

FEBRUARY

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Monday, February 1, 2021
(Lec. 323)
1) Hebrews 11:32-40
2) Mark 5:1-20

MONDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: With faith, we can do great things.

In the Gospel, after the man possessed by demons had been healed, he went off and began *to proclaim ... what Jesus had done for him*. He was transformed. Jesus has the power to change and transform our lives as well by the power of his Word and healing love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Letter to the Hebrews speaks about the faith and endurance of their ancestors and the prophets, even though they *did not receive what had been promised*. In the Gospel, Jesus orders unclean spirits out of a man and casts them into swine. Jesus sends the man to tell his family what the Lord had done for him, and *all were amazed*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Letting our hearts take comfort and hope in the Lord, we entrust to his goodness and mercy all of our needs.

- 1) That the Church's proclamation of the Good News may, through the power of the Holy Spirit, bring many more to faith and her sheltering arms, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That civic leaders may be guided in their actions by Jesus' example of servant leadership, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who endure mental or physical affliction may be comforted by God's love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the one Spirit of Christ may be a unifying force for this faith community during Black History Month, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all who have died may receive God's promise of resurrection in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving and merciful God, we thank you for your goodness and ask that you hear our prayers, through Christ our Lord.

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021

(Lec. 524)

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

**THE PRESENTATION
OF THE LORD
- FEAST**

FOCUS: *The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.*

The Holy Family models for all of us the call to sanctity. Mary's fiat, and Joseph's quiet, yet faithful, obedience to God show us what it means to be true disciples. Mary and Joseph bring their Son to the temple as a complete surrender to God's will for Jesus' life. May we, too, give ourselves fully over to God's plan for our lives.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Malachi speaks of a messenger who will be sent to prepare the way for the Lord. In the Letter to the Hebrews, the author says that Jesus shared in the flesh and blood of God's children, becoming like them in every way in order to expiate their sins. In the Gospel, Mary and Joseph take Jesus to Jerusalem to *present him to the Lord*. Simeon gathers Jesus in his arms and blesses God, proclaiming the arrival of the Savior.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As God's children, let us bring our prayers to him this day, with great confidence in his love for us.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all pastoral leaders, may the Lord guide and sustain them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may God move their hearts in working to protect the dignity and sanctity of human life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, may God's saving power offer profound healing and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here and for all those we love, may God's mercy be upon all of us this day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they, through the mercy of God, soon experience eternal joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we thank you for sending your Son, who took on our nature to conquer sin and death. We ask that you hear the prayers we offer in his name today.

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Wednesday, February 3, 2021
(Lec. 325)
1) Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15
2) Mark 6:1-6

WEDNESDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Blaise,
Bishop and Martyr;
Saint Ansgar,
Bishop)

FOCUS: The Lord disciplines those he loves by granting us his wisdom and giving us his strength.

Life brings with it both joys and struggles; how we deal with each speaks volumes about the reality and depth of our faith and who we are in Christ. We may suffer in the Lord's discipline of us, yet we know he provides strength and hope, helping us to bring forth *the peaceful fruit of righteousness*.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews tells the community that they have not yet shed blood in their resistance of sin, and they have forgotten what they have been told about suffering and the discipline of the Lord, which bears righteous fruit. In the Gospel from Mark, Jesus teaches in the synagogue of *his native place*, and is met with opposition and an absence of faith.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Together we lift up our hearts in prayer to God, who blesses us with abundance and who is present to us in all our needs.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the Holy Spirit continue to guide us in the ways of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For peace in our world, and in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who struggle with addiction, may the Lord's kindness and compassion come upon them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Lord sow seeds that bear much fruit in our lives of discipleship, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they know the fullness of life with God in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear our prayers and in your great mercy grant them according to your holy will. We pray this through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, February 4, 2021
(Lec. 326)

- 1) Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24
- 2) Mark 6:7-13

THURSDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: We can do amazing things when we have faith and trust in God.

Jesus' instructions to the Twelve, to go out into the world with nothing other than a walking stick, necessitated that they depend on the hospitality of others, and the providence of God. This required faith, and absolute trust in God rather than in themselves and in their own resources. In doing so, the Apostles were able to do amazing things: casting out demons and curing the sick. What can we do when we trust in God?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Letter to the Hebrews tells the community that in approaching God, they are not like those who were with Moses, terrified and trembling, but are under a new covenant, with Jesus as the mediator. In the Gospel, the Twelve are sent out *two by two* to preach repentance, to heal the sick, and to cast out demons, taking nothing with them other than a *walking stick*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we approach our heavenly Father, we do so in confidence that he will hear our prayers.

- 1) For all missionaries sent out to preach the Gospel, may God be their leader and their guide, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may God bless their work to bring peace and justice to their nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For people who are terminally or chronically ill, may God grant them peace and healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of worship, may God bless the efforts of those who teach the faith to others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they find their eternal home in the *city of the Living God*, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we approach you with confidence, knowing that you hear our prayers and always desire what is best for us. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Friday, February 5, 2021
(Lec. 327)

- 1) Hebrews 13:1-8
- 2) Mark 6:14-29

FRIDAY OF
FOURTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(OBL MEM
Saint Agatha,
Virgin and Martyr)

FOCUS: God has promised never to abandon us, and with his help we can choose the path of faith and life.

King Herod knew that John the Baptist was *righteous and holy*, and yet he ordered him to be killed out of fear of embarrassment. When life challenges us to choose between succumbing to worldly pressures or doing right with the Lord's support and guidance, let us choose the path of faith and life.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews urges the community to let brotherly love continue, remaining hospitable and attentive to the needs of prisoners and others who are ill-treated, and honoring the state of marriage. He reminds them that God will never forsake or abandon them. In the Gospel, Herod is concerned that Jesus is John the Baptist *raised from the dead*. Herod had had John the Baptist beheaded after Herodias, his wife, had demanded it.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With trust in God's loving will, let us make our requests known to him.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may God bless us in the service of his Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may God grant them fortitude and strength in choosing to promote the dignity of all human life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the lonely and despairing among us, may they know God's love and consolation in the midst of their trials, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this family of faith, may the Lord develop within us hearts of love and stewardship to draw us ever closer to him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they soon come before the Lord and rejoice in his eternal presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving and gracious God, hear our prayers and pour out your grace upon us, we ask through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, February 6, 2021

(Lec. 328)

1) Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21

2) Mark 6:30-34

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

FOCUS: We receive grace and strength in prayer.

In the Gospel, Jesus was moved with pity for the crowd. In the same way, Jesus is with us in our day-to-day struggles. Let us take our rest in him each day in times of quiet prayer, and he will give us the grace and the strength to carry on.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the Letter to the Hebrews, the community is urged to continue to offer praise, to do good deeds, and to share what they have, as these are pleasing to God. In the Gospel, Jesus says to the disciples, *come away ... and rest a while*, but the crowds followed them. Moved with pity, Jesus stopped and taught the crowd *many things*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Today, we gather together as one voice and offer our prayers to our loving God.

- 1) For Church leaders, may the Spirit of Christ sustain them in their lives of service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For political leaders, may God bless them with integrity and humility, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer from anxiety or depression, may the hope of Christ bring peace to their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those within our faith community who are discerning vocations to the priesthood and religious life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they enjoy eternal life through the mercy of our loving God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear and answer these prayers we have brought before you in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2021

(Lec. 74)

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

**FIFTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

FOCUS: Although we may know despair, we are called to live in hope.

Despair and grief are part of the human condition, and are often brought on because of loss or suffering. In Christ, however, we experience hope and healing. As disciples working to build the kingdom of God on earth, let us, like Saint Paul, willingly take the Gospel to others and share our hope freely with them.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Job expresses his despair, describing life without hope or happiness. Saint Paul writes that he has no reason to boast – that preaching the Gospel is an obligation. Thus, he offers the Gospel *free of charge* and has *become all things to all, to save at least some*. In the Gospel, Jesus touches and cures Simon's mother-in-law, as well as many others, *throughout the whole of Galilee*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We present our needs and petitions to our almighty God, who sustains the lowly and heals the broken-hearted.

- 1) That the Church, the seed of the Kingdom inaugurated by Christ, may be nourished by his grace to grow in unity and holiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That government and public health officials may be granted wisdom and strength in their efforts to manage the pandemic, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That the Good News of God's kingdom may give hope to all those in misery and despair, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That this faith community may be blessed by the Spirit with love, joy, and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who die in hope may be met by Christ in the fullness of God's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Good and gracious God, in your goodness hear and answer the prayers of those who cry out to you. Through Christ our Lord.

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Monday, February 8, 2021
(Lec. 329)
1) Genesis 1:1-19
2) Mark 6:53-56

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

FOCUS: God is both transcendent and immanent; he is both beyond us, and within us.

Today we reflect on the grandeur of God, who created the heavens and the earth. God is transcendent: beyond our imagining and existing apart from and not subject to the limitations of the material universe. And yet, he is also immanent: dwelling within us and pervading the universe he created. He is all powerful, and yet he chooses to remain close to us in our spiritual poverty. In the person of Jesus, God reveals his loving care, especially for the weakest.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

God created the heavens and the earth, speaking light, the sky, the earth, and the sea into existence and calling them good. In the Gospel, Jesus and his disciples arrive in Gennesaret, where he is immediately recognized. The people bring the sick to him, in *whatever villages or towns or countryside he entered*, and he heals them.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring our prayers to our loving Father, the creator of the universe.

- 1) For the Church, may the Holy Spirit continue to bless and sanctify her in her mission of caring for others, especially the most vulnerable, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For national and local leaders, may God direct their actions in service to the common good of their communities, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, especially those who feel disheartened or filled with despair, may God touch them with his healing hand, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Holy Spirit guide us in affirming the dignity of one another, regardless of race, ethnicity, or social status, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may they experience fullness of joy in paradise, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

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

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Tuesday, February 9, 2021
(Lec. 330)
1) Genesis 1:20–2:4a
2) Mark 7:1-13

TUESDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: A heart united with God is one that receives and returns his love.

Jesus' frustration with the scribes and Pharisees is apparent in today's Gospel. He calls them hypocrites, for they have replaced the love of God with their own traditions consisting of legalistic interpretations of the law, and external piety. In doing so, they have erected their own stumbling blocks to being united with the heart of God. What Jesus yearns for more than anything are hearts that receive and return God's love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

God speaks and creates living creatures upon the earth, and within the waters. Then he created *man in his image ... male and female he created them*. Then *[he] blessed them saying, "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it."* In the Gospel, Jesus rebukes the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes, who honor God only with their lips, while their hearts remain far from him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Together as one voice, let us lift our prayers to our loving and merciful God.

- 1) For members of the Church throughout the world, may the love of Christ unite our hearts to God in our lives of faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may God strengthen them in justice and integrity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the homebound and the lonely, may the love of Jesus console and comfort them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may God's declaration of the goodness of creation guide our relationship with the earth and its resources, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may the Lord welcome them into his Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers this day and ask for your gracious mercy in granting them. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

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Wednesday, February 10, 2021
(Lec. 331)
1) Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-17
2) Mark 7:14-23

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

FOCUS: Purity is a matter of the heart.

Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person, but the things that come out from within are what defile. This was as true for the man in the Garden of Eden as it was for the crowd surrounding Jesus, and for us. The first man and woman sinned through pride and disobedience. Jesus speaks of the sins of *theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice* as evils that come from within. Purity is a matter of the heart, not of the food we eat or the rituals we perform.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

God creates man out of dust and breathes life into him. Then God creates the garden and places man in the garden to care for it, commanding him not to eat from the tree of knowledge. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches that it is not what enters a person from the outside that defiles, but the evils that come from people's hearts.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in our God who created us, we bring our prayers before him.

- 1) That the Church may continue to be sanctified and strengthened through the transforming grace of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That the Lord may look graciously upon all who desire and strive for purity of heart for the sake of their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all who have experienced violence or hatred of any kind may be consoled by the peace and healing of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the hearts of those of us gathered here may be purified from every evil, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all who have died may live forever in God's presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of all Creation, we thank you for the gift of life and everything that sustains us. Hear and answer our prayers this day according to your will, through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, February 11, 2021
(Lec. 332)
1) Genesis 2:18-25
2) Mark 7:24-30

THURSDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(Opt. Mem.
Our Lady of Lourdes)

FOCUS: In faith, we find fullness.

Our Liturgy of the Word today reveals God's powerful love for us. In the story of creation, God creates humans as relational beings, finding fullness together in God. In the Gospel, Jesus heals a woman's daughter after she shows great faith. How do we recognize God's love in our faith lives and in our relationships?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Lord God formed many creatures out of the ground, but none were a *suitable partner for the man*. So God created a woman as his partner, that *the two of them [might] become one flesh*. In the Gospel, a Syrophenician woman *[begs] him to drive the demon out of her daughter*. Despite the fact that she was a Gentile, she shows tremendous faith in Jesus and he heals her daughter.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident in God's great love for us, we place our needs before him.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all Church leaders, may God's light shine upon them in their work of spreading the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For political leaders, may God guide them in faith to lead with responsibility and integrity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who struggle with seemingly insurmountable challenges, may God's love strengthen their faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here today, may God's bountiful presence permeate our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they rest in the loving embrace of God the Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty and eternal Father, you created us and provided for our every need. Hear our prayers today as we humbly ask for your help. We ask through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Friday, February 12, 2021
(Lec. 333)

- 1) Genesis 3:1-8
- 2) Mark 7:31-37

FRIDAY OF
FIFTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Let us be open to God's abundant blessings in our lives.

The crowd in today's Gospel said about Jesus, *He has done all things well*. God's grace is continuing to work in our lives today, and he is continuing to do great things in and through us. Let us place our lives into God's hands and recognize the abundant blessings he brings to us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

After the serpent tells the woman that eating the forbidden fruit will open their eyes, she eats some and also gives some to her husband. They then hide from God. In the Gospel, Jesus cures a deaf man. The *astonished* crowd praises Jesus' actions.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God's providence, we present him our petitions.

- 1) That the ears of Christians everywhere may be opened by God's grace to his saving Word, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That civic leaders may be guided by the Holy Spirit in their efforts to protect life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who suffer from addiction may find healing in Jesus' merciful touch, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That members of this faith community may grow in faith, love, and hope through God's providence in their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the faithful departed, freed from all sin, may rejoice in the vision of God forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Faithful and merciful God, hear the prayers we offer you today, through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, February 13, 2021
(Lec. 334)
1) Genesis 3:9-24
2) Mark 8:1-10

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

FOCUS: God is the source of our being and sustenance.

Jesus is *moved with pity* for the hungry crowd that had been following him for three days. He sees their need and provides for them. If our faith is strong and we say *yes* each day to God working in our lives, he can do the same for us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Adam is hiding because he is naked and afraid. The Lord God knows he has eaten the forbidden fruit, and so dictates the consequences of this to the serpent, the woman, and Adam. He expels Adam [and Eve] from the garden. In the Gospel, Jesus uses seven loaves and a few fish to feed *about four thousand* people, with seven baskets left over.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Aware of the Lord's goodness, let us offer him our prayers with trust and humility.

- 1) For the Church, may the Lord protect her from all evil, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For governing officials, may God inspire them in enacting policies that uplift families, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who suffer from the violence to human dignity inherent in racism, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may we grow in holiness through the intercession of God's Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they enjoy the splendor of God's eternal glory, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, accept the prayers we have brought to you today. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2021

(Lec. 77)

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

**SIXTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

FOCUS: Let us turn to Christ today to heal our wounds.

Jesus enters into our spiritual and physical suffering with his mercy to heal our separation from God and draw us back into the relationship for which we are made. The leper's faith can lead us also to confidently seek Christ out today. Jesus, the eternal Word of God, draws near to us to heal us of every wound.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Lord gives instructions to Moses and Aaron for how to deal with leprosy. In the second reading, Paul encourages the Corinthians to do everything for the glory of God. In the Gospel, a leper asks Jesus to make him clean, and after he is made so, he then begins *to publicize the whole matter*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Together as one voice, we turn to our merciful, ever-present God with our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the Holy Spirit draw us ever more deeply into the communion for which we are made, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may God give them fortitude in working to promote peace and unity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are grieving broken relationships or the loss of a loved one, may God's presence offer comfort and healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in this faith community discerning a vocation to the priesthood or religious life, may God grant them strength and wisdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rejoice in the communion of heaven with the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, trusting in your saving power, we offer these prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Monday, February 15, 2021
(Lec. 335)

- 1) Genesis 4:1-15, 25
- 2) Mark 8:11-13

MONDAY OF
SIXTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Let us open our hearts to Jesus.

In the Gospel, the Pharisees want a sign from Jesus and he refuses, knowing that their hearts are hardened. Let us open our hearts to God's call in our lives today and place our trust in him.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Cain and Abel are born from the union of the man and Eve. When they are grown, the Lord looks with favor on Abel, but not Cain. Cain is resentful and kills Abel, and the Lord marks Cain so that no one would, in turn, kill him. In the Gospel, the Pharisees ask for a sign from Jesus, and he tells them that their generation will not receive a sign.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With trust in our gracious God, we humbly offer our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For leaders in the Church, may God grant them integrity and strength as they shepherd their flocks, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may God guide and support them as leaders of justice and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer from injury or physical disability, may God provide them with strength, healing, and perseverance, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the faith community gathered together today, may God grant us patience and understanding with one another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithfully departed, may God welcome them into his Kingdom and grant them everlasting life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious God, thank you for hearing our prayers. We offer them to you with thanksgiving and praise, through Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, February 16, 2021
(Lec. 336)

- 1) Genesis 6:5-8;
7:1-5, 10
- 2) Mark 8:14-21

TUESDAY OF
SIXTH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME

FOCUS: Negative influences can harden our hearts.

Like a little yeast (leaven) affects a batch of dough, negative influences can cause hearts to harden. This happened with the Pharisees' attitudes influencing the disciples. Sometimes we need a fresh start to cleanse our hearts, as the earth had a fresh start after the flood.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Lord *regretted that he had made man on the earth*, and threatens to destroy much of creation. He finds favor with Noah, however, and commands him to build an ark and bring animals into it to repopulate the earth after the flood the Lord will send. In the Gospel, Jesus uses leaven as a symbol to tell his disciples not to have the evil disposition of the Pharisees which leads to a hardening of hearts.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With trust in our merciful God, let us bring him our prayers today.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the Holy Spirit strengthen us in our work of building the kingdom of God on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For legislatures around the world, may God embolden them in enacting policies to protect human life in all stages, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are hungry or food insecure, may the love of God call forth people and resources to meet their needs, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Lord's compassion enable us to see and respond to one another's suffering, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may God welcome them into eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we humbly ask you to look kindly on the prayers we bring before you today, in the name of Jesus, your Son.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

ASH WEDNESDAY

(Lec. 219)

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

FOCUS: As we begin the season of Lent, we are invited to draw closer to God.

As we begin this season of Lent, today's readings invite us to trust in the Lord's mercy and forgiveness, and seek to draw closer to him through repentance and reconciliation. This journey of conversion of heart should be reflected in the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, practiced in a manner that is pleasing to God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Joel speaks the Lord's words in exhorting all the people to gather in fasting and return to the Lord, who is *gracious and merciful*. Paul implores the Corinthians to receive God's grace fruitfully and be reconciled to him. In the Gospel, Jesus says to give alms, to pray, and to fast out of a desire to please God rather than to be praised by others.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in the Lord's mercy, let us bring before him our prayers and petitions for ourselves and for the world.

- 1) For the Church throughout the world, may the Lord lead us into a deeper conversion of heart through the practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who govern, may the Spirit guide them in their decision-making for the common good, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For children throughout the world, especially those who are in need of food, shelter, and care, may the Lord protect and guard them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all members of this faith community, may the Lord help us persevere in our Lenten commitments in the face of distractions and temptations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may the Lord's perpetual light shine upon them and bring them everlasting joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Hear these prayers we bring before you, O Lord, and answer them in accordance with your merciful and divine will. We ask through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, February 18, 2021
(Lec. 220)

THURSDAY AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY

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

FOCUS: Each of us must choose to pick up our cross each day and follow Jesus.

For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. Jesus' words today challenge us to live as his disciples by letting go of the desire for personal gain and saying yes to God's will for our lives. Bearing our cross each day looks different for each person.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Moses sets before the people *life and prosperity, death and doom* and tells them which behaviors will lead to each. He instructs God's people to choose life, blessing, and prosperity by loving God and walking in his ways. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of the inevitable suffering of the Son of Man, and states, *If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Gathered as one people, let us ask God to hear the prayers we bring before him.

- 1) That the Lord may inspire men and women to choose to follow Christ through vocations to the ordained and consecrated life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That the Holy Spirit may renew the commitment of our nation's leaders in choosing life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That God may give strength to those whose crosses seem too burdensome to bear, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That Christ may bless our practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during this Lenten season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all who lose their life this day may gain eternal life in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of Life, hear our prayers and answer them according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, February 19, 2021
(Lec. 221)

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

FRIDAY AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY

FOCUS: Lent is an invitation to sacrifice and grow in our journey toward Easter.

Fasting, which is discussed in both readings today, is not just about abstaining from food. True fasting can mean performing works of mercy or “fasting” from things that draw our attention away from God and from our life as Christians. When we fast in an authentic way, we let our light *break forth like the dawn*.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies of the people’s wickedness and sins, and criticizes their motivation for fasting. He tells them the Lord desires fasting that frees those bound and oppressed, feeds the hungry, shelters the homeless, and clothes the naked. In the Gospel, Jesus answers a question from John’s disciples about fasting with his own question: *Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we begin our Lenten journey, we turn our hearts and minds to our heavenly Father and present our petitions to him.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may God draw us ever closer to himself during this Lenten season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations and all those in authority, may God guide them in governing with wisdom and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who struggle with mental illness, may God’s healing grace come upon them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of faith, may the Holy Spirit enkindle in us a fire for the corporal works of mercy during this Lenten season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rejoice with God in their eternal home in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father of love and mercy, we ask you to graciously hear the prayers we offer today. Through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, February 20, 2021
(Lec. 222)

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

SATURDAY AFTER
ASH WEDNESDAY

FOCUS: Jesus said to Levi, *Follow me.*

After calling Levi, the tax collector, Jesus explains to the Pharisees that he has come not to call the righteous, but to call sinners. He calls each one of us to repentance in this season of Lent. Let us pray daily with humble hearts, asking for his healing and forgiveness.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies of the behaviors that will lead to God's blessing and his guidance always. In the Gospel, Jesus calls Levi [Matthew] to follow him. He leaves everything behind and follows Jesus. Jesus tells the complaining Pharisees that he has *not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As members of the Body of Christ, we humbly bring our prayers and petitions to God.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may God grant him courage and strength in his mission to spread the Good News, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For national leaders, may God lead them in greater selflessness in their call to serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For families who are estranged from one another, may God's grace bring about healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of this faith community, may the Holy Spirit guide our thoughts and actions this day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they rest in the loving embrace of the Father in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful Father, through the death of your Son you have restored humanity to your love. Hear the prayers we now offer through him, he who is Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2021

(Lec. 23)

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

**FIRST SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: If we go into the desert with Jesus this Lent, his grace will move us forward in our life of faith.

Lent isn't an end unto itself; we go into the desert with Jesus in order to advance in holiness and in our spiritual life. All the blessings and trials in our lives are not closed events. They're precursors to more: greater trust in God, deeper union with him, and a greater sense of our mission to proclaim the kingdom of God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, God establishes a covenant with Noah and his sons, promising never to flood the earth again. In the second reading, Peter writes to his community about those *in the days of Noah* who *were saved through water*. *This prefigured baptism*, which is what saves them now. In the Gospel, Jesus is tempted by Satan in the desert. He then goes to Galilee to begin his public ministry.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Approaching the throne of our heavenly Father, let us offer our prayers for the Church and the world.

- 1) For the Church, may the Lord guide and protect her in proclaiming the kingdom of God to all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who serve in state and local governments, may the Holy Spirit inspire them in working to protect the most vulnerable, especially the unborn, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those burdened to the point of despair, may God's grace poured out upon them strengthen and uphold them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Lord's presence here in Word and sacrament open our hearts more fully to the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they soon rejoice with all the angels and saints in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Hear our prayers, God our Father, as we turn to you, the source of all goodness. We ask this through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Monday, February 22, 2021

(Lec. 535)

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

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

FOCUS: The authority symbolized by the chair of Peter is established by God for the care and salvation of his people.

In giving Peter the keys to the Kingdom and the power to bind and loose, Jesus confers on him the office of governing and teaching the Church. But it's clear that this office is not about power over others, but is a gift from God for the purpose of serving the flock in imitation of the Good Shepherd.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Peter exhorts the leaders of the early Christian communities to tend to their flocks by example, *overseeing not by constraint but willingly*. In the Gospel, Peter declares that Jesus is *the Son of the living God*. Jesus names Peter the rock on which he will build the Church, giving him the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in his care and concern for us, let us bring our petitions to God.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all who care for the Lord's flock, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those entrusted with leadership throughout the world, may Christ inspire them to grow in virtue, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those sick in mind, body, or spirit, may God console them and provide for their needs, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here, may God grant us the fortitude to be peacemakers in our families and in our communities, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they receive from Christ the unfading crown of glory and rest in eternal peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear the prayers of the Church you have promised to watch over and preserve until the end of time. Through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, February 23, 2021
(Lec. 225)

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

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

FOCUS: The word of God bears life-giving fruit.

Isaiah's prophecy of the word of God being just like water from heaven invites us to contemplate the pervasive presence of God's word, its dynamic activity, and its aim of bearing fruit. Prayer is our way of contemplating and responding to God's word, such that God's will can be done on earth as it is in heaven.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the Lord says his Word shall be just like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth fruit, before it returns to heaven. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With humble hearts, we bring our prayers before the Lord.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the power of God's word embolden us in bearing abundant fruit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may the word of the Lord be the water that makes their labors fruitful and just, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who struggle with their prayer life, may they be comforted in the knowledge that God hears their distress and knows what they need before they ask, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our community of faith, may God transform our lives into witnesses of his goodness, truth, and beauty, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died in the peace of Christ, may they one day rise with him to eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Good and gracious God, accept these prayers and answer them according to your holy will. We ask through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, February 24, 2021
(Lec. 226)

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

WEDNESDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: The sign of Jonah is an invitation to repent – to turn from evil ways and accept the mercy of the Father.

Jesus, like Jonah, came with a call to repentance. He asks us to turn back to him, to set down the evil we have done, and to accept the forgiveness offered by the Father. The people of Israel, the generation of which Jesus speaks, are condemned not because the Ninevites had been sinless, but because *at the preaching of Jonah they repented.*

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Jonah obeys God's command and announces his warning to the Ninevites, who repent and are spared. In the Gospel, Jesus says that this *evil generation* will be given no sign *except the sign of Jonah*, and announces that there is *something greater than [Solomon and] Jonah here.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident in God's merciful love, we bring our needs to him this day.

- 1) For the Church, may the Spirit give us courage to spread the Good News, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in governance and public office, may the Lord strengthen them in leadership and guide their hearts toward charity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who feel they cannot be forgiven, may the compassion of God open their hearts to his abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here, may God grant us the grace this Lent to recognize our sins and to turn back to him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be welcomed into the kingdom of God by the mercy of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful and loving God, we thank you for the sign of Jonah and the salvation won by your Son. Hear these prayers we offer, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, February 25, 2021
(Lec. 227)

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

THURSDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Praising God in prayer leads us to greater love, greater trust, and greater faith in him.

When Jesus tells us to ask, seek, and knock in prayer, he promises that God will hear us when we approach him with a humble, grateful heart. We will be rewarded with good gifts when we persevere in our efforts to do God's will.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Queen Esther turns to God in prayer to *save [Israel] from the hand of [their] enemies*. In the Gospel, Jesus says to his disciples, *Ask and it will be given to you ... knock and the door will be opened to you*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God's mercy and compassion, we offer our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For missionaries who work to spread the Gospel, may God bless their efforts in drawing others closer to Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For national and local leaders, may the grace of God grant them discerning hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the chronically ill, may God bring them healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Holy Spirit unify us in love for Christ and service to others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died marked with the sign of faith, may they rest in the peace of God's perfect love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, hear the prayers we have brought before you, in the name of Jesus the Lord.

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Friday, February 26, 2021
(Lec. 228)

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

FRIDAY OF
FIRST WEEK
OF LENT

FOCUS: Let us strive to turn away from sin and grow in virtue.

Lent is an opportunity to effect change that brings us closer to God. Today's readings focus on turning away from anger and sin and turning toward the Lord. This challenges us to examine what needs to change in our own lives, and then striving, with the help of God's grace, to live in a more virtuous manner.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Ezekiel speaks for the Lord, saying that if a wicked man turns from his sins, he shall live; none of his transgressions will be remembered. If a virtuous man turns to evil, he shall die because *none of his virtuous deeds shall be remembered*. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches about the importance of turning away from anger and reconciling with and forgiving one another.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence in our merciful Father, we bring him our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For Pope Francis and bishops across the world, may the Lord guide them this Lent in shepherding their flocks, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders, may the Holy Spirit be their guide in treating their people with basic human dignity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who feel marginalized or left behind, may God strengthen them in faith and bring them his peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those who are preparing to join the Church at Easter, may the Lord's grace be upon them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they soon reside eternally in the merciful arms of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear the prayers we offer through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, February 27, 2021

(Lec. 229)

1) Deuteronomy 26:16-19

2) Matthew 5:43-48

SATURDAY OF

FIRST WEEK

OF LENT

FOCUS: Observe God's laws *with all your heart and with all your soul.*

The privilege of enjoying a special relationship with God comes with the responsibility to live a holy life. For the Israelites, this was a set of commandments. For Christians, we also have the commandments but we are called to more: We are called to a life of holiness and love that will set us apart from the world and draw others to Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Moses exhorts the Israelites to follow God's commandments. If they do, God promises to bless them abundantly and they *will be a people sacred to the Lord*. In the Gospel, Jesus cites a law of Scripture and tells his followers that they are expected to go beyond the letter of this law and instead seek to emulate the Father's perfect holiness.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God's promise to be near to those who follow his commandments, we confidently bring him our prayers.

- 1) For the Church, may God continue to guide and bless her as we enter this holy season of Lent, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For judges and practitioners of the law, may the Holy Spirit bless them with wisdom and honesty, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the imprisoned, may the love of Christ enter their hearts, bringing hope and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the faithful gathered here, may God bless our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they soon be welcomed into the heavenly Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Eternal Father, we thank you for your goodness. We ask you to kindly hear the prayers brought before you today in the name of your Son Jesus, our Lord.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021

(Lec. 26)

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

**SECOND SUNDAY
OF LENT**

FOCUS: On the Mount of the Transfiguration, Jesus is revealed to his disciples as God's *beloved Son*.

In our Scriptures today, Jesus is revealed as God's *beloved Son*, and Paul writes that the risen Jesus will *indeed intercede for us*. What gifts we are given! Let us, then, act in the world as God's children and be his instruments for building the Kingdom on earth.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Abraham was about to *offer [his son] up as a holocaust* to the Lord. But a messenger of the Lord stopped him, and told him, *[the Lord] will bless you abundantly*, and that he would have innumerable descendants. Saint Paul asks, *If God is for us, who can be against us?* For Christ Jesus *intercedes for us*. In the Gospel, Peter, James, and John accompany Jesus *up a high mountain*, where he is *transfigured before them*. They see Moses and Elijah conversing with Jesus, and from the cloud a voice says, *This is my beloved Son. Listen to him*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Gathered as one voice, let us present our petitions to our merciful Father.

- 1) That all members of the Church may be blessed with the grace to hear God's voice each day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That leaders everywhere may be led by the Spirit in protecting life at all its stages, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all who are suffering physical, financial, or psychological hardships due to the coronavirus may have their burdens lifted by the Lord, and be consoled by his healing hand, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That those among us who may be discerning a call to priesthood or religious life may be led and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may rest in peace with all the angels and saints in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear the prayers we place before you this day. We ask this through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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