

MARCH

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Wednesday, March 1, 2017
(Lec. 219)

ASH WEDNESDAY

- 1) Joel 2:12-18
- 2) 2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2
- 3) Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

FOCUS: Our acts of repentance allow us to renew our life in Christ.

Today's readings encourage us to take stock of our relationship with God. We aren't always attentive to how sin separates us from God and the glorious life God has envisioned for us. Lent offers us an opportunity to reflect on our character as it is demonstrated through our words and deeds. Repentance allows us to renew our life in Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the prophet Joel encourages repentance: *Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful.* The second reading reminds us that we are ambassadors for Christ – that our actions matter. The Gospel makes clear that the actions we take are not for public praise but for private prayer, and that God knows our hearts.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Although at times we fall short of living in the way God calls us to live, let us with humble hearts seek God's grace and mercy as we offer our prayers of petition.

- 1) For members of the Church, may we heed the prophet's words to return to God with our whole heart, and may our actions demonstrate that we are joy-filled ambassadors of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they be inspired by the Holy Spirit to seek opportunities to lessen sectarian tension so individuals can live in peace with their neighbors, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer in mind or body, may they find comfort in the tender care of Christians and consolation in the abounding steadfast love of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For each of us gathered here today, may we journey through Lent taking stock of our relationship with God, so that by reflecting on our sins and seeking repentance we will renew our life in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died marked with the sign of faith, may they come to enjoy eternal life in God's heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and loving God, we turn to you with humble and contrite hearts. Hear the prayers we offer and grant them according to your will. Through Christ our Lord.

Thursday, March 2, 2017

(Lec. 220)

- 1) Deuteronomy 30:15-20
- 2) Luke 9:22-25

THURSDAY AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY

FOCUS: In order to enjoy eternity with the Lord in heaven, we must follow in his footsteps here on earth.

If we take a trip to an unfamiliar place and fail to follow directions on a map or a GPS, we'll most likely get lost. Similarly, Christ – through his life, death and resurrection – revealed the way we need to live so we might enter into eternal life. So let us take up our cross and follow Jesus so we may stay on course and one day join him in heaven.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, Moses makes plain the choice of, *life and death, the blessing and the curse* if the Israelites choose to not follow the Lord's commands. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that to live as one of his disciples we must take up our cross each day and follow him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us lift up our minds and hearts to the Lord as we present our petitions to him.

- 1) That all members of the Church may make a concerted effort this Lenten season to grow in our faith and love for the Lord, so we may share fully in the joy of Easter, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That the Lord will enlighten the minds and hearts of all elected officials to protect the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who have fallen away from the practice of their Catholic faith may find their way back to God's loving embrace during this Lenten season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That we in this Eucharistic community may always be willing to follow in the Lord's footsteps, and take up our cross each day to follow him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all of our deceased friends and relatives, and all who have died, may enjoy eternal happiness with the Lord in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petitions)

PRIEST: Lord God of hope, we present these prayers in faith. We ask that you hear and answer them. Through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, March 3, 2017
(Lec. 221)

- 1) Isaiah 58:1-9a
- 2) Matthew 9:14-15

FRIDAY AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Katharine Drexel,
Virgin)

FOCUS: For fasting to bear good fruit in our lives, its goal must be to help us grow in our love for God.

For the Lenten discipline of fasting to bear good fruit, it must be directed toward helping us grow in love for the Lord. Perhaps we can do less of an activity we enjoy during Lent, or we can spend fifteen more minutes a day in prayer. Either way, we must strive to let our light *break forth like the dawn*, as we heard in Isaiah.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading reminds us that if fasting is to bear good fruit, it must be directed toward helping us grow in our love for God and living as God calls us to live. In the Gospel, Jesus responds to a question of why his disciples do not fast by teaching that when he – the bridegroom – is no longer with his disciples, then they will fast.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Father of mercy, you ask us to always be mindful of the needs of those less fortunate. We bring our petitions before you in a spirit of gratitude and supplication.

- 1) For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and all clergy, that God may grant them the spiritual and physical strength they need to preach and teach the Gospel and build up God's kingdom on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who serve in positions of leadership, may they strive to be models of servant leadership, and always act with integrity and honesty, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have lost their homes because of natural disasters around the world, may they receive help from people of good will and may God give them the strength to rebuild their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For Catholics around the globe and in our parish community, that we may join in serving the poor and supporting Catholic missions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they be wrapped in the loving embrace of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, for all eternity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and loving God, we come to you mindful of our sinfulness. We ask that you grant our petitions according to your will, through your son, Jesus Christ.

Saturday, March 4, 2017
(Lec. 222)

- 1) Isaiah 58:9b-14
- 2) Luke 5:27-32

SATURDAY AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Casimir)

FOCUS: We are all sinners in need of repentance.

Jesus tells us in today's Gospel that he has come to call sinners – and not the righteous – to repentance. In this season of Lent, we come to understand that we are all sinners, in need of forgiveness and a spirit of repentance. Let us work to cultivate that spirit by praying daily with humble hearts.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah presents us with a litany of ways to show our love for God – especially by taking care of those who are in need and by keeping the Sabbath holy rather than seeking to fulfill our own desires. In the Gospel, Jesus calls Levi, the tax collector – to come and follow him. Levi responds to this call by leaving everything behind to follow Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: God calls us to watch out for one another as brothers and sisters, and so we present to our loving God the needs of our family near and far.

- 1) For all members of the Church, that we continue to share the love of God with all whom we meet, and strive to do his will each day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders and elected officials, that they might use the resources at their disposal to ensure they are meeting the basic needs of all whom they serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the hungry and homeless, may we strive to be the hands and hearts of Jesus for them as we tend to their needs, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the Elect who are beginning the Lenten period of deepening their faith, may it prove to be a fruitful time for them as they prepare to enter the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, that they might receive a place at the eternal banquet in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious God, hear our prayers and grant us the grace needed to walk in your way of love. We ask this in the name of your son, Jesus.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2017

(Lec. 22)

- 1) Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7
- 2) Romans 5:12-19
or 5:12, 17-19
- 3) Matthew 4:1-11

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

FOCUS: Jesus is the model of love and obedience.

It can be difficult to be obedient. Temptations, deceptions and lack of will can contribute to our failures. When we focus on what love asks us to do, however, we can overcome the obstacles to our desired choices and behaviors. Jesus serves as the model of love and obedience, and relying on him in prayer gives us strength to make the right choices.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Genesis recalls the first sin committed by humankind: disobedience to God. The second reading from Romans explains how Christ came to counter that sin of disobedience with his perfect obedience. In the Gospel, Jesus remains perfectly faithful to his Father as he resists the temptations put to him by the devil in the desert.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we continue our Lenten journey of faith, let us offer these prayers to our heavenly Father, who loved us enough to offer his only Son for our sins.

- 1) For all who minister and teach in the Church, may they boldly proclaim the hope that is Jesus, our Lord, and which leads to the resurrection and eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in positions of authority throughout our nation, that their efforts may contribute to the well-being of our nation and reflect the care we are to have for one another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are sick, may they be comforted by the helping hands of caregivers, and may God bring them healing and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, that our Lenten journey will bring us closer to Jesus, who calls us to his side, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they rest in the arms of God in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, whose love knows no bounds, we ask you to hear and answer our prayers according to your will. For we offer them to you through Christ our Lord.

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Monday, March 6, 2017

(Lec. 224)

1) Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18

2) Matthew 25:31-46

MONDAY OF
FIRST WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: We are called to lovingly care for and tend to the needs of the poor and vulnerable.

Today's Gospel reminds us that one of the main criteria Jesus will use to determine whether we are judged worthy to enter into eternal life is how we care for the least in our midst. Understanding this, may we strive to see the face of Jesus in all those we meet, especially the poor and the vulnerable, and assist them in their need.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading reminds us that to lead lives that are holy and pleasing to God, it is necessary to follow and live by his commands. In the Gospel, Jesus explains that on the Day of Judgment, we will be judged by the acts of mercy we have shown to others in our lifetime, such as tending to the needs of the least among us.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we strive to be faithful to all God asks of us, let us join in bringing our needs before the Lord.

- 1) That all members of the Church, both clergy and laity, will embrace this season of Lent as a time of renewal and purification, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That countries torn by ethnic and religious strife may seek to foster tolerance and reconciliation among their people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are poor may be strengthened by their faith in God, and comforted by our efforts to minister to them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That catechumens and candidates who are preparing to enter fully into the life of the Church may find this Lenten season to be one of growth, joy and blessing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith may come to share eternal life with our heavenly Father, and all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, in your goodness hear our prayers and grant us the grace needed to pour ourselves out in love and service to others. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, March 7, 2017
(Lec. 225)

- 1) Isaiah 55:10-11
- 2) Matthew 6:7-15

TUESDAY OF
FIRST WEEK OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saints Perpetua and Felicity,
Martyrs)

FOCUS: Jesus gave us the perfect way to pray.

Personal prayer – prayer from the heart – is wonderful and effective prayer. When Jesus gave us the Our Father, he showed us all there is to know about praying: praise God, commit to his will being done, ask for what we need, and ask for forgiveness so that we might be forgiven. It is a formula that will never be surpassed.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading says God's word is like the rain, falling to earth and not returning to heaven until its work is accomplished. In the Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples not to babble when they pray. He gave them the right words to use: what we know as the Our Father. Jesus emphasized the need for us to forgive in order to be forgiven.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us join together and present our needs to our heavenly Father, confident in his power and love.

- 1) That our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and all who shepherd our Church will continue to speak out against the use of violence to solve the world's problems, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That leaders around the world will place the welfare of their citizens above the desire for power or domination, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who suffer from lack of adequate housing may be helped by the actions of caring individuals to find suitable shelter for themselves and those who depend upon them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That we in this faith community may use this season of Lent to remove those things from our lives which hinder us from developing a deeper relationship with God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died in God's grace may be given a place at the heavenly banquet, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, in your goodness hear and answer our prayers. We ask these and all things through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, March 8, 2017
(Lec. 226)

- 1) Jonah 3:1-10
- 2) Luke 11:29-32

WEDNESDAY OF
FIRST WEEK OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saint John of God,
Religious)

FOCUS: Sin keeps us separated from God.

During this Lenten season, God calls us to repentance by turning from actions and desires that are not holy. It isn't always easy, but with his grace, we can do it. The more we turn away from sin, the more our minds and hearts will be set on Jesus and living according to his teachings, which will bring us God's good gifts such as peace and joy.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In our first reading, Jonah goes to Nineveh preaching repentance to its citizens. They understand that they have been evil and turn to God, sorrowful for their sin. In the Gospel, Jesus says to a gathered crowd, *This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us turn our minds and hearts to God, our Father, and place our needs before him.

- 1) For all members of the Church, that our prayers and fasting during this Lenten season may result in greater conversion of heart and bring us closer to God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they work together in a spirit of cooperation to solve the difficult problems that face our world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For couples who are experiencing difficulty in their marriage vocation, may they turn to prayer and the Holy Spirit for guidance and strength, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our parish, that during this Lenten season our fasting, prayer and almsgiving may be done with humility, and lead to greater love and service of God and our neighbor, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have fallen asleep in Christ, may they find their peace and reward in God's presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petitions)

PRIEST: Father of all creation, hear our prayers and grant us the grace needed to turn away from sin so we may lead lives which glorify you in all things. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, March 9, 2017

(Lec. 227)

- 1) Esther C: 12, 14-16, 23-25
- 2) Matthew 7:7-12

THURSDAY OF
FIRST WEEK OF LENT

(Opt. Mem.
Saint Frances of Rome,
Religious)

FOCUS: *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find.*

Humble perseverance in prayer is rewarded with good gifts from our heavenly Father. But we must not simply ask and expect that our every wish will be granted. We must ask for courage and wisdom, like Queen Esther, and seek to accomplish God's will through hard work and perseverance.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of Queen Esther praying earnestly to God to save and deliver the Israelites from the hands of their enemies. Today's Gospel recalls Jesus saying to his disciples: *Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened unto you.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Encouraged by Jesus' instruction to ask God for what we need, we place our petitions before him.

- 1) For the Church, that we continue to be blessed with an abundance of holy and wise leaders, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the world, that peace will reign in every nation on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer religious persecution, that God will give them strength and courage to persevere in their faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the children of our parish community, that they will learn to pray earnestly for what they need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our faithful departed, that they will know perpetual joy and peace in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Good and gracious God, we thank you for counting us as your sons and daughters. Hear and answer the prayers that we offer today, through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, March 10, 2017
(Lec. 228)

- 1) Ezekiel 18:21-28
- 2) Matthew 5:20-26

FRIDAY OF
FIRST WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: We are to prayerfully address feelings of anger, and reconcile with our brothers and sisters.

Anger is a normal human emotion that sometimes arises within us when we sense that something isn't right. The challenge is to listen to what anger might tell us about what in our lives might need to be changed, and then work with the help of God's grace to make those changes.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the prophet Ezekiel speaks clearly about the need to sustain a life of virtue and goodness. In the Gospel, Jesus reminds us that if we are holding anger in our hearts toward another person, we must forgive that person and do all within our power to be reconciled with them.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Good and compassionate God, we bring our prayers and petitions before you, trusting that you will hear and answer.

- 1) That the Church may continue to teach and boldly call all people to reject violence and work to find nonviolent solutions to problems and conflicts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That leaders of war-torn nations may seek assistance for those within their borders who have lost their homes, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are alienated or who feel alone may hear the words of Jesus and be comforted by his love and compassion for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That catechists and youth ministers in our parish will continue to work prayerfully and diligently to bring the Light of Christ to our young people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may see the face of God in heaven with all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God, hear our prayers and grant us the grace needed to work to foster healing and peace in the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, March 11, 2017

(Lec. 229)

- 1) Deuteronomy 26:16-19
- 2) Matthew 5:43-48

SATURDAY OF
FIRST WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: *Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

By accepting the Lord's covenant, we agree to follow his commandments and grow in holiness. This requires us to obey his word, even when it's not easy. Certainly, loving one's enemies and praying for those who persecute us is challenging! In doing so, we imitate Christ; we become perfect as the Father is perfect.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's reading from Deuteronomy confirms acceptance of the Lord's covenant with the people of Israel. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that living as one of his faithful disciples requires loving your enemies and praying for those who persecute you.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: In humility and trust, let us now turn to our Lord in prayer.

- 1) For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, cardinals, bishops and priests, that they will be blessed with the grace and strength needed to continue their efforts of bringing lost sheep back into the fold, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who serve in government, may they turn to God for guidance to enact laws that protect all life from conception to natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who persecute others through bullying or violence, may they realize the harm caused by their words and actions and turn to God for forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those preparing to enter the Church at Easter, that during this Lenten season they may continue to grow in knowledge and love of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be clothed with eternal glory in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we are a people especially your own. Hear and answer our prayers according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2017

(Lec. 25)

- 1) Genesis 12:1-4a
- 2) 2 Timothy 1:8b-10
- 3) Matthew 17:1-9

**SECOND SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: The transfiguration brings together the law, the prophets and the saving act of Christ.

Today's Gospel tells of Jesus taking Peter, James and John up a mountain where he was transfigured before them. Similarly, Jesus invites each of us into a deep relationship of love with him so that he may change and transfigure our lives and hearts. Let's accept this invitation each day so we may lead more Christ-like lives of love and service.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of God's promise to Abraham to make of his descendants a great nation. In the second reading, Paul reminds Timothy that he must be willing to bear hardship for the sake of the Gospel. Today's Gospel recalls Peter, James and John witnessing the transfiguration of Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we stand together at the foot of the cross and recall all that God has done for his people, let us present our needs to him, knowing he will respond in love.

- 1) That the Word of God proclaimed by the Church throughout the world will bring repentance and renewal to those who have turned away from God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That those who hold public office may always speak the truth and put the interests of the people above their own, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are suffering physically or emotionally will find relief from their pain and comfort by taking refuge in Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the young people in our parish who are discerning a vocation to religious life may feel our support and be guided in their decision-making by our prayers, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed will enjoy eternal rest and peace in the arms of our heavenly Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, you are the giver of all good things. May our petitions give you praise as we trust in your mercy and love. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

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Monday, March 13, 2017
(Lec. 230)

MONDAY OF
SECOND WEEK OF LENT

- 1) Daniel 9:4b-10
- 2) Luke 6:36-38

FOCUS: In true repentance, let us come before God, who welcomes us back with open arms.

God is extravagant in the way he deals with us. He heaps his blessings upon us, and continues to call us near to him even when we have gone astray. God's extravagance toward us should fill our hearts with gratitude and move us to treat others in the same way. Mindful of this, may we strive to treat all we encounter with kindness and compassion.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Daniel acknowledges to God the sin of Israel. Though God is merciful and forgives, the sinner still has to suffer the consequences of his sin. Today's Gospel reminds us that we are to be merciful just as our heavenly Father is merciful.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Most merciful God, we ask that you hear and answer the humble petitions we place before you today.

- 1) That all members of the Church will generously share God's love with others, and have hearts that are ever-willing to forgive, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That our elected leaders may exercise wisdom and fairness as they work to eliminate violence and hatred in all forms, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those affected by violence in their lives may feel the healing touch of Jesus, and find strength in the loving and prayerful support of their community, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That we in this faith community who have been shown mercy by God might, in turn, be merciful to those who have wronged us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our deceased brothers and sisters in faith may know the splendor and glory of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of Mercy, hear and answer our prayers which we offer you through Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, March 14, 2017
(Lec. 231)

TUESDAY OF
SECOND WEEK OF LENT

- 1) Isaiah 1:10, 16-20
- 2) Matthew 23:1-12

FOCUS: We are called to work for justice for all God's people with hearts full of humility.

Spreading the Gospel and working for justice and peace are at the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus today. Bring your efforts, your prayer and your heart's desire to be of humble service to others.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah eloquently encourages us to put away our misdeeds, make justice our aim and *learn to do good*. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Our God invites us to open our hearts and speak to him about our needs. We present these petitions with humble hearts.

- 1) That all members of our Church may be blessed with the grace needed to give of themselves more fully in humble love and service to God and neighbor, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That government leaders around the world will work to improve the lives of the most vulnerable among them, especially children, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those burdened by poverty may be blessed with the resources and opportunities that may help them improve their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That God will transform the hearts of those gathered here today, and lead us toward humble service to all in God's family, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died, having lived as humble servants of God, may know the fullness of life and love in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God, you know us through and through. Hear our prayers while also filling our hearts with humility and gratitude. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, March 15, 2017
(Lec. 232)

WEDNESDAY OF
SECOND WEEK OF LENT

- 1) Jeremiah 18:18-20
- 2) Matthew 20:17-28

FOCUS: Jesus calls us to imitate his example of servant leadership.

The way of the world would have leaders assert their authority over others for their own gain. Jesus and the prophets before him offer an alternative: leaders giving of themselves in self-sacrificial love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Jeremiah comes before the Lord with his frustrations that the people he has been called to serve are plotting against him. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the Apostles about his upcoming passion and death, and that greatness is found in serving others.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Though he transcends the entire universe, our heavenly Father is attentive to the needs of each of us. Let us come before him, then, with our prayers.

- 1) For the Church, that the Holy Spirit may continue to inspire all the faithful to be servant leaders in their communities, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all government leaders, that Christ might instill in their hearts the conviction that their role is one of service to others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For Christians and other people of faith suffering persecution for their beliefs, that the Lord might comfort them and strengthen them in their trials, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our local parish community, that the Holy Spirit may imbue in us a passion to spread the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they might experience eternal happiness with our heavenly Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we thank you for hearing our prayers this day. Please answer them according to your will so that we might glorify your name always. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

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Thursday, March 16, 2017
(Lec. 233)

- 1) Jeremiah 17:5-10
- 2) Luke 16:19-31

THURSDAY OF
SECOND WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: Placing our trust and hope in the Lord brings abundant blessings.

Today's first reading reminds us that placing our trust in the Lord brings manifold blessings. It gives us the strength and grace needed to weather life's trials and difficulties. It gives us the gifts and grace we need to lead lives which bear good fruit for God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from the prophet Jeremiah reminds us that placing our faith and trust in God brings abundant blessings. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the rich man and Lazarus to teach the lesson that failing to care for the needs of others, especially the poor, can result in eternal separation from God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Merciful Father, we turn to you in prayer, trusting that you will hear our petitions.

- 1) For members of the Church throughout the world, that we may work together to help provide the basic necessities of life – food, shelter and clean water – for all of God's children, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world and national leaders, may they follow the example of Christ's mercy and compassion as they uphold the law and work for justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For missionaries at home and abroad, may they be protected from harm and may their labors be fruitful, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For parish families, may they heed the call to be good stewards by giving generously to the parish of their time, talent and treasure, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful who have died, that they rejoice in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God, hear our prayers and grant us the grace needed to be good and faithful stewards of all you entrust to us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, March 17, 2017

(Lec. 234)

- 1) Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a
- 2) Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

FRIDAY OF
SECOND WEEK OF LENT

(Opt. Mem.
Saint Patrick,
Bishop)

FOCUS: *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*

No stone is more important than the cornerstone because the integrity of the whole structure depends on it. Jesus uses the words from psalm one hundred eighteen to convey that his rejection and crucifixion is the means by which he becomes the cornerstone of God's temple. We are also built into that same temple as living stones.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Joseph is sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. He should have ended up as a slave in Egypt, but he won favor with Pharaoh and eventually saved his own people. The parable of the servants who kill the owner's son in the Gospel points to what will happen to Jesus. His death and resurrection will become the source of eternal life.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With humility, let us bring our prayers before a merciful God.

- 1) That Pope Francis and all bishops may be given the wisdom they need to continue leading and guiding the faithful to walk in the ways of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That leaders of nations torn by conflict may work to plant seeds of tolerance and acceptance of others among their people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those suffering from economic hardship may have their burdens lightened by God's grace and the helping hands of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That our faith community may always be one to welcome the stranger and open our hearts to new parishioners, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may come to enjoy eternal life with Jesus and the rest of the saints and angels in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious Father, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers in the name of Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, March 18, 2017

(Lec. 235)

- 1) Micah 7:14-15, 18-20
- 2) Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

SATURDAY OF
SECOND WEEK OF LENT

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

FOCUS: God's love and mercy know no bounds.

God is ever-willing to forgive anyone who sincerely asks for forgiveness, repents of their sins and then renews their faith and trust in him. In offering us these great gifts and blessings, God expects us, in turn, to show that same mercy to those who have wronged us, and work to forgive them.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading reminds us that God delights in clemency, is ever-willing to forgive and is faithful to his promises. In the parable of the prodigal son, we learn that Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Grateful for the gifts of God's love and mercy which know no bounds, let us join in offering our prayers and petitions to our loving Father in heaven.

- 1) For members of the whole Church, that we may continue to give witness to the power of God working in our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who hold elected office, may they carry out their duties with integrity and consideration for all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For wounded veterans, may they be cared for by compassionate and skilled medical personnel, and experience the healing warmth of God's love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For parish families, that they strive to model the love and compassion shared by the Holy Family, and seek guidance from the Holy Spirit to help them through difficult times, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they enjoy God's loving embrace in heaven with the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful Lord, we offer you our petitions, and ask that you hear our prayers and answer them according to your will. Through Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2017

(Lec. 28)

- 1) Exodus 17:3-7
- 2) Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
- 3) John 4:5-42 or 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

FOCUS: Christ offers all people the living water of salvation.

To those who thirst for truth in this world, our Christian faith offers the living waters of baptism and life in Christ. So many in our world are like the woman in the Gospel, isolated and afraid, often living on the fringes, looking for something or someone in whom to place their trust and faith. Let us pray they turn to Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, fear and need cause Israel to grumble against Moses and the Lord. God responds with water flowing from the rock. The second reading reminds us that salvation is a gift, granted through the cross of Jesus. In the Gospel, Jesus encounters a broken woman at the well. His words renew her and change her life.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we journey through Lent may we, like Christ, be willing to enter into deep prayer with our God and bring before him our needs and hopes.

- 1) For Christians throughout the world, as we continue our Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and sharing, may we experience anew God's faithfulness and come to share in the promise of the risen Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those preparing to be baptized this Easter, may they have a deeper awareness of God's loving and life-transforming presence in their lives, and the glory that awaits them in the life to come, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who suffer from chronic, painful illness, may they experience the healing consolation of Christ through our prayers and loving actions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our parish community who have strayed from God's covenant or rejected his promise of life eternal, may they, in this Lenten season, come to know once more the steadfast love and mercy of God through sharing in the mystery of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they come to share in the fullness of Christ's glory in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty and ever loving God, hear our prayers and continue to transform our hearts so we may serve you more fully and faithfully. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Monday, March 20, 2017
(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

**ST. JOSEPH
SPOUSE of the
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
- SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS: Following the example of Abraham and Saint Joseph helps us lead lives that are right in the sight of God.

The hand of God has ordered all things so that we may be right and just through his son, Jesus. It is by faith that we give our lives over to Jesus and to the will of God. We are blessed to have examples of faith that led to righteousness in Abraham and Saint Joseph. Following their examples, we can rest assured that our lives are right in the sight of God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of God instructing the prophet Nathan to go tell King David that God would make his house and his kingdom endure forever. The second reading reminds us that faith is essential in order to be righteous before God. Today's Gospel recalls Joseph being faithful to the Lord's command spoken by an angel to take Mary as his wife.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting that our heavenly Father will provide for us, we bring our needs in prayer to him.

- 1) That all members of the Church will make use of this Lenten season, and the sacrament of reconciliation, so they may be more fully reconciled to God, and experience God's gift of peace in their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That elected officials may be given the grace and strength to govern wisely, in a spirit of collaboration and partnership, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That members of the military serving abroad may help nations turn away from hostility and work toward peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That parish families may strive to imitate the faith of Saint Joseph and the love of the Holy Family within their homes, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may come to know eternal splendor, joy and bliss in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord God, your kindness and fidelity endure forever. Hear our prayers and provide for us in our need. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Tuesday, March 21, 2017
(Lec. 238)

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

TUESDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: Let us approach the Lord with humble and contrite hearts.

God does not desire that we offer grand gestures to express our love and reverence for him. Rather, we are to express our reverence through a humble, contrite heart that acknowledges our need for God's love, mercy and goodness. And then, as we are changed by God's love and mercy, we are to love others and be ever-willing to forgive.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Azariah pleads for God's mercy on behalf of the people. He acknowledges their need for God, and asks: *Do not put us to shame, but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy.* In the Gospel, Jesus uses a parable to explain to his disciples that for one to be forgiven by God, one must forgive others from one's heart.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We are a chosen people who seek to follow God with our whole heart. Let us, with humble and contrite hearts, now offer our prayers of petition.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may his humility and acts of contrition continue to inspire people of every nation to place their trust in God's kindness and great mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those in positions of civic and corporate leadership, may the measure of their mercy and kindness in decision-making and governance reflect that of God's divine mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those who have been imprisoned and are now re-entering society, may they find gainful employment and be treated with respect and dignity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here today, may we come before the altar of the Lord with humble, contrite hearts, and ask that God's wisdom may take root in the hearts of our children, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may they see God face to face and bask in his eternal kindness and mercy in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God Almighty, hear the prayers of petition we offer to you. In your kindness and mercy grant them according to your divine will. Through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, March 22, 2017
(Lec. 239)

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

WEDNESDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: Make God's law known to your children.

Obedience to God's commandments leads to wisdom and right judgment. God calls us to learn and live by his law, and to teach others to do the same so that more and more people may come to know the manifold blessings from living by his law of love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the reading from Deuteronomy, the Lord tells his people that by living according to his statutes and ordinances, other nations will see them as a great nation that is truly a wise and intelligent people. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches the disciples that he has not come to abolish but to fulfill the law.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Gathering our prayers together, we offer them to our Father in heaven.

- 1) For the Church, that we may not waver in our commitment to forming the faith of the next generation of Christians, but instead boldly continue to spread the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, that they may embrace a spirit of cooperation that allows their nations to live peacefully with neighboring countries, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who struggle to practice their faith without the protections of religious freedom, may they be given the grace to stay strong and persevere, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For parish catechists and Catholic school teachers, may they be blessed in their efforts to help our youth grow in their knowledge and love for the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they come to enjoy perfect happiness in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and loving God, hear our prayers and grant us the grace needed to persevere in faith. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, March 23, 2017
(Lec. 240)

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

THURSDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo,
Bishop)

FOCUS: Fidelity to Jesus means fidelity to his authority.

Jesus is accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul. Like today, many then were trying to undermine the authority of Christ by calling into doubt his identity. So, for those present, Jesus made it clear that whoever was not with him was against him. He counsels us, then, to stay faithful to him or risk being scattered.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from Jeremiah recounts the infidelity of the people of Israel, who time and again betray their loyalty to the Lord. God sends Jeremiah to preach the truth. Jesus, in the Gospel, casts out a demon but is accused of doing so by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Jesus makes it clear that whoever is not with him is against him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting that God hears and answers all our prayers, let us join in offering our petitions to our loving Father in heaven.

- 1) For all clergy and religious, that they might continue their work of overcoming evil in the world in the name of Jesus, and bringing more souls to Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders, may they work together cooperatively to promote the common good, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the hungry and the homeless, that they might be assisted in their need by people of goodwill, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our parish community, that we remain faithful to the Gospel and work collaboratively together to be a beacon of hope to our community, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, that their fidelity to Jesus has reserved for them a place at the heavenly banquet, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful Father, we offer you these petitions in fidelity to your word, having been invited to do so by your only son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Friday, March 24, 2017
(Lec. 241)

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

FRIDAY OF
THIRD WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: Love is the thread that weaves our lives together with our heavenly Father.

Loving God with one's whole being and loving one's neighbor as oneself leads to keeping the rest of the commandments, for love fulfills the law. Understanding this, let us ask God each day for the grace to continually grow in our love for him and our love for others.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from Hosea exhorts the people of Israel to turn back to the Lord and ask forgiveness for their sins, which will bring them forgiveness, healing and renewal. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that the two greatest commandments are loving God with one's whole being and loving one's neighbor as oneself.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Grateful that God is a loving Father, we come to him with our intentions, confident that he will hear and answer them.

- 1) For our Holy Father, that he may have the grace and strength to continue his work in building up God's kingdom on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, that their hearts may be open to promoting policies that benefit the needs of all people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who serve our country in the armed forces, may they carry out their duties in safety, and receive the appropriate health care they need when they return home, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of this parish community, that during this Lenten season we may make more frequent use of the sacrament of reconciliation so we may be more fully reconciled to God, and experience his healing love and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they enjoy perpetual light and peace in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the care you show us every day. Hear the prayers we offer you this day through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Saturday, March 25, 2017
(Lec. 545)

- 1) Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10
- 2) Hebrews 10:4-10
- 3) Luke 1:26-38

**THE ANNUNCIATION
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS: Let us willingly place our trust in God's design for our lives.

Today's readings serve as a reminder that God's designs for our lives exceed even our wildest imaginations. God invites us into co-creating our lives through our hopes and dreams. But, like Mary, our limited understanding cannot envision the totality of God's grand design. And, like Mary, our calling is to trust God and willingly place ourselves at the disposal of that design.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Ahaz is invited by God to ask for a sign. Ahaz is fearful to do so. The second reading recounts that Christ's sacrifice is the quintessential offering that saves the world. The Gospel reading is the Annunciation, in which Mary is invited to bear the Christ child. In humility, she offers her fiat.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Knowing that we need God's guidance, grace and mercy to participate in helping those in need, let us turn to God and offer our prayers for the Church and our world.

- 1) For the universal Church, may she continue to inspire the faithful to seek God and offer themselves as humble, willing servants of his plan, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all the peoples of the world, may they, inspired by the Holy Spirit, seek ways to love and serve God by bringing about peace and reconciliation in their homes and nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who despair because they fear God does not care about them, may they find sure hope by encountering God's abundant love and mercy in the words of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the members of this faith community, may we, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, demonstrate courage, wisdom and humility as we offer ourselves as servants of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died marked with the sign of faith, may perpetual light shine upon them and may they be granted eternal rest in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God Almighty, you alone know the totality of the plans you have for our lives. It is our hope that these prayers of petition are answered according to your divine will. Through Christ our Lord.

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2017

(Lec. 31)

- 1) 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
- 2) Ephesians 5:8-14
- 3) John 9:1-41 or 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

FOCUS: The blind man's conversion of heart stands in stark contrast to the stubborn blindness of the Pharisees.

Observing how a blind person negotiates his or her way through life is inspiring. Observing blindness of heart, however, is troubling. Those who are blind to the truth often stumble through life because of obstacles they place in their own paths. When we seek the truth of the Gospel, we are like the blind man who came to believe in the Son of Man.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

At first, Samuel judges by appearances, then he is reminded by God to judge the heart in order to find a worthy candidate to anoint as king. Saint Paul challenges us to live as *children of light*. In the Gospel, we have a man, blind from birth, move from seeing Jesus as a prophet to seeing Jesus as the Promised One, while the blindness of the Pharisees remains.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Seeking to eradicate our own spiritual blindness, let us petition our loving God to fill our hearts with his light.

- 1) For Pope Francis, our clergy and all pastoral leaders, may they help us to embrace the Light of Christ with all our hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, may they shed any blindness to seeking power which impedes them from serving the needs of all the people entrusted to their care, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who struggle with disabilities, may they receive whatever assistance they need to fully share their gifts and talents with others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the Elect and candidates preparing to receive the Easter sacraments, may the anticipated joy of being one with Christ strengthen their resolve to be children of the Light, let us pray to the Lord
- 5) For those who have died and faithfully carried their crosses through life, may they share in the victory won by Jesus in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God of Abraham and Father of Jesus, hear our prayer as we seek your wisdom and guidance. Grant us greater clarity of spiritual sight and draw us ever closer to you. We pray through Christ our Lord.

Monday, March 27, 2017
(Lec. 244)

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

MONDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: We rejoice in God's promise of everlasting life as we travel deeper into our journey of Lent.

Lent is a time to change our hearts and minds, and put our trust in the Lord. This is difficult. God has promised us life, and he will deliver on that promise. All we are asked to do is to come close to him, listen to his word and trust that he will take care of us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah proclaims that the Lord will make all things new and not recall past mistakes, if only his people would return to the Lord. In John's Gospel, many come to believe in Jesus because of what he has done for them. The official asks for his son to be healed, and believes without first seeing.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us place our trust in our merciful Father and bring him our prayers.

- 1) That the Church may continue to preach the Good News to those who are lost, offering them a place of acceptance and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That those around the world who are persecuted for their Christian faith may be able to celebrate Holy Week in safety and without fear of reprisal, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who live with addiction may derive strength from their faith in God, and be blessed with the help needed to begin the journey to healing and recovery, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That members of this faith community may take advantage of the sacrament of reconciliation during this Lenten season, and use it as an opportunity to develop a closer relationship with God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed might rejoice with all the angels and saints in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God, hear and answer our prayers, which we offer you through Christ our Lord.

Tuesday, March 28, 2017
(Lec. 245)

- 1) Ezekiel 47: 1-9, 12
- 2) John 5:1-16

TUESDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: Jesus offers new life, healing and salvation.

What does it mean to be “well?” Simply the absence of disease or physical affliction? Jesus heals not only the body, but the soul. He forgives sins, and warns those who are healed to avoid sin. Certainly, it is important to care for our bodies. But it is equally important that we care for our souls, so we might stay on the right track and be well for eternity.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading tells of Ezekiel’s vision of water flowing out from the Temple, bringing life in whatever direction it flowed. In the Gospel, Jesus cures a crippled man and commands him to take up his mat and walk. The Jewish leaders begin to persecute Jesus because he healed the man on the Sabbath.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Knowing that God is present among us, let us bring our petitions to him, full of hope and gratitude.

- 1) That the Church may be blessed with an abundance of holy men and women who hear and answer the call to priesthood and consecrated life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That elected officials will work to defend the dignity and sanctity of human life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That the elderly may find peace in the love of God, and through the kindness of their neighbors and the compassion of caregivers, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the families in our community may grow strong in their love for God and one another by placing God at the center of their lives and praying daily, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may come to dwell in the new and heavenly Jerusalem, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, look down upon your children who come to you in their need, and grant their petitions in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.

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Wednesday, March 29, 2017
(Lec. 246)

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

WEDNESDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: God's love for us is unmatched by any earthly love we can imagine.

God's love for us cannot be matched, even by the most loving image we can contemplate: the love of a mother for her child. How wonderful it is to know that the creator of the universe, the Almighty One, loves us individually and unconditionally, and will never stop loving us. Let us be ever-grateful.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah likens the love of God to the love a mother has for her child, but goes on to say if a mother should forget her child, God will never forget or abandon his people. In the Gospel, Jesus calls God his Father, and we honor God by honoring his Son. He said the Father has given his Son the power to judge justly.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: United to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, let us join in offering our prayers to our loving Father in heaven.

- 1) That the Holy Father, and all clergy and religious, will continue to seek the lost and guide them to the light of God's love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That all parents may be strengthened and assisted in their special role of raising good, loving children who heed the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That children suffering because of economic conditions and poverty may obtain the help and security they need through a caring community, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the people of this parish may always welcome the stranger, and work to spread the Good News at work, at school and at home, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our beloved dead may experience everlasting joy in the company of the angels and saints in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for all you do for us. We bring these petitions to you, trusting in your loving providence, through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Thursday, March 30, 2017
(Lec. 247)

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

THURSDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

FOCUS: Turn away from sin and reconcile with God. Let him pour his gift of mercy and hope upon us.

We may be tempted to judge the Israelites, who quickly turned to their former ways and forgot about God. We must be careful, though, because in many ways, we also do this. The key is to always turn back to God and reconcile with him. The sacrament of reconciliation offers us his gift of mercy and grace so we may resist sin and continue to grow in holiness.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading recalls Moses' earnest plea to the Lord to have mercy on the Israelites. Moses' appeal brings God to relent of the punishment he had planned to bring upon them for worshipping a molten calf. In the Gospel, Jesus testifies to his relationship with the Father and his saving works.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Knowing our need for reconciliation, let us turn to God who pours out his love and mercy upon us.

- 1) For missionaries in the Church, may they be given the grace to continue their work of spreading the Gospel message to those who have yet to hear and believe, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they work to end ethnic and religious tensions in their countries which can lead to violence and unrest, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are suffering this Lent due to the loss of employment, may the light of Christ become visible to them, and may they find employment to sustain them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For an awakening in our parish community to the needs of the poor, may our hearts respond in love to reach out to them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they find rest in the arms of our heavenly Father in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we ask that you hear and answer the prayers we offer today in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, March 31, 2017
(Lec. 248)

FRIDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

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

FOCUS: We are called to be courageous, and trust in God's unwavering love and care.

In times of distress, it is difficult to be patient in our desire that God hear and answer our prayer. It is at those times that we must lean even more on our faith, and trust in the God who made us and has a plan for our lives that no one can thwart. He will "rescue us" and renew our faith in his loving care and mercy.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the wicked conspire to put to death the just one who walks in the way of the Lord. The responsorial psalm reminds us that God is close to the broken-hearted. Today's Gospel tells of Jesus not wanting to travel to Judea because some of the Jewish leaders there were trying to kill him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With trust in God's timely and gracious providence, we place our needs before him.

- 1) That during these remaining days of Lent, the Church may continue to preach the message of Jesus, and his love, care and mercy for people throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That elected officials will always serve with humility, putting the needs of those they serve ahead of their own self-interests, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who have been forced from their homeland because of war or violence may find safe refuge and welcome from people of goodwill, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That we in this parish community will open our hearts more fully to the Holy Spirit so that our love for God will shine forth and we may be more generous in assisting those who are in need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed may live in the light of God's love for all eternity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear our prayers and bless us with the grace to live with faith at all times, trusting that you know our needs best. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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