

February

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Thursday, February 1, 2018
(Lec. 326)

- 1) 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12
- 2) Mark 6:7-13

THURSDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Jesus is with us each day as we strive to walk in his ways.

When Jesus sent his disciples out to preach and heal, he sent them in pairs. This meant that his disciples had each other for encouragement, and were able to strengthen one another when the journey was arduous. Although Jesus is always with us on our path, do we have a spiritual companion who can help to keep us walking in the way of the Lord?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, a dying King David reminds his son, Solomon, of God's promise to make his family reign over Israel forever. In the Gospel, Jesus sends out the Apostles to continue his work of healing and sanctifying. They are to go humbly, relying on God and the people for whatever they need.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident that God will provide for all our needs, let us present our petitions to him.

- 1) That the Church may continue to be the standard bearer for love and compassion for all people in need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That business leaders may commit to treating customers and employees fairly, and being good corporate citizens, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That refugees and others who are displaced from their homes may obtain the help and support they need to live with dignity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That those of us gathered here may seek opportunities to help someone who is in need of our time, talent or treasure, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may be welcomed into the peace and happiness of everlasting life in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord God, ruler of heaven and earth, hear our prayers offered today in humble submission to your will. We bring them to you through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, February 2, 2018
(Lec. 524)

- 1) Malachi 3:1-4
- 2) Hebrews 2:14-18
- 3) Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22-32

**THE PRESENTATION
OF THE LORD
- FEAST**

FOCUS: Let us rejoice in the presence of the Lord.

Today we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord. Simeon and Anna in the Temple recognize Jesus as the one who will carry out God's plan of salvation. Jesus is likewise in our midst today. Do we recognize his presence among us? Do we rejoice in the light of this presence?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Prophet Malachi writes of the Lord sending a messenger who will refine and purify. In Hebrews, we hear that Jesus had to take on our human nature to expiate the sins of the people. In the Gospel, Simeon and Anna speak about the child *destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, let us offer to God our prayers.

- 1) That we, as members of the Church, may share the saving message of Jesus through our compassionate outreach to others and by lives of faithful witness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That those throughout the world who govern may assure right and just peace, prosperity and freedom for all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all parents who lack adequate resources to provide for their children's basic needs may be blessed with the presence of those who can help to ease their burdens, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That Christ may have a place in the hearts and homes of those gathered here, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed may be brought into the light of the Resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we entrust ourselves to you by living as faithful followers of your Son. We ask that you hear these prayers, through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, February 3, 2018
(Lec. 328)

- 1) 1 Kings 3:4-13
- 2) Mark 6:30-34

SATURDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(Opt. Mem.

Saint Blaise, Bishop and Martyr;
Saint Ansgar, Bishop;
Saturday in Honor of BVM)

FOCUS: We pray to the Lord for wisdom and healing.

Today, we have the opportunity to carry out one of the traditions of the Church in the blessing of throats. Following the example of Jesus, we carry out the ministry of healing to all in need. By the prayer and blessing with candles, through the intercession of Saint Blaise, we call on God to heal all afflictions of the throat.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

God appeared in a dream to King Solomon telling him to ask whatever he wished. In his wisdom, Solomon prayed for an understanding heart to be able to govern his people. Following the initial mission of the Apostles, Jesus instructs them in the Gospel to get away and rest. The crowds, however, seek them out.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us offer our prayers and petitions on behalf of the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

- 1) For our Holy Father and all who lead the Church, may they remain faithful to the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders and civic officials, may they strive to serve their people with honesty and integrity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are suffering from illness, may they have the comfort of family and friends and be restored to health, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all catechists and parents who teach the Word of God to young people, may they be guided by the Holy Spirit to be living examples of God's Word in the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they experience the joys of the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God, in your compassion hear us and answer our prayers. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2018

(Lec. 74)

- 1) Job 7:1-4, 6-7
- 2) 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23
- 3) Mark 1:29-39

**FIFTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

FOCUS: Let us strive to proclaim the Gospel by our everyday words and actions.

In the Gospel, we hear that the Good News of Jesus is spreading to many towns and villages. Jesus tells his disciples that he has come for the purpose of preaching and teaching. That is our purpose as well. Let us strive to spread the Gospel in our everyday lives.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Our first reading relates the suffering and despair of Job. In the second reading, Saint Paul tells us we must not keep the Good News to ourselves, but we are called to share it with those we meet. In the Gospel, we hear that Jesus comes to bring healing and peace to all those he encounters.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We now turn to our God, who is the source of all grace, and present our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For all those in leadership positions in the Church, may they be strengthened in their tireless efforts to bring others to know Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may they work to bring about a just society for everyone, especially for those whose voices are unheard, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who face the daily hardship of searching for food or shelter, may they be strengthened by the Lord standing by them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us in this faith community, may we evangelize in our everyday lives through our words and actions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, especially those who have no one to pray for them, may they be welcomed into the kingdom of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord God, we thank you for your great love and mercy. Please hear our prayers, which we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Monday, February 5, 2018
(Lec. 329)

- 1) 1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13
- 2) Mark 6:53-56

MONDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(OBL MEM
Saint Agatha,
Virgin and Martyr)

FOCUS: In Jesus' touch, we find healing and experience his holy presence in our lives.

Healing is one of the visible forms of evidence that God is present in our lives and in our world. We all need healing in some shape or form – healing from our sins and sinful choices, healing from our wrongful actions, and healing from our pride and failure to acknowledge the presence of God in our lives.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Our first reading recalls the dedication of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Filled with God's glory and presence in the ark, it became the place of God's dwelling with his chosen people. In the Gospel, Jesus heals the sick through his touch.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence and trust, let us bring our prayers and petitions before our merciful Father.

- 1) For Church leaders, may the Holy Spirit continue to guide and inspire them and keep them faithful to Christ and his Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all civic leaders, may they work to ensure that all people can worship God in peace and freedom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are persecuted for their faith in Christ, may God's Holy Spirit uphold and strengthen them, and assure them of the prayers and support of their Christian brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those of us gathered here, may we reach out to those in our faith community who struggle with sorrows or heavy burdens, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they receive the reward of a life well spent and come to share in the fullness of Christ's glory, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty and eternal God, our salvation comes from you alone. As you watch over the lives of your people, let us once again experience the transforming and strengthening power of your Holy Spirit. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, February 6, 2018
(Lec. 330)

- 1) 1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30
- 2) Mark 7:1-13

TUESDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(OBL MEM
Saint Paul Miki
and Companions,
Martyrs)

FOCUS: Let us pray always with humility and wonder in our hearts.

When we get overly caught up in the daily minutiae of our lives, we run the risk of being oblivious to God's awesome grace. Praying throughout the day helps keep us grounded in what really matters. Let us strive to pray as Solomon does, and remember always to thank God for the many blessings he has bestowed upon us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Solomon's humble and inspiring prayer in the first reading sets the tone for the Israelites and for us. In the Gospel, Jesus is not happy with the leaders of his time because they skirt the full meaning of the law and harp on matters of little consequence.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We come before the Lord with humility, acknowledging his awesome grace at work in our lives.

- 1) That all members of the Church may have the grace to walk humbly before our God in the spirit of Pope Francis, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That the governments of the world may engage one another with increasing respect and tolerance, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those confined to hospitals or nursing homes may find joy in the visits of family and friends, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That all places of worship in our community may be respected and protected, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may enter the heavenly Jerusalem, joining the angels and saints in giving glory to God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, hear our prayer that one day we might be with you in Paradise, and strengthen our resolve to be faithful disciples. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, February 7, 2018
(Lec. 331)

- 1) 1 Kings 10:1-10
- 2) Mark 7:14-23

WEDNESDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Evils come from within and they defile.

Many of the Old Testament laws identify certain dietary or other practices that determine a person's cleanliness or purity. Jesus radically alters his disciples' understanding of these precepts by pointing out that we are not defiled by what we put into our bodies, but by what arises from within us. If we respond to God with our whole being, we will want to seek that which is pure, and do his will.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon in today's reading from the Book of Kings. Fascinated by his wisdom and prosperity, she believes the Lord made Solomon king to carry out judgment and justice. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches his disciples that a person is made unclean by the evils that come from within their hearts, not from the food they eat.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: United as the body of Christ, we turn to our Lord with prayers for the good of our assembly, the Church and the world.

- 1) For all Church leaders, may the Spirit guide them in truth and wisdom as they shepherd souls throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those entrusted to public office, may they embody an attitude of selflessness and carry out their duties for the good of those they serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those suffering from addiction of any kind may experience the healing power of God, and find recovery and peace through the support of friends and family, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our parish community who are facing new challenges in this new year, may they draw strength from listening to Jesus in prayer, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they enter the heavenly kingdom and enjoy the presence of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful God, grant us your wisdom. Answer our prayers so we may come to you with clean hearts and pure minds. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, February 8, 2018
(Lec. 332)

- 1) 1 Kings 11:4-13
- 2) Mark 7:24-30

THURSDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Jerome Emiliani;
Saint Josephine Bakhita,
Virgin)

FOCUS: Jesus brings God's healing and love to all.

The strength of the Gentile woman's faith serves as a reminder to trust in God always, and have faith in his healing power. She is persistent in her pleading, and Jesus rewards her persistence. Jesus shows us that God's plan of salvation includes all people who follow him and do his will.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's readings are a short study in contrasts, with faith at the core. In the first reading, King Solomon has turned away from his faith in the Lord and erected temples to strange gods. The Gospel passage from Mark presents the Syro-Phoenician woman who approaches Jesus to cure her daughter of an unclean spirit. Although she is a Gentile, she demonstrates great faith in Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, knowing that you always respond to a prayer offered in faith, we come before you, and ask you to hear our petitions.

- 1) For musicians, cantors, lectors and acolytes in the wider Church, may they be blessed with the gift of joy in their ministry of reverent and faithful liturgical worship, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they be inspired to seek peaceful solutions to the conflicts that cause violence in their regions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are sick and suffering, may they experience the healing love of Jesus through those who care for them and through the sacraments of the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this parish community, may we be witnesses to God's love to those in need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may they rejoice in eternal light in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father in heaven, in your eternal love, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers. We pray through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, February 9, 2018

(Lec. 333)

- 1) 1 Kings 11:29-32; 12:19
- 2) Mark 7:31-37

FRIDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Let us open ourselves to wonder at the good things God does in our lives.

The crowds who witnessed Jesus' healing of the deaf man are astonished at his actions, proclaiming, *He has done all things well*. God continues to do great things in our lives and in the lives of people we know. How open are we to being astonished at the greatness of God?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, the prophet Ahijah performs a strange and symbolic action: tearing his cloak and giving ten pieces to Jeroboam, symbolizing the splitting of the ten northern tribes from the line of David. In the Gospel, Jesus astonishes the crowd by healing a deaf man suffering from a speech impediment.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: God continues to astound us with his great works of love. Let us offer to him our prayers for people throughout the world.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may our faithful and bold witness lead others to Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders throughout the world, may they see themselves as servants for justice, and treat each person with dignity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are tested by their daily burdens of pain or suffering, may Jesus be their strength and support, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For married couples in our faith community, may Jesus' example of sacrificial love be their daily guide, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they rejoice in the dawn of eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of great wonders, hear the prayers we present to you, and bring joy to those for whom we pray. Through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, February 10, 2018
(Lec. 334)

- 1) 1 Kings 12:26-32; 13:33-34
- 2) Mark 8:1-10

SATURDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(OBL MEM
Saint Scholastica,
Virgin)

FOCUS: When we are in need, the Lord blesses us with abundance.

Sometimes we may feel powerless and overwhelmed. We don't believe we have enough strength or wisdom to face up to life's challenges. But where we see scarcity and want, the Lord sees abundance. If we have faith in him, the Lord will bless us with even more than we need.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the reading from the First Book of Kings, Jeroboam leads his people into sin by encouraging them to worship the golden calves he has set up in Bethel and Dan, instead of worshiping the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem. In the Gospel, having only seven loaves of bread and a few fish, Jesus feeds a crowd of four thousand who have grown hungry after following him for three days.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Aware of his concern for us, let us bring our needs to God, knowing he will not send us away hungry.

- 1) For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, may his faith continue to be a shining beacon to all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all judges and those responsible for law enforcement, may they have the prudence to exercise their authority in humility and with fairness on behalf of the people they serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the hungry, the homeless, and all those who lack the basic necessities of life, may God move our hearts and provide us with sufficient resources to care for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all the schools in our community, may the Spirit enliven them in their efforts to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children entrusted into their care, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they join the angels and saints in singing praise to God in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty Father, we thank you for your many blessings, and beg you to grant our petitions in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2018

(Lec.77)

- 1) Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
- 2) 1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1
- 3) Mark 1:40-45

**SIXTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

FOCUS: Sin separates us from God.

In the same way that leprosy separated people from their communities until they were healed, sin separates us from God until we ask for forgiveness and healing. Let us have the faith of the leper in today's Gospel, and believe in the healing words and touch of Jesus when it is our time to need forgiveness.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, a man with a skin infection is deemed unclean and separated from the community. In Corinthians, Paul tells us to be imitators of Christ, and to do everything for the glory of God. In the Gospel, Jesus cures a leper, and then tells him not to speak of the healing to anyone.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Approaching the altar with appreciation for our many blessings, we offer our prayers of petition for the world and for ourselves.

- 1) For Pope Francis, bishops, priests, and all who serve as ministers of the Gospel, may God grant them joy and faithfulness as they proclaim the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those in leadership positions throughout the world, may they turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are ill or homebound, may they be uplifted and comforted by God's grace and the compassion of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For families in our parish community, may the teachings of Jesus in Scripture, and participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, make them stronger and more faith-filled, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they find themselves in the loving arms of our Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty Father, you have the power to forgive us and bring us back into your loving arms. Help us to be imitators of your Son in all that we do. We ask this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Monday, February 12, 2018
(Lec. 335)

- 1) James 1:1-11
- 2) Mark 8:11-13

MONDAY OF
SIXTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Seek the wisdom of God.

Sometimes things happen in our lives that cause us to wonder about how, exactly, God is caring for us. When we think we know what is in our best interest and life does not play out that way, it can be difficult to understand why. In times like these, more than any other, we are encouraged to have faith, and to seek the wisdom of God in prayer, so that we might see ourselves, and our lives, as God does.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, James tells us that our trials are the very things that lead us to God. He encourages us to have faith because doubting tosses us about *like a wave of the sea*. In the Gospel, Jesus is frustrated with the Pharisees because they are asking for a sign from him. Jesus refuses.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: God, our Father, we humbly place our needs before you.

- 1) That the Church, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, may persevere in spreading the Gospel message to the ends of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That world leaders may be awakened to how their actions affect the poor and those in most need of their attention, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all those who are in need of healing and reconciliation may find welcome and care when they turn to the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That we who are gathered here might be mindful of God's work in our lives, and in the lives of those around us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died might live eternally with Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord, our God, hear our prayers that we might come to a greater understanding of your gift of love in our lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, February 13, 2018
(Lec. 336)

- 1) James 1:12-18
- 2) Mark 8:14-21

TUESDAY OF
SIXTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Only good gifts come from God.

Our personal desires and the powers of the world lead us to sin, but God's gifts are always good. Let us use our God-given gifts to build up, not to tear down; let us use them in service to others, not for our own gain.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading reminds us that temptation does not come from God, but from desires that lead to sin. Only good gifts come from God. In the Gospel, Jesus tries to warn his disciples against temptation from the Pharisees and Herod – the powers of the world.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: God of all good gifts, help us to persevere in faith as we offer our prayers to you.

- 1) For the Church, may our witness in the world facilitate peace among people and nations, and help to build up God's kingdom on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the citizens of every nation, may we be wary of unjust power and seek to support honest men and women for political office, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have had to flee their homelands because of war or violence, may they find refuge and welcome in other lands, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may the example of the saints inspire us in our prayer and in our caring for one another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have passed into eternal life, may they be greeted by God's loving mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we ask you to provide for our needs as we place our trust in you. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, February 14, 2018
(Lec. 219)

ASH WEDNESDAY

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

FOCUS: God is calling us now to repentance, as we begin the journey of Lent.

Whatever spiritual state we are in, no matter how much we succeeded or failed in our Lenten journeys of the past, God is calling us now to begin this period of repentance and love. Jesus faced Jerusalem and his impending death with steadfast courage. May we enter this period of prayer, fasting and charity with the courage to answer whatever it is God asks of us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading from the Book of Joel, the people of Israel turn back to God with repentance and fasting. Paul reminds us in the second reading that now is the acceptable time to be reconciled to God. In the Gospel, Jesus instructs us to approach charity, prayer and fasting with sincerity of heart – not for show.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we begin this season of Lent, let us approach God with trust, knowing he will hear our prayers and respond according to his will.

- 1) For Catholic parishes throughout the world, may they be welcoming communities of repentance, prayer and service in this Lenten season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials and policy-makers, may God inform their work to uphold the dignity and sanctity of human life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For parents who struggle each day to feed, clothe and educate their children, may their communities respond generously in order to bring them assistance and relief, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our parish preparing to be received into the Church at Easter, may they come ever closer to Christ during their Lenten journey, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died in faith, may they rejoice forever in their new life with God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, hear our prayers and bring us ever closer to you as we begin this holy season of Lent. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

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Thursday, February 15, 2018
(Lec. 220)

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

THURSDAY
AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY

FOCUS: Sacrifice can be life-giving.

For our financial, health or social benefit, we are usually willing to make sacrifices. Should we not do the same for our spiritual health and benefit? Sacrifice for the greater good of ourselves is life-giving, and Lent is a reminder of this in its preparation for the greatest life-giving sacrifice.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Moses reminds his people that God offers life and death – life for those who worship him only, and death for those who turn away from him. In the Gospel, we hear a call for each of Christ's disciples to take up his or her own cross daily and follow him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us open our hearts and bring to the Lord the needs of the Church and the world.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may God enable us to live out our baptismal calling and lead lives of humble service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For lawmakers, may they know and understand the words of Jesus concerning fair judgements and doing God's will, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are grieving the loss of a loved one, may the hope of eternal life bring them solace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may prayer be our strength in times of difficulty or struggle, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they live forever in heavenly peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, we offer these petitions for our good and for the good of others. Grant what is consistent with your holy will. We pray in the name of Jesus the Lord.

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Friday, February 16, 2018
(Lec. 221)

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

FRIDAY
AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY

FOCUS: God desires true fasting.

Fasting plays an important part in many of the world's major religions. Today's Scripture readings teach us that while there are appropriate times to fast, this external act needs to be practiced with love and sincerity to be acceptable to the Lord. True fasting involves performing acts of mercy.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah describes the fasting God desires. He wants us to free the oppressed and give to those in need. In the Gospel, John's disciples ask Jesus why his disciples do not fast. Jesus answers by asking if wedding guests mourn while the bridegroom is present. He says they will fast when he is taken away.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Eager to offer a fast acceptable to the Lord, we join together for the needs of our Church and the good of the world.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may his practice of merciful love become a model for Christians around the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For political leaders, may the grace of God guide them in their leadership roles, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who do not believe in Christ, may they be enlightened by the Holy Spirit and discover the fullness of life in Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our parish, that this Lenten season may inspire us to practice the true fasting our Lord desires, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, may they be mercifully welcomed to the wedding feast of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Glorious Lord, hear the prayers of your people. Let our light break forth like the dawn so we may do your will here on earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, February 17, 2018
(Lec. 222)

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

SATURDAY
AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY
(Opt. Mem.
The Seven Holy Founders
of the Servite Order)

FOCUS: Jesus came in order to heal and forgive.

In today's Gospel, Jesus explains that his mission is to heal those who are spiritually sick. He says he is there for those who need his help, but in order for Jesus to help us, we must recognize our need. Let us spend some time in prayer today opening our hearts to his Word.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading from Isaiah, we hear of the blessings God will bestow on those who do his will. In today's Gospel, Jesus calls and heals Levi, a rich tax collector. Jesus uses a proverb to explain his actions to the Pharisees.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence in your love, gracious Lord, we place our petitions before you.

- 1) For an increase in vocations in the Church, may the Church continue to be led by those who are dedicated to the mission of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For missionary disciples throughout the world, may their gifts of preaching and teaching draw people to seek Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering from long-term illness, may they be comforted by the knowledge that they are loved and cared for by Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those of us gathered here, may we always strive to love one another and practice charity and justice to all we meet, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died in Christ, may they live forever with him in eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, with humble gratitude for your justice and mercy, we ask you to hear these petitions in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2018

**FIRST SUNDAY
OF LENT**

(Lec. 23)

- 1) Genesis 9:8-15
- 2) 1 Peter 3:18-22
- 3) Mark 1:12-15

FOCUS: *The kingdom of God is at hand.*

Repent and believe in the Gospel. These sound like simple words from our short Gospel today. But it is fitting that Jesus begins his earthly ministry with this powerful message after the Spirit descended upon him at his baptism. He asks us to believe in the Gospel and embrace its message of humble service and discipleship.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the reading from Genesis, God establishes a covenant with Noah, declaring the rainbow as the reminder to all his people. In the second reading, we hear that the eight who had been saved by the water in the story of Noah prefigure our baptism which saves us now. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus begins his Galilean ministry by proclaiming the need to repent and believe.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Loving Father, we trust in your covenant which makes us your sons and daughters. We ask that you hear the prayers we bring to you today.

- 1) For the Church, may we confidently proclaim the Good News of the Gospel and share our faith with others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in public office, may they embrace servant leadership and strive to be steadfast in speaking the truth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are in prison, may they use this difficult time to grow closer to God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here, may we respond boldly to the call to discipleship and mission, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they experience the fullness of God's love and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, hear the prayers we bring you today, and all the intentions we hold in our hearts. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Monday, February 19, 2018
(Lec. 224)

- 1) Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18
- 2) Matthew 25:31-46

MONDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Let us seek first to be holy in all things.

We have the Scriptures to guide us through life. They are the paths we should follow. Jesus was very clear about what lies ahead eternally for those who follow his words, and for those who refuse to follow his words. Let us look for opportunities to reach out to one another in love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In our first reading from Leviticus, God instructs Moses to tell the people to be holy as God is holy. Then he gives them commandments to follow. In the Gospel, Jesus describes the final judgment for those who do, and for those who do not, follow his commandments.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Remembering that each of us has been called to serve, let us ask the Lord in confidence to hear our petitions for our needs and the needs of those we are asked to serve.

- 1) That the Church, as she continues to bring the message of Jesus to all, may be blessed with more and more listeners who heed his words, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That integrity and honesty may be the hallmarks of all who hold elected office or formulate public policy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who have been victimized by prejudice or hatred may be affirmed and comforted by our love, acceptance and support, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That we as a faith community will be open to the grace of the Holy Spirit during this Lenten period as we prepare to welcome the risen Christ at Easter, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all of our beloved friends and relatives who the Lord has called home will rest eternally in the Lord's presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: We offer these prayers to you with thanksgiving, Father, in the name of Jesus, your son.

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Tuesday, February 20, 2018
(Lec. 225)

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

TUESDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: God wants what's best for us.

God is a generous and loving Father who wants only what is best for his children. God showers down rain to make the seed grow, and gives us his Word to bring us grace. But God also expects us to be generous and loving toward all his children – to forgive them from our hearts. We are called to be like God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the passage from Isaiah, God promises that his word will be as fruitful and fertile as the earth after a rain. God's will –what is best for us – will be achieved. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches us to pray to God with absolute trust that he knows what we need and will give it to us.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Jesus taught us to trust God with all our needs, and so we present these petitions to our heavenly Father.

- 1) For clergy around the world, may the Holy Spirit guide them as they lead their people through this most sacred season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For farmers and all who work the land throughout the world, may they receive what they need to produce an abundant harvest, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, the homebound and the suffering, that God's healing touch may bring them peace and comfort, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may our lives bear witness to the Lord during this Lenten journey, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who will die today, and all the faithful departed, may they enter into their eternal rest, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, you are always ready to give us what we need. Hear our prayer for ourselves and those most in need. We ask this through your son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Wednesday, February 21, 2018
(Lec. 226)

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

TUESDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Peter Damian,
Bishop and Doctor
of the Church)

FOCUS: Let us heed Jesus' message of salvation today.

The people of Nineveh were evil, yet Jonah had just started through their city preaching repentance when they began to fast and turn from their evil ways. The crowds in Jesus' time had the Lord himself preaching to them and still did not believe. Jesus is our sign; let us waste no time in repenting and believing.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

After the Lord called to Jonah a second time in the first reading, the prophet went to Nineveh announcing that God would destroy the city in forty days. Because they turned away from evil, God relented of the destruction. In the Gospel, Jesus brands the crowd an evil generation for not repenting as did the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With contrite and humbled hearts, we approach our compassionate God, offering our prayers for ourselves and for the world.

- 1) That Church leaders may be blessed with a fruitful harvest in their call to the faithful to be active in sharing their faith with others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That elected officials may have the graces of integrity, honesty and compassion in enacting laws and decrees that benefit all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who lack the basic necessities to survive the long winter months may be helped by abundant generosity and love from others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That our catechumens and elect may be strengthened on their journey to Easter, and may God build them into his kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our beloved dead may be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom with all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and merciful God, create in us a clean heart and steadfast spirit, that we may repent and turn away from all evil. Hear the prayers we bring you as we begin our Lenten journey. Through Christ our Lord.

Thursday, February 22, 2018
(Lec. 535)

- 1) 1 Peter 5:1-4
- 2) Matthew 16:13-19

**THE CHAIR OF SAINT
PETER THE APOSTLE
- FEAST**

FOCUS: The Church stands strong on the apostolic foundation of Peter and his confession of faith.

Jesus chooses Peter to be the rock on which he builds his Church, and promises that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Peter recognizes his mission as one of service and love, not domination and power. We are called to imitate this mission.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, we hear that proper leadership is not about dominance, but should be focused on service and love. The Gospel relates Jesus' bestowal of the keys to the kingdom on Peter.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With hope and trust, we bring our prayers and petitions before our heavenly Father.

- 1) That the Church, through the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit, may bring the hope of Christ to all who seek the truth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That community leaders may be filled with wisdom and humility, and embrace servant leadership, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are grieving the loss of a loved one may be comforted and strengthened by the love of God reflected in each of us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That those in our faith community in need of forgiveness may be inspired to seek the grace of the sacraments in order to restore peace in their hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may share in the eternal peace of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, accept our prayers we offer today. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

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Friday, February 23, 2018
(Lec. 228)

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

FRIDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Polycarp,
Bishop and Martyr)

FOCUS: The Christian life becomes virtuous as we turn away from sin.

Today we learn from both of our readings that following the commandments – our moral framework for the Christian life – is necessary for those who desire to live in Christ. This way of life is lived through our direct relationship with our brothers and sisters, and learning to reconcile and forgive one another.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the reading from Ezekiel, we are reminded of the danger of turning away from virtue toward sin, and the mercy of God when we strive to turn away from sin and live a virtuous life. In the Gospel from Matthew, Jesus teaches about the importance of reconciliation.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence and trust, we turn to our Father with prayerful petitions for our needs and those of our brothers and sisters.

- 1) That we the faithful, baptized into the one Lord, may hear the voice of the Shepherd calling us to discipleship in his name, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That leaders throughout the world may have virtuous hearts in seeking to understand people of diverse cultures and practices, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who struggle with addiction may be freed from what enslaves them and come to see God as their refuge, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That this community of faith may be guided by the Holy Spirit so as to use our talents and gifts for the greater glory of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God, giver of all good gifts, we ask that you hear our prayers, through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Saturday, February 24, 2018
(Lec. 229)

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

SATURDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: The commandments guide us on the path of discipleship.

Today's readings remind us that, as people of God, we must keep the commandments of the Lord with our whole heart and our whole soul and walk in the ways of God, no matter how difficult it may be. As members of the body of Christ, we are called to share God's love with everyone, even those who make it challenging to love them.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Moses reminds us to observe the laws of the Lord. In the Gospel, Jesus asks us to go beyond loving our neighbor, and to love our enemies as well. When we do this, we are reflecting the perfection of our heavenly Father.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: O God, we come before you in gratitude for all you have given us, and ask for your mercy in granting our petitions according to your will.

- 1) For Church leaders and our Holy Father, Pope Francis, may they be strengthened by our prayers as they continue to spread the message of God's love throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For countries torn apart by violence and hatred, may they experience a new dawn of peace and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those whose hearts have turned away from God, may they, in this season of Lent, find new hope in the promise of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may we be graced with the heart and mind of Christ so as to welcome the stranger and the traveler, and spread the fruits of hospitality and generosity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may they behold God face-to-face in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God and Father, you give us everything we need. We ask you to grant our petitions according to your will, through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2018

(Lec. 26)

- 1) Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18
- 2) Romans 8:31b-34
- 3) Mark 9:2-10

**SECOND SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: God's love for us is limitless.

Today, we hear the familiar passage from Saint Paul when he says, *If God is for us, who can be against us?* Since we have been called by name, by virtue of our baptism, we know that we are God's children; we are his instruments in the world.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Abraham is willing to make the ultimate sacrifice of surrendering his son to the Lord. Saint Paul reminds the Romans that having God with them will allow them to face any challenge. In the Gospel, the disciples realize that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law after he is transfigured before them.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Standing before our heavenly Father, we humbly petition him to hear our needs.

- 1) For all members of the Church as we continue our Lenten journey, may the Lord lead us to a deeper conversion from sin, and may we experience more deeply his mercy and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For heads of state and elected leaders, may they be led by the Spirit as they work for justice and peace above personal gain and ambition, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the suffering among us, may they draw strength from the compassionate love of family and neighbors, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For married couples and those preparing for marriage, may they grow in love and fidelity and always be able to forgive each other, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be embraced by an unconditional loving God in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of Abraham and Father of the Transfigured Christ, help us to carry out your desire for all people to dwell together in harmony and peace. This we ask through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Monday, February 26, 2018
(Lec. 230)

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

MONDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: The need for God's mercy.

It can be easy to grow complacent as we progress in Christian virtue, treating our relationship with God like a checklist of activities to be completed. The life of faith is transcendent of mere observation of the law, however, and that is why we need God's love and mercy to grow in the discipleship of love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the passage from Daniel, Daniel acknowledges the sins of the nation of Israel, but praises God for his mercy. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that in showing mercy to others, a greater abundance of mercy will be issued back to us.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us now turn to our loving Father, who is quick to mercy and slow to anger, and offer our petitions.

- 1) That the Holy Spirit may inspire all members of the Church to reach out with mercy and forgiveness to those who have wronged us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That world leaders may heed God's call to mercy as they work to secure lasting peace among the nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who suffer for their faithful witness to the message of Christ may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and our prayers for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That we in this faith community may open our minds and hearts to God's will for us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our faithful departed may be at peace in the splendor of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, look with kindness upon our petitions, both spoken and unspoken, and in your mercy please grant them in accord with your holy will. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Tuesday, February 27, 2018
(Lec. 231)

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

TUESDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: God is merciful and full of compassion.

Every year we cycle through the liturgical seasons following the mystery of the life and ministry of Jesus. In the Lenten season, we hear the call of Jesus to turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel. Through our Lenten discipline of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we empty ourselves of sin and fill ourselves with God's mercy.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah has harsh words for the princes of Israel and Judah. Yet his words of doom are tempered with the promise of mercy if they change their ways. Jesus also has harsh words for the scribes and Pharisees. They lay down heavy burdens for the people to carry, yet do not help them in any way.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Having heard God's call to act with justice, let us present our prayers for all those in need of his mercy.

- 1) For the Church, may her voice of justice for the oppressed throughout the world lead more people to the fullness of communion with her, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who govern, may Christ lead them to undertake their duties with fairness and truthfulness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who work to help the poor, may their efforts be blessed as they bring joy and dignity to those they serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our catechumens and candidates, may their Lenten period of preparation bring them to the fullness of Easter joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they behold the glory of God in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful God, in your kindness look with favor on your people. If it be your will, grant these prayers in the name of Jesus, your son.

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Wednesday, February 28, 2018
(Lec. 232)

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

WEDNESDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Jesus gave his life willingly as a ransom for many.

Rejection and opposition are part and parcel of the Christian life because the Gospel often goes against cultural norms. Let us work to embrace the life of servant leadership to which Jesus refers, and do our part to build up his kingdom on earth.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the enemies of the prophet Jeremiah plot his downfall by seeking to use his words against him. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches the disciples the real meaning of service and how it is intimately linked to self-sacrifice and giving.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident that our prayers will be answered, let us turn to God with courage and faith and present our petitions.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may he have the gift of fortitude in his efforts to help all people see the love, compassion and mercy of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may the Spirit inspire them to work to protect the dignity and sanctity of all life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are sick in our community, may they come to know the healing mercy of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may we have the grace of humility, and express a spirit of repentance and gratitude for all that God has given to us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they come to dwell in the house of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty and eternal Father, send forth your Spirit into our hearts so we may be faithful witnesses to the Gospel. We ask that you hear our prayers this day, through your son, Jesus Christ.

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