

MARCH

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Friday, March 1, 2019

(Lec. 345)

1) Sirach 6:5-17

2) Mark 10:1-12

FRIDAY OF
SEVENTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Jesus affirms the life-long commitment of marriage, bound in heaven by God.

As a visible sign on earth of God's covenantal relationship with us, the married couple – in their sacramental bond to each other and with God – form a reflection of the Holy Trinity, a community of persons, the Lover, the Beloved and the Love between them. Healthy marital relationships bear fruit for one's personal family and also for the greater community.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Sirach instructs to be wary of various types of friends, then describes the blessing of a *faithful friend*. In the Gospel, the Pharisees test Jesus with a question about divorce and remarriage. Jesus quotes Genesis and affirms marriage as a union designed by God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God's mercy, let us bring to him the needs we carry in our hearts.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the grace of the Holy Spirit inspire our efforts to grow in holiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For national and international leaders, may God bestow upon them wisdom and discernment, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those experiencing crisis in their marriage, may the Lord give them what they need for a healthy relationship, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those of us gathered here, may God grant us courage as we give witness to Gospel values in our daily lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they enjoy eternal life in heaven with God and all the saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, receive all that we have confided in you with your mercy and love. We ask this through your son, Jesus.

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Saturday, March 2, 2019

(Lec. 346)

- 1) Sirach 17:1-15
- 2) Mark 10:13-16

SATURDAY OF
SEVENTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(Saturday in honor of
BVM)

FOCUS: God has great care for all of his creation.

Our God is so good! He created everything that exists, purely out of love – even fashioning us after his own image. When we sinned and fell from grace, he promised to reconcile with us, and he did so through his Son – the Son who himself welcomes the children with tenderness. Approaching the Lord with childlike innocence and love allows us to see the great care he has for all of creation.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, we hear about God's creation of humankind, our dominance over creation, and God's relationship with Israel. In the Gospel, the disciples try to prevent children from going to Jesus, but Christ instead welcomes the children, telling his disciples that they must all embrace the kingdom of God like children.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With childlike dependence on our loving God, let us bring our petitions to him.

- 1) For young people in our Church, may the grace of the Holy Spirit open their hearts to the call of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For policymakers, may the Holy Spirit strengthen their efforts to uphold the dignity and sanctity of life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are forgotten or neglected, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may we have the grace to imitate Christ in welcoming all, especially children, into our lives and into the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our departed brothers and sisters, may they be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom with the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, you created humankind in your own image and likeness. Please hear the prayers of your children, which we ask in the name of your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2019

(Lec. 84)

- 1) Sirach 27:4-7
- 2) 1 Corinthians 15:54-58
- 3) Luke 6:39-45

**EIGHTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

FOCUS: Let us be faithful in speech and action.

The first reading today uses the example of a sieve to show how grain (good fruit) is separated from the husks (the dead shell). Tribulation and difficulties are sieves in our own lives – and when we are shaken, the real fruit of who we are will be revealed in both our speech and actions.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The writer of Sirach gives examples of how what is good is separated from what is poor, especially in speech. Saint Paul reminds us that Christ has defeated death – it no longer has power over us. In the Gospel, Jesus uses the parable of the blind leading the blind to show there is a difference between what is good and what is evil.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

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

- 1) For Church leaders, may they continue, by God's grace, to be strengthened by the Good News of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all civil leaders, may they be guided by God's love to work for justice and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who have fallen away from their faith, may Christ open their hearts to his mercy and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all who are sick, may God restore them to the fullness of life and health, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they come to share in the fullness of Christ's glory and enjoy his favor forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, as you once heard the prayers of your son, Jesus Christ, hear now our prayers and in your great love answer them. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

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Monday, March 4, 2019

(Lec. 347)

1) Sirach 17:20-24

2) Mark 10:17-27

MONDAY OF
EIGHTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Casimir)

FOCUS: Do we have kingdom vision?

We should imitate the eagerness of the man in today's Gospel. As Jesus leaves town the man chases after him, wondering what he needs to do to inherit eternal life. He knows and has followed the law, but he knows something is different about Jesus. To enter the kingdom of God he needs to change his vision from the old covenant "Follow the laws," to the new covenant, "Follow Jesus."

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Our first reading reminds us that through penitence and prayer, we always have a way back to God and his mercy. In today's Gospel, Jesus engages a man who asks what he must do to inherit eternal life, and tells his disciples how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As a community of faith trusting in God's love, we offer our prayers this day.

- 1) For the Church, may God bless her with healing and unity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For public authorities, may the Holy Spirit inspire them to lead with virtue and goodness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer, may God provide them with the love and comfort of family, friends and caregivers, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, that through lives of prayer we may grow in faith and help each other follow Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our faithful departed, may they inherit eternal life and enjoy endless riches in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord, our God, your wisdom is beyond all understanding. Please hear and answer our prayers this day, according to your holy will. We ask through Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, March 5, 2019

(Lec. 348)

1) Sirach 35:1-12

2) Mark 10:28-31

TUESDAY OF
EIGHTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Salvation comes from God, and is a gift freely given.

Jesus told us those who sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel will be greatly rewarded. So let us rely on his promises, and live our lives for the sake of the Gospel. It will not always be easy, but this is the task we have been given.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, we hear that we are to give cheerfully and generously to God and to others in imitation of how God gives to us. In the Gospel, Jesus promises that those who sacrifice family or material wealth for the sake of the Gospel will be rewarded greatly, but may also suffer persecution.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With the generosity of God ever in our hearts, let us present our petitions to him, praying for our own needs and those of the world.

- 1) For the Church, may she be blessed with more vocations to the priesthood, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For local lawmakers, may God grant them fortitude in their work to protect the most vulnerable in their communities, especially the elderly and the unborn, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those grieving the loss of a loved one, may the Holy Spirit bring them comfort and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may God enlighten our hearts so we may grow in love for and knowledge of him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be included in the heavenly banquet at the table of the Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Hear us, O Lord, and provide what we need. We pray through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Wednesday, March 6, 2019

ASH WEDNESDAY

(Lec. 219)

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

FOCUS: We begin the season of Lent by repenting and turning back to the Lord with our whole heart.

As Jesus went into the desert, so we, too, go into the desert for Lent as we repent of our sinfulness and turn back to God's ways. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving allow God to form us as disciples of Jesus Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading the Lord, through the prophet Joel, calls us to return with our whole hearts. In the second reading, Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians and implores them to be reconciled to God. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches us to give alms, pray and fast without notice, building a relationship with the Father that he will bless and reward.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence in our kind and merciful God, we present our petitions for the needs of all people.

- 1) For all members of the Church, through the intercession of the saints, may we always have hearts of repentance and conversion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who hold political office, may they be guided in their duties by God's commandments, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer in mind, body or soul, may they be graced by the healing presence of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our parish community, may this time of Lent bring us to a deeper relationship with God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may the mercy of God allow them to be welcomed into paradise, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father in heaven, thank you for the many blessings you pour out on us. Hear and answer these prayers and all of the intentions on our hearts this Ash Wednesday. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, March 7, 2019

(Lec. 220)

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

THURSDAY

AFTER

ASH WEDNESDAY

(Opt. Mem.

Saints Perpetua and Felicity,
Martyrs)

FOCUS: Our Lenten journey challenges us to pick up our cross daily and follow Jesus.

Yesterday, we received ashes on our foreheads. Today, we are called to pick up our proverbial crosses – the sufferings, challenges, prayers and acts of charity of our daily lives, and consciously follow Jesus. At the end of Lent, may we be able to say that we chose life, took up our cross daily, put to death our own wishes and saved our lives.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Moses lays a challenge before the Hebrews and us: to choose life by obeying God's commandments, listening to him and holding fast to him. In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that he, the Son of Man, *must suffer greatly and be rejected*, to the point of death. He says that all who wish to follow him must take up their own crosses daily.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us call upon our merciful and compassionate God to hear the prayers we offer today.

- 1) For those who shepherd our Church, may they be blessed with wisdom as they preach the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of cities, towns and villages, may Christ guide them in their use of authority, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who suffer in mind or body, may they experience God's grace and consolation and be strengthened by him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those of us gathered here, may the Lord bless us and sustain us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they bask in the eternal light of God's love in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, hear the prayers we put before you today and answer them according to your will. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your son.

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Friday, March 8, 2019

(Lec. 221)

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

FRIDAY
AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY
(Opt. Mem.
Saint John of God,
Religious)

FOCUS: Lent is an opportunity to grow deeper in our relationship with Jesus.

Fasting in a way that is pleasing and acceptable to the Lord will lead to strong faith and deeper bonds with God and those around us. For each of us, the object of our fast may be different, but for all of us, choosing to renew our spirit prepares us for the great feast of Easter.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah tells the Israelites what God has said about fasting and what is acceptable to him. In the Gospel, John the Baptist's followers are confused about why Jesus and his followers do not fast as they do.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring our petitions to God, trusting always in his power, mercy and love.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all ministers of the Church, may God guide them as they lead us to a deeper renewal of our faith this Lent, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government officials, may they be blessed with wisdom as they find ways to strengthen our families and communities, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer from chronic pain and illness, may Jesus bless them with a hopeful patience as they join their sufferings to his, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Lord develop within us hearts of love and service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they now rest in the arms of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful God, as we journey through this season of Lent, deepen in us a spirit of love for you and for our neighbor. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, March 9, 2019

(Lec. 222)

1) Isaiah 58:9b-14

2) Luke 5:27-32

SATURDAY

AFTER

ASH WEDNESDAY

(Opt. Mem.

Saint Frances of Rome,

Religious)

FOCUS: Jesus pours out his love and goodness on those who need it most. No one is outside his great mercy.

Today's Gospel is a great reminder to us to follow the ways of Jesus. He reminds us in his call of Levi, and in his eating with tax collectors and sinners, that all are invited to the banquet of eternal life. His salvation is meant for all, especially those who are in greatest need of his love and mercy.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Through the prophet Isaiah, the sounds of the call of hopefulness can be heard as the promises of all that the Lord will give to the faithful are identified. In the Gospel, Levi responds to the call of Christ, and the Pharisees and scribes rebuke Jesus for eating with tax collectors and sinners.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Aware of our need for God's mercy, we offer him our petitions in confidence and hope.

- 1) For Church leaders who serve faithfully in parishes around the world, may they be sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit in the challenges of their daily ministry, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For policymakers, may they be endowed with wisdom, strength and justice to administer their duties in a manner that protects the dignity and sanctity of all human life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those in need of healing, may they be surrounded with compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the success of the Church's efforts to provide for the poor, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they come to enjoy perfect peace and happiness in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, we ask that you hear and answer these prayers. Through Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2019

(Lec. 24)

- 1) Deuteronomy 26:4-10
- 2) Romans 10:8-13
- 3) Luke 4:1-13

**FIRST SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: Jesus Christ freed us from the slavery of sin.

As we begin Lent, our penance and fasts seem rather small in comparison with how Jesus suffered for our salvation. Our forty days does not quite compare to his forty days in the desert. We need only to call on Jesus, and he will deliver us from our sins. Each Lent presents a new opportunity to repent and grow in our relationship with the One who gave his all so we could be his.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses instructs the people to offer gifts to the Lord for their freedom from slavery in Egypt, and for God's never-ending care. In his Letter to the Romans, Paul reminds his readers that without any distinction of nationality, all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Luke's Gospel tells how Jesus withstood the temptations of the devil.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we begin our Lenten season, let us call on God to hear our prayers of petition.

- 1) That all members of the Church may grow in holiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That political leaders may be guided by Christ in their decision-making, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all those suffering the effects of war or violence may find healing and peace in Jesus, the Divine Physician, let us pray to the Lord
- 4) That those of us gathered here may be blessed with the grace we need to be faithful disciples, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our beloved dead will be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom and rest in God's merciful presence forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we pray these prayers with confidence through your son, Christ our Lord.

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Monday, March 11, 2019

(Lec. 224)

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

2) Matthew 25:31-46

MONDAY OF

FIRST WEEK

OF LENT

FOCUS: The words of the Lord are Spirit and life.

God calls us to be holy as he is holy and provides a guide to holiness for us, first through Moses, and then by becoming one of us. Jesus is God's law alive, and he shows us the way to holiness and wholeness. Those who choose to heed his word and follow his way will know the fullness of God's love and enjoy eternal life in his kingdom.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In Leviticus, Moses expands the law for the children of Israel beyond the Ten Commandments. In the Gospel, Jesus reinforces the necessity of acting with compassion and justice in our quest for eternal life with God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Our God is the God of eternal life. Let us bring our petitions to him for our needs and the needs of the whole world.

- 1) For the Church, the Body of Christ, may God graciously grant us what we need as we serve him in truth and with justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may God give them wisdom and guide their efforts to provide for those most in need in their countries, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those seeking truth and justice in their lives, may God's word inspire and encourage them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our faith community grieving the loss of a loved one, may God give them comfort and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may God's peace surround them as they join him in his heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, let the words of our prayers and the thoughts of our hearts find favor before you today. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, March 12, 2019

(Lec. 225)

1) Isaiah 55:10-11

2) Matthew 6:7-15

TUESDAY OF

FIRST WEEK

OF LENT

FOCUS: The Lord's Prayer is the perfect prayer for us to pray.

Jesus showed us God's love during his time here on earth. He taught us how to communicate with God. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught us The Lord's Prayer. It is the perfect model for prayer. In it, we praise our Father, petition for our needs and ask for forgiveness and protection. It ends with praise for our Lord's kingdom.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah relates the Lord's message that his word shall not return to him until it has achieved the end for which he sent it. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches us how to pray, with the Our Father.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Jesus has taught us how to pray. Let us now turn to God, our Father, with faithful hearts, knowing he hears our prayers.

- 1) For the Church, may the Holy Spirit lead us to live the Gospel more fully and faithfully, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world peace, that God may strengthen the resolve of government leaders throughout the world to work together, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are struggling with illness, depression or fear, may they be strengthened by those who love God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may God lead us in this season of Lent to repentance and conversion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have gone before us, may they rest peacefully in God's presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord, you alone are the source of every good gift. We thank you and praise you for your steadfast love as we offer our prayers today, through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, March 13, 2019

(Lec. 226)

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

WEDNESDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Jesus demands a wholehearted response to the Gospel.

Jesus calls us to stop waiting for a miracle to transform us into saints who ardently live the Gospel. He has already given us the greatest of miracles – in the Gospel, in the Eucharist – and we have no excuse for not changing our ways and fully committing to being the presence of Christ in the world.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, we hear how the Ninevites turned away from their evil ways and came to believe in God upon hearing Jonah's proclamation. In the Gospel, Jesus calls the crowd to task for seeking divine signs, yet failing to see that they have already witnessed the greatest of signs in Jesus' own ministry. It is this lack of response which will condemn them.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Humbly let us bring our petitions before the Lord, who is full of mercy and compassion.

- 1) For our Church leaders, may the Spirit continue to encourage them in their service to the people of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may the Good News of the Gospel guide their actions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are sick, especially those who feel alone in their struggle, may they experience the solace of our loving God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all those preparing to receive the sacraments this Easter, may the Holy Spirit enkindle their hearts and deepen their faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they find peace and eternal joy in the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord of hope, hear these prayers offered by your faithful people; in your mercy, grant them in accordance with your will. In Christ's name we pray.

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Thursday, March 14, 2019

(Lec. 227)

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

2) Matthew 7:7-12

THURSDAY OF

FIRST WEEK

OF LENT

FOCUS: Lent is a time to deepen our faith and communicate more with God.

We have the opportunity to deepen our faith and our commitment to the Gospel this Lent. Jesus promises that if we ask we will receive; seek and we shall find; knock and it will be opened to us. Perhaps we might spend this season contemplating what we should ask of God; what we are seeking; and what we hope to find once our knock is answered.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Queen Esther prays for God's help as she tries to rescue her people from annihilation. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that we are to ask the Father for what we need and it will be given to us. We are to seek, and we shall find; knock and the door will be opened to us.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: In a spirit of humility and gratitude, let us bring to the Father our petitions regarding our needs and the needs of others.

- 1) That the Lord may guide and sustain all of the servant leaders who shepherd our Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That elected officials may have the gifts of integrity and honesty, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are marginalized may be blessed with assurance that Jesus knows them and calls them by name, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the God of endurance and encouragement may inspire members of this faith community to live in harmony with one another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have gone before us may rest in eternal peace in the presence of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God and Father, we thank you for your constant care and turn to you now, in our need. We offer these prayers through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, March 15, 2019
(Lec. 228)

FRIDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT

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

FOCUS: To be reconciled with God, we must also be reconciled with our neighbor.

It can be tempting to assume the fate of our souls has been decided by a certain moment in our lives. However, sanctification is a continuous process. God tells us that if the wicked one turns to a virtuous path, he or she will be saved. To be reconciled with God, we must also be reconciled with our neighbor. Let's begin today.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Lord says through the prophet Ezekiel that he rejoices when a wicked person turns away from sinfulness and keeps his commandments. In the Gospel, Jesus calls his disciples to a higher standard, saying that they must reconcile any arguments before daring to approach the altar.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Gathering together the hopes and needs of our community, we bring these prayers before God.

- 1) For all priests and religious, that the graces they receive in the sacraments continue to help them live out their vocations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For judges and magistrates, may God guide them to just yet compassionate decision-making, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer, may God heal them in mind and body, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For families in this faith community suffering conflict, that they may find resolution and reconciliation through Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, especially our loved ones, may they be welcomed into the heavenly banquet, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father of mercy, we pray that you look favorably upon these intentions and that you will hear our prayers. We ask this through Jesus, your son.

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Saturday, March 16, 2019

(Lec. 229)

1) Deuteronomy 26:16-19

2) Matthew 5:43-48

SATURDAY OF

FIRST WEEK

OF LENT

FOCUS: Blessed are those who follow the law of the Lord.

The law of the Lord is given to God's people so that they may live in God's freedom. By living according to the law, God will raise them up as God's chosen people. Jesus extends the law so that all of God's people are called to love not just one another, but also their enemies. God's law of love must extend to all people.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Moses calls upon the people to live according to the covenant made with God. If they follow the way of the Lord, then the Lord will raise them up in honor above all people. In the Gospel, Jesus has further expectations of the covenant, calling his followers to love their enemies. They must learn to love perfectly, just as the Father is perfect.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Relying on the Father's perfect love, let us offer our prayers for our sisters and brothers.

- 1) For all who serve the Church, may the promptings of the Holy Spirit be their guide, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may God increase in them a willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have been abandoned or feel isolated, may the certainty of God's love and the embrace and compassion of their community give them hope, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those who may benefit from the alms we share during this Lenten season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the souls of the faithful departed, may they enjoy the eternal dwelling place prepared for them by the Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful Father, how great and just are you. Kindly hear the prayers we offer this day, through Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 2019

**SECOND SUNDAY
OF LENT**

(Lec. 27)

- 1) Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18
- 2) Philippians 3:17-4:1 or 3:20-4:1
- 3) Luke 9:28b-36

FOCUS: Jesus is beloved Son and fulfillment of God's promises.

At this early point in our Lenten journey, our readings remind us of God's promises to humanity and his faithfulness to those promises. Full of the same hope that once spurred Abraham on to leave his homeland and Paul to preach the Gospel with commitment and fidelity, they now seek to encourage us in our Lenten disciplines.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The promises made to Abraham go beyond his wildest dreams – he will be the father of a great nation, as numerous as the stars in the night sky. Saint Paul challenges the Philippians to imitate him and to stand firm and faithful in the Lord. The glory of the Transfiguration gives us a glimpse of the glory of the risen Christ.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

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

- 1) For the Church, in this holy season of Lent may we experience anew God's faithfulness and so come to share in the promise of the risen Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For peace in our world, that the Holy Spirit will manifest, in the hearts of leaders, God's transforming peace and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have strayed from God's covenant, may they come to know once more the steadfast mercy of God through sharing in the mystery of Christ, his son, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in this faith community preparing to be baptized this Easter, may they have a deeper awareness of God's loving presence in their lives, 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 and ever-loving God, help us to remain steadfast in our baptismal calling. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

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Monday, March 18, 2019

(Lec. 230)

1) Daniel 9:4b-10

2) Luke 6:36-38

MONDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF LENT
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Cyril of Jerusalem,
Bishop and Doctor
of the Church)

FOCUS: God's mercy compels us to forgive as we are forgiven.

No one chooses to carry a ball and chain around. When we do not follow Jesus' admonition to practice mercy and forgiveness, we place an unnecessary and heavy burden on our spirits.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, *the men of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, and all Israel*, show contrition and repentance, and offer a humble prayer that seeks out God's forgiveness. In today's Gospel, Jesus calls us to be as merciful to others as the Father is with us measure for measure.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us come before a merciful God with humble hearts, and offer these petitions.

- 1) For the Church, may God strengthen her with the gifts of the Spirit, and help her in times of need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may God's grace give them courage to always seek the common good, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are estranged from loved ones, may God grant them forgiveness and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here, may God nurture our faith each and every day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died in the sight of the Lord, may they rest eternally in his loving arms, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and compassionate Father, hear our humble prayers this day as we strive to bring peace upon the earth, through your son, Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, March 19, 2019

(Lec. 543)

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

**SAINT JOSEPH,
SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED
VIRGIN MARY
- SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS: Saint Joseph models a life of faith and obedience.

Joseph accepts his role as father in faith to the son Mary carries. In doing so, he is a model of faith, hard work and obedience to God. May we follow his example of humility and love and support of his family.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, God makes a promise to David through Nathan that will establish his kingdom forever. In the Letter to the Romans, Saint Paul makes it clear that it was through Abraham's faith that he was made father of all nations. The Gospel shows Joseph's faithful obedience to God in taking Mary into his home and accepting his fatherhood to Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us confidently place our needs in the loving hands of our heavenly Father.

- 1) For those who shepherd our Church, may God watch over them and keep them faithful to their vocation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may the Lord bless those seeking to follow his ways, and call to conversion those who do evil in his sight, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering from illness and those who are alone, that the hope found in Jesus may encourage them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those of us gathered here who struggle to forgive, may God's mercy permeate our hearts and help us heal, let us pray to the Lord
- 5) For those who have died, may they be raised up in the promises of Christ's resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father of all, we thank you for the love you give us. Hear our prayers in your loving mercy as we ask through your son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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Wednesday, March 20, 2019

(Lec. 232)

1) Jeremiah 18:18-20

2) Matthew 20:17-28

WEDNESDAY OF

SECOND WEEK

OF LENT

FOCUS: Let us have a servant's heart toward God and others.

Standing up for the Truth, even in the face of severe consequences, is not an easy thing. In our words and our actions, we have the opportunity to lead by example and show the world the goodness of God. We can rely on the Lord in prayer, and in his promise that *whoever wishes to be great among you must serve God and others.*

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading shows Jeremiah crying out to the Lord as he faces persecution for taking the word of God to his people – and having his prophecies rejected. In similar fashion in the Gospel, Jesus gives his Apostles a preview of his impending passion and death, only to have his words ignored as a couple of them vie unsuccessfully for high seats in Jesus' kingdom.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us now take our petitions and lay them before our compassionate Father.

- 1) For all members of our Church, may the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit sanctify us and transform us for the good of the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those who hold public office, that through the work of the Holy Spirit they may endeavor to pass laws protecting the sanctity of life from conception to natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those whose lives are controlled by addiction, may they, in God's mercy, be freed from their chains, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those who are preparing to join our parish family at Easter Vigil, may they experience not only the joy of our faith, but the warmth of a loving community, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all our deceased parishioners, may they experience the peace and joy of the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petitions)

PRIEST: Merciful Father, we humbly pray that you may grant our petitions, giving us strength for our journey. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Thursday, March 21, 2019
(Lec. 233)

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

THURSDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Those who have been blessed with riches and abundance are called by Jesus to take care of those in need.

The rich man who dies does not go to the netherworld because he was rich. He ends up there because, despite being rich, every day he ignored the plight of those right in front of him, specifically the poor man Lazarus. Whatever we have is from God, and is meant to be shared with those who are in need. Sometimes the most difficult ones to see are those right in front of us – but let us not be blind to them, or to our own abundance that can be shared.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's reading from Jeremiah assures us that those who put their trust and hope in the Lord are blessed and will be rewarded. Mark's Gospel recounts Jesus' parable of the rich man and the poor man and the story of their eternity.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We put our trust in the Lord in all things, and so we join together in prayer and present our petitions to God.

- 1) For the Church, may the Holy Spirit work in us that we may always heed the call of repentance and seek to return to God when we go astray, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those in authority, may God in his goodness guide them in their work for the good of all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the poor, the homeless, the sick and the lonely, that they may receive the healing comfort of the Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us on our Lenten journey, that the Lord may strengthen our faith and help us to grow in understanding, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may be carried by the angels into the arms of our heavenly Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, please accept these petitions which we offer in trust and deep love, knowing you will give us all we need. We offer this in the name of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Friday, March 22, 2019

(Lec. 234)

1) Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a

2) Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

FRIDAY OF
SECOND WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: We are tenants in the vineyard of the Lord; let us work in the world and offer the fruits of our labor to God.

God has entrusted us with the vineyard of the world. We should be diligent and just in our actions, unlike those in today's readings. This includes welcoming others whom God has sent into our lives, and returning to God the good things we are able to accomplish through him.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Israel's sons plot against their brother Joseph. They consider killing him, but decide to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of tenants who killed the landowner's servants and son to take the land for themselves.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in the Lord who is the cornerstone of our faith, we bring our prayers and petitions to him.

- 1) For the leaders of the Church, that they may continue to be blessed with good health and strength to work in God's vineyard, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civil leaders, that they may be empowered by God's grace to act with justice, mercy and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering any type of injustice, that our just and merciful God may bring them relief and reparation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our parish community, that God may bless our efforts to teach our children and grandchildren the beauty of living the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they rest in Paradise with all the saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, you remained faithful to your servant Joseph. Therefore, we humbly ask you to hear and answer our prayers. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord forever.

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Saturday, March 23, 2019

(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 Turibius of Mogrovejo,

Bishop)

FOCUS: God's divine mercy is given to all who seek it.

God's love and forgiveness are the parallel themes of today's two readings. God, himself, is our model for how to give unconditional love to others. He loves us despite our failures and mistakes. He wants us to do better, but does not withdraw his love if we fail again. God's divine mercy is given to all who seek it.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Micah praises God for his compassion, saying that God does not persist in anger, but rather *delights in clemency*, removing guilt and pardoning sin. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the lost son, giving a dramatic picture of the Father's love.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Together let us make our petitions to the Father, confident of his loving providence.

- 1) That the Lord may look graciously upon all members of the Church as we proclaim the Good News, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That the Gospel message of peace and blessing may direct the actions of world leaders, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are suffering may be assured of and comforted by God's love for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the members of this parish may be strengthened by the graces of the sacraments, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may bask in the warmth and brightness of God's love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: All-loving God, hear the prayers we bring to you today and grant what is consistent with your will. We offer them in the name of Jesus the Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2019

(Lec. 30)

- 1) Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15
- 2) 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12
- 3) Luke 13:1-9

**THIRD SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: Jesus calls us to repent so that we might bear good fruit.

God's ways are not our ways. In order to bear good fruit, we must allow him to shape and mold our lives. This was not a new message that Jesus shared, but an affirmation of the covenant that God made with his people from the beginning. God is faithful – and so we are called to be. When we stray and wither or produce bad fruit, we have the opportunity to repent and try again.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading from Exodus, God speaks to Moses from the burning bush, announcing his presence as the God of his father, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Saint Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, he speaks of the Old Testament ancestors, many with whom God was not pleased. In today's Gospel, the crowd tells Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices. Jesus calls them to repentance and tells them a parable of the fig tree that produces no fruit.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us approach the Father, who has formed and shaped us to help us bear good fruit, and ask him to hear and answer the prayers we offer.

- 1) For all the members of God's holy Church, may we, through the power of the Holy Spirit, persevere in bringing Christ's light to the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who hold positions of leadership, that the Lord's gracious mercy may bear great fruit in their lives of service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, may they know the peace, love and comfort of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the community of faithful gathered here, may the Lord's call to repentance and conversion take root in us and bring forth a fruitful harvest, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they enter fully into God's loving presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we trust that these and all of our prayers will be answered in your time and according to your will, through your son, Christ our Lord.

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Monday, March 25, 2019
(Lec. 545)

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

**THE ANNUNCIATION
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS: God transforms brokenness into beauty.

Human beings are not perfect. Scriptures abound with that reality. Every person has faults that can bring shame and dishonor. Yet, God's will for all people is that they follow the divine law that leads to life. So he gives us the means to be reconciled to him through his son, Jesus Christ – transforming the broken world of sin into the beauty of his kingdom.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah delivers a message that the Lord will deliver a sign of his fidelity. That sign is a Son who will remind all people that God is with them. In the Letter to the Hebrews, we hear that God did not delight in *holocausts and sin offerings*, but through the sacrifice of Christ we have been consecrated once for all. In the Gospel, Mary says “yes” to Gabriel’s announcement that she has been chosen to carry the Son of God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: The angel Gabriel brought great news to Mary. Let us now bring our prayers before the Lord.

- 1) That all members of the Church may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That God may guide the hearts of policymakers to work to defend the dignity and sanctity of life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are suffering with brokenness and hurt may be blessed with caring people who will accompany them in their pain, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That God may grant strength to all members of this faith community to live and love as Jesus taught us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all who have died may rest in God’s eternal kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of heaven and earth, in your loving kindness hear and answer our prayers. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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The following readings may be used on any Lenten day this week, especially in Years B and C when the Gospel of the Samaritan Woman is not read on the Third Sunday of Lent: Ex 17:1-7/Jn 4:5-42 (236).

Tuesday, March 26, 2019

(Lec. 238)

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

TUESDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: We must open our hearts to God, by forgiving others just as we ourselves wish to be forgiven.

God's mercy is infinite. He will forgive us as often as we repent. But our hearts must be open to receive his forgiveness. If we close our hearts to our brothers and sisters by refusing to forgive them, we shut ourselves off from God's mercy as well. He will forgive us only to the extent that we forgive others.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading offers a prayer of repentance and plea for forgiveness, given by Azariah, In the Gospel, Jesus offers a parable about a servant who owed a huge debt to the king, and is also himself owed a much smaller sum by another servant. Jesus warns that the Father will forgive us only if we forgive others.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With open hearts, let us bring our needs to the Lord, full of confidence in his loving mercy.

- 1) For the faithful, may the light of Christ be seen in us, and help us to lead more people to Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, that God may fill them with the Spirit of truth and humility in the service of their constituents, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering long-term illness, that God may accompany them in their suffering and bring comfort to their families, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all parents in our community, that the Lord may give them the wisdom, patience and faith to make each home a true domestic church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they experience eternal life in the glory of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, have mercy on your children gathered here today and grant our petitions. This we ask in the name of Christ the Lord.

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

(Lec. 239)

1) Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

2) Matthew 5:17-19

WEDNESDAY OF

THIRD WEEK

OF LENT

FOCUS: Following God's commands is how we respond in generosity to all he has given us.

It is easy to think of laws as "the things we must not break so as to not get into legal trouble." And while that is true, it misses a larger point when it comes to God's laws. God's laws are what define our relationship with him, much as the laws of physics define the relationship of objects in motion or at rest. When we obey his commands, we unite with him the way we are intended to, and allow his generosity to be returned in love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Moses exhorts the people to hear and observe the decrees of the Lord, in order for them to live and to take possession of the land that God gives to them. In the Gospel, Jesus explains that he has not come to abolish the law or the teachings of the prophets, but to fulfill them. The commandments are still binding, and the one who obeys them will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we strive to be faithful to the law of God and the Gospel of Christ, let us bring our petitions to our Father in heaven.

- 1) For all who serve God's people, may the grace of God further and strengthen them in their mission, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world, national, and local leaders, may the God who gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning grant them just and prudent decision-making, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, that God will guide physicians, nurses, caregivers and medical researchers to help and heal them in mind and body, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of this faith community who are discerning a call to the priesthood or married life, may God provide them clarity and wisdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, that they may experience fullness of joy in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we entrust our prayers to you in the holy name of your son, Jesus Christ.

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Thursday, March 28, 2019
(Lec. 240)

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

THURSDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

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

Being a Christian means more than listening to God's word; to be God's people, we must walk in the ways he commands. Jesus invites us to believe that the kingdom of God comes to us through him. Our faith in Jesus will affect our choices and be evident in the way we treat others.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Jeremiah warns the Israelites that they have failed to walk in God's ways. Jesus tells those who test him to recognize the *finger of God* in his power to drive out demons, and that whoever is not with him is against him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us turn to God with our whole hearts and ask him to hear our prayers.

- 1) For the Church, may the Lord make us worthy to live his call in our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all leaders, may God protect them from any indulgence and greed and grant them a servant's heart, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those seeking to walk in the light of the Lord, may God's love and mercy inspire them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may the Holy Spirit embolden us in our call to joyfully proclaim the Good News, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may God welcome them into his kingdom to walk forever in his light, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, you call to us to open our hearts to hear your word. We ask that you hear our prayers and help us to walk in your ways, through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, March 29, 2019

(Lec. 241)

1) Hosea 14:2-10

2) Mark 12:28-34

FRIDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: The greatest commandments are to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Today we reflect on placing God first in our lives, and how we can offer the Lord our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. How can we avoid the pitfalls of placing lesser goods, such as our work and family, above God's rightful place as first in our lives?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the prophet Hosea conveys the Lord's call for repentance. In the Gospel, we have a rare scene where Jesus and a scribe collaborate to proclaim the two great commandments.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us present our needs and those of the world to the Lord.

- 1) For the Church throughout the world, may the Lord grant us patience for one another, bearing with one another in love with humble and gentle hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the nations of the world, may the Holy Spirit give their leaders discerning hearts to know his will and the courage to follow it, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who lack adequate food and shelter, may God provide for their needs through the helping hands of compassionate neighbors and friends, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all those preparing for baptism in this faith community, may their Lenten season be one of joyful purification and enlightenment, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they come to share in the eternal banquet in heaven with all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, in your mercy, accept our humble prayers and answer them according to your will. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, March 30, 2019

(Lec. 242)

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

SATURDAY OF
THIRD WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Conversion and repentance must come from the heart.

God tells us that he desires love and knowledge of him rather than sacrifices. We see this today with the Pharisee and the tax collector. When we pray or go to confession, let our repentance come from the realization that our sins hurt God, who loves us. This will help our faithfulness to last.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading is the Israelites' response to Hosea's warning. They say they will change their ways, but God knows their new attitude will be short-lived. In the Gospel, a tax collector humbles himself, asking for God's forgiveness, while a Pharisee is too proud to admit his sins. The tax collector is justified and the Pharisee is not.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring the prayers we hold in our hearts to our merciful and loving God, who desires for us to know him.

- 1) For all clergy, religious and laypeople who serve the Church, may they be blessed with grace to continue in humble service for the glory of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of our community and our nation, that the Holy Spirit may guide them to promote equality and justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those who feel trapped by habitual sin, may they know the immeasurable mercy of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those who volunteer their time in our faith community, may God bless their efforts to serve their brothers and sisters in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, that they may see the face of God and rest with him in paradise, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful Father, hear the prayers of your children gathered before you today. We ask this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2019

(Lec. 33)

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

**FOURTH SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: God is always ready to take us back, no matter how far or how often we stray.

Jesus' famous parable of the prodigal son depicts God as a father always ready to take back those who stray from him. No matter how we may have turned away from God, we have only to turn back to him through the sacrament of reconciliation. Lent is the perfect time to be reconciled to God and to be a new creation for Easter.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, God stops the miraculous manna as soon as the Israelites are able to eat the produce of the Promised Land. Paul tells the Corinthians they are a new creation through reconciliation with God. The prodigal son demonstrates God's willingness to welcome us back as soon as we turn to him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We put our trust in our loving God, our Creator and Father, as we present the needs of our world.

- 1) For the Church, that God may unite us in our witness to his mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our elected leaders, may God grant them the fortitude and humility to walk in a manner worthy of their calling, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For families torn apart by addiction or divorce, that Christ the mediator may bring them healing and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ give us the strength to follow his will and spread the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Good and gracious God, accept these prayers we bring to you today, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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