

Elizabeth Elin, *Excerpts Editor*

Lori Dahlhoff, *Special Content Editor*

Angie Steffens, *Production Manager*

Julie Surma and Mark Warzecha, *Desktop Publishers*

Monica Bokinskie, *Art Design*

Robert Ellsberg, *"Blessed Among Us" Author*

Susan Barber, OSB, *Intercessions*

Therese L. Ratliff, *Liturgical Press Director*

Editorial Advisors

James Martin, SJ ♦ Irene Nowell, OSB

Carolyn Y. Woo ♦ Timothy Radcliffe, OP

Kathleen Norris ♦ Ronald Rolheiser, OMI

giveusthisday.org

Give Us This Day, Liturgical Press

PO Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56321-7500

Customer Service: 888-259-8470, subscriptions@giveusthisday.org

Give Us This Day® (March 2025/Vol. 15, No. 3. ISSN 2159-2136, print; 2166-0654, large print; 2159-2128, online) is published monthly by Liturgical Press, an apostolate of Saint John's Abbey, 2950 Saint John's Road, Collegeville, Minnesota. Rev. Douglas Mullin, OSB, *Abbot*. Periodicals postage paid at Collegeville, MN 56321 and other mailing offices. The annual standard subscription rate is \$46.95; single copy price is \$5.95. POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS. (See DMM 507.1.5.2): NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address changes to *Give Us This Day*, PO Box 414, Congers, NY 10920-9984.

© 2025 by the Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota.

Printed in the United States of America.

Share HOPE



*“I was in prison and
you visited me.”* Matt 25:36

Learn more and donate at

Share the blessing of

Give Us ThisDay®

With your support, we put *Give Us This Day* in the hands of thousands of prisoners each month.

We can't do it without you. Your generosity provides FREE subscriptions to prisoners.



Bring comfort
through the Gospel



Offer hope through
daily reflections



Connect lives
through daily prayer

GUTD.net/prison



Canticle of Mary (Magnificat)

Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

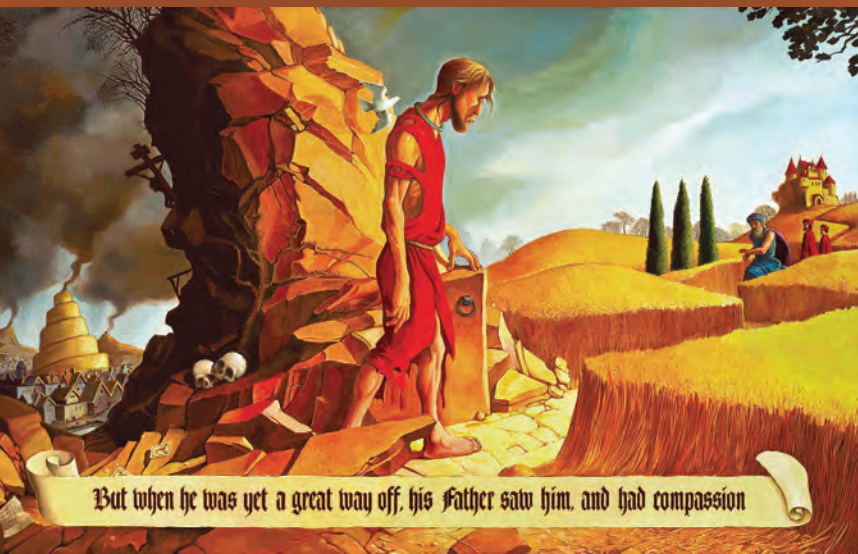
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.



giveusthisday.org

888.259.8470

Front cover: *Lent* by Fr. Emanuel Franco, O.Carm.

Back cover: *The Prodigal Son* by Edward Riojas

Liturgical Press  litpress.org