

MARCH

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Tuesday, March 1, 2016

(Lec. 238)

- 1) Daniel 3:25, 34-43
- 2) Matthew 18:21-35

TUESDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Jesus teaches that we must be ever-willing to forgive others who sin against us.

In today's Gospel, Jesus places a daunting challenge before us: We must be willing to forgive those who have sinned against us. If we try to meet this challenge solely through our own efforts, we will inevitably fail. On the other hand, if we turn to God and ask him for grace and strength, we will be able to forgive even those who may have hurt us in the deepest recesses of our hearts.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Azariah acknowledges the many sins of the people of Israel. He asks the Lord, in his great love and mercy, to forgive the people of Israel and deliver them. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the indebted servant who received mercy from his master but did not show mercy to his own slave. Thus, the master withdrew his good favor.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: God shows mercy to those in need. Inspired by this, we place our needs before the Father.

- 1) That the Church continues to be an example of justice for all, regardless of their social, political or economic situations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That our civil leaders act with integrity and truthfulness, working together for the peace and good of all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who feel depressed or discouraged find hope through their faith and the support of their church communities, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That our parish community join in efforts to advocate for the most vulnerable among us, from conception until natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may come to enjoy eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful God, please hear and answer our prayers according to your will. We offer them in the name of Christ, our Lord.

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

(Lec. 239)

- 1) Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9
- 2) Matthew 5:17-19

WEDNESDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Jesus teaches us that we are to set a good example before others.

Jesus readily understood human nature. Others can easily be put off if one's behavior doesn't reflect the faith and values one espouses. He calls us to be true to the faith and values we profess in all areas of our lives. When we do so, our behavior doesn't become a stumbling block for others in turning to Jesus, but rather a help and support.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading recalls Moses instructing the people of Israel to observe the statutes and decrees of the Lord when they entered the Promised Land. In doing so, they would prosper and shine as a light before other nations. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us seek our Lord in prayer, knowing that he is present, with great love and care for us.

- 1) For our Church, that through God's grace she continue her evangelization efforts, drawing all closer to Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all nations' leaders, that they may pass laws and enact social policies that respect and defend life from the moment of conception until natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who live in poverty and lack food and safe housing, that they receive assistance in their immediate need and support as they work for a better future, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all catechists and Catholic school teachers, that they are inspired and supported in their efforts to share God's word and our faith with our children, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may enter into eternal glory in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, please hear and answer our prayers, through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, March 3, 2016
(Lec.240)

- 1) Jeremiah 7:23-28
- 2) Luke 11:14-23

THURSDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem. Saint Katharine
Drexel, Virgin)

FOCUS: Let us recommit to making Lent a time for growing closer to God.

We are just about at the halfway mark of Lent. This would be an ideal time to check ourselves and see if we are relying on foolish excuses for not living fully our commitment to grow closer to God. He tells us time and again that he wants us to be his people, and him to be our God. What could be more important?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading tells of God's desire to give good things to his people, but they turn their backs to him. In the Gospel, people accuse Jesus of driving out demons through Beelzebul, or Satan. Jesus states this isn't possible because every kingdom or house divided against itself will not stand.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting that God watches over and protects us, let us join in offering him our prayers and petitions.

- 1) That our Holy Father and all who faithfully serve in the Church may be blessed as they seek to bring more souls to eternal happiness with God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That those who do not believe may open their hearts to God's grace, so they might believe and be saved, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who suffer from long-term illnesses may be sure of the continuing love and care God has for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the members of this faith community may carry out God's commandments to love him and to love others in all aspects of their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed may rest in peace in paradise, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Holy God, hear our prayers and grant us what is consistent with your will, through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, March 4, 2016
(Lec. 241)

- 1) Hosea 14:2-10
- 2) Mark 12:28-34

FRIDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem. Saint Casimir)

FOCUS: Love God with your whole self and love your neighbor as yourself.

Our heavenly Father sent his son, Jesus, to reveal his love for us and to teach us by word and example what it means to love God and others. Jesus gave us the two great commandments: to love God with our whole being and our neighbor as ourselves, so that we might live rightly and be judged worthy of entering eternal life in heaven.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading exhorts the people of Israel to turn to the Lord and ask for forgiveness, so they might receive the gifts God wants to bestow upon them. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that loving God with one's whole being and loving one's neighbor as oneself are the greatest of all the commandments.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Grateful for God's great love for us, we offer our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For Church leaders, that they will continue to reflect God's love and guidance in their ministries, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, that they will serve their people with justice and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are struggling with their faith and have difficulty following God commandments, that they will seek strength from the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our church community, that we may take advantage of the sacrament of reconciliation and the healing it offers during this "24 Hours for the Lord" declared by Pope Francis as part of the Year of Mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they come to enjoy perfect peace and joy in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Lord, hear our prayers and answer our needs according to your will, through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday March 5, 2016
(Lec. 242)

- 1) Hosea 6:1-6
- 2) Luke 18:9-14

SATURDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Approach the Lord with humility and love.

The sacrifices we make during Lent help us draw closer to Jesus. We must offer them with humility and love. Like the tax collector in today's Gospel reading, let us humble ourselves before the Lord in prayer, acknowledging our sinfulness and dependent on his mercy so we may continue to grow in our faith and love for the Lord.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from the prophet Hosea conveys the Lord's discontent with the offerings of his people. They are carried out in accordance with the laws set forth by Moses, but are insincere in their intent. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The parable teaches us that to be saved, we must humbly acknowledge our need for God and ask for his forgiveness.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Recognizing that we are saved by God's love, grace and mercy, we humbly present our needs before the Lord.

- 1) That the Church may be blessed and strengthened as it continues its mission of preaching the good news to all nations, and sharing Christ's love with others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That government leaders may seek peaceful solutions to the complex problems facing our world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who suffer in mind, body or spirit may find comfort in God's love and the compassion of his people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That members of our community encourage and pray for those who have been called to priesthood or religious life as they discern their vocation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed may enjoy perpetual joy and peace in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, like the tax collector, we present our needs to you with humble hearts. In your mercy, look favorably upon these prayers and grant them according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 2016

(Lec. 33)

- 1) Joshua 5:9a, 10-12
- 2) 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
- 3) Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

NOTE: 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: Micah 7:7-9; John 9:1-41 (Lec. 243)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

FOCUS: We are called to foster unity, peace and reconciliation in the world.

Jesus, through his suffering and death upon the cross, won forgiveness for our sins and reconciled us to God the Father. He calls us to go forth to share God's love and forgiveness with others by seeking to foster unity, peace and healing in our workplaces, local community, among our friends and family, and in our homes.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of the Israelites celebrating the Passover when they entered the Promised Land. The second reading reminds us that we are called to work to foster unity and peace in the world. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the prodigal son, which reminds us that God loves us unconditionally and is ever-willing to forgive us.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident in the abiding mercy of the Father, let us turn to him with our petitions.

- 1) That all members of the Church will serve as examples of reconciliation, and will renew their efforts to bring peace to divided families, cities and countries, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That all those who lead nations may seek nonviolent solutions to age-old conflicts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all lost or exploited children, that they may be reunited with their families, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all who are new to our community, that they may find support and welcome here, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, especially our beloved dead, that they may one day see God face to face in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear the prayers of your children, and answer them according to your will. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

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Monday, March 7, 2016
(Lec. 244)

- 1) Isaiah 65:17-21
- 2) John 4:43-54

MONDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF LENT
(Opt. Mem. Saints Perpetua
and Felicity, Martyrs)

FOCUS: God is always at work to change and transform us that we might live more fully and faithfully as his dearly beloved sons and daughters.

We are offered the gift of new life and salvation when we place our faith in Jesus. If we are sincere in our desire to grow in our love for God and live as followers of Jesus, our lives will be irrevocably changed by God, who is ever at work to change and transform our lives and hearts. We experience a more abundant life in his love, living more fully and faithfully as children of God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells us that the Lord is at work to bring a renewal of all creation. The responsorial psalm exhorts us to praise the Lord, for he delivers us from our trials and tribulations. In the Gospel, a royal official approaches Jesus and asks him to visit his dying son. Jesus responds by saying, *You may go; your son will live.* The royal official's son is healed.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us pray to God our Father, who makes all things new.

- 1) For the Church, that our leaders may be blessed in their efforts to observe the Year of Mercy and extend healing to those who seek reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the leaders of our nation, that they may always strive to build a more just society, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who lack adequate food, housing and health care, that our compassionate actions may help provide for their needs, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the sick of our parish and our community, that they may find hope through prayer and the compassionate care of nurses, doctors and other health-care providers, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, that they may join the angels and saints in singing God's praises for all eternity in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, you are the source of all joy and hope. We ask that you hear and answer these petitions according to your will. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, March 8, 2016
(Lec. 245)

- 1) Ezekiel 47:1-9
- 2) John 5:1-16

TUESDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF LENT
(Opt. Mem. Saint John of God,
Religious)

FOCUS: Lent is a time for healing.

As Jesus approaches the crippled man in the Gospel, he asks him if he desires to be well. Jesus asks us the same thing during this time of Lent. We might feel as helpless as that man, but when we turn to Jesus with our hurts, he will surely heal our wounds so that we might walk more fully in his love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading is from the prophet Ezekiel, who has the vision of the waters flowing out of the Temple, waters that refresh and heal. The Gospel reading tells of the healing pool at Bethesda where the lame man seeks to be well, and where Jesus heals him. The Jews grumble at this, because it was the Sabbath.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us pray to the Lord, who offers us new life, healing and salvation through Jesus.

- 1) For all members of the Church, that we might turn to our merciful God in prayer, and in turn extend God's compassion to others by performing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all nations and their leaders, that they may seek peaceful solutions to the world's conflicts rather than turning to violence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are sick and dying, that they might come to know the compassion of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our community, that Lent be a time to return to the sacrament of reconciliation, which, in the words of Pope Francis, will "enable people to touch the grandeur of God's mercy with their own hands," let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, that they may enter into eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord God Almighty, we ask that you hear and answer our petitions. For we offer them to you through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, March 9, 2016
(Lec. 246)

- 1) Isaiah 49:8-15
- 2) John 5:17-30

WEDNESDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF LENT
(Opt. Mem. Saint Frances
of Rome, Religious)

FOCUS: God loves us and continues to invite us to a newer and deeper life in him.

God is rich in mercy and compassion. And God's love for us is unconditional, unending, knowing no bounds or limits. Grateful for such love and mercy, may we open our hearts more fully to God's love, grace and mercy so we might lead lives that shine as a light before others and give God glory in all things.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading promises that God has not forgotten his people Israel, and that he is at work to bring them healing, restoration and salvation. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches, *Whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With grateful hearts, let us place our prayers and petitions before our loving Father.

- 1) For leaders of the Church, that they may continue to extend God's love and mercy to the world through actions rooted in our rich tradition of Catholic social teaching, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, that they govern with justice and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who experience isolation or neglect, especially the elderly, that they may find God's presence through the outreach of family and caregivers, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, that they have strength to live and love as God has taught, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may enjoy eternal peace in God's heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, full of compassion and mercy, hear our prayers and answer them according to your will, through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, March 10, 2016
(Lec. 247)

- 1) Exodus 32:7-14
- 2) John 5:31-47

THURSDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: God offers us the gift of salvation and eternal life through placing our faith and trust in Jesus.

We come to receive the gifts of salvation by placing our faith and trust in Jesus. However, placing our faith in Jesus isn't a one-time action. Rather, it is a choice we must make and renew each day so that when our time comes to stand before the Lord, he may judge us worthy of entering unto eternal life.

LITURGY OF THE WORD:

The first reading tells of the Israelites making a molten calf and worshipping it. Moses successfully intercedes on behalf of the Israelites so that the Lord would not bring down his wrath upon them for committing such a grave sin. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that the works and miracles his Father called him to do testify that he was sent into the world by God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With humble hearts, let us bring our prayers before our merciful God.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all the bishops, that God continues to grant them wisdom in all of their decisions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders everywhere, that they have the humility to seek God's wisdom and God's will in the decisions they must make, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are persecuted and struggle daily to have their needs met, that God will touch their hearts to preserve their faith and give them hope for a better life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our community, that our actions display clearly the faith we claim to have, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, that they may come to enjoy eternal life with Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, your son, Jesus, is the source of all hope. We ask that you hear and answer our prayers, in the name of Christ our Lord.

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Friday, March 11, 2016
(Lec. 248)

- 1) Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22
- 2) John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

FRIDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Jesus invites us to follow him so he may give us new life.

Jesus invites us to come and follow him so that he may give us new life, healing and the promise of eternal life in heaven. However, responding to this call isn't always easy. We must be willing to let go of things that stand in the way of our growing in our love for Jesus.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from the Book of Wisdom tells how the wicked despise the just one, and plot to condemn him to a shameful death. In the Gospel, Jesus boldly preaches in the Temple area even though some of the Jews were trying to kill him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us offer our prayers of petition to our heavenly Father.

- 1) For Church leaders, that they continue to challenge the faithful to align their lifestyles with Gospel values of love, generosity and self-sacrifice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, that they always speak truthfully, even when it comes at a personal or professional cost, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those facing cancer and chronic diseases, that they find strength and hope through their faith and the support of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of our faith community, that we give glory and honor to God through love and service to others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, that they enter into eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, you know our true needs. Hear these prayers and answer them according to your divine will. We pray through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, March 12, 2016
(Lec. 249)

- 1) Jeremiah 11:18-20
- 2) John 7:40-53

SATURDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Jesus calls us to love him above all things and to remain faithful to him regardless of the cost.

Being faithful to Jesus in today's world isn't easy. It can seem as if pressures to compromise our faith and values are coming at us from all directions. At those times, we can remain faithful to Jesus by striving to love him above all things, relying on him to be our strength, living in gratitude, and not counting the cost.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of Jeremiah entrusting himself and his cause to the Lord. Today's Gospel describes the desire of the chief priests and Pharisees to have Jesus arrested so that he might no longer threaten and undermine their authority with his teachings.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us open our hearts, and in faith offer our prayers to the Father.

- 1) For our Holy Father and our bishops, that they may continue to lead the Church with courage, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all world leaders, that their hearts be motivated by peace and charity toward all people and nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For our first responders, police, military and those in harm's way each day, that they find strength through Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our families, parents, children and grandparents, may their efforts to remain steadfast in faith and pass it on to each generation be blessed, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they come to share eternal life with God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty Father, we come to you in need of your loving aid. Hear us and in your mercy come answer our prayers, we ask this through Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016

(Lec. 36)

- 1) Isaiah 43:16-21
- 2) Philippians 3:8-14
- 3) John 8:1-11

**FIFTH SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: Our dignity and worth as individuals do not come from our own merits, but from God's free gift of grace.

Whether we sin or do good, God's love for us remains constant. We cannot judge our worth based on our own merits and piety. We must continue to strive to live in accord with God's calling, trusting not in ourselves but in the power and compassion of Jesus.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of God's promise to bring deliverance, restoration and salvation to the people of Israel. The second reading reminds us of Paul's acceptance of the loss of all things so that he might gain Christ. In the Gospel, Jesus refuses to let anyone condemn the woman caught in adultery, and tells her to sin no more.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Remembering that God is a loving Father, always eager to help his children, let us approach him with our petitions.

- 1) For Pope Francis, all bishops and priests, and all members of the Church, that they continue to grow in faith and trust in Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all elected officials, that they enact laws to protect human life in all its stages, from conception until natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are experiencing depression or mental illness, that they may know God is with them through the compassionate care of others and loving support of family, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of our faith community, that we may open ourselves to God's mercy through the grace of the sacrament of reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, that they experience the peace and joy of eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, trusting that you always listen to your children when we call out to you, we ask you to grant our petitions through your son, Jesus Christ.

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The following readings may be used on any Lenten day this week, especially in years B and C when the Gospel of Lazarus is not read on the Fifth Sunday of Lent: 2 Kings 4:18b-21, 32-37; John 11:1-45 (Lec. 250).

Monday, March 14, 2016

(Lec. 251)

MONDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
OF LENT

- 1) Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17,
19-30, 33-62 or 13:41c-62
- 2) John 8:12-20

FOCUS: If we know Jesus, we will also know his Father.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells the Pharisees that they know *neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.* This also is true in a human sense – we know more about a person when we understand their background and their family. Similarly, knowing that Jesus has been sent by God the Father reveals to the world that he is the Messiah.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading tells the story of Susanna, the wife of Joakim, who was accused of adultery by two judges. The prophet Daniel was able to save Susanna from execution by revealing that the judges had lied in their testimonies. In the Gospel, the Pharisees doubted Jesus when he said he was the light of the world, because they claimed he bore witness to himself. Jesus told them that his Father sent him and also bears witness to him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With humble hearts, we bring our prayers before our loving Father.

- 1) For the Church throughout the world, that she may be blessed as she continues to witness to Jesus Christ, light of the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who don't know Christ, that they may have a deep encounter with him and his endless love and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who struggle with loneliness and isolation, that they may experience God's love through the compassion of friends, neighbors and family, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For each of us, may we set aside time to pray each day so we may continue to grow in holiness, and receive the grace needed to share Christ's love more fully with others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may be welcomed into the presence of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, through Jesus, your son, we ask you to grant us these petitions if it be your will.

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Tuesday, March 15, 2016
(Lec. 252)

- 1) Numbers 21:4-9
- 2) John 8:21-30

TUESDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: The sign of the cross is a sign of life.

For some people, believing comes only after seeing. God gave the people many signs in the desert: the parting of the water, manna for food and the bronze serpent. For Christians, Jesus on the cross is the sign of our redemption.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the desert, the people grumbled against God and were punished. Those who repented and looked upon the bronze serpent were spared. For our sake, Jesus would be lifted up on a cross. Those who believe in Jesus will have eternal life because he is from God and of God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: In confidence and trust, let us offer our prayers to our loving Father.

- 1) That the shepherds of our Church may continue to be examples to others of Christ's love and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That government leaders may work to protect the fundamental human rights of all people to food, shelter and religious freedom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all who suffer chronic pain or serious illness may be encouraged by the healing mercy Jesus showed toward the sick, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That our faith community may be strengthened in our effort to support life from conception to natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may be welcomed into God's heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of mercy, hear the prayers we offer and guide us in your way at all times. In the name of your son, Jesus, we pray.

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Wednesday, March 16, 2016
(Lec. 253)
1) Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95
2) John 8:31-42

WEDNESDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: If we fully live by truth, we do not need the approval of others and are free to live as God intends.

Speaking the truth is not always popular and leads to difficult situations. Three administrators of Babylon had to face this with King Nebuchadnezzar in today's reading. They trusted God, asking him to save them, but were willing to face death. Why? Because, as Jesus says, the truth saves us and sets us free.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refusing to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's statue. Thrown into a fiery furnace to die, they were saved by an angel sent from God. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that those who remain faithful shall come to know the truth and be set free.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting that Jesus offers us the truth that will set us free, let us join in offering our prayers to our loving Father in heaven.

- 1) For Church leaders, may they be blessed with the grace and strength needed to continue proclaiming the good news of salvation to all the ends of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders, may they enact laws to protect and respect life from conception until natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have turned away from God, may they be open to the Holy Spirit and the words of Jesus in Scripture, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our parish community, may we continue to grow in our knowledge and love for the Lord so that we might lay down our lives more fully in love and service to others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all of our friends and family who have died, may they see God face to face in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, thank you for sending your Son to reveal the truth of your love and free us from sin. We ask that you hear and answer our prayers, in the name of Jesus.

* * *

Thursday, March 17, 2016
(Lec. 254)

- 1) Genesis 17:3-9
- 2) John 8:51-59

THURSDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem. Saint Patrick,
Bishop)

FOCUS: By giving God everything we have and all we are, we get more in return than we could ever imagine.

By living our lives for Jesus, we are given the promise of eternal life. It really is not a fair trade: The duration of our lives on earth for unending joy in heaven. But God wants us to reach heaven even more than we do; that is how much he loves us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading recalls the covenant God made with Abraham in which he promised to make Abraham the father of a host of nations. In the Gospel, Jesus declares that whoever believes in him and lives according to his teaching will come to have eternal life in heaven.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Loving God, with faith and trust we place these petitions before you.

- 1) For all bishops, priests and deacons of the Church, that they be blessed with the grace to continue proclaiming God's love and the promise of eternal happiness in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our nation's leaders, that they use their authority to protect the innate dignity of every person as a child of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For refugees and immigrants, that they may find safe refuge, welcome and assistance from all of us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those who are discerning a call to priestly or religious life, that they faithfully follow wherever God is leading them, let us pray
- 5) For those who have died, that they may join the angels and saints in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, in your goodness and love, we ask you to hear and answer our prayers. We pray through your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

* * *

Friday, March 18, 2016

(Lec. 255)

- 1) Jeremiah 20:10-13
- 2) John 10:31-42

FRIDAY OF

FIFTH WEEK

OF LENT

(Opt. Mem. Saint Cyril
of Jerusalem, Bishop
and Doctor of the Church)

FOCUS: Living as a faithful disciple of Jesus requires an ongoing conversion of mind and heart.

Each of us, because of our genetic makeup and unique life experiences, brings a different perspective to the way we see and make sense of the world. Growing in our love of Jesus requires a willingness to let go of outdated beliefs and misperceptions that stand in the way of us living as Jesus calls us to live.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of Jeremiah's faith and conviction that the Lord, like a mighty champion, will watch over and protect him. In the Gospel, some of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem accuse Jesus of blasphemy and try to arrest him. However, their efforts are unsuccessful, and Jesus escapes from their midst.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With faith and trust, let us join in offering our prayers for our needs and those of the world to God the Almighty Father.

- 1) For our Holy Father, that God give him strength as he continues to model for us what it means to live the commandments to love God and one another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all world leaders, that they find peaceful ways to solve conflicts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are ill, and those caring for them, that they may turn to God for strength and healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of our community, that during this Lenten season, we pray daily and deepen our relationship with Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they find eternal peace with God in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers. For we offer them to you through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, March 19, 2016
(Lec. 543)

- 1) 2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16
- 2) Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22
- 3) Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a
or Luke 2:41-51a

**SAINT JOSEPH,
SPOUSE of the
BLESSED VIRGIN
MARY - SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS: Saint Joseph, fully devoted to Mary and Jesus, is our ideal spiritual father.

As the old saying goes, actions speak louder than words. No words or quotes are attributed to Saint Joseph in Scripture, but through his life and actions – as the husband of Mary and the father of Jesus – he shines for us as an ideal model of faith and devotion to God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of God's promise to David to make his house and kingdom firm forever. The second reading reminds us that God's promise to Abraham is extended to all people who follow his example of faith. In the Gospel, after an angel appears to Joseph in a dream, he takes Mary into his home as his wife.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We come together in confidence to present our prayers and petitions for our needs, and those of the world, to our loving Father in heaven.

- 1) For our deacons, priests and bishops, that with God's grace they continue to show us by example how to live lives of love and service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For expectant mothers and fathers, especially those experiencing difficulties of any kind, that they place their trust in the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all unborn children, that by the prayers of their patron saint, Joseph, their right to life may be respected and protected, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For catechists and school teachers, that God may bless them and give them wisdom and patience as they guide our children, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, that they may see God face to face in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty Father, grateful for the blessings in our lives, we ask you to hear and answer our prayers according to your will. Through Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2016

(Lec. 38)

Procession with Palms:

- 1) Luke 19:28-40 (Lec. 37)

Mass Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 50:4-7
- 2) Philippians 2:6-11
- 3) Luke 22:14—23:56 or 23:1-49

**PALM SUNDAY
OF THE PASSION
OF THE LORD**

FOCUS: This week takes us from somber reflection to glorious rejoicing.

We begin the holiest week of the year with blessed branches and processions. We recall the events that lead to another procession on Good Friday up the hill to Calvary. Because we know the rest of the story, we anticipate the glorious procession from the empty tomb to the announcement of the good news that Jesus had risen from the dead.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of the faithful servant of God being abused and beaten. The second reading reminds us that Jesus emptied himself and became one of us for the sake of our salvation. Today's Gospel reading recounts Jesus' passion and death, which defeated sin and evil and won forgiveness for our sins.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With renewed faith in the promises of the Lord, we dare to approach the Father with our needs and those of the world.

- 1) For our pope, bishops and priests, that they be blessed during Holy Week and always as they proclaim the good news of salvation through the death and resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world and national leaders, that they may protect the right and freedom of Christians to express and practice their faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are in prison, that they experience God's mercy and forgiveness through the Church's ministry and God's grace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our community, that we embrace the call of evangelization, sharing the good news with others by our words and actions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they experience the joy and peace of eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, please hear the prayers we offer in the name of Christ our Lord.

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Monday, March 21, 2016
(Lec. 257)

MONDAY OF
HOLY WEEK

- 1) Isaiah 42:1-7
- 2) John 12:1-11

FOCUS: We are to keep our eyes firmly fixed upon Jesus and serving the needs of others.

There seems to be a flurry of activity in today's Gospel. Mary, Martha and Lazarus attend to the needs of Jesus by serving, anointing and reclining with him. Others are focused on their own needs and concerns. The question for us is: Are we focused on living as Jesus calls us to live, or preoccupied by our own concerns?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading contains the first of the four *Servant of the Lord* oracles. As Christians, we believe that the prophet Isaiah is pointing to Christ, who fulfills the prophecies. The Gospel recounts Mary anointing the feet of Jesus with costly perfume. Judas objects to this seeming extravagance, saying the oil could be sold to benefit the poor.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: In faith, we now offer our prayers to our heavenly Father, trusting in his love for us.

- 1) For the Church, the mystical body of Christ, may this Holy Week be a time of penitential reflection that leads to a deeper conversion of hearts and commitment to Christian discipleship, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they attend to the needs of those they lead through acts of love, devotion and service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For victims of acts of greed and destruction, may they find comfort and courage through the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of our loved ones and friends who have strayed from the Catholic faith, may they be inspired by our prayer, love and devotion to open their hearts to return to the active practice of the faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may they rest in eternal peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Good and gracious God, we desire to love and serve you. Hear these prayers offered in love and grant them according to your will. Through Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, March 22, 2016
(Lec. 258)

- 1) Isaiah 49:1-6
- 2) John 13:21-33, 36-38

TUESDAY OF
HOLY WEEK

FOCUS: *Master, is it I who will betray you?*

The way that question is worded makes it seem possible that any one of the apostles could have been the betrayer. None of us can take it for granted that we have achieved the status of steadfast, faithful follower. Peter's denial is evidence of that fact. Let us enter into a deep examination of conscience these remaining days of Holy Week, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the ways we betray and deny Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading contains the second of the four *Servant of the Lord* oracles. In this reading, the servant is identified with Israel, and promised to be a *light to the nations*. In the Gospel, Jesus, while reclining at table with the disciples, states that one of them will betray him. Jesus also reveals that Peter will deny him three times before the cock crows.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: In confidence that our heavenly Father hears our prayers, let us offer him our petitions.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may we continue to encourage each other to remain steadfast in our devotion and commitment to Christ, especially during times of struggles and trials, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all world leaders, may they turn away from the allure of greed, power and fear that can influence them to place their desires above the needs of those they lead, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer from poverty, malnutrition or lack of adequate housing or health care, may they place their trust in Christ and find care and comfort through faith-filled Christians, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here today, may we continue to deepen our commitment and devotion to Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may they be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious loving God, hear the prayers we offer today. We know and trust that you are the source of grace, comfort and compassion, and will grant them according to your divine will. Through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, March 23, 2016
(Lec. 259)

WEDNESDAY OF
HOLY WEEK

- 1) Isaiah 50:4-9a
- 2) Matthew 26:14-25

FOCUS: As Jesus prepares for the Passover feast, one of his disciples prepares to betray him.

Jesus throughout his life experienced trials and suffering, the greatest of which occurred during his passion and death. Jesus was able to endure all of this because of his love for us, and because he relied upon his Father to give him the strength. Similarly, we can endure our trials and sufferings by loving God and by relying upon him to be our strength.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of the faithful servant of the Lord who will give his back to those who beat him, his cheeks to those who pluck his beard, and who will not shield his face from those who will spit on him. Today's Gospel tells of Judas Iscariot going to the chief priests and agreeing to hand Jesus over to them for thirty pieces of silver.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With humility and trust, we bring our prayers to our loving and merciful God.

- 1) For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, our Bishop, N, and all our Church leadership, that they may continue to guide us and help us deepen our faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, that they may be blessed with wisdom in their decision-making and make service the foundation of their leadership, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are ill and suffering, that God's healing hand may touch them and bring them comfort and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our brothers and sisters who are preparing to enter the Church at Easter, that they be blessed as the day approaches, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may enter into heaven and be united with the Lord Jesus forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful and loving God, we bring our prayers to you. We ask them through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, March 24, 2016

(Lec. 39)

- 1) Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14
- 2) 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- 3) John 13:1-15

**THURSDAY OF
HOLY WEEK
(HOLY THURSDAY)**

FOCUS: As I, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's.

We are called to celebrate the Eucharist as an act of thanksgiving, remembrance and renewal of our unity with Jesus Christ. After we come forward to receive the bread of life and drink the cup of salvation, we can go forward to pour ourselves out in love and service to others.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells the Israelites how to prepare themselves properly for the Passover of the Lord. The second reading recounts how Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. In the Gospel, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples.

THE WASHING OF THE FEET (*Optional Comment*)

This symbolic action is a visual reminder of Christ's *mandatum* to humble service. As the ritual takes place, we are asked to recommit ourselves to lives of loving service.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Seeking to give of ourselves more fully in humble love and service to others in imitation of Christ, we offer our petitions to the Lord.

- 1) For the Church, that our leaders will continue to work toward Christian unity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, that they work to improve the quality of life of all of their people, and protect life from the moment of conception until natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, may the efforts of their caregivers be blessed, and may they receive comfort from those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all members of our parish, that, with God's grace, we may open our hearts in loving service to others in our families, parish and community, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they come into eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special parish petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we seek to follow the example of Jesus, our master and teacher. Hear these prayers and all those we hold in the silence of our hearts. For we ask them through Christ our Lord.

PRESENTATION OF THE OILS (*Optional text may be spoken as each oil is presented.*)

The Oil of the Sick is used for the healing of body and spirit. It calls to mind the command of Jesus to his disciples to *cure every disease and illness* (Mt. 10:1). Our prayer is that all who are anointed with this oil will truly be *saved and raised up* to health in and through Christ Jesus.

The Oil of the Catechumens is used in ceremonies for the baptism of infants and for our adult catechumens. We are invited to reflect on the power of Christ who transforms us into new creatures and sets us free from the power of Satan.

Behold the Sacred Chrism consecrated by our bishop earlier today. It is a mixture of olive oil and perfume and is used in baptism, in confirmation, and in ordinations. This chrism is also used in the consecration of churches, sacred items, and vessels.

TRANSFER OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

After the Last Supper, Jesus led his apostles to a quiet place of prayer. Our personal vigil with Christ begins now as we honor the Blessed Sacrament. Following age-old tradition, the table of celebration will be cleared in preparation for the service of the Lord's Passion. The starkness of the sanctuary should impress upon us that Jesus emptied himself totally for us on Good Friday, only to fill us with his blessed joy on Easter morning.

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Friday, March 25, 2016

(Lec. 40)

- 1) Isaiah 52:13—53:12
- 2) Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
- 3) John 18:1—19:42

**FRIDAY
OF THE PASSION
OF THE LORD
(GOOD FRIDAY)**

FOCUS: Jesus Christ is the faithful servant who was obedient unto death for our salvation.

What was “good” about Good Friday, the day we commemorate the passion and death of Jesus? In the eyes of the world, his suffering and death may appear to be folly. Yet we know that the mystery of suffering does not end in death, but leads to resurrection and new life.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of the faithful servant who, in humble obedience to God, would suffer and die to bring about salvation. The second reading reminds us that Jesus, out of love for us and in obedience to the will of his Father, gave his life for our salvation. Today’s Gospel recounts the passion and death of our Lord that wrought our salvation.

VENERATION OF THE CROSS

As Catholics, we revere the cross; our crucifixes bear the image of Christ crucified. With this powerful image, we can be moved to join our own sufferings to his and, in this way, help further the salvation of the world. In the love of God for humanity manifested by the cross, we can find ultimate meaning in both the joys and sorrows of life.

HOLY COMMUNION

In venerating the cross with a touch or kiss, we humbly recognized the cross as the tree of life. Now, as we come forward to receive holy Communion, we are fed by bread from heaven, the Lord himself, so that we may continue to grow in our faith and conform our lives to his.

* * *

Saturday, March 26, 2016
(Lec. 41)

**HOLY SATURDAY
EASTER VIGIL**

FOCUS: This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad!

Tonight celebrates the most important happening in the history of humankind; something that will continue to have meaning to us for all eternity. Sinful humanity has been redeemed. The history of our redemption is revisited in this evening's readings. It is our story, the story of our loving God making a way for our salvation.

I. SERVICE OF LIGHT

Jesus is the light of the world. As we begin our vigil, we seek his light – the light that dispels the darkness of sin. This is represented as we bless and light the Easter candle, then walk in a procession and proclaim Christ as our light.

II. LITURGY OF THE WORD

Nine readings are assigned to the Easter Vigil: seven from the Old Testament, and two from the New. If circumstances demand in individual cases, the number of prescribed readings may be reduced. Three selections from the Old Testament, both from the Law and Prophets, should be read before the Epistle and Gospel. In any case, the reading from Exodus about the escape through the Red Sea (reading 3) should never be omitted.

1) Genesis 1:1-2:2 or 1:1, 26-31a

God's countless acts of creation bring into existence that which does not yet exist. In the creation account from the Book of Genesis, *God said, 'Let there be light...'* and it happened. Thus, we see the awesome power of our Creator in the world.

2) Genesis 22:1-18 or 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Abraham's faith in God was put to the supreme test. That a father would be willing to offer his only son as a sacrifice is unthinkable, yet, that is what God did for us.

3) Exodus 14:15-15:1

Water brings both life and death in this Scripture reading. Through the waters of the Red Sea, the Israelites were brought to freedom and to new life, yet the Egyptians drowned in that same water. As Christians, we are brought to new life in the waters of baptism.

4) Isaiah 54:5-14

God called the Israelites to return to him and accept his generous and unconditional love. God once again reaffirms his promise to remain faithful to his covenant with Israel.

5) Isaiah 55:1-11

We can all partake of the life-giving waters and sumptuous meal that God offers to us. God invites the faithful to the feast; come and delight in the riches of the Lord.

6) Baruch 3:9-15, 32--4:4

God's generosity toward Israel was immeasurable. God gave Israel prudence so that its people would be able to choose right from wrong, wisdom from folly, and life over death.

7) Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28

God poured out clean water over the house of Israel for the sake of his holy name, even though they had profaned it. God's holiness is shown forth, once again, by the renewal of his covenant with Israel.

New Testament Readings

8) Romans 6:3-11

9) Luke 24:1-12

FOCUS: Jesus has risen. Alleluia! Jesus rose from the dead as he said he would. He is the Word of God, announcing our salvation.

Like the women who found the tomb empty, let us go and share the good news, even if people call us foolish. We know that our Lord lives. Let us rejoice and be glad.

III. LITURGY OF BAPTISM

Through the waters of baptism, we joined to Christ in his death so that we can rise with him to new life. In confirmation we are marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit, as we are anointed with the oil of chrism. Our initiation is complete as we become partakers in the sacred meal of the body and blood of Christ.

IV. UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Humbly let us join together and present our petitions to our loving Father.

- 1) That the faithful may make evident our gratitude for the gift of our salvation by our efforts to love and serve one another as Christ taught, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That Christian, Jewish and Muslim believers may treat each other with respect and work to bring peace and unity into the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those facing serious illness may find comfort in the prayer and the presence of caring friends and family members, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That our faith community, and those of us visiting today, may be renewed in our faith in the risen Jesus and energized to share the good news with others by being kind to those we encounter in our daily lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, we bring our petitions to you, trusting in your constant love and providential care. We ask these and all things through Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 2016

(Lec. 42)

- 1) Acts 10:34a, 37-43
- 2) Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8
- 3) John 20:1-9 or
Luke 24:1-12 (Lec. 41)

**EASTER SUNDAY
OF THE RESURRECTION
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS: Alleluia, he is risen. Truly, he is risen.

The significance of the empty tomb was seemingly beyond the comprehension of Peter and Mary Magdalen. It was the beloved apostle, John, who understood the implication. He saw and *believed*. When we trust whole-heartedly in Christ, we witness things that seemingly defy human comprehension. Easter is evidence of that. The love of the cross triumphs over sin and death. From humiliation, brutality and pain come redemption and salvation. Alleluia indeed!

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Peter preaches about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The second reading encourages believers of Christ to *think of what is above, not what is on earth*. In the Gospel, Mary Magdalen, Peter and the beloved disciple witness the empty tomb. Peter is confused, but the beloved disciple sees the empty tomb and believes.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Loving God, you gave your Son for our salvation. Please hear and answer our prayers.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may our proclamation, *He is risen*, inspire those who have become doubtful of, or, indifferent to, the power and magnitude of God's love and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they find in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the inspiration to serve in perseverance and self-sacrifice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those who work with people recovering from addictions and re-entering society from incarceration, may they find inspiration in the paschal mystery as they assist those seeking restoration of relationships and new opportunities, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the neophytes welcomed into the Church during the Easter Vigil, may they continue to find examples of deeply committed and loving Christian discipleship in this community, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all our beloved dead, may they share eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, with great joy and exaltation we cry out *Alleluia* today. With complete confidence in your love and mercy, we ask that you grant these prayers according to your will, knowing that your design for our lives is beyond our human comprehension. Through Christ our Lord.

Monday, March 28, 2016
(Lec. 261)

- 1) Acts 2:14, 22-33
- 2) Matthew 28:8-15

MONDAY
WITHIN THE OCTAVE
OF EASTER

FOCUS: We believe!

Peter and the disciples begin to spread the Good News. The Church begins to grow. However, even at its earliest moments, stories were fabricated to raise doubt in would-be believers. As Catholics, we believe, profess and live a creed rooted in the readings we hear today. This creed is a sure compass for guiding our way through the challenges and distractions in our lives.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Peter proclaims the events of Christ's death and resurrection. He quotes King David, making it clear that Jesus was indeed the descendent David had foretold. In the Gospel, Jesus commands the women to tell the others of his resurrection. Those who guarded the tomb are bribed by the chief priests to lie about the empty tomb.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We gather here today to celebrate what we believe. United in that belief, let us offer our prayers of petition to God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

- 1) For the Church, may she continue to be a steadfast herald of the good news, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may their leadership reflect integrity of word and action, and demonstrate good will to and for those they serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those who have been hurt or victimized because of lies and deceit, may they find renewal and healing through the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all the members of this faith community, may the creed we profess give us the strength and courage to remain faithful during times of trial, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may they come to share eternal life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father Almighty, we offer these prayers to you believing that you hear and answer them in your mercy and love. Through Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, March 29, 2016
(Lec. 262)

- 1) Acts 2:36-41
- 2) John 20:11-18

TUESDAY
WITHIN THE OCTAVE
OF EASTER

FOCUS: A disciple is one who shares the Gospel of Jesus.

Both Peter and Mary Magdalene, based on their experience of the resurrection, go and tell the good news to the world. Mary Magdalene is the first to tell the apostles, and the first to see Jesus. Peter is the first to see the empty tomb. They both show us that a disciple brings people to Jesus.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from Acts relates Peter's message to the Jews about Jesus. His passion and his message help bring about the conversion of three thousand in one day. Today's Gospel reading tells of Mary Magdalene's encounter with the risen Christ, and her response of love in which she goes and tells the apostles the news she had seen Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Loving Father, with grateful hearts we place these prayers before you.

- 1) For all in the Church, that we will be strengthened in our efforts to live our lives in as Jesus taught us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the leaders of nations, that they may strive to enact laws that respect the dignity of all people whom they serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer religious persecution, that they may find safety and the freedom to express their faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our community, that we might strive to follow the example of the saints who fully devoted their lives to God and preached the good news, we pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, that they might share in eternal life in heaven, we pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God almighty, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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Wednesday, March 30, 2016
(Lec. 263)

- 1) Acts 3:1-10
- 2) Luke 24:13-35

WEDNESDAY
WITHIN THE OCTAVE
OF EASTER

FOCUS: What's Mass got to do with it?

The healed cripple joins Peter and John at the Temple. In the breaking of the bread, the disciples recognize Jesus. This Mass, celebrated thousands of years later, is done so in continuity with those Scripture passages we heard today. In gratitude and joy, like the healed man, we come to worship. Like the disciples, we recognize Christ in the breaking of the bread, and we experience the transforming love of Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading recounts Peter and John meeting a crippled beggar on their way to afternoon prayer at the Temple. Peter heals the man and he joins them for prayer at the Temple. In the Gospel, two heavy-hearted disciples are on their way to Emmaus. A stranger joins them and discusses Scripture as they journey. At mealtime, when he breaks the bread, they recognize the stranger as Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us, with grateful and humble hearts, offer our prayers of petition to our heavenly Father.

- 1) For the Church, clergy and laity, may we continue, with gratitude and joy, to proclaim the good news in word and action, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in civic leadership, may their actions demonstrate gratitude and joy for those whom they are entrusted to serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who work diligently to protect human life from conception to natural death, may their efforts foster a deeper respect, gratitude and joy for the sacredness of life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the members of this faith community, may we, with grateful, joyful hearts, share the good news with all those we meet this week, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they find perfect joy and peace for all eternity in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, in you we move and have our being. Our celebration of this worship today is one of gratitude and joy. We trust that you will hear and answer our prayers according to your will. For this we give thanks through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, March 31, 2016
(Lec. 264)

- 1) Acts 3:11-26
- 2) Luke 24:35-48

THURSDAY
WITHIN THE OCTAVE
OF EASTER

FOCUS: Too good to be true.

Christ appears in the midst of the apostles. Their response is fear and confusion. It's not uncommon to initially distrust something that looks too good to be true. At times, it can be difficult to overcome our expectation of reality to see what is actually happening. Jesus Christ is risen! It is for us to trust that at face value.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Peter preaches that it was through Jesus the crippled beggar was healed. He proclaims that Jesus was the one foretold by the prophets of Israel, *Samuel and those afterwards*. In the Gospel, Jesus appears in the midst of the apostles. They respond in fear and confusion. Jesus assures them he is indeed risen and is not a ghost.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We are the recipients of God's goodness, love and mercy. With joyful longing and anticipation, we offer our petitions to God, the Father almighty.

- 1) For the Church, the bride of Christ, may she continue to foster in the hearts of the faithful joyful anticipation, praise, glory and honor of our risen Lord and savior, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, may they cast aside mistrust and discord in order to see clearly the longing for peace among those they govern, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have lost a sense of hope and joy, may they open their hearts to the Holy Spirit to receive a renewed sense of wonder and awe, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may we share with others our joy and gratitude for the gifts of life, love and mercy that God bestows on us daily, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they know perpetual joy and peace for all eternity in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God almighty, we ask you to hear and answer our prayers according to your will. We offer them through Christ our Lord.

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