

MARCH

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28 29 30 (GOOD FRIDAY)

31 APR 1 (EASTER SUNDAY)

Thursday, March 1, 2018
(Lec. 233)

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

THURSDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Let us turn our focus away from material goods, and toward God.

God has told us through Old Testament prophets and through Jesus that our eternity is in our own hands. How we live on earth will determine what our eternal life will be like. Every action, every word, every thought and every reaction creates the mosaics of our lives. Let us ask Jesus to help us make them pleasing to the Father.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading reminds the faithful to remain close to the Lord, for he nurtures and cares for us, like a tree planted near water. He also rewards us in accord with how we have lived. The Gospel tells the parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence in God's love and care for us, let us present our petitions to him.

- 1) For Church leaders, may God guide them in their ministry as together we continue to build the future of our Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For lawyers and judges, may the Holy Spirit give them wisdom and understanding, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For caregivers struggling with overwhelming responsibilities, may they obtain respite and be consoled by the knowledge that God is with them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the members of this parish, that our words and actions today may be pleasing to the Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be welcomed into God's heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, hear our petitions and provide for us what is good. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, March 2, 2018
(Lec. 234)

FRIDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF LENT

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

FOCUS: Let us pray for the grace to be at peace with one another.

In both Scripture readings today, we see conflict and killing. These are brothers and fellow citizens who are definitely not at peace with one another. In God's kingdom, we can both find and engender peace. Since God's kingdom is now – not somewhere down the road – let us pray for the grace to be at peace with one another.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Joseph's brothers are extremely jealous of their father's favoritism, and so they sell Joseph into slavery to be rid of him. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the vineyard owner whose servants are killed by his tenants.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Believing that God responds to the needs and desires of our hearts, let us join together in a community of prayer.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may we continue to reach out to people throughout the world to share the Good News of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our political leaders, bless them with courage to enact laws protecting the dignity of each person from conception to natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the neglected and the lonely, may they come to know the uplifting presence of God through the tender care and compassion of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For each of us, that during this season of Lent we may become more rooted in prayer and come to trust the Lord more fully, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may they praise God for all eternity with the choirs of angels, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious God you are always present and attentive to our needs. Grant these prayers, we ask you through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, March 3, 2018

(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 Katharine Drexel,
Virgin)

FOCUS: The Lord welcomes us with mercy and compassion.

None of us is without sin. While the Lord condemns wrongful actions, he longs for us to return to him. He desires reconciliation. This is possible when we humble ourselves, admit our guilt and sincerely express remorse. The loving Father welcomes our repentance with mercy and compassion, and invites others to join the celebration.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Micah asks the Lord to shepherd the people of Israel. He believes God will cast their sins into the sea and remain faithful to the covenant. Luke's Gospel focuses on a story about two sons and their loving father. One son is sinful, the other is faithful; both are deserving of the father's mercy and compassion.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Like lost children, we humbly turn to our Father and trust in his love. We join now in prayer for the needs of our parish, the Church and the world.

- 1) For those who shepherd our Church, may they be strengthened by our prayers as they continue to lead the faithful in the ways of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our nation's leaders, may God grant them wisdom and fortitude in their support of programs that protect and promote life in all its stages, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are estranged from their families, may God provide healing and reconciliation with their loved ones, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our parish community, may we be blessed with the joyful return to the Church of our absent brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be welcomed home into the loving arms of our Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, you delight in mercy and run to embrace your children. Hear our prayers and help us to do your will, through your son, Jesus Christ.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2018

(Lec. 29)

- 1) Exodus 20:1-17
or 20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:22-25
- 3) John 2:13-25

**THIRD SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: Jesus performed many signs, but it was in his death and resurrection that God's glory was fully revealed and made manifest.

When Jesus drives the money changers and animal vendors from the Temple, the Jews demand a sign to prove his authority. They do not have the faith to see what is in front of them. Later, when Jesus dies and is risen, his disciples remember his words, and they understand and believe. Do we have the faith to see what is revealed right in front of us, in this Eucharist?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, God presents the Ten Commandments to Moses. In the Letter to the Corinthians, Paul declares Christ as the power and wisdom of God for Jew and Gentile, alike. Today's Gospel displays Jesus' zeal for his Father's house, as he drives the money changers and animal sellers out of the Temple.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in the power and wisdom of God, we offer our petitions in confidence.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may we grow in holiness and be nourished by the graces of prayer and reception of the sacraments, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they receive the grace to cooperate in working for peace and for the respect and dignity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are ill, may they be blessed with caring friends, family and caregivers to support and console them in their time of need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may we be renewed in spirit as we honor Sunday as the Lord's day, enjoying a day of rest and fellowship, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they experience eternal peace in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of mercy, please hear our prayers and answer them in your wisdom. We pray through Jesus Christ, your son.

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Monday, March 5, 2018
(Lec. 237)

- 1) 2 Kings 5:1-15b
- 2) Luke 4:24-30

MONDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: We can trust in the Word of the Lord.

Both Naaman and the people of Nazareth are presented with God's Word: spoken by Elisha, and embodied in Jesus Christ. Naaman does not recognize what he sees, but he heeds his servants' suggestions, comes to believe, and is healed. The inhabitants of Nazareth have the Word living among them and yet they refuse to believe. Let us trust and believe, as Naaman did.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Naaman, the army commander for the king of Aram, has leprosy. He listens to the instruction of the prophet Elisha and is cleansed of his disease. In the Gospel, Jesus is rejected by the people of the synagogue in Nazareth who refuse to listen to his words. In their anger, they take Jesus to throw him over a cliff. Jesus escapes the crowd.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We now offer our prayers and petitions to our heavenly Father for our needs and the needs of others throughout the world.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may he be blessed with good health in his humble witness to the power of God's love for us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government officials, may they be inspired to work for the common good of all humanity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For justice and peace among nations, that conflicts and wars may be solved with diplomacy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those of us gathered here who are grieving the death of a loved one, may the promise of eternal life bring comfort and consolation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they find welcome in God's heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God, pour out your love on all who are in need and guide them in their trials with your Holy Spirit. We pray in the name of Jesus, your son.

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Tuesday, March 6, 2018

(Lec. 238)

1) Daniel 3:25, 34-43

2) Matthew 18:21-35

TUESDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: We are called to imitate God in forgiving others.

Like the huge amount the debtor owed, the weight of our sin is beyond imagining, yet God set us free at the cost of his Son. We think withholding forgiveness imprisons our enemy, but actually it is we who are in bondage; we fasten our own shackles. When we show mercy, we reap the benefits of freedom and peace.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, Azariah calls confidently on the Lord from the midst of the fiery furnace. Today's Gospel recounts Jesus' response to Peter's question about the limits of forgiveness with the parable of the unforgiving servant.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God's faithfulness, we offer him our prayers this day.

- 1) For all bishops and priests, please bless their labors with abundant fruit as they preach and teach the Good News, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For magistrates and mediators, may they be blessed with prudence and selflessness as they strive for fair and just solutions to cases of conflict before them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those whose wounds are so deep they struggle to forgive, help them to know your mercy and offer mercy to others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us here, grant us the grace to receive the sacrament of reconciliation with contrite hearts and humble spirits as we celebrate the joy of your mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved departed, through your mercy may they enjoy eternal delight in seeing you face to face, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: In your great mercy, Lord, hear and answer our prayers this day. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, March 7, 2018
(Lec. 239)

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

WEDNESDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saints Perpetua and Felicity,
Martyrs)

FOCUS: Obey the commandments now and forever.

Moses and Jesus tell us to keep the commandments and to teach them to our children. They are a gift from God, lighting the pathway to right morals and ethics, and engaging us in relationship with him. We are called to obey the commandments here so we may live in eternity in heaven.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Both readings today speak to the importance of keeping the commandments and passing them on from generation to generation. Moses says: *Observe them carefully, for thus will you give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations.* In the Gospel, Jesus says: *Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Knowing that the Lord's words are Spirit and life, let us offer our prayers of petition.

- 1) That this season of Lent may be a time when faith and the virtues of the Christian life grow within us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That world leaders may be graced with right judgment and the virtue of charity as they seek to aid the oppressed and give help and hope to refugees, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That communities torn apart by violence or unrest will work together to find nonviolent solutions to conflict, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That God's blessing may be upon those who are preparing for baptism in our faith community, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may be welcomed into the kingdom of heaven with all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, help us to live in your love as we strive to follow your commandments. We offer these prayers to you through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Thursday, March 8, 2018
(Lec. 240)

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

THURSDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saint John of God,
Religious)

FOCUS: Listen to God and respond wholeheartedly.

Throughout salvation history, once-faithful people have hardened their hearts against God. Today's readings invite us to respond to hearing God's Word: listen, soften our hearts and obey his commands. The Gospel also warns us to take this seriously: if we're not with Jesus, we are against him. It's all or nothing.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the Lord speaks to the prophet Jeremiah, whom he is sending to prophesy to the unfaithful Israelites, even though they won't listen to the young prophet. In the Gospel, Jesus casts out a demon and some become suspicious he is using the power of the devil. Jesus chastises them and gives them an ultimatum.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring our prayers and petitions to our God, who is gracious and merciful to his people.

- 1) For an increase in vocations to the Church, may we all listen to God's voice with an open heart, and may those called to a religious vocation answer generously, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all local and national leaders, may they be united in working for the good of all people, especially for the unborn and vulnerable, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering in physical or spiritual poverty, may they experience Christ's love in the selfless service of those who attend to their needs, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may our Lenten works of prayer, fasting and almsgiving be acceptable to God and bring us closer to him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the deceased members of our parish and our families, may they enjoy every happiness and fulfillment in eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father of Mercy, look with kindness upon these prayers of your faithful. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Friday, March 9, 2018
(Lec. 241)

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

FRIDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Frances of Rome,
Religious)

FOCUS: Jesus sums up the laws into one word: love.

When a scribe asks Jesus which commandments are first and second, he replies: to love God with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love your neighbor as yourself. Truly, love can help to stamp out repression, stifle bullying, stop crime, wipe away fear. How simple is that? How difficult is that?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Hosea passionately prays, hopes and calls for the return of Israel to God. Mark's Gospel tells of Jesus summing up the two greatest commandments – love of God and love of neighbor.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we continue our Lenten journey, let us turn to God, our loving Father, and offer our prayers of petition.

- 1) That members of the Church throughout the world may be strengthened in their own faith as they share the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That world leaders may be inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit to work together for peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are struggling with difficult life decisions may find peace of mind and heart through faith in the Lord and the wise counsel of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That those in our parish who are lonely, discouraged or without hope may find Christ's joy and peace through our prayers and support, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all the faithful departed may find rest and eternal happiness in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of goodness and mercy, we ask you to hear our pleas as we strive to grow in your love during this Lenten season. We pray through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, March 10, 2018
(Lec. 242)

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

SATURDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Take up the humility of the tax collector to avoid self-righteousness.

It is easy to condemn the Pharisee who appears bloated with self-righteousness, until we explore the not-so-obvious ways that we, too, may express such an attitude. How do we, in secret, perhaps take pride in judging others? Let us seek the humility of the tax collector, who was aware of his need for God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The reading from the prophet Hosea exhorts us to *strive to know the Lord*. In the Gospel from Luke, Jesus warns against self-righteousness and a lack of humility in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: During these days of Lent, as we come to recognize through humility our great need for God, let us ask him to answer our prayers according to his will.

- 1) That Church leaders, in imitation of God our Creator, may be able to bring the message of new life in Christ to a world in need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That legislators and policymakers may always recognize the dignity and sanctity of human life and do all within their power to protect it, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are unemployed or underemployed may find meaningful work, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That our parish community will be a beacon of hope to those in search of true happiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have passed to eternal life may find joy in the salvation promised to them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, you call us to be mindful of others. We ask you to hear our prayers and help us to help those near us, through your son, Jesus Christ.

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2018

(Lec. 32)

- 1) 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23
- 2) Ephesians 2:4-10
- 3) John 3:14-21

**FOURTH SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: God's mercy and love, made clear in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, overcame our sins and transgressions.

God does not love us conditionally, or despite our sins, but rather because he created us, and he is love. His mercy and compassion are that of a loving Father.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading from Second Chronicles, we hear of the fall of Judah. In Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, he reminds us that even when we were dead in our transgressions, God brought us to life through Christ. In the Gospel, John proclaims that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Father, you love us more than we know. Hear our prayers that we bring before you this day.

- 1) For the Church, may God continue to bless her with disciples, that she may confidently proclaim God's love to the whole world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who serve in public office, may they be blessed with God's grace as they serve others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, that through our care, they may know of God's love for them and know his healing touch, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the continued conversion of our faith community during this Lenten season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they experience the joy of salvation made possible through Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son. Through him, we ask that you hear and answer these prayers and those intentions in our hearts.

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Monday, March 12, 2018
(Lec. 244)

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

MONDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Trust in the Lord's promises.

It's easy to trust the Lord when life goes as planned. But there will be times that challenge our faith – when we can cling only to hope. It took great trust for the royal official to walk away from Jesus with only the promise of his son's healing. Yet, his trust and belief were rewarded.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies that the Lord will create new heavens and a new earth. The world will be free from grief and early death; instead there will be rejoicing and happiness. In the Gospel, Jesus performs another miracle at Cana when he heals the son of a royal official who is near death. Jesus says the boy will live, and the fever leaves him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: The Lord promises a new world filled with rejoicing and happiness. Trusting in our Father's Word, we pray for the needs of all people.

- 1) For leaders of our Church, may God grant them perseverance and strength as they boldly profess Christ's Word, inspiring others to believe, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our nation, may God guide us in our efforts to embrace the dignity of life and the protection of our most vulnerable citizens, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are persecuted for their faith in Christ, may God's Holy Spirit uphold and strengthen them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those being welcomed into the Church this Easter, that the Holy Spirit may fill them abundantly with the gift of faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may know the peace and happiness of eternal life with Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Ever-powerful God, your Word brings life to those who believe. Hear the prayers of your faithful and help us to do your will, through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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Tuesday, March 13, 2018
(Lec. 245)

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

TUESDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: God's mercy is like a flowing river or a deep pool.

God's desire that we be healed and saved pours forth like a river in a flood. Let us immerse ourselves in the knowledge that despite our past transgressions and sins, we are loved and forgiven by a gracious God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Ezekiel shares with us one of his many visions. He is brought to the heavenly temple and immersed in the great waters that flow from its heart. In the Gospel, Jesus heals the sick man at Bethesda Pool.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we continue our Lenten journey, we bring our prayers now to our merciful Father.

- 1) For all Christians, may we continue our Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and sharing, and strive to seek first the good of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those preparing to be baptized this Easter, may they be given a deeper awareness of God's loving presence in their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For refugees and immigrants, may our corporal and spiritual works of mercy show them the face of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in this faith community who have strayed from God's covenant, may they come to know again the steadfast love and mercy of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they come to share in the fullness of Christ's glory, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, hear now our prayers and petitions. Transform our hearts and conform our lives to your law of love. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, March 14, 2018
(Lec. 246)

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

WEDNESDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: God will never forsake his people.

As hard as it is to imagine a mother ever forsaking her child, it is impossible for God to do so. We can take comfort in the knowledge that no matter what we do, as long as we repent and seek forgiveness, God always forgives and reconciles us to himself.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In our first reading, the author speaks with optimism concerning the Lord's covenant with his people. God does not forget. In today's Gospel, Jesus reflects on judgment and the resurrection of the just and the unjust.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Since our compassionate God looks with mercy upon us, let us humbly offer him our petitions.

- 1) For the Church in the whole world, may Pope Francis and all the clergy continue to be examples of God's mercy at work, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all who serve as judges or on juries, may they reflect God's wisdom and mercy in enacting justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those struggling with the guilt of past actions, may they know the mercy and compassion of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us here, may our hearts be filled with mercy when responding to the pain caused by another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be welcomed into the heavenly banquet by all the saints and angels, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of mercy, God of justice, hear our prayers placed before you with humble gratitude. Grant what we need to carry out your will for us. We ask this through Christ, your son.

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Thursday, March 15, 2018
(Lec. 247)

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

THURSDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: *Remember us, O Lord, as you favor your people.*

The psalm response for today is appropriate to the message we hear in the readings. God is merciful, even when we mess up. In our repentance and our belief in God and his promises, God finds in us fertile ground for increased faith and understanding. God favors us, should we not favor God?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the reading from the Book of Exodus, the people have lost hope in Moses and, therefore, God, and have built an idolatrous image of him. Moses implores God not to punish them, and God relents. In today's Gospel, Jesus expresses his frustration with the leaders of the Jewish people who still fail to understand who he is.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: God works marvels in the lives of those who believe. With faith, we offer our prayers and concerns to the Lord.

- 1) For those who lead the Church, may they be strengthened by our prayers as they continue their witness to the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they be blessed with the grace to begin building a more just world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer from economic insecurity, may they find the assistance they need and be lifted up by our prayers and support, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our faith community who are preparing to enter the Church this Easter, may their witness reveal God's love and mercy to others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who died in the peace of Christ, and all the dead whose faith is known to God alone, may they be raised up with Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: We offer these prayers to you, beloved Father in heaven, through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, March 16, 2018
(Lec. 248)

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

FRIDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: God humbled himself in Christ and took on our human likeness in order to redeem us.

As we draw closer to Holy Week, the tenor of the Lenten season begins to shift to the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. Our Old Testament readings foreshadow the trials of Jesus, and our Gospels reveal the turmoil between belief and unbelief. It is an opportunity for us to reflect on what God has done for us in the gift of his Son, and to recommit ourselves to a life of discipleship.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Our reading from the Book of Wisdom, showing the errors and blindness of the wicked, is a prophetic foreshadowing of the death of the Christ by evildoers. The Gospel passage finds Jesus in Jerusalem being confronted by a faction of the people who want to arrest and kill him because he professes to have been sent by God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence in the Lord's mercy and kindness, we offer our petitions for ourselves and for the world.

- 1) For the Church, that she may continue to be the voice of Christ for the poor and the oppressed, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the world in which we live, may our efforts to live the Christian faith bring about justice and peace for all people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who live with fear of violence or the terror of war, may they be open to trust in the peace and hope of God's loving protection, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the sanctity of life in our community, may our works inspire a greater reverence among all people for every stage of life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rest in the peace of the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Compassionate God, we offer these petitions in faith, aware that you know our every need. We ask that you grant these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Saturday, March 17, 2018
(Lec. 249)

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

SATURDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Patrick,
Bishop)

FOCUS: *Never before has anyone spoken like this man.*

People were undecided about Jesus and his teachings for many reasons. Some of those reasons were cultural (a prophet could not arise from Galilee), and others were more personal: fear, pride or stubbornness, perhaps. Today, we face the same challenges to hear the Lord's voice above all the cultural and personal noise that surrounds us. Let us rise to the challenge.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading today, Jeremiah addresses the plot against him. In the Gospel, John writes of the division and discussion among the people about whether or not Jesus is the Messiah.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us turn to God our Father and offer our prayers of petition for the Church and for our world.

- 1) That the Church, through the intercession of Saint Patrick who successfully converted countless pagans and is honored today, may obtain the missionaries she needs to continue the work of spreading the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That Christians throughout the world may joyfully embrace God's call to prayer, fasting and almsgiving as they continue their Lenten journey, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who have strayed from a life of discipleship may trust in God's mercy and continue with renewed efforts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That families in this faith community who are struggling in hurtful relationships may be open to communicating and healing through prayer and patience, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed may enjoy the vision of God with those in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we thank you for all you have given us. We pray for your guidance to have right judgment in all that we do. Through Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2018

(Lec. 35)

- 1) Jeremiah 31:31-34
- 2) Hebrews 5:7-9
- 3) John 12:20-33

**FIFTH SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: Everyone, great and small, will have God's law written on their hearts, and their sins forgiven.

The Lord reaches out once again to his people. God, ever faithful, extends his hand to those who break the covenant. No longer depending on prophets to communicate, under the new covenant each individual will know God's law, his love, his mercy. God's personal invitation calls for a personal response. Will we receive it?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's reading from Jeremiah, the Lord declares a new covenant with his people. The Letter to the Hebrews presents Jesus as the perfect high priest. In today's Gospel, Jesus approaches his passion.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God who has called us as a people of his own, we offer our petitions with confidence.

- 1) For the Church, may she see an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and may all who are called respond with courage and joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For political leaders, may they have the integrity to enact laws protecting the rights of all people, especially the unborn, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the unemployed and underemployed, that they may find the means of support and the dignity of honest labor, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may we have confidence in God's healing love and mercy present in the sacrament of reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, passing from this life to the next, may they enjoy eternal freedom in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending Jesus, our great high priest and source of eternal salvation. Please hear and answer these prayers we offer through Christ our Lord.

Monday, March 19, 2018
(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: Joseph, a righteous man, models for us obedience and trust in the Lord.

The Hebrew nation waited and trusted in the Father's promise of an heir to carry forward his kingdom. Today we honor Joseph, who willingly answered the call to take his place in God's plan. We are called as well. As brothers and sisters to Jesus, we are commanded to spread his love to others with our faith and actions.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, David is promised that his house and his kingdom will endure. In Paul's Letter to the Romans, he teaches that the descendants of Abraham come to this inheritance through faith. This promise comes to fruition in the Gospel, as Joseph is charged with the care of Mary and her child, Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Following the example of Joseph, who put his trust in the Lord, let us join our voices in prayer as we invoke the presence of the Father.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may we continue to be an example to the world of God's loving care for all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those in leadership in our country and across the world, may they look first to the needs of those they lead as they make decisions and enact laws, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer emotionally, physically or mentally, may they be comforted by God's loving embrace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our local community as we live out our daily lives, may we remember to look beyond our own needs and to bring the Father's love to those around us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they rejoice with Saint Joseph and the community of saints in the heavenly kingdom of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we offer these prayers in humble gratitude and hope, through Jesus Christ, your son.

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Tuesday, March 20, 2018
(Lec. 252)

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

TUESDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Be thankful for the spiritual gifts the Lord provides, and for the teachings Jesus gives us to follow.

It can be easy to dismiss all the good things in our lives when difficult events or circumstances weigh us down. Our readings today show us that looking to God, and believing in his promises, are what sustain us through those trying times. Let us be thankful for all the Lord has given us, including himself.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, God punished the complaining people by sending serpents that bit them, killing many. They repented, and God had Moses make a brass serpent that healed those who looked at it after being bitten. In the Gospel, Jesus warns the Pharisees that they will die in their sin of unbelief; at the same time, his sincerity about being sent by the Father brings many to believe.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Following the example of Jesus, let us pray to our Father with confidence.

- 1) That the Universal Church may be graced with increasing numbers of those willing to surrender their lives more fully to following the words of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That lawmakers and elected officials may find grace and strength in our prayers for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are sick or hospitalized may find the strength to persevere, and be blessed with relief, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That this faith community may reflect the Light of Christ to the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our deceased friends and relatives, and all who have died, may forever enjoy the company of the Lord and all his saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: We present these petitions in faith to God, our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Wednesday, March 21, 2018
(Lec. 253)
1) Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95
2) John 8:31-42

WEDNESDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Let us strive to always remain faithful and loyal to the Lord.

Today, as we move closer to Holy Week, our readings become a bit more ominous. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Jesus all faced serious consequences if they remained faithful to God. We also might face serious consequences – including marginalization and conflict – if we remain true to our calling as Christians.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, God remains true to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who are thrown into the fiery furnace for their refusal to worship false gods. In the Gospel, Jesus argues with the religious leaders of his time as he claims his identity as the Son of God with true authority to set others free.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: God gives us the freedom to follow in his ways, and so we approach him with the needs of our world.

- 1) For all Christians as we approach Holy Week, may God help us to grow and deepen our faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they be blessed with an abundance of grace to seek justice for all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For Christians who are being persecuted for their faith, may they trust God and hold fast to their faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the young people of this faith community, may our prayers and support encourage them as they discern their vocation in life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died in faith, may they join the company of the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Faithful God, you are with us in all our struggles. Fill us with your grace. We ask this and all things through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

* * *

Thursday, March 22, 2018
(Lec. 254)

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

THURSDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: The Lord remembers his covenant forever.

God told Abraham he would be the father of many nations even though he and Sarah had no children. God was faithful to Abraham, and to all of us as his covenantal children. For our sake, he sent his Son into the world, to suffer and die for us. Many did not know him, and still do not know him. Do we trust in God's promises? Or do we throw stones like the crowd around Jesus?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

God establishes a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, giving them the land of Canaan as their permanent possession and telling Abraham he will be father of a host of nations. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the Jews that whoever keeps his word will never taste death and that he existed before Abraham, but they respond by trying to throw stones at him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Seeking to serve the Lord, who remembers always his covenant, we present in confidence the prayers we hold deep in our hearts.

- 1) For Pope Francis, bishops and priests, and all who attend to the cries for healing and justice pouring forth from the world, may they be a light to the nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our world, may the Word of God nourish and transform us so that truth and righteousness may prevail, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For refugees, may the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob bring them to places of welcome and safety, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those who suffer from depression, anxiety or grief in this faith community, may they be awakened to signs of springtime and the hope of new life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may their souls rest in eternal peace, let us pray to the Lord
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious God, hear the prayers of your people. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

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Friday, March 23, 2018
(Lec. 255)

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

FRIDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo,
Bishop)

FOCUS: May our hope in God be our constant support.

Those who surrounded Jesus in the Gospel of John always seemed to demand some kind of proof, or sign of his authority. Jesus points to the signs he performed in the Father's name as proof of his identity as the Son of God, but many still did not believe. Those who did believe received the gift of hope as they faced their daily trials.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Even in the midst of interior struggle, the prophet Jeremiah expresses his confidence that God will triumph over his persecutors. In the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of the works he has done in the Father's name as evidence of his unity with the Father.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God's care for us, we can present our needs to him and know they will be heard.

- 1) That Church leaders may be animated by the movement of the Holy Spirit in their witness to the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That those in public service may be inspired to seek justice for the oppressed, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That single parents, and other parents who face challenges, may find comfort and strength in the Church and receive the support they need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That our liturgical ministers and volunteers, who give so willingly of their time and gifts, may be blessed for their generosity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have passed into eternal life may see the face of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, we ask you to pour out your grace on us this day and give us the strength to patiently wait on your wisdom. We ask this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.

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Saturday, March 24, 2018
(Lec. 256)

- 1) Ezekiel 37:21-28
- 2) John 11:45-56

SATURDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: God keeps his promises.

Even when things seem hopeless, the Lord will provide all we need, according to his divine plan. He has made a covenant of peace with us that he will not break; his sanctuary is among us forever. Because we know our God is steadfast and constant, let us strive to be faithful to his Word.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Ezekiel tells the Israelites the Lord will take care of all of their needs, making a covenant of peace with them. In the Gospel, we hear of the increasing division between those who believed in Jesus and those who did not – and the subsequent plan of the religious leaders to kill him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we come to you with gratitude for all you have given us, and a plea to hear our petitions and answer them according to your will.

- 1) For the Church and all her leaders, may they receive the graces necessary to continue to spread the message of God's promise throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For secular leaders, may their decisions be pleasing to God and reflect concern for all people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have fallen away from the Church, may this Lenten season inspire them to return and be comforted by the power of God's unconditional love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here, may God grant us whatever needs we hold most closely in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they experience the peace of the heavenly kingdom with all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God, your love for us knows no boundaries. As we gather here and present our petitions to you, we ask for your mercy in granting them according to your will, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2018

Procession with Palms: (Lec. 37)

- 1) Mark 11:1-10
or John 12:12-16

Mass Readings: (Lec. 38)

- 1) Isaiah 50:4-7
- 2) Philippians 2:6-11
- 3) Mark 14:1–15:47 or 15:1-39

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

FOCUS: The Father responds to Jesus' willing self-sacrifice by raising him to glory.

As we begin to recall and commemorate the events of that first Holy Week, when Jesus willingly laid aside his glory and embraced the cross for our salvation, may we be filled with gratitude and awe at one who loves us so much.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah foretells that God's servant will suffer as a consequence of being a true and faithful disciple. Saint Paul reminds us that Jesus set aside his glory and power by becoming one with us in the flesh, but through his humility and suffering, he has become Lord of all. The Gospel tells the story of Jesus' passion and death.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Through his holy cross, we gain the confidence necessary to trust in Christ, who promises to plead for us before the eternal Father.

- 1) For all members of the Church, as we commemorate the death and resurrection of Jesus, may we be inspired to die to ourselves and seek first the good of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those preparing to be baptized and to be received in the Church this Easter Vigil, may they be filled with joy and a deep sense of God's love for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For peace in our world, may the celebration of Christ's victory over sin and death transform us and heal all division and strife, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the sick in our faith community, may Christ who knew pain and suffering in his own life fill them with healing and hope, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they come to share in the fullness of Christ's glorious resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Eternal Father, in the mystery of your Son's cross and resurrection, you reveal to us your abundant mercy and love. Grant us the humility to rely only on your goodness as we offer these petitions. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

* * *

Monday, March 26, 2018
(Lec. 257)

MONDAY OF
HOLY WEEK

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

FOCUS: Humbly doing God's work brings joy to the soul.

As we enter Holy Week, we have an opportunity to reflect on the humility of Jesus as he willingly gave his life for us. Perhaps we have that ability, in our own lives, to humbly and quietly serve others as Jesus taught. In so doing, we bring joy to others, to our own souls and to our loving God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah today speaks of the servant of the Lord, who will bring forth justice to the nations. In the Gospel, Jesus visits Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany, and Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with oil.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God's providence, let us bring our own needs and the needs of the world to him.

- 1) That the faithful witness of clergy and religious may strengthen the Church throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That leaders of all nations may be blessed with the strength to avoid the brutality of war and to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who have lost hope may regain it, and be granted its fruit of endurance in their struggles, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the members of this faith community may find joy in serving others for God's sake, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed may know true happiness for all eternity in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord God, with humble hearts we bring these petitions to you and ask you to find them worthy. We ask all things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, March 27, 2018
(Lec. 258)

TUESDAY OF
HOLY WEEK

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

FOCUS: The Word of God is a sharp-edged sword which penetrates into the deepest recesses of our hearts.

In the biblical context, a name always carried not only a vocational call, but a divine sense of destiny. When one of the Lord's messengers is called a sharp-edged sword, it means that the person is able to think clearly and perceive keen possibilities about God's Word. We need to listen to that person intently and discover the meaning for our lives.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the passage from Isaiah we hear the Second Song of the Suffering Servant. While the Lord makes him a *sharp-edged sword*, he struggles with his calling. He also recognizes a summons to be *a light to the nations*. In the Gospel, Jesus announces his betrayal by Judas and denial by Peter.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Seeking to lead lives that give glory, honor and praise to God, we place our petitions before him.

- 1) That Pope Francis and our bishops may feel the strength of the Lord during the difficult times of their ministry, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That all elected officials may possess the gift of humility in allowing the Word of God to speak to them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who experience persecution for their Christian faith may feel the Lord's nearness and be strengthened by it, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That our community of faith may always be open to the Word of God penetrating the depths of our hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our faithful departed may rest in the loving embrace of a merciful and loving God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: In confidence, we place these petitions before you in the name of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

* * *

Wednesday, March 28, 2018
(Lec. 259)

WEDNESDAY OF
HOLY WEEK

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

FOCUS: Let us rely upon the Father, as Jesus did, to help us endure our trials and sufferings.

Holy Week is a time of deep contemplation. As we prepare to enter the Easter Triduum, we focus our attention on the events leading to our Lord's death and resurrection. Today's Gospel reveals the betrayal of Judas. His actions raise the question: have we betrayed others, ourselves or Jesus?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies the resolve of the Lord's servant in today's reading. Despite the offenses against him, he persists with God as his help. The Gospel recounts Jesus' revelation at Passover that he will be betrayed, and the actions of Judas, who receives thirty pieces of silver to commit that betrayal.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: The Lord God is our help. Let us now offer the following prayers for the good of our Church and the salvation of the world.

- 1) For the Church, may God, through the events of Holy Week, deepen our faith and strengthen our resolve to live as Christians, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our world leaders, may they be granted the courage to promote and defend the dignity of life in all its stages, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who suffer from any physical or emotional illness, may they be blessed with peace and strength in their struggle for health, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those being baptized and welcomed into the Church this Easter, may they grow in holiness over the Paschal Triduum, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died believing in Christ, may our Father welcome them into the company of saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord God, hear the prayers of your people. In your mercy, grant us what we need to do your will. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

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Thursday, March 29, 2018
(Lec. 39)

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

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

FOCUS: *This is my body; this is my blood.* This is the Real Presence.

While today's Gospel tells of Jesus washing the disciples' feet to show the importance of humility, service and forgiveness, Paul's writing reminds us of our belief in the *Real Presence* of Jesus in the Eucharist – the bread and wine become his *real* body and blood. When we receive the Eucharist, Christ is in us! Therefore, we are emboldened to be like Christ and serve others.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's readings show rich links between the Old and New Testaments. Exodus defines the Passover ritual including meal preparation and marking doors with lamb's blood. Paul gives his account of the Last Supper. In the Gospel, John writes of Jesus – the Paschal Lamb – washing the feet of his disciples.

THE WASHING OF THE FEET

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

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Celebrating our gift of the *Real Presence*, let us humbly present our petitions to God.

- 1) That all believers may comprehend the presence of Christ in themselves and bear witness through acts of humility, service and forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That public servants may be stirred to recognize and live the example of Christ, the Suffering Servant, and do all they can for those in need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That refugees, immigrants and all those threatened by war or violence may find hope in Christ, the innocent victim, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That those who have strayed from God's law may have the conversion of heart to know of his merciful love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died marked with the sign of faith may come to take their place in heaven with Christ, the victorious king, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of Israel, you fed your people manna as you led them through the desert. We pray you guide us now as we live in the *Real Presence* of your Son. Through Christ, our Lord.

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

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

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

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

TRANSFER OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

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

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Friday, March 30, 2018
(Lec. 40)

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

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

FOCUS: As we walk the Way of the Cross and hear the Passion narrative, we reflect on God's love.

Today as we hear the Passion narrative, venerate the cross and receive Holy Communion, we remember how much God loves us. He loves us enough to suffer and die, to transform the cross into the tree of life and to abide with us in the sacraments.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading is a prophecy from Isaiah which speaks of the suffering servant. The second reading, from Hebrews, assures us that Jesus understands us in our humanity and grants us mercy and grace. The Gospel is the Passion narrative from John, beginning with Judas' betrayal of Jesus and ending with Jesus' burial.

VENERATION OF THE CROSS

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

HOLY COMMUNION

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

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Saturday, March 31, 2018
(Lec. 41)

**HOLY SATURDAY
- EASTER VIGIL**

FOCUS: We have a faithful, loving and generous God.

Throughout history, our heavenly Father has revealed to us his loving nature, even to the point of sacrificing his only Son to prove his love and faithfulness to us. Sin has constantly separated us from him, but his loving forgiveness brings us back every time.

I. SERVICE OF LIGHT

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

II. LITURGY OF THE WORD

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

1) Genesis 1:1–2:2 or 1:1, 26-31a

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

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

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

3) Exodus 14:15–15:1

Water brings both life and death in this Scripture reading. Through the waters of the Red Sea the Israelites were brought to freedom and to new life, yet the Egyptians drowned in that same water. We receive the waters of new life in Baptism; may we never drown in our own sinfulness.

4) Isaiah 54:5-14

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

5) Isaiah 55:1-11

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

6) Baruch 3:9-15, 32–4:4

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

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

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

New Testament Readings

- 8) Romans 6:3-11
- 9) Mark 16:1-7

In the New Testament readings, Jesus proves his love for us and his faithfulness to the Father through his death and resurrection. As believers, we are promised that we also will beat death and rise with Christ into eternity.

III. LITURGY OF BAPTISM

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

IV. UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We come together in the trust that our loving Father's care for us is never-ending.

- 1) For the Holy Father and all the bishops and clergy, may God provide for their every need as they preach the Gospel of salvation to all the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may they be granted the wisdom to lead peacefully and work cooperatively, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who feel broken by difficult circumstances, may they experience healing and wholeness by turning to God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those coming into the Catholic Church tonight, may they find themselves welcomed and home at last, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they be welcomed into the glory of heaven with all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we thank you for your unconditional love for us and your faithfulness to your promises throughout history. Help us to trust in your assistance in all our needs. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, APRIL 1, 2018

(Lec. 42)

- 1) Acts 10:34a, 37-43
- 2) Colossians 3:1-4
or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8
- 3) John 20:1-9
or Mark 16:1-7 (41)

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

FOCUS: Is it fact or fiction? The totality of our faith hinges on our fervent belief that the tomb is empty.

It all comes down to this. Jesus being raised from the dead gives purpose to his cross and ours. Without the Resurrection, all suffering is absurd, death is the end and we are lost.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Saint Peter gives a summary of the Paschal Mystery in our reading from Acts. In the reading from Colossians, Paul reminds us that being raised in Christ calls us to a higher standard. In the Gospel, Mary Magdala does not go into the empty tomb right away. Instead, she seeks out Peter and the Beloved Disciple.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Full of confidence in the risen Christ, we place before the Father our humble needs.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may the Holy Spirit continue to inspire his mission to bring all to the risen Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may they have the resources they need in their work to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless and clothe the naked, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have not been baptized into the faith, may our witness of the risen Christ at work in our lives be a source of inspiration for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our gathering of family and friends this Easter, may it be a time of witness, growth and harmony, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those near death, may they soon be embraced by the risen Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, as we gather to celebrate the resurrection of your Son, strengthen our desire to be good and faithful witnesses of the Gospel message of salvation. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

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