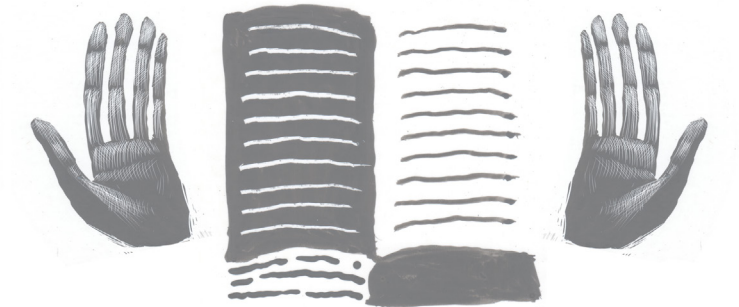


WELCOME TO OPENING THE WORD

OPENING THE WORD



PRAYER JOURNAL

LUCAS POLLICE

Editor

YEAR A

Nil obstat:

Censor Deputatus

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Presenters: Ben Akers, Jim Beckman, Tim Gray, Mary Healy, Julianna Miles, Scott Powell, Father John Riley, Edward Sri

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Contributing Writers: Ashley Crane, Sean Innerst.

Editor: Lucas Pollice

Media Production: Aurora Cerulli, Brenda Kraft, Ted Mast, Molly Sweeney, Travis Haynie

Print Production: Jeff Cole, Julia DeLapp, Ann Diaz, Stacy Innerst, Christina Gray, Brenda Kraft, Kathleen McCarty, Jane Myers.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

303-937-4420

AugustineInstitute.org

formed.org

AN INTRODUCTION TO *OPENING THE WORD*

Welcome to *Opening the Word*. Over the next several months, we are going to be explaining sacred Scripture, prayer, and insights about how the Lord is working in our midst today. We invite you to participate fully in this study, allowing the Father to guide you, the Son to extend his love to you, and the Holy Spirit to enlighten your heart and mind.

The Leader Guide, Prayer Journal, and videos are the three components we'll be using throughout this program. Each builds upon the other, providing you with everything you need to fully immerse yourself in this study. Whether you're participating as part of a small faith-sharing group or an RCIA program, or just for personal faith formation, everything you need is right here. To direct you further, we've also included information on the traditional prayerful reading of Scripture known as *lectio divina* and suggestions for facilitating a small group.

We've found that when our participants utilize these components with an open heart, they don't just grow in their understanding of sacred Scripture, but their relationship with Our Lord also grows. Going to Mass on Sunday is never the same again, as they are able to hear the Sunday readings in a much more personal way.

We're excited for you as you begin your journey into the Sunday readings.



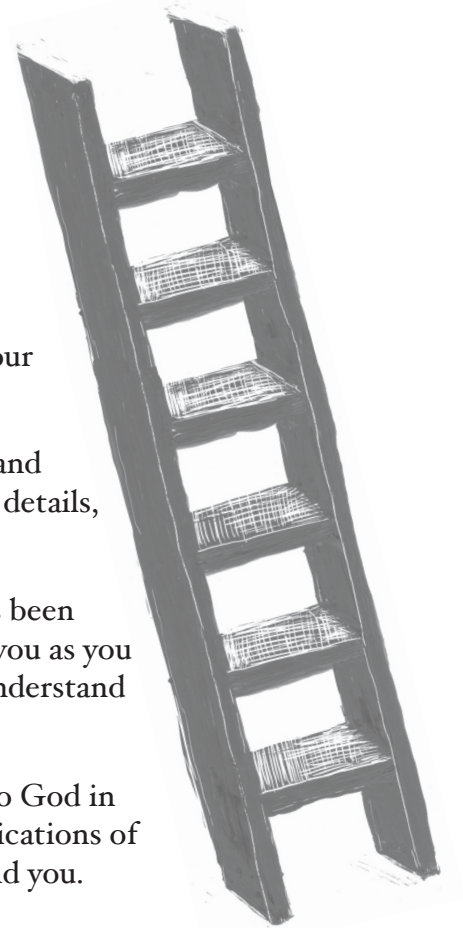
AN OVERVIEW OF LECTIO DIVINA

L*ectio divina* is an ancient practice to enhance one's prayer life through the power of God's Word. The term itself means "divine reading" of Sacred Scripture. It is our hope that by using these simple steps each day as they study the Scriptures in *Opening the Word*, participants will develop an effective way to soak up God's Word as they learn to fruitfully pray and listen to how God wants to be part of their lives.

Here is a brief description of each step of *lectio divina* for your reference as you guide participants through the practice:

- **Sacred Reading of the Scriptures (*lectio*):** The reading and rereading of the Scripture, paying close attention to words, details, themes, and patterns that speak to the reader.
- **Meditation (*meditatio*):** Meditating or reflecting on what's been read to gain understanding. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you as you spend time pondering what you have read and striving to understand it in meditation.
- **Prayer (*oratio*):** A time to bring our meditative thoughts to God in prayer. Talk with God about how the connections and implications of your meditation affect your life and the lives of those around you.
- **Contemplation (*contemplatio*):** A time of quiet and rest, when we become receptive listeners to God's voice. Contemplation is a gift from God, not something we achieve on our own—so be patient as you practice this step and strive to be receptive to God's voice speaking into your life.
- **Resolution (*operatio*):** A call for resolution and action, inviting us to respond to the things we have read and prayed about in Scripture and to put them into practice.

(To learn more about *lectio divina*, check out Dr. Tim Gray's book *Praying Scripture for a Change*, available at www.AscensionPress.com.)



SUNDAY	TITLE	PRESENTER	MINUTES
1st Sunday of Advent - 12/01/19	A New Year	Edward Sri	6:49
2nd Sunday of Advent - 12/08/19	True Repentance	Johnette Benkovic	6:11
3rd Sunday of Advent - 12/15/19	An Unexpected Messiah	Mary Healy	6:18
4th Sunday of Advent - 12/22/19	Fulfillment of Prophecy	Tim Gray	6:28
Nativity of the Lord - 12/25/19	God Had This Planned	Jim Beckman	4:48
The Holy Family - 12/29/19	The Importance of Family	Jules Miles	5:37
Mary, Mother of God - 01/01/20	The Rosary, A True Treasure	Father Riley	8:57
The Epiphany of the Lord - 01/05/19	Coming Before the King	Jim Beckman	4:48
Baptism of the Lord - 01/12/20	Anointed By the Spirit	Mary Healy	4:47
2nd Sunday in OT - 01/19/20	Lamb of God	Edward Sri	6:40
3rd Sunday in OT - 01/26/20	Come, Follow Me	Patrick Coffin	6:02
Presentation of the Lord - 02/02/20	Light of Revelation	Edward Sri	5:13
5th Sunday in OT - 02/09/20	Salt and Light	Teresa Tomeo	4:47
6th Sunday in OT - 02/16/20	The New Law	Scott Powell	6:12
7th Sunday in OT - 02/23/20	Love Your Enemies	Tim Gray	5:27
1st Sunday of Lent - 03/01/20	Into the Desert	Jules Miles	6:07
2nd Sunday of Lent - 03/08/20	Living with Contrasts	Martha Fernandez	6:31
3rd Sunday of Lent - 03/15/20	A Messiah for All People	Mary Healy	5:45
4th Sunday of Lent - 03/22/20	Healing Our Blindness	Michel Therrien	5:34
5th Sunday of Lent - 03/29/20	The Raising of Lazarus	Johnette Benkovic	5:32
Palm Sunday - 04/05/20	Not My Will	Edward Sri	6:33
Easter Sunday - 04/12/20	He Is Risen	Father Riley	6:45
2nd Sunday of Easter - 04/19/20	Peace and Mercy	Jules Miles	5:38
3rd Sunday of Easter - 04/26/20	Our Emmaus Road	Mary Healy	6:21
4th Sunday of Easter - 05/03/20	The Good Shepherd	Teresa Tomeo	4:53
5th Sunday of Easter - 05/10/20	The Way, the Truth, the Life	Ben Akers	4:52
6th Sunday of Easter - 05/17/20	The Spirit of Truth	Scott Powell	6:18

SUNDAY	TITLE	PRESENTER	MINUTES
Ascension - 05/24/20	Through the Eyes of Faith	Father Riley	6:17
7th Sunday of Easter - 05/24/20	The Work of the Father	Jim Beckman	4:55
Pentecost Sunday - 05/31/20	The Holy Spirit	Father Riley	7:08
Trinity Sunday - 06/07/20	Three Persons--One God	Tim Gray	6:59
Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) - 06/14/20	Take and Eat	Father Riley	6:07
12th Sunday in OT - 06/21/20	Do Not Be Afraid	Patrick Coffin	4:48
13th Sunday in OT - 06/28/20	Finding Our Lives	Edward Sri	5:46
14th Sunday in OT - 07/05/20	Light Burdens	Michel Therrien	5:37
15th Sunday in OT - 07/12/20	The Soil of Our Lives	Teresa Tomeo	4:37
16th Sunday in OT - 07/19/20	Faith and Patience	Jim Beckman	6:51
17th Sunday in OT - 07/26/20	Choosing the Higher Goods	Tim Gray	7:02
Transfiguration - 08/06/20	It Is Good That We are Here	Jim Beckman	6:51
19th Sunday in OT - 08/09/20	Storms of Life	Patrick Coffin	6:05
20th Sunday of OT - 08/16/20	Great Faith and Prayers	Mary Healy	5:54
21st Sunday in OT - 08/23/20	Keys of the Kingdom	Tim Gray	7:26
22nd Sunday in OT - 08/30/20	The Word Burning Within	Martha Fernandez	6:58
23rd Sunday in OT - 09/06/20	Our of Bondage	Johnette Benkovic	6:42
24th Sunday in OT - 09/13/20	Forgiven Debt	Mark Giszczak	4:16
25th Sunday in OT - 09/20/20	Envy and God's Generosity	Katie Warner	4:45
26th Sunday in OT - 09/27/20	Actions Speak Louder than Words	Jim Beckman	6:39
27th Sunday in OT - 10/04/20	The Vineyard of the Lord	Ben Akers	4:46
28th Sunday in OT - 10/11/20	The Wedding Feast of the King	Scott Powell	7:10
29th Sunday in OT - 10/18/20	Render Unto Caesar	Martha Fernandez	6:17
30th Sunday in OT - 10/25/20	Loving the Lord with Our Mind	Tim Gray	7:52
The Feast of All Saints - 11/1/20			
32nd Sunday in OT - 11/08/20	Wise and Foolish Virgins	Jim Beckman	4:49
33rd Sunday in OT - 11/15/20	Using our Talents	Ben Akers	4:00

1ST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

✧ YEAR A ✧



A NEW YEAR

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FIRST READING

~ **Isaiah 2:1-5** ~

This is what **Isaiah**, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. / In days to come, / the mountain of the LORD's house / shall be established as the highest mountain / and raised above the hills. / All nations shall stream toward it; / many peoples shall come and say: / "Come, let us climb the LORD's mountain, / to the house of the God of Jacob, / that he may instruct us in his ways, / and we may walk in his paths." / For from Zion shall go forth instruction, / and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. / He shall judge between the nations, / and impose terms on many peoples. / They shall beat their swords into plowshares / and their spears into pruning hooks; / one nation shall not raise the sword against another, / nor shall they train for war again. / O house of Jacob, come, / let us walk in the light of the LORD!

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~ **Psalm: 122:1-9** ~

R/ Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,
"We will go up to the house of the LORD."
And now we have set foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

R/
Jerusalem, built as a city
with compact unity.
To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD.

R/



According to the decree for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
In it are set up judgment seats,
seats for the house of David.

R/

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
May those who love you prosper!
May peace be within your walls,
prosperity in your buildings.

R/

Because of my brothers and friends
I will say, "Peace be within you!"
Because of the house of the LORD, our God,
I will pray for your good.

R/

SECOND READING

~ **Romans 13:11-14** ~

Brothers and sisters: You know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and lust, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

GOSPEL

~ Matthew 24:37-44 ~

Jesus said to his disciples: “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him:
a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
A spirit of counsel and of strength,
a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord,
and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD.
Not by appearance shall he judge,
nor by hearsay shall he decide,
But he shall judge the poor with justice,
and decide fairly for the land’s afflicted.
He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

—Isaiah 11:1-4



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What is the major thrust of the readings for the first week of Advent, according to Dr. Sri?

What are we being called to do at this time of year?

A common non-Catholic teaching about the end of times is the Rapture. What does the whole idea of being “left behind” mean to you?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Take a deep breath and close your eyes. Allow yourself to become still. Now imagine that you have just learned that you are going to die very soon. What is your first thought? What is your first feeling? Hold that thought and the feeling as you take another deep breath. Now see Jesus talking directly to you. Hear him say, “There is still time. Wake up! Stop sleeping your life away!” What areas of your life come to mind as you hear Jesus? Now see him gently touching you on the shoulder and saying, “You have time. So stay alert. Go and....” What is he asking you to do? Listen carefully for his guidance.

RESOLUTION:

During this first week of Advent, choose one activity that will take you out of the “slumber” of commercialism and busyness, and “awaken” a new zeal for the faith. You might attend daily Mass one morning, pray the rosary over the noon hour, or read Scripture instead of watch TV. Make a choice based on what you heard Jesus tell you to do during our prayer time.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain
to the house of the God of Jacob
that he may instruct us in his ways
and we may walk in his paths.
Amen.

“We are God's creative works in process. God alone knows what we shall become. What might He have in store in the fullness of our time? In the beginning, God created Light. In Mary, God became flesh. What will God become in us this Advent?”

—Thomas Hoffman

Monday

During this week's meeting, we spent time in prayer, asking Jesus what he would have us do right now. Review your notes from that time and choose one action that you will perform this week in response to Jesus' message.

"By his own will Christ was dependent on Mary during Advent: he was absolutely helpless; he could go nowhere but where she chose to take him; he could not speak; her breathing was his breath; his heart beat in the beating of her heart....In the seasons of our Advent — waking, working, eating, sleeping, being — each breath is a breathing of Christ into the world."
—Caryll Houselander

Tuesday

Based on what you learned this week about the Rapture, what would you tell someone who believed in that idea? Read what the Catholic Church teaches about the end times in the CCC 668ff.

"Since the Ascension Christ's coming in glory has been imminent, (Cf. Rev 22:20) even though "it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority." (Acts 1:7; cf. Mk 13:32). This eschatological coming could be accomplished at any moment, even if both it and the final trial that will precede it are 'delayed.'" (Cf. Mt 24:44; 1 Thes 5:2; 2 Thes 2:3-12) —CCC 673

Wednesday

Read this week's Responsorial Psalm and "pray for the good" of all those who are in most need of your prayers.

"Do not be troubled if you do not immediately receive from God what you ask Him; for He desires to do something even greater for you, while you cling to Him in prayer."
—Evagrius Ponticus

Thursday

What is one thing you can do today to help prepare the "manger of your heart" for the coming of the Lord? Now do it!

"We do not exist for ourselves."
—Thomas Merton

Friday

The first reading from Isaiah contains some of the most beautiful and hopeful words ever written about peace. Read them, light a candle, and spend at least 10 minutes praying that real peace might come into the world in your lifetime.

“Desire to see God, be fearful of losing Him, and find joy in everything that can lead to Him. If you act in this way, you will always live in great peace.”
—St. Teresa of Avila

Saturday

Have you made your “New Year’s resolutions” for this, the beginning of the new Church year? If not, make them now. If you have, review and recommit to their accomplishment.

“Fidelity is always a change, a blossoming, a growth. The Lord brings about a change in those who are faithful to Him.”
—Pope Francis

2ND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

✧ YEAR A ✧



TRUE REPENTANCE

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FIRST READING

~ **Isaiah 11:1-10** ~

On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD, and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD, as water covers the sea. On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~ **Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17** ~

**R/ Justice shall flourish in his time, and
fullness of peace forever.**

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;
he shall govern your people with justice and
your afflicted ones with judgment.

R/



Justice shall flower in his days,
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.
May he rule from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

R/

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,
and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.
He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor; the
lives of the poor he shall save.

R/

May his name be blessed forever;
as long as the sun his name shall remain.
In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed;
all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.

R/

SECOND READING

~ Romans 15:4-9 ~

Brothers and sisters:

Whatever was written previously was written for our instruction, that by endurance and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I say that Christ became a minister of the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, but so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written:

*Therefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles
and sing praises to your name.*

GOSPEL

~ Matthew 3:1-12 ~

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: */ A voice of one crying out in the desert, / Prepare the way of the LORD, / make straight his paths. /* John wore clothing made of camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Come Jesus;
come, give strength to the light and to the good;
come where dishonesty, ignorance of God,
violence and injustice dominate;
come, Lord Jesus,
give strength to the good in the world
and help us to be bearers of your light,
workers of peace,
witnesses of truth.
Come Lord Jesus!

— Pope Benedict XVI, December 3, 2008



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

Have you ever experienced an answer to prayer that led you to reevaluate your life and make positive changes?

Why is repentance an essential part of faith? What does it mean to "return to the Truth"?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are standing on the banks of the Jordan River listening to John the Baptist. You hear him say, “Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” What do you think as you hear those words? What areas of your life come to mind where you might not be bearing good fruit?

RESOLUTION:

What is one thing—one “good fruit”—that you could do this week that would show your sincere desire to repent? Make a commitment to act on this thought by writing down a specific action you can do and a time you can do it.

“God is faithful even when man, instead of responding with love to God’s love, opposes him and treats him like a rival, deluding himself and relying on his own power, with the resulting break of relationship with the one who created him. In spite of this transgression on man’s part, God remains faithful in love.”

—Pope St. John Paul II

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Lord, we come to you, aware of our sinfulness, but equally aware that you long to grant us forgiveness. We thank you that despite our failings, you always welcome us back to friendship with you. We ask now that you give us the strength and courage to live in expectant hope of your coming, both now and at the end of time. Amen.

Monday

In the first reading, we are told that the Spirit of the Lord brings wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength and knowledge. Ask the Spirit to give you these gifts this Advent, as you wait for the coming of the Lord.

"Pray with great confidence, with confidence based upon the goodness and infinite generosity of God and upon the promises of Jesus Christ. God is a spring of living water which flows unceasingly into the hearts of those who pray."
—St. Louis de Montfort

Tuesday

In our time, peace seems like an elusive goal, yet the psalmist says that one day, "Justice shall flower... and profound peace, till the moon be no more." What can you do this week to promote peace and justice?

"If you want peace, work for justice."
—Pope Paul VI

Wednesday

St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Romans, “Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God” (Romans 15:17). Who can you welcome into the faith? What is stopping you from doing so?

*“Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place.” —Father Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out**

Thursday

Repentance is the theme of this week’s Gospel. It is never easy to admit our faults, but until we acknowledge our failures, we are unable to receive God’s grace and mercy. Examine your conscience today, and choose one area where you can commit to making real change.

“But the man who is not afraid to admit everything that he sees to be wrong with himself, and yet recognizes that he may be the object of God's love precisely because of his shortcomings, can begin to be sincere. His sincerity is based on confidence, not in his own illusions about himself, but in the endless, unfailing mercy of God.” —Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island*

Friday

Reread this week's Gospel (Matthew 3:1-12). What does it mean to be baptized "with the Holy Spirit and fire"? How does knowing that the Holy Spirit lives within you give you courage?

"Few souls understand what God would accomplish in them if they were to abandon themselves unreservedly to Him and if they were to allow His grace to mold them accordingly." —St. Ignatius Loyola

Saturday

As you reflect on how you spent this second week of Advent, in what ways did you bear good fruit? How can you improve in the remaining weeks before Christmas?

"To keep a lamp burning we have to keep putting oil in it."
—Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

3RD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

✧ YEAR A ✧



AN UNEXPECTED MESSIAH

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FIRST READING

~ Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10 ~

The desert and the parched land will exult;/ the steppe will rejoice and bloom./ They will bloom with abundant flowers,/ and rejoice with joyful song./ The glory of Lebanon will be given to them,/ the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;/ they will see the glory of the LORD,/ the splendor of our God./ Strengthen the hands that are feeble,/ make firm the knees that are weak,/ say to those whose hearts are frightened:/ Be strong, fear not!/ Here is your God,/ he comes with vindication;/ with divine recompense/ he comes to save you./ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened,/ the ears of the deaf be cleared;/ then will the lame leap like a stag,/ then the tongue of the mute will sing.

Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return/ and enter Zion singing,/ crowned with everlasting joy;/ they will meet with joy and gladness,/ sorrow and mourning will flee.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~ Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10 ~

R/ Lord, come and save us.

or: Alleluia.

The LORD God keeps faith forever,
secures justice for the oppressed,
gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets captives free.

R/

The LORD gives sight to the blind;
the LORD raises up those who were bowed down.
The LORD loves the just;
the LORD protects strangers.

R/

The fatherless and the widow he sustains,
 but the way of the wicked he thwarts.
 The LORD shall reign forever;
 your God, O Zion, through all generations.

R/

SECOND READING

~ James 5:7-10 ~

Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not complain, brothers and sisters, about one another, that you may not be judged. Behold, the Judge is standing before the gates. Take as an example of hardship and patience, brothers and sisters, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

GOSPEL

~ Matthew 11:2-11 ~

When John the Baptist heard in prison of the works of the Christ, he sent his disciples to Jesus with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me."

As they were going off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? Then what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in fine clothing? Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces. Then why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written:

Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you. Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Holy Mary, loving mother and heavenly guide,
be present to me now
and let me know your compassion and kindness.
Pray for me to your Divine Son,
that I may experience calmness, tranquility,
and peace in all my emotions.

Help me to grow in faith and love.
Protect me from all that displeases God,
and obtain for me serenity of mind, body, and spirit.
I place my trust and confidence in you,
dear Blessed Mother, and I pray that
God’s blessings of mercy, grace, and gentle goodness
will bring happiness to my life, now and always.
Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

How did Jesus answer John’s disciples when they asked him if he was the Messiah?

In what way does Jesus’s answer give John encouragement, despite the fact he is in prison and facing death?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture yourself as one of John’s disciples. John has sent you out to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” What kind of answer are you expecting? How do you feel when Jesus says to you, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.” How do you feel about going back with that answer? How do you think John is going to respond? Now ask God to show you how Jesus’s answer can make a difference in the way you think about Jesus.

RESOLUTION:

Ask the Lord to show you areas in which you might be blind, unclean, deaf, or dead. As you gain insights, write them in your journal and pray that these areas be healed.

“But the eyes are blind. One must look with the heart. (Mais les yeux sont aveugles. Il faut chercher avec le cœur.)”

—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

CLOSING PRAYER:

Incline Thine ear to our prayers, O Lord,
we beseech Thee; and make bright the darkness
of our minds by the grace of Thy visitation.
Who livest and reignest, with God the Father,
in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God,
world without end.
Amen.

Monday

In the first reading we are told: “Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you.” What are you most afraid of? Ask God to help remove your fear and replace it with his peace.

“Ignore those that make you fearful and sad, that degrade you back towards disease and death.”

—Rumi

Tuesday

“Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord,” writes James in the second reading. This time of year we are often in situations that try our patience. Today, wait patiently in a line, let someone go ahead of you, or give up a choice parking spot.

“Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them — every day begin the task anew.”

—St. Francis de Sales

Wednesday

In this week's responsorial psalm, we are told that the Lord sets the captives free. Write down one or two areas in your life where you may be captive to a bad habit, negative thinking, or a harmful activity. Choose one, and make a focused effort to change this week.

***“Let all men know that grace comes after tribulation.
Let them know that without the burden of afflictions
it is impossible to reach the height of grace.
Let them know that the gifts of grace increase as
the struggles increase.”***

—St. Rose of Lima

Thursday

The people of Jesus' time were expecting a Messiah who would overthrow the Romans and establish the kingdom of God on earth. They weren't prepared for a suffering servant. When Jesus comes again, what kind of Messiah do you think he will be?
What kind of a Messiah do you want?

“I have often thought of, and meditated on, the holy eagerness of the patriarchs who so sighed for the coming of the Messiah; and I felt confused, and was, moreover, so penetrated with grief, that I could scarcely re-frain from weeping, so much was I ashamed to see the tepidity and indifference of these unhappy days...For who amongst us is filled with so much joy in the fulfillment of this mystery, as did the saints of the Old Testament, at the promises which so called forth their longing desires?”

—St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Friday

As we draw closer to Christmas, take time to write down all the gifts that God has given you, beginning with life itself. Say “thank you” for each item on your list.

“In all created things discern the providence and wisdom of God, and in all things give Him thanks.”

—St. Teresa of Avila

Saturday

Reread the second reading from James. Its timeless message is that we live patiently, looking forward to Christ’s coming; then all else will fall into its proper place. If we seek first the kingdom, all else will follow after. As you go about your daily chores, do each one mindfully and purposefully, offering it up to the Lord.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.”

—Matthew 6:33 (RSV)

4TH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

✧ YEAR A ✧



FULFILLMENT OF
PROPHECY PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FIRST READING

~ **Isaiah 7:10-14** ~

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying: Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky! But Ahaz answered, “I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!” Then Isaiah said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary people, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~ **Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6** ~

R/ Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;
the world and those who dwell in it.
For he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

R/

Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?
or who may stand in his holy place?
One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,
who desires not what is vain.

R/

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
a reward from God his savior.
Such is the race that seeks for him,
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

R/



SECOND READING

~ Romans 1:1-7 ~

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, the gospel about his Son, descended from David according to the flesh, but established as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness through resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we have received the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith, for the sake of his name, among all the Gentiles, among whom are you also, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; to all the beloved of God in Rome, called to be holy. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL

~ Matthew 1:18-24 ~

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,*
which means “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

The Memorare:

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee,
O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come,
before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions,
but in thy mercy hear and answer me.
Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What did Mary do that we should be emulating?

Explain how the prophecy from Isaiah about the mother of the Messiah can be seen in relation to Mary.

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are with Joseph when he awakens from his dream. He tells you that even though Mary is pregnant, he is going to marry her anyway because the child she is carrying is the long-awaited Messiah, who will save his people from their sins. What do you think when you hear this? Are you shocked at his decision, or inspired by his trust in the Lord? Do you think you would have the courage to do what Joseph did? Prayerfully reflect on how you tend to respond when God invites you to do something difficult or confusing.

RESOLUTION:

Is there an area of your life right now that is bewildering or difficult for you to understand—an area in which you may be wondering, “Why is this happening? What am I to do? Where is God in all of this?” Take this situation to God in prayer. Talk to God about it. Ask him to show you what he is trying to teach you through this difficult situation, and then ask him to help you imitate Joseph’s trust and obedience.

“From Mary we learn to surrender to God’s Will in all things. From Mary we learn to trust even when all hope seems gone. From Mary we learn to love Christ her Son and the Son of God!”
—Pope St. John Paul II

CLOSING PRAYER:

Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong,
so prompt before the throne of God,
I place in you all my interests and desires.
Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession,
and obtain for me from your divine Son
all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power,
I may offer my thanksgiving and homage
to the most loving of fathers.
Amen.

Monday

In the first reading, the Lord told Ahaz to ask for a sign. Have you ever asked God for a sign? What happened?

“The world needs ... the sign of the wholly Other, the living Word of God, entering into this our age in unadulterated trustworthiness and dynamism.” —Pope Benedict XVI

Tuesday

The prophet Isaiah said that the Son of God would be called Emmanuel. Today sing (or recite) the words of the Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” as your prayer. (Lyrics can be found at www.carols.org.uk.)

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.
(From the hymn, "O Come,
O Come Emmanuel")***

Wednesday

Look at the three readings for this week. Underline the references to the name of Jesus in each one. Journal about what the Holy Name of Jesus means to you.

“Each time we say, ‘Jesus,’ we give God infinite joy and glory, for we offer Him all the infinite merits of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.”
—Fr. Paul O’Sullivan, O.P. (E.D.M.)

Thursday

As we come closer to Christmas, reflect on the words of the responsorial psalm. What “blessing from the Lord” are you asking for? Write out your request in the form of a prayer.

“Whether, therefore, we receive what we ask for, or do not receive it, let us still continue steadfast in prayer. For to fail in obtaining the desires of our heart, when God so wills it, is not worse than to receive it; for we know not as He does, what is profitable to us.”

—St. John Chrysostom

Friday

What stands out for you in the way Joseph treated Mary after he found out she was pregnant? How can you follow his example when faced with a difficult situation?

“Though thou hast recourse to many saints as thine intercessors, go especially to St. Joseph, for he has great power with God.”

—St. Teresa of Avila

Saturday

What does Christmas mean to you?

“We consider Christmas as the encounter, the great encounter, the historical encounter, the decisive encounter, between God and mankind. He who has faith knows this truly; let him rejoice.”

—Pope Paul VI

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

✧ YEAR A ✧



GOD HAD THIS
PLANNED

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) MASS DURING THE DAY

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains/ are the feet of him who
brings glad tidings,/ announcing peace, bearing good news,/
announcing salvation, and saying to Zion,/ “Your God is King!”

Hark! Your sentinels raise a cry,/ together they shout for joy,/ for they see
directly,/ before their eyes,/ the LORD restoring Zion./ Break out together in
song,/ O ruins of Jerusalem!/ For the LORD comforts his people,/ he redeems
Jerusalem./ The LORD has bared his holy arm/ in the sight of all the
nations;/ all the ends of the earth will behold/ the salvation of our God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6~

R/ All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done wondrous deeds;
his right hand has won victory for him,
his holy arm.

R/

The LORD has made his salvation known:
in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.
He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness
toward the house of Israel.

R/

All the ends of the earth have seen
 the salvation by our God.
 Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;
 break into song; sing praise.

R/

Sing praise to the LORD with the harp,
 with the harp and melodious song.
 With trumpets and the sound of the horn
 sing joyfully before the King, the LORD.

R/

SECOND READING

~Hebrews 1:1-6~

Brothers and sisters:
 In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our
 ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke
 to us through the Son, whom he made heir of all things and through
 whom he created the universe,
 who is the refulgence of his glory,
 the very imprint of his being,
 and who sustains all things by his mighty word.
 When he had accomplished purification from sins,
 he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
 as far superior to the angels
 as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say:

You are my son; this day I have begotten you?

Or again:

I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me?

And again, when he leads the first-born into the world, he says:

Let all the angels of God worship him.

GOSPEL

~Jn 1:1-5, 9-14~

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came to be through him,
and without him nothing came to be.
What came to be through him was life,
and this life was the light of the human race;
the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.
The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into
the world.
He was in the world,
and the world came to be through him,
but the world did not know him.
He came to what was his own,
but his own people did not accept him.

But to those who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to those who believe in his name,
who were born not by natural generation
nor by human choice nor by a man's decision
but of God.

And the Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory as of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Praise to you, Lord God!

You have become one of us.
You have become a human being,
while still retaining all your power and holiness as God!

You, O Lord, made the journey of the unborn child.
By being an embryo, a fetus, and a newborn,
you joined all unborn and newborn children to you!

From the beginning of history, O Lord,
you were the Creator of every human life.
Now, with Christmas,
you join yourself in an unthinkable way with the life you created.

Let this Christmas, O God,
fill all of us with awe and wonder
at how close human life is to you.
Cleanse the world of all that tarnishes
and rejects this gift.
Purify our hearts of all that fears this gift.

Let our Christmas joy be the joy of welcoming every human life!

Amen!

A Christmas Prayer taken from www.catholic.org



LECTIO DIVINA – SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

SMALL GROUP QUESTION #1

Today’s Gospel reading reveals that the Incarnation was part of God’s glorious plan from the very beginning. What significance does this plan have for you personally? How is the Incarnation a source of hope for you?

SMALL GROUP QUESTION #2

At Christmas we often focus on the humanity of Jesus— how humble and helpless he is as a newborn baby and how approachable he is as one of us. He is Emmanuel, “God with us,” not “God far away in heaven.” But today’s Gospel reading also focuses on God’s sovereignty. How does this reading remind us of God’s power and glory?

LECTIO DIVINA – PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture the newborn Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the manger. Now consider the proclamation that today's Gospel makes about this infant: he has always been and always will be, through him everything was created, he is the light of the world, he saves us and makes us children of God, he reveals the full glory of the Father, he is God. What are you not entrusting to him completely? Where do you need to surrender more fully to his plan? Offer these things to him.

RESOLUTION:

We live in a busy world filled with noise and chaos. Ask God how he wants to help you find the quiet and peace to be present with him, the Word made flesh, dwelling among us. What is one concrete thing you can do each day this week to spend time with the babe in the manger?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Word made flesh,
we praise you, we adore you, we glorify you.
You are Emmanuel, God with us.
Please help us to be ever more aware of your presence among us.
Give us the grace to surrender to your glorious plan.
Guard our hearts and minds in your peace.
Fill us with the joy of this holy season
and make us emissaries of your joy and peace,
that we may help our family and friends
to encounter you more closely this Christmas.
We turn to you with all our anxieties and needs,
trusting in your loving care.
We ask this in your most holy name, Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

***“Today the darkness begins to grow shorter and the light to lengthen, as the
hours of night become fewer....***

***‘Realize that the true light is now here and, through the rays
of the Gospel, is illumining the whole earth.’”***

—St. Gregory of Nyssa

Monday

The first line of Sunday's Gospel reading echoes the beginning of Genesis: "In the beginning..." With this, John sets up the proclamation of the Gospel as the story of a new creation. What do you need God to make new in your life right now?

"Behold, I make all things new."
—Revelation 21:5

Tuesday

The Responsorial Psalm from Sunday is a call for all the earth to praise God for his wondrous, saving deeds. What is one particular way you have witnessed God's saving power this week? Take time today to praise him for it!

"Then my tongue shall recount your justice, declare your praise, all the day long."
—Psalm 35:28

Wednesday

Last Sunday's First Reading from the prophet Isaiah praises those who spread the "glad tidings" of God's salvation. Reread Isaiah 52:7–10. What good news is God asking you to announce to others?

***"As the kernel and center of His Good News,
Christ proclaims salvation, this great gift of God which is liberation
from everything that oppresses man but which is above all
liberation from sin and the Evil One,
in the joy of knowing God and being known by Him,
of seeing Him, and of being given over to Him."***

—Evangelii Nuntiandi 9

Thursday

Sunday's Second Reading from the letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus is the "refulgence" of God's glory—he is the radiance or brilliance of the glory of God. How does Jesus reveal God's glory to you? Spend some time in prayer contemplating the glory of God.

***"So without leaving his Father's glory behind,
the Son of God comes down from his heavenly throne and enters the depths of our world,
born in an unprecedented order by an unprecedented kind of birth....
The Lord of the universe veiled his measureless majesty and took on a servant's form."***

—St. Leo the Great

Friday

In last Sunday's Gospel, we heard that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." Ask God today where he wants to use you to shine his light in the darkness. Pray for the strength to accomplish this.

***"Shine forth with the light of your faith....
and light up all the ways of the earth with the fire
of Christ that you carry in your heart."***

—St. Josemaría Escrivá

Saturday

In last Sunday's Second Reading, we are reminded of the great privilege and grace of being on this side of the Incarnation. We have not received God's word in "partial and various ways," but we have received the fullness of revelation in the Word of God Incarnate. Reread Hebrews 1:1–6 slowly and prayerfully, taking time to thank God for the way he has revealed himself to us.

***"Because of his boundless love,
Jesus became what we are
that he might make us to be what he is."***

—St. Irenaeus

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE IMPORTANCE OF
FAMILY

PRAYER JOURNAL

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

FIRST READING

~Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14~

God sets a father in honor over his children;/ a mother's authority he confirms over her sons./ Whoever honors his father atones for sins,/ and preserves himself from them./ When he prays, he is heard;/ he stores up riches who reveres his mother./ Whoever honors his father is gladdened by children,/ and, when he prays, is heard./ Whoever reveres his father will live a long life;/ he who obeys his father brings comfort to his mother.

My son, take care of your father when he is old;/ grieve him not as long as he lives./ Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him;/ revile him not all the days of his life;/ kindness to a father will not be forgotten,/ firmly planted against the debt of your sins/ --a house raised in justice to you.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5~

**R/ Blessed are those who fear the Lord
and walk in his ways.**

Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,
who walks in his ways!
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
blessed you be, and favored.

R/

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
in the recesses of your home;
your children like olive plants
around your table.

R/

Behold, thus is the man blessed
who fears the LORD.
The LORD bless you from Zion:
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.

R/

SECOND READING

~Colossians 3:12-21~

[Short Form: Colossians 3:12-17]

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of God dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

[End of Short Form]

Wives, be subordinate to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and avoid any bitterness toward them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23~

When the magi had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.” Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, *Out of Egypt I called my son.*

When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, *He shall be called a Nazorean.*

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

A traditional prayer to the Holy Family

O most loving Jesus, who by your surpassing virtues and the example of your home life did hallow the household in which you did choose to live while on earth, mercifully look down upon our family, whose members implore your protection. Remember that we are yours, bound and consecrated to you by a special devotion. Protect us in your mercy, deliver us from danger, help us in our necessities, and impart to us strength to persevere always in the imitation of your Holy Family, so that, by serving you and loving you faithfully during this mortal life, we may at length give you eternal praise in heaven. Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

How does presenter Jules Miles say that each member of the Holy Family displays the virtue of obedience?

In this week's Gospel, Joseph plays an essential role. What does Joseph do that is so important?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine what it must have been like to be in Joseph's position. You know you have to get your family out of danger; you have to do it immediately, in the middle of the night. What would be going through your mind? Maybe you would worry about having enough money, or what you were going to do with your house while you were gone. Or you might be afraid that something would happen to you on the trip. Or maybe you weren't sure how you would tell Mary that you had to leave "right now!" Think about all that might have been going through Joseph's mind as he prepared to leave for Egypt. How does this impact your impression of Joseph as a husband and a father?

RESOLUTION:

What are three qualities you can see in Joseph that you would like to imitate in your own life? Write them down and look for opportunities to exhibit them this week.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God. I place in you all my interests and desires. Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine Son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of Fathers.
Amen.

"As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live." —Blessed John Paul II

Monday

In the first reading, we are told several things that happen to a person who honors his father and his mother. List them here.

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” —Exodus 20:12

Tuesday

Paul says in the second reading, “do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged.” If you are a parent, consider how you might have “provoked” your children and reflect on ways you might change your behavior. If you don’t have children, take a few minutes to forgive your parents if they provoked you as you were growing up.

“See the Face of God in everyone.”
—St. Catherine L’Aboure

Wednesday

Get out a map of the Middle East and see how far the Holy Family would have had to travel on foot or by donkey from Israel to Egypt and back again. Then spend a few minutes praying for the Christians of the Middle East, especially the Coptic Christians of Egypt.

*“We believe that the venerable and ancient tradition of the Eastern Churches is an integral part of the heritage of Christ's Church, the first need for Catholics is to be familiar with that tradition, so as to be nourished by it and to encourage the process of unity in the best way possible for each.” —Blessed John Paul II, *Oriente Lumen**

Thursday

We read in the Responsorial Psalm: “The Lord bless you from Zion: may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.” What is it that you would ask the Lord to bless you with? Write down the deepest prayer/desire of your heart and commit its fulfillment to the Lord.

***“Unfurl the sails,
and let God steer
us where He will.”
—St. Bede***

Friday

In this week's video, the presenter talked about some of the ways we can spend time together as a family. Make a list of activities your family enjoys. (Don't forget to put some faith-building activities like reading Bible stories or saying the rosary together on it.) Choose one to do this evening.

“O Jesus, come back into our society, our family life, our souls and reign there as our peaceful Sovereign.” —Blessed Pope John XXIII

Saturday

Reread this week's Gospel. Select one phrase that strikes you. What does this tell you about the character of Joseph? How can his example inspire you in your dealings with your own family?

***“St. Joseph was an ordinary sort of man on whom God relied to do great things. He did exactly what the Lord wanted him to do, in each and every event that went to make up his life.”
—St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer***

THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY
SOLEMNITY OF MARY,
THE HOLY MOTHER
OF GOD

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE ROSARY,
A TRUE TREASURE

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

FIRST READING

~Numbers 6:22-27

The LORD said to Moses:
“Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them:
This is how you shall bless the Israelites. Say to them:
The LORD bless you and keep you!
The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!
The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!
So shall they invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8~

R/ May God bless us in his mercy.

May God have pity on us and bless us;
may he let his face shine upon us.
So may your way be known upon earth;
among all nations, your salvation.

R/

May the nations be glad and exult
because you rule the peoples in equity;
the nations on the earth you guide.

R/

May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you!
May God bless us,
and may all the ends of the earth fear him!

R/

SECOND READING

~Galatians 4:4-7~

Brothers and sisters:
When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son,
born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those
under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.
As proof that you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our
hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a
son, and if a son then also an heir, through God.

GOSPEL

~LUKE 2:16-21~

The shepherds went in haste to **Bethlehem** and found
Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When
they saw this, they made known the message that had
been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed
by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all
these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds
returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and
seen, just as it had been told to them.

When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named
Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in
the womb.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

O Mary, Mother of God

As you are above all creatures in Heaven and earth,
more glorious than the cherubim, more noble than any here below,
Christ has given you to his people, firm bulwark and protectress,
to shield and save sinners who fly unto you.

Therefore O Lady, all embracing refuge,
we solemnly recall your sweet protection,
and beg Christ forever for his mercy.

Amen.

A prayer taken from www.catholic.org



LECTIO DIVINA – SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DEVINA — MEDITATION

SMALL GROUP QUESTION #1

What does it mean that Mary “kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart”? How is the Rosary a “school of prayer” to follow her example in this?

SMALL GROUP QUESTION #2

According to Father John Riley, how long did it take the Church to formally proclaim the title “Mother of God” for Mary? When was this title added to the Hail Mary? How does the addition of this title enrich your praying of the Hail Mary?

LECTIO DIVINA – PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Prayerfully place yourself in today's Gospel reading. Imagine that you are one of the shepherds, hurrying to Bethlehem after receiving the angel's message. What do you experience when you find Mary, Joseph, and Jesus in Bethlehem? What do you see? What do you feel? What do you say? What about this experience do you keep and ponder in your heart?

RESOLUTION:

Think of a time when you have encountered God in a powerful way. It might have been an answer to prayer, consolation in a time of trouble, physical or mental healing, an overwhelming sense of peace amidst anxiety, or something else. Set aside time each day this week to remember and reflect on that encounter with God and to praise him for it.

CLOSING PRAYER:

We entrust all of our cares to Christ
through Mary as we pray:

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

***“We never give more honor to Jesus than when we honor his Mother,
and we honor her simply and solely to honor him all the more perfectly.
We go to her only as a way leading to the goal we seek—Jesus, her Son.”***

—St. Louis Marie de Montfort

Monday

Reread Numbers 6:22–27. How does God let his face shine upon you? This blessing was for the Aaronic priests to pray over the people of Israel. As God’s priestly people, we are still called to bless and be a blessing to others (see CCC 1669). What can you do to live out this blessing toward others?

***“Spread love
everywhere you go.
Let no one ever
come to you
without leaving
happier.”***

**—St. Teresa of Kolkata
(Calcutta)**

Tuesday

Sunday’s Responsorial Psalm is a prayer asking for God’s blessing and looking forward to the day when the whole earth will praise the Lord together. How does your praise of God witness to his blessing and encourage others to do the same?

***“The most deadly poison of our times is indifference.
And this happens,
although the praise of God should know no limits.
Let us strive, therefore,
to praise Him to the greatest extent
of our powers.”***

—St. Maximilian Kolbe

Wednesday

In last Sunday's Second Reading, St. Paul says that we are sons and heirs of God. Take time today in your prayer to meditate on what it means to be an heir of God as his son or daughter. Thank God for making you his child and his heir.

"Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

—1 John 3:2

Thursday

Read Sunday's Gospel reading again. What might have motivated the shepherds to tell others about their experience? What inspires you to share the Good News with others?

"The belief of the shepherds who heard the voices of angels, and of the people who heard the shepherds' testimony, set into motion a sharing of faith that has endured for more than two millennia and has spread to all corners of the world."

—Cardinal Seán O'Malley

Friday

St. Paul says that by the Spirit we cry out to God, “Abba, Father!” Abba is an intimate term of endearment we might translate as “Daddy.” What difference does it make to relate to God not just as Father but as “Daddy”? Does this change how you approach prayer? Why or why not?

“God loves us more than a father, mother, friend, or any else could love, and even more than we are able to love ourselves.”

—St. Francis de Sales

Saturday

There is an ancient tradition of dedicating Saturday as a special day in honor of the Holy Mother of God. Pray the Rosary today, meditating carefully on each of the mysteries as Father Riley discussed in the video.

“The greatest method of praying is to pray the Rosary.”

—St. Francis de Sales

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

✧ YEAR A ✧



COMING BEFORE THE KING
PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 60:1-6~

Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come,/ the glory of the Lord shines upon you./ See, darkness covers the earth,/ and thick clouds cover the peoples;/ but upon you the LORD shines,/ and over you appears his glory./ Nations shall walk by your light,/ and kings by your shining radiance./ Raise your eyes and look about;/ they all gather and come to you:/ your sons come from afar,/ and your daughters in the arms of their nurses.

Then you shall be radiant at what you see,/ your heart shall throb and overflow,/ for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you,/ the wealth of nations shall be brought to you./ Caravans of camels shall fill you,/ dromedaries from Midian and Ephah;/ all from Sheba shall come/ bearing gold and frankincense,/ and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13~

R/ Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;
he shall govern your people with justice
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

R/

Justice shall flourish in his days,
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.
May he rule from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

R/

The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts;
 the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute.
 All kings shall pay him homage,
 all nations shall serve him.

R/

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out, and
 the afflicted when he has no one to help him. He
 shall have pity for the lowly and the poor; the lives
 of the poor he shall save.

R/

SECOND READING

~Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6~

Brothers and sisters: You have heard of the stewardship of
 God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely,
 that the mystery was made known to me by revelation.
 It was not made known to people in other generations as it has
 now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:
 that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and
 copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 2:2-12~

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days
 of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in
 Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of
 the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him
 homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled,
 and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the
 scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to
 be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has
 been written through the prophet:

*And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler,
who is to shepherd my people Israel.”*

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.” After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God of heaven and earth,
you revealed your only-begotten Son to every nation
by the guidance of a star.

Bless this room
and all who are in it.

Fill us with the light of Christ,
that our concern for others may reflect your love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

—Adapted from USCCB



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

According to the presenter, why did King Herod want to kill Jesus?

How are the Epiphany and the Eucharist related, according to the presenter?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture yourself as one of the magi standing before Mary, who is holding the Infant Jesus on her lap. You kneel before Jesus and offer him your life, to do with as he will. What might Mary say to you? What does Jesus do? How do you feel? Now take a moment to offer words of praise and thanksgiving for the opportunity to serve the King of kings.

RESOLUTION:

Today we heard how the early Church Fathers saw the visit of the magi as a symbol of the Eucharist. This week pay a visit to your church or adoration chapel, and spend a few minutes adoring Jesus as the magi did.

CLOSING PRAYER:

I resolve with your Divine assistance,
Oh, my Saviour,
to follow your desires and your ordinances,
without regarding or examining why you do this rather than that;
but I will blindly follow you according to your Divine will, without
seeking my own inclinations.
Hence I am determined to leave all to you,
taking no part therein save by keeping myself in peace in your arms,
desiring nothing except as you incite me to desire, to will, to wish.
I offer you this desire, oh, my God,
beseeching you to bless it;
I undertake all it includes, relying on your goodness,
liberality, and mercy,
with entire confidence in you,
distrust of myself,
and knowledge of my infinite misery and infirmity.
Amen!

—St. Jane Frances de Chantal

“He was created of a mother whom He created. He was carried by hands that He formed. He cried in the manger in wordless infancy. He, the Word, without whom all human eloquence is mute.” —St. Augustine

Monday

Read the Gospel account of the visit of the magi. Write down all the details of the visit, such as where the magi found Jesus and Mary. (Hint: it wasn't in the stable.)

"I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year."
—Charles Dickens

Tuesday

This week's Responsorial Psalm says: "Justice shall flourish in his days, and profound peace, till the moon be no more." Today, pray for our world, which sorely lacks peace and justice.

"If you want peace, work for justice."
—Pope Paul VI

Wednesday

In this week's lesson, the presenter talked about how we should approach the Eucharist with the same awe and desire to worship as the magi did when coming before the Infant Jesus. If you haven't yet made a visit to the church or an adoration chapel, do so today.

"Celebrate the feast of Christmas every day, even every moment in the interior temple of your spirit, remaining like a baby in the bosom of the heavenly Father, where you will be reborn each moment in the Divine Word, Jesus Christ."

—St. Paul of the Cross

Thursday

In the Epistle, St. Paul tells us that we are “coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” What does it mean to you to be a “coheir” of the promises of Christ? What promises mean the most to you?

***“Mankind is a great, an immense family...
This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas.”***
—Pope St. John Paul XXIII

Friday

The Wise Men followed a star. Tonight (weather permitting) go outside and watch the night sky. Ask God to show you the direction you should be following in your life.

***"O Star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy Perfect Light."
—From "We Three Kings"
by John Henry Hopkins***

Saturday

As the Christmas season draws to a close, write down three things that you would like to do differently next year to make it a more holy and spiritually uplifting time. Put your thoughts in the box with your Advent and Christmas decorations.

***"We should not be anxious about baseless arguments against Christmas decorations. Rather, we should be focused on the Christ of Christmas and giving all diligence to remembering the real reason for the season."
—John MacArthur***

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

1ST SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



ANOINTED BY THE SPIRIT
PRAYER JOURNAL

SCRIPTURE STUDY ON THE SUNDAY READINGS

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7~

Thus says the LORD:

Here is my servant whom I uphold,/ my chosen one with whom I am pleased,/ upon whom I have put my spirit;/ he shall bring forth justice to the nations,/ not crying out, not shouting,/ not making his voice heard in the street./ A bruised reed he shall not break,/ and a smoldering wick he shall not quench,/ until he establishes justice on the earth;/ the coastlands will wait for his teaching.

I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice,/ I have grasped you by the hand;/ I formed you, and set you/ as a covenant of the people,/ a light for the nations,/ to open the eyes of the blind,/ to bring out prisoners from confinement,/ and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10~

R/ The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Give to the LORD, you sons of God,
give to the LORD glory and praise,
Give to the LORD the glory due his name;
adore the LORD in holy attire.

R/

The voice of the LORD is over the waters,
the LORD, over vast waters.
The voice of the LORD is mighty;
the voice of the LORD is majestic.

R/



The God of glory thunders,
and in his temple all say, “Glory!”
The LORD is enthroned above the flood;
the LORD is enthroned as king forever.

R/

SECOND READING

~Acts 10:34-38~

Peter proceeded to speak to those gathered in the house of Cornelius, saying: “In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

GOSPEL

~Matthew 3:13-17~

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

In the second reading from Paul, we are told that “after the baptism that John preached...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” Now apply those words to yourself: “After my baptism, God anointed me with the Holy Spirit and power. I go about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God is with me.” What do you feel as you hear those words applied to you? Do you truly believe that you have been anointed by the Holy Spirit? Do you trust that God is with you? Let the truth of this statement take root in your heart and say to yourself, “God is truly with me.”

RESOLUTION:

This week, trusting that you have been anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit through your Baptism and Confirmation, try your best to explain what the Church really teaches the next time you hear someone misunderstand or even misrepresent a Catholic doctrine.

“In Baptism every Christian personally meets (Jesus); he is inserted into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and receives a new life, which is the life of God. What a great gift and what a great responsibility!” —Blessed Pope John Paul II

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Come Holy Ghost, Creator Blest,
And in our hearts take up thy rest;
Come with thy grace and heav'nly aid
To fill the hearts which thou hast made,
To fill the hearts which thou hast made.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What does it mean to you that Jesus healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and raised the dead both as God and as man?

At our baptism and confirmation, we are anointed to carry out a unique mission that can never be fulfilled by anyone. Write down some ideas about how you are fulfilling your mission.

Monday

In our group time this week, you were asked to choose one word to describe Jesus' mission. What was your word? Spend some time journaling about how that word also can describe your own relationship with Jesus.

"Charity may be a very short word, but with its tremendous meaning of pure love, it sums up man's entire relation to God and to his neighbor." —St. Aelred of Rievaulx

Tuesday

In the second reading, Paul says that "I see that God shows no partiality." Think about that one person who upsets you the most. Commit to doing something positive for him or her, even if it is simply to remember them in prayer.

"If we wish to keep peace with our neighbor, we should never remind anyone of his natural defects." —St. Philip Neri

Wednesday

Pray this week's Responsorial Psalm aloud. Each time you come to the word "Glory," stop and bow your head, remembering that the Lord is indeed all of our glory, honor and praise.

*The King of glory comes,
the nation rejoices.
Open the gates before him,
lift up your voices.
Who is the King of glory;
how shall we call him?
He is Emmanuel,
the promised of ages. (Traditional hymn)*

Thursday

In the second reading, Paul talks about "doing good." As part of your New Year's resolutions, make a list of one good deed that you can do each month for the rest of the year. Remember that the best good deeds are those done in secret!

***"How far that little candle throws its beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world."* —William Shakespeare**

Friday

“He shall bring forth justice to the nations.” These words from the first reading from Isaiah may seem like an impossible dream. However, justice starts not with countries but with individuals and families. Today treat everyone you meet with justice and fairness, remembering that “God shows no partiality.”

“As the family goes, so goes the nation, and so goes the whole world in which we live.” —Blessed Pope John Paul II

Saturday

Reread Sunday’s Gospel. Give thanks that God considers you his beloved son or daughter by virtue of your Baptism and Confirmation and that he has entrusted you with your own unique and special mission in this life.

“God gave Himself to you: give yourself to God.” —Blessed Robert Southwell

CLOSING PRAYER:

Blessed Spirit of Wisdom, help me to seek you, my God. help me make you the center of my life and order my life to him, so that love and harmony may reign in my soul.

Blessed Spirit of Understanding, enlighten my mind, that I may know and love the truths of faith and make them truly my own.

Blessed Spirit of Counsel, enlighten and guide me in all my ways, that I may know and do your holy Will. Make me prudent and courageous.

Blessed Spirit of Fortitude, uphold my soul in every time of trouble or adversity. Make me loyal and confident.

Blessed Spirit of Knowledge, help me to know good from evil. Teach me to do what is right in the sight of God. Give me clear vision and firmness in decision.

Blessed Spirit of Piety, possess my heart, incline it to a true faith in you, to a holy love of you, my God, that with my whole soul I may seek you, who are my Father, and I find You, my best, my truest joy.

Blessed Spirit of Holy Fear, penetrate my inmost heart that I may be mindful of your presence. Make me fly from sin, and give me intense reverence for God and for my fellow men who are made in God's image.

—Adapted from http://www.god-answers-prayers.com/holy_spirit_prayers/prayer_consecration_to_the_holy_spirit/index.html

2ND SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



LAMB OF GOD

PRAYER JOURNAL

SCRIPTURE STUDY ON THE SUNDAY READINGS

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 49:3, 5-6~

The LORD said to me: You are my servant,/ Israel,
through whom I show my glory./ Now the LORD has
spoken/ who formed me as his servant from the womb,/
that Jacob may be brought back to him/ and Israel gathered to
him;/ and I am made glorious in the sight of the LORD,/ and my
God is now my strength!/ It is too little, the LORD says, for you
to be my servant,/ to raise up the tribes of Jacob,/ and restore the
survivors of Israel;/ I will make you a light to the nations,/ that
my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10~

R/ Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

I have waited, waited for the LORD,
and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.
And he put a new song into my mouth,
a hymn to our God.

R/

Sacrifice or offering you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;
Then said I, "Behold I come."

R/

"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,
to do your will, O my God, is my delight,
and your law is within my heart!"

R/

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.

R/

SECOND READING

~ 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 ~

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL

~ John 1:29-34 ~

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, ‘A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.’ I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel.” John testified further, saying, “I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

God the Father,
I thank thee for creating me.

God the Son,
I thank thee for redeeming me.

God the Holy Ghost,
I thank thee for sanctifying me;
infuse into my thoughts,
words and actions thy grace,
so that they may be supernaturally pleasing to thee
and supernaturally rewarding to me, forever.

O Blessed Trinity,
abundantly assist me in becoming that
which thou intended me to become when thou created me,
for in that perfection
I will give thee the glory thou desirest of me,
and in that perfection I will find my greatest joy in heaven.

Amen.

—Fr. Lucian Pulvermacher, O.F.M. Cap.



LECTIO DIVINA —

SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What would the phrase “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world” have meant to John the Baptist’s Jewish followers, according to Dr. Sri?

What role does John the Baptist play with regard to Jesus and our salvation?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine you are standing on the banks of the Jordan River, watching John baptize the crowds. All of a sudden, you see him looking at a man who is approaching. John cries out, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!” What do you think when you hear those words? Now move forward in time and imagine that John asks you to follow this man, Jesus, no matter where he goes or what he asks of you. Are you ready to make that commitment? Are you ready to follow the Lamb?

RESOLUTION:

Do you truly believe that Jesus has come to take your sins away? If there is something in your past for which you are ashamed, confess it now, in the silence of your heart, and ask the Lamb to remove it from you. As soon as you are able, go to Confession. If nothing immediately comes to mind, spend time in prayer asking the Lamb to protect you from all temptation.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

***“Consider all the past as nothing, and say,
like David: Now I begin to love my God.”***

—St. Francis de Sales

Monday

Everywhere we turn, we can find people who claim to have *the* answer. In this week's reading, John the Baptist tells us that there is only One who has the answer—Jesus. Take some time this week to examine your heart and determine where you are listening to the voices of the world and where you are listening to the Word of the Lord.

"My director, Jesus, does not teach me to count my acts, but to do everything for love, to refuse him nothing, to be pleased when he gives me a chance to prove to him that I love him - but all this in peace - in abandonment."

—St. Therese of Lisieux

Tuesday

The next time you attend Mass, pay special attention to the *Agnus Dei*. As you say the words, reflect on what it truly means to proclaim Jesus as the One who takes away the sins of the world.

"God wastes nothing—not even sin. The soul that has struggled and come through is enriched by its experiences, and Grace does not merely blot out the evil past but in the most literal sense 'makes it good.'"

—Dorothy Sayers

Wednesday

The responsorial psalm says: “I have waited, waited for the Lord, and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.” Is there something you are waiting on for the Lord? Do not lose heart, but continue to pray in expectant hope for the answer.

“For a stalk to grow or a flower to open there must be time that cannot be forced; nine months must go by for the birth of a human child; to write a book or compose music often years must be dedicated to patient research ...To find the mystery there must be patience, interior purification, silence, waiting.”

—Pope St. John Paul II

Thursday

John the Baptist understood that his role was to bring others to Christ. How can you, by your life, show to those who do not believe in Jesus that he is truly the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world? Find one way this week to be a living witness to that reality.

“Christ has no body now but mine. He prays in me, works in me, looks through my eyes, speaks through my words, works through my hands, walks with my feet and loves with my heart.”

—St. Teresa of Avila

Friday

Did you know that you can take holy water home? Ask your priest to bless a small bottle to use before and after prayer, to bless your family members, and to be a sign of your own Baptism.

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' Let the hearer say, 'Come.' Let the one who thirsts come forward, and the one who wants it receive the gift of life-giving water." —Revelation 22:17

Saturday

Read the story of the Passover in Exodus 12, and then reread John the Baptist's words about Jesus in this week's Gospel. What new insights did you get by comparing Jesus to the Passover lamb?

"I am very far from practicing what I understand." —St. Therese of Lisieux

3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



COME, FOLLOW ME

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 8:23-9:3~

First the LORD degraded the land of Zebulun / and the land of Naphtali; / but in the end he has glorified the seaward road, / the land west of the Jordan, / the District of the Gentiles.

Anguish has taken wing, dispelled is darkness: / for there is no gloom where but now there was distress. / The people who walked in darkness / have seen a great light; / upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. / You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, / as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, / as people make merry when dividing spoils. / For the yoke that burdened them, / the pole on their shoulder, / and the rod of their taskmaster / you have smashed, as on the day of Midian.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14~

R/ The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid?

R/

One thing I ask of the LORD;
this I seek:

to dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
that I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD
and contemplate his temple.

R/

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD
 in the land of the living.
 Wait for the LORD with courage;
 be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17~

I urge you, **brothers and sisters**, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose. For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers and sisters, by Chloe's people, that there are rivalries among you. I mean that each of you is saying, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning.

GOSPEL

~ Matthew 4:12-23 ~

[Short Form—Matthew 4:12-17—omit text indented and in bracket]

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphatali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:

*Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
 the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan,
 Galilee of the Gentiles,*

*the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light,
on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death,
light has arisen.*

From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

[As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fisherman. He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him. He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and curing every disease and illness among the people.]

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Govern by all thy wisdom, O Lord,
so that my soul may always be serving thee
as thou dost will,
and not as I may choose.
Do not punish me, I beseech thee,
by granting that which I wish
or ask if it offended thy love,
which would always live in me.
Let me die to myself,
so that I may love thee.
Let me live to thee,
who art in thyself,
the true life.

—St. Therese of Lisieux



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What happened 750 years earlier in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali that makes the area so important to Jesus’ ministry?

What would it take for you to leave your “fishing nets” and follow the Lord with your whole heart?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are working alongside Peter and Andrew. You see a man walking along the shore. He stops and begins talking. What is he saying? What is he talking about? All of a sudden, he says to Peter and Andrew, “Come after me and I will make you fishers of men.” What is your reaction to those words? Now see Peter and Andrew putting down their nets and getting ready to walk off with this man, Jesus. What are you feeling? What do you do? As they walk away, Jesus turns back and looks directly at you. “Come, too,” he says. “Come with us. Come with me.” What do you say? What do you do?

RESOLUTION:

This week, listen for the ways that Jesus is asking you to “come and follow.” When you hear his prompting, stop, pay attention, and do what he is telling you to do.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, you called your disciples
from the shore of the Sea of Galilee.
Today you call us from different shores and different seas.
From the shores of our ordinary lives.
From the seas of pain, illness, sorrow.
But you do more than merely call.
You come to meet us where we are,
to extend your love and friendship,
to invite us to change our lives.
This week, help us to hear your voice
and answer your call,
knowing and trusting
in your everlasting love and care.
Amen.

***“You have only one model,
Jesus. Follow, follow, follow
him, step by step, imitating
him, sharing his life in every
way.”***

—Charles de Foucauld

Monday

In our study this week, we looked at the way the disciples put aside everything to be with Jesus. In prayer, ask Jesus to show you one way that you might follow him more closely this week. Then ask him for the courage to actually do it.

“Few souls understand what God would accomplish in them if they were to abandon themselves unreservedly to him and if they were to allow his grace to mold them accordingly.”

—St. Ignatius Loyola

Tuesday

Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen—not what we would consider proper training for becoming priests proclaimers of the Gospel. Yet God used them and their abilities to spread the Gospel throughout the world. Write down three or four of your abilities. How could God use them for his glory?

“It is not the actual physical exertion that counts toward a man’s progress, nor the nature of the task, but the spirit of faith with which it is undertaken.”

—St. Francis Xavier

Wednesday

Are you feeling downhearted or discouraged? Reread today's Responsorial Psalm:

**I believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord with courage;
be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord.**

“Have courage for the great sorrows of life and patience for the small ones; and when you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. God is awake.”

—Victor Hugo

Thursday

In the second reading, Paul tells the Corinthians: “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning.” What meaning does the Cross of Christ have for you? Would anyone be able to tell whether you are a Christian by the way you act and speak? Today, strive to be a witness to the Cross in all your words and actions.

“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried.”

—G. K. Chesterton

Friday

Jesus begins his preaching by using the catch phrase of John the Baptist: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Examine your conscience, confess those areas where you have sinned, and renew your commitment to follow Jesus. Plan to go to Confession as soon as possible.

“The essential act of penance, on the part of the penitent, is contrition, a clear and decisive rejection of the sin committed, together with a resolution not to commit it again, out of love which one has for God and which is reborn with repentance.”

—Pope St. John Paul II

Saturday

The first reading from Isaiah talks about abundant joy and great rejoicing. One of the best ways to see God’s hand at work in your life is start a gratitude journal. Each day write down three things that you are grateful for. Don’t put it off. Start today!

***“For each new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food, for love and friends,
For everything Thy goodness sends.”***

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

✧ YEAR A ✧



MARY'S CROSS

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Malachi 3:1-4~

Thus says the Lord God:

Lo, I am sending my messenger
to prepare the way before me;
And suddenly there will come to the temple
the LORD whom you seek,
And the messenger of the covenant whom you desire.
Yes, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.
But who will endure the day of his coming?
And who can stand when he appears?
For he is like the refiner's fire,
or like the fuller's lye.
He will sit refining and purifying silver,
and he will purify the sons of Levi,
Refining them like gold or like silver
that they may offer due sacrifice to the LORD.
Then the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem
will please the LORD,
as in the days of old, as in years gone by.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 24:7, 8, 9, 10~

R/ Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

Lift up, O gates, your lintels;
reach up, you ancient portals,
that the king of glory may come in!

R/

Who is this king of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle.

R/

Lift up, O gates, your lintels;
reach up, you ancient portals,
that the king of glory may come in!

R/

Who is this king of glory?
The LORD of hosts; he is the king of glory.

R/

SECOND READING

~Hebrews 2:14-18 ~

Since the children share in blood and flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the Devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. Surely he did not help angels but rather the descendants of Abraham; therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

GOSPEL

~Luke 2:22-40~

[If the shorter form is used, the indented text in brackets is omitted]

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, *Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons*, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.”

[The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,

“Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted And you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.

She was advanced in years,
 having lived seven years with her husband after her
 marriage,
 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.
 She never left the temple,
 but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer.
 And coming forward at that very time,
 she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child
 to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions
 of the law of the Lord,
 they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.
 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom;
 and the favor of God was upon him.}]

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

St. Alphonsus de Liguori's Prayer to the Sorrowful Mother:

O my afflicted Mother! Queen of martyrs and of sorrows, you did so bitterly weep over your Son, who died for my salvation; but what will your tears avail me if I am lost? By the merit, then, of your sorrows, obtain me true contrition for my sins, and a real amendment of life, together with constant and tender compassion for the sufferings of Jesus and your dolours. ... O my Mother, by the grief you did experience in seeing your Son bow down His head and expire on the cross in the midst of so many torments, I beseech you to obtain me a good death. Ah, cease not, O advocate of sinners, to assist my afflicted soul in the midst of the combats in which it will have to engage on its great passage from time to eternity. And as it is probable that I may then have lost my speech, and strength to invoke your name and that of Jesus, who are all my hope, I do so now; I invoke your Son and you to succour me in that last moment; and I say, Jesus and Mary, to you I commend my soul. Amen.

LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

Why does the presenter say Mary would initially have been comforted when she heard Simeon's prophecy? Why would her happiness have immediately been tinged with sorrow?

Why is the Presentation in the Temple sometimes called Mary's second Annunciation?

How does Mary show us the way to accept the inevitable crosses of our lives?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are in the Temple when Mary and Joseph arrive with Jesus. You see Simeon approach and allude to the prophecies from Isaiah about the coming of Israel's redeemer. You look at the baby in Mary's arms. What do you think? Do you believe that it is possible that this child could be the Messiah? Next, you hear Simeon's stark words about the opposition the child will face and the suffering Mary will endure as a result. What enters your mind when you realize that accepting Jesus as the Messiah also means accepting the sword and the cross?

RESOLUTION:

This week take some time to consider what it means to realize that accepting Jesus as the Messiah always means accepting the crosses that are to come. What cross are you carrying right now that you can offer to Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER:

I grieve for you, O Mary most sorrowful, in the affliction of your tender heart at the prophecy of the holy and aged Simeon. Dear Mother, by your heart so afflicted, obtain for me the virtue of humility and the gift of the holy fear of God.

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

“Through Mary the Lord allows us to feel his tenderness.”
—Pope Francis

Monday

One of the devotions to Mary is her “Seven Sorrows.” This week, we will look at one sorrow each day. Today consider the prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:34-35). What about Simeon’s prophecy touches you the most? How can you, along with Mary, brace yourself for the swords of sorrow that will undoubtedly come in your life?

“Men do not fear a powerful hostile army as the powers of hell fear the name and protection of Mary.” —St. Bonaventure

Tuesday

Today consider Mary's second sorrow: the flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-14). Think of a time when you may have had to leave family, friends, or possessions. Make a donation to Catholic Charities for those displaced by war or natural disasters.

"Tribulation is a gift from God—one that he especially gives his special friends." —St. Thomas More

Wednesday

On this day, remember Mary's sorrow when she lost Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:43-45). Take some books or magazines to your local hospital's children's unit for parents who are waiting anxiously for the results of surgery.

"What is needed to attain happiness is not a comfortable life, but a heart in love, such as Christ's." —Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos

Thursday

Mary's fourth sorrow occurred when she met Jesus on the way to Calvary (John 19:25-27). Whom can you comfort today? Make a special point to reach out to someone who is sad or grieving.

"We always find that those who walked closest to Christ were those who had to bear the greatest trials." —St. Teresa of Avila

Friday

Perhaps Mary's greatest sorrow was the Crucifixion (John 19:25). Pray today for mothers everywhere who are watching helplessly while their children suffer from addictions, abuse, or illness.

***"For Jesus Christ I am prepared to suffer still more."* —St. Maximilian Kolbe**

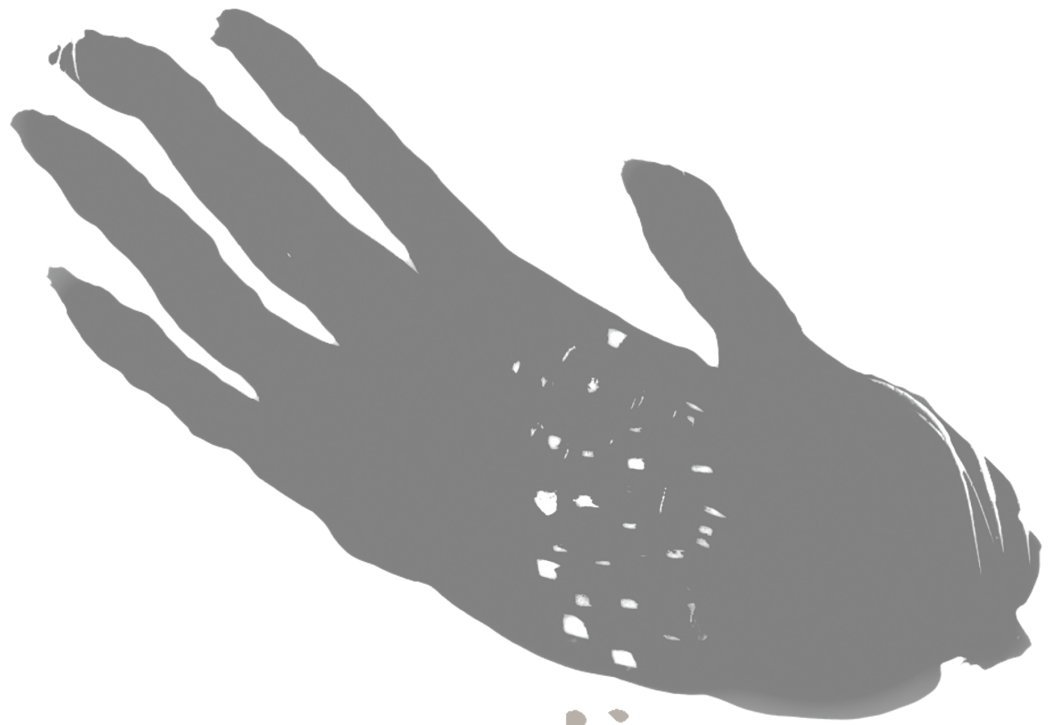
Saturday

Mary's heart must have been broken when she and the others took the body of Jesus from the Cross (John 19:40). Send a card to someone who has lost a child, either recently or in the past. Consider having a Mass said for the family.

***“Let us run to Mary, and, as her little children, cast ourselves into her arms with a perfect confidence.”
—St. Francis de Sales***

5TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



SALT AND LIGHT

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 58:7-10~

Thus says the LORD: / Share your bread with the hungry, / shelter the oppressed and the homeless; / clothe the naked when you see them, / and do not turn your back on your own. / Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, / and your wound shall quickly be healed; / your vindication shall go before you, / and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. / Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer, / you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am! / If you removed from your midst / oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; / if you bestow your bread on the hungry / and satisfy the afflicted; / then light shall rise for you in the darkness, / and the gloom shall become for you like midday.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9~

R/ The just man is a light in darkness to the upright.

or:

R/ Alleluia.

Light shines through the darkness for the upright;
he is gracious and merciful and just.

Well for the man who is gracious and lends,
who conducts his affairs with justice.

R/

He shall never be moved;
the just one shall be in everlasting remembrance.

An evil report he shall not fear;
his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.

R/

His heart is steadfast; he shall not fear.
 Lavishly he gives to the poor;
 his justice shall endure forever;
 his horn shall be exalted in glory.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Corinthians 2:1-5~

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 5:13-16~

Jesus said to his disciples: “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
I consecrate myself today anew
and without reserve to your
Divine Heart.

I consecrate to you my body
with all its senses,
my soul with all its faculties,
my entire being.

I consecrate to you all my
thoughts,

words and deeds,
all my sufferings and labors,
all my hopes, consolations,
and joys.

In particular I consecrate to you
this poor heart of mine
so that it may love only you
and may be consumed as a victim
in the fire of your love.

Amen.

—Apostles of Prayer



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What are some ways that you might be able to take your faith beyond the walls of the church?

In the Gospel, Jesus gives a specific reason why we must let our light shine before others. What is that reason?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine Jesus saying to you, “You are the light of the world.” What does that mean to you? Does it make you feel encouraged or overwhelmed? Now, in the stillness of your being, ask Jesus to reveal to you a way that you can become a light to the world. What comes to mind? Is it something you are currently doing or something new that you are being called to do?

RESOLUTION:

Now hear Jesus say, “Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” What is one good deed that you can do this week that will glorify the Father? Choose a specific day and time to do it so that it doesn’t go the way of unfulfilled good intentions.

“Good example is the most efficacious apostolate. You must be as lighted lanterns and shine like brilliant chandeliers among men. By your good example and your words, animate others to know and love God.”

—Sr. Mary Joseph Rossello

CLOSING PRAYER:

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection. Amen.

Monday

In the First Reading, God gives a series of “if / then” promises (i.e. “If you share your bread...then your light will break forth.”) List them here and write down any insights you have about God and his promises.

“Pray with great confidence, with confidence based upon the goodness and infinite generosity of God and upon the promises of Jesus Christ. God is a spring of living water which flows unceasingly into the hearts of those who pray.” —St. Louis de Montfort

Tuesday

Paul says in the Second Reading that our faith should not rest on human wisdom but on the power of God. What does that mean to you? Consider where your own faith rests. Is it on the power of God?

“The faith of those who live their faith is a serene faith.”
—Pope St. Leo the Great

Wednesday

In the video presentation, the presenter talked about how many of us were not taught how to live our faith outside of Sunday Mass. If you were taught how to do this, say a prayer of thanks for your teachers. If you are still learning, write down a couple of ideas for ways you might begin.

“God has created me to do him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission—I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next... I have a part in a great work; I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons...”

—Blessed John Henry Newman

Thursday

Read this week’s Responsorial Psalm. Choose one line and make it your motto for the day.

“Cast aside regret and fear...do the deed at hand.”

—J.R.R. Tolkien

Friday

The first reading from Isaiah talks about healing our wounds. What wound do you need the Lord to heal? Have you asked for healing? Do you truly believe the Lord can heal you?

“We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way.”

—St. Francis of Assisi

Saturday

Look back over your journal entries for this week. Which one had the most impact on your life?

“The nation doesn’t simply need what we have. It needs what we are.”

—St. Edith Stein

6TH SUNDAY OF
ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE NEW LAW

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~ Sirach 15:15-20 ~

If you choose you can keep the commandments, they will save you; / if you trust in God, you too shall live; / he has set before you fire and water; / to whichever you choose, stretch forth your hand. / Before man are life and death, good and evil, / whichever he chooses shall be given him. / Immense is the wisdom of the Lord; / he is mighty in power, and all-seeing. / The eyes of God are on those who fear him; / he understands man's every deed. / No one does he command to act unjustly, / to none does he give license to sin.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~ Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34 ~

R/ Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

Blessed are they whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD.

Blessed are they who observe his decrees,
who seek him with all their heart.

R/

You have commanded that your precepts
be diligently kept.

Oh, that I might be firm in the ways
of keeping your statutes!

R/

Be good to your servant, that I may live
and keep your words.

Open my eyes, that I may consider
the wonders of your law.

R/

Instruct me, O LORD, in the way of your statutes,
that I may exactly observe them.
Give me discernment, that I may observe your law
and keep it with all my heart.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Corinthians 2:6-10~

Brothers and sisters: We speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age knew; for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: / *What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, / and what has not entered the human heart, / what God has prepared for those who love him, /* this God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 5:17-37~

Short Form: Matthew 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37
[omit text indented and in brackets]

Jesus said to his disciples:
["Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until the heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever

obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.]

“I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

“You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, *You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.* But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

[and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ will be answerable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.]

“You have heard that it was said, *You shall not commit adultery.* But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

[If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

“It was also said, *Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.* But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife—unless the marriage is unlawful—causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.]

“Again, you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, *Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.* But I say to you, do not swear at all;

[not by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black.]

Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
 bless us as we come together in your name.
 Send the Spirit of Jesus into our hearts
 to guide us in our discussions
 for the good of all.
 Father,
 we ask this grace
 through Christ our Lord.
 Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

The presenter says that Jesus didn't abolish the Old Testament Law but actually "upped the ante." What are some examples of how Jesus did this?

The point of the Old Law was to get the Israelites to follow and obey God. What is the point of the New Law? (Hint: it has to do with our hearts.)

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

You are seated comfortably on the grassy slope of the hill. The sun shines brightly on Jesus's white robes and you settle in to listen to him talk. Suddenly you hear him say, "Therefore, if you bring your gift to that altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift." What goes through your mind when you hear these words? Is there someone with whom you need to reconcile? Is there something you need to do to make amends? Let Jesus bring to mind what it is he would have you do.

RESOLUTION:

If a person or situation came to mind as you were praying, decide what you can do this week to be reconciled. List the steps you will need to take to accomplish this.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Jesus, almighty King of Kings,
You who obeyed your Father to the end,
Teach me the meaning of obedience.
My soul burns to comply to your will,
Striving to obey your Law.
While my spirit seeks to follow your way,
my worldly nature another.
Bless me with the strength to obey,
To always obey you until my last breath.
Amen.

***“Next to the
Blessed Sacrament
itself, your neighbor
is the holiest object
presented to your
senses.”***

—C.S. Lewis

Monday

Jesus said he came to fulfill the Law. What does that mean to you personally? Write down your thoughts and questions. Remember, questions can be as important in learning as answers.

“When freedom does not have a purpose, when it does not wish to know anything about the rule of law engraved in the hearts of men and women, when it does not listen to the voice of conscience, it turns against humanity and society.” —Pope St. John Paul II

Tuesday

The first reading says that God offers us a choice between life and death, adding that we will be given whatever we choose. In what ways are you choosing life? In what ways are you choosing death? For example, how do you take care of your body? How do you take care of your intellect?

“There is no good trying to be more spiritual than God. God never meant man to be a purely spiritual creature. That is why he uses material things like bread and wine to put the new life into us. We may think this rather crude and unspiritual. God does not: He invented eating. He likes matter. He invented it.”

—C.S. Lewis

Wednesday

The psalmist prays, “Give me discernment, that I may observe your law and keep it with all my heart.” Are there areas in your life that need God’s discernment, such as career, another child, marriage? Ask God for his wisdom and guidance. Write down any insights you have during the week.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him.”
—James 1:5 (RSV)

Thursday

St. Paul tells us that “What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him.” What do you think about life after death? How do you envision Heaven?

***“Oh, hear him within you
speaking this infinite love,
moving like some divine and
audible leaven,
lifting the sky of the soul
with expansions of light,
shaping new heights
and new depths,
and, at your stir of assent,
spreading the mountains
with lame, filling the hollows
with heaven.”***

—Sister Miriam of the Holy Spirit (Jessica Powers)

Friday

Jesus says, "Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes' and your 'No' mean 'No.' Anything more is from the evil one." Today make sure that you speak the truth gently, but speak nothing but the truth. (No white lies.)

"One must throw truth across the path of lies. One must throw truth into the eye of a lie..."

—Pope St. John Paul II, from his early play "Jeremiah"

Saturday

Read this week's Responsorial Psalm as a prayer. Pause over any lines that resonate particularly with you at this time.

"We are to love God for himself, because of a twofold reason; nothing is more reasonable, nothing more profitable."

—St. Bernard of Clairvaux

7TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18~

The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the whole Israelite community and tell them: Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy.

“You shall not bear hatred for your brother or sister in your heart. Though you may have to reprove your fellow citizen, do not incur sin because of him. Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against any of your people. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13~

R/ The Lord is kind and merciful.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.

R/

He pardons all your iniquities,
heals all your ills.
He redeems your life from destruction,
crowns you with kindness and compassion.

R/

Merciful and gracious is the LORD,
slow to anger and abounding in kindness.
Not according to our sin does he deal with us,
nor does he requite us according to our crimes.

R/

As far as the east is from the west,
 so far has he put our transgressions from us.
 As a father has compassion on his children,
 so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Corinthians 3:16-23~

Brothers and sisters: Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy.

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you considers himself wise in this age, let him become a fool, so as to become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God, for it is written: */ God catches the wise in their own ruses, / and again: / The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. /* So let no one boast about human beings, for everything belongs to you, Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or the present or the future: all belong to you, and you to Christ, and Christ to God.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 5:38-48~

Jesus said to his disciples: "You have heard that it was said, *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.* But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand over your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.

“You have heard that it was said, *You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.* But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brother only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

God, my Father,
may I love you in all things and above all things.
May I reach the joy which you have prepared for me in heaven.
Nothing is good that is against your will,
and all that is good comes from your hand.
Place in my heart a desire to please you
and fill my mind with thoughts of your love,
so that I may grow in your wisdom and enjoy your peace.
Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

How did the Jews of Jesus’s time view non-Jews in general, and Romans in particular?

The presenter, Tim Gray, uses the example of iron to explain how we should treat our enemies. What does he say, and how does that relate to Christian truth?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

As you sit and listen to Jesus as he teaches, you suddenly hear him say, “Offer no resistance to one who is evil.” What? Aren't we supposed to fight against evil in the world? What can this mean? Reflect for a moment on what Jesus himself did when he was arrested and crucified. What does his example mean for you right now, today, in your life?

RESOLUTION:

This is one of Jesus’s hardest teachings. During this week, reread the Gospel and take some time to pray about how this can apply to you and your family. If there is someone you consider an “enemy,” bring your relationship before the Lord and ask to be shown how to demonstrate love to that person.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Assist me, O Holy Spirit,
in all my trials of life,
enlighten me in my ignorance,
advise me in my doubts,
strengthen me in my weakness,
help me in all my needs,
protect me in temptations
and console me in afflictions.
And help me to go the extra mile,
to love, serve, and forgive my enemies.

Graciously hear me, O Holy Spirit,
and pour your light into my heart,
my soul, and my mind.
Amen.

***“We must find [God] in our enemy, or we may lose him even in our friend. We must find him in the pagan or we will lose him in our own selves, substituting for his living presence an empty abstraction.”
—Thomas Merton***

Monday

As you begin the week, read the Responsorial Psalm, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” List five benefits you are grateful for that you do not want to forget.

“You have given it all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and grace. That is enough for me.” —St. Ignatius of Loyola

Tuesday

In the First Reading, the Lord tells the Israelites to “cherish no grudge.” If you are holding a grudge against anyone, let go of it now and ask God for forgiveness.

“Let your religion be less of a theory and more of a love affair.”

—G. K. Chesterton

Wednesday

According to Roman military law, soldiers had permission to force civilians to carry equipment or even personal items for one Roman mile (4,854 feet). If someone asks you to go “one mile” today, make sure you go the extra mile.

“There is no traffic jam on the extra mile.”
—Unknown

Thursday

In this week’s Epistle, Saint Paul writes, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God?” How are you taking care of the temple of God, a.k.a. your body? Do one thing that improves your health today.

***“Those in whom
the Spirit comes to
live are God's new
Temple. They are,
individually and
corporately, places
where heaven and
earth meet.”***

—N.T. Wright

Friday

Jesus says that the rain falls on the just and the unjust alike. Reflect today on those times when you catch yourself saying, “That’s not fair!” Is it simply a case of the rain falling on the just and the unjust?

“It is a lesson we all need—to let alone the things that do not concern us. He has other ways for others to follow him; all do not go by the same path. It is for each of us to learn the path by which he requires us to follow him, and to follow him in that path.”
—St. Katharine Drexel

Saturday

We are told to pray for those who persecute us. Who do you feel is persecuting or mistreating you (or has in the past)? Write down their names and ask the Holy Spirit to heal whatever pain they may be experiencing in their lives. Repeat if necessary.

“He pours light into our minds, arouses our desire, and gives us strength. As the soul is the life of the body, so the Holy Spirit is the life of our souls.”
—St. Peter Damian

8TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



DO NOT WORRY

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE EIGHTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 49:14-15~

Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.” Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 62:2-3, 6-7, 8-9~

R/ Rest in God alone, my soul.

Only in God is my soul at rest;
from him comes my salvation.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold; I shall not be disturbed at all.

R/

Only in God be at rest, my soul,
for from him comes my hope.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold; I shall not be disturbed.

R/

With God is my safety and my glory,
he is my rock of my strength; my refuge is in God.
Trust in him at all times, O my people!
Pour out your hearts before him.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Corinthians 4:1-5~

Brothers and sisters: Thus should one regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. It does not concern me in the least that I be judged by you or any human tribunal; I do not even pass judgment on myself; I am not conscious of anything against me, but I do not thereby stand acquitted; the one who judges me is the Lord. Therefore do not make any judgment before the appointed time, until the Lord comes, for he will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will manifest the motives of our hearts, and then everyone will receive praise from God.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 6:24-34~

Jesus said to his disciples: “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. “Sufficient” for a day is its own evil.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
 I do not see the road ahead of me.
 I cannot know where it will end.
 Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am
 following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.
 But I believe that the desire to please you
 does in fact please you.
 And I hope I have that desire in all I am doing.
 I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
 And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road,
 though I may know nothing about it.
 Therefore, I will trust you always,
 though I may seem to be lost in the shadow of death.
 I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
 and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

—Thomas Merton



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

Why do you think that worry is such a common problem for so many people?

The presenter said that our anxiety is high when our trust in God is low. Do you find that to be true in your own life? How can you increase your trust in God when you are feeling worried or anxious?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Bring to mind something that concerns you or that you are worried about right now. Allow yourself to feel any anxiety or fear that might arise. Now imagine that you are with crowds on the Mount as Jesus is teaching. He comes toward you and speaks the words of today's Gospel directly to you: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life... can you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?" How do these words challenge you? How do they comfort and encourage you? What might you say to Jesus in response?

RESOLUTION:

This week, consider at least two ways in which you might use the words of Jesus about not worrying to bring a sense of peace and calm to your life.

"Pray, hope, and don't worry."
—St. Pio of Pietrelcina

CLOSING PRAYER:

O God, my beloved Father, I thank you for this day.
You know how worried and anxious I am about...
Help me to be sensible and to see that
worrying about things does not make them any better.
Help me to be calm and serene in such situations of life.
Help me to cast all my worries and anxieties upon you
for I know that you care for me.
Help me to be sure that nothing can happen to me
through which you cannot bring me in safety
and that nothing can separate me from your love.
I believe and trust that your everlasting arms are underneath me
and above me and give me something of the peace
that the world cannot give and cannot ever take away.
Jesus my Lord you said to me,
"Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."
Jesus, I praise you.
Jesus, I love you.
There is power in your mighty name.
Alleluia.

Holy Spirit, my consoler, give me comfort in all difficult
situations of life. I trust in your power. Enrich me with your
powerful intervention. Thank you, Lord. Praise you, Lord.
Amen.

Monday

This Gospel says, “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.” What do you think Jesus meant by “all these things”? What are some of the things that you need right now in your life?

“You cannot please both God and the world at the same time. They are utterly opposed to each other in their thoughts, their desires, and their actions.”
—St. John Vianney

Tuesday

This week’s Responsorial Psalm calls God “our rock and salvation.” List at least three ways that God has been a rock or salvation in your life. Write a prayer of thanksgiving.

“Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.”

— Philipians 4:5-6

Wednesday

Meditate today on the First Reading, in which we are told that God will never forget us. How do you live your life when you remember this?

"He loves, he hopes, he waits. If he came down on our altars on certain days only, some sinner, on being moved to repentance, might have to look for him, and not finding him, might have to wait. Our Lord prefers to wait himself for the sinner for years rather than keep him waiting one instant." —St. Julian Peter Eymard

Thursday

St. Francis de Sales tells us, "Do not look forward to the changes and chances of this life with fear." Are you undergoing change in your life right now? How are you feeling about it? Express any apprehension or fear you might have to the Lord right now.

"Our Lord wills that you cling to him alone! If your faith were greater how much more peaceful you would be even when great trials surround and oppress you."
—St. Paula Frassinetti

Friday

Jesus tells us that we cannot serve both God and money. Examine your life honestly to see what role money plays. Are you attempting to serve both God and money? Ask God to give you the grace to see where you might be compromising your devotion to the Lord.

“All the wealth in the world cannot be compared with the happiness of living together happily united.”
—Blessed Margaret d'Youville

Saturday

Look back over your week. What were some of the things that concerned you or that you worried about? How many of them actually came true? If they did come true, how did God help you get through them?

“Do everything through love and for love, making good use of the present moment, and do not be anxious about the future.”
—St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

1ST SUNDAY
OF LENT

✧ YEAR A ✧



INTO THE DESERT

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

FIRST READING

~Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7~

The LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the LORD God had made. The serpent asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" The woman answered the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is evil." The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14, 17~

R/ Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

R/

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me.

R/

For I acknowledge my offense,
and my sin is before me always:
“Against you only have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight.”

R/

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

R/

Give me back the joy of your salvation,
and a willing spirit sustain in me.
O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 5:12-19~

Short Form—Romans 5:12, 17-19

[omit text indented and in brackets]

Brothers and sisters: Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all men, inasmuch as all sinned—

[for up to the time of the law, sin was in the world, though sin is not accounted when there is no law. But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come.

But the gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one, the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ overflow for the many. And the gift is not like the result of the one who sinned. For after one sin there was the judgment that brought condemnation; but the gift, after many transgressions, brought acquittal.]

For if, by the transgression of the one, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one Jesus Christ. In conclusion, just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so, through one righteous act, acquittal and life came to all. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so, through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous.

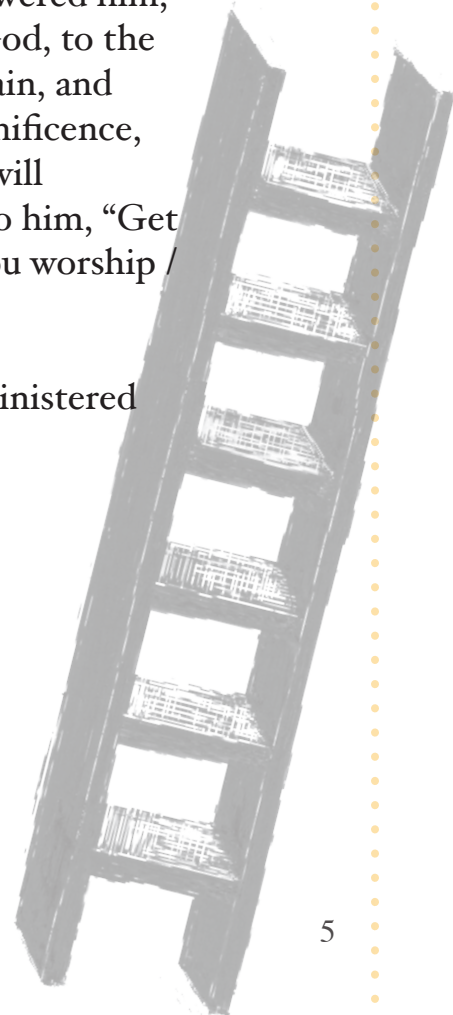
GOSPEL

~Matthew 4:1-11~

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread.” He said in reply, “It is written: / One does not live on bread alone, / but on every word that comes forth / from the mouth of God.”

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: / He will command his angels concerning you / and with their hands they will support you, / lest you dash your foot against a stone.” Jesus answered him, “Again it is written, / You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.” Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, “All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me.” At this, Jesus said to him, “Get away, Satan! It is written: / The Lord, your God, shall you worship / and him alone shall you serve.”

Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.



Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

O Jesus, wash away my sins with your Precious Blood.
O Jesus, the struggle against temptation is not yet finished.
My Jesus, when temptation comes near me,
make me strong against it.
In the moment of temptation may I always say:
“My Jesus, mercy! Mary, help!”
Amen.

(<http://lordcalls.com/prayers-for-different-people/prayer-for-oneself>)

LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

In the first temptation, the devil urges Jesus to turn stones to bread. What is this temptation really all about?

In the second temptation, the devil tells Jesus to throw himself off the temple and let angels rescue him. What is this temptation really all about?

In the third temptation, the devil tells Jesus he can have all the power of the world if he will bow down in worship. What is this temptation really all about?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture Jesus sitting beside you and saying the same three responses he gave to the devil. He says:

“One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.”

“You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.”

“The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.”

Which of these three responses of Jesus speaks the most to you and your life right now? How so?

RESOLUTION:

Considering the statement of Jesus that relates most to your life now, find at least one practical way to implement Jesus’ teaching this week.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

“Do not bargain with any temptation; lock yourself immediately in My [Jesus] Heart and, at the first opportunity, reveal the temptation to the confessor....Do not fear struggle; courage itself often intimidates temptations, and they dare not attack us.” —St. Faustina

Monday

In the first reading, we see humanity’s first temptation and the results of succumbing to that temptation. What is your greatest temptation? Be honest with yourself. Then write down three ways that you can avoid being in a situation where you will be tempted.

“When tempted, invoke your Angel. He is more eager to help you than you are to be helped! Ignore the devil and do not be afraid of him: He trembles and flees at the sight of your Guardian Angel.” —St. John Bosco

Tuesday

In the second reading, Saint Paul talks about how Adam's sin brought death into the world and how Jesus' suffering and death restores us to life. Although this reading can be challenging, pick out one or two points and prayerfully consider what they mean for your life.

***"Where sin was hatched, let tears now wash the nest."
—St. Robert Southwell***

Wednesday

Consider the temptations of Christ. Look back over your notes on the video presentation and see how these temptations might apply to you. Choose the one temptation that you believe is the most difficult for you to resist. Without revealing the details, ask someone to pray for you about this. In turn, offer your prayers for those who have no one to pray for them.

***"The best security we can possess in this world of being in the grace of God, consists not indeed in feeling that we have his love, but in a pure and irrevocable abandonment of our entire being into his hands, and in the firm resolution of never consenting to any sin, either great or small."
—St. Francis de Sales***

Thursday

Reread the prayer section for this week. Go through the exercise of listening to Jesus as he gives you guidance. Do you get any new insights or messages when you repeat this prayer? Write them down for later consideration.

“Virtue is nothing without the trial of temptation, for there is no conflict without an enemy, no victory without strife.” —Pope St. Leo the Great

Friday

Read this week’s responsorial psalm slowly and thoughtfully. Underline phrases or passages that strike you and then confess any sins that come to mind. Make an appointment to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as soon as possible to confess any serious sins.

“Your first task is to be dissatisfied with yourself, fight sin, and transform yourself into something better. Your second task is to put up with the trials and temptations of this world that will be brought on by the change in your life and to persevere to the very end in the midst of these things.” —St. Augustine

Saturday

Today write a prayer thanking God for the gift of forgiveness of sin. Trust and believe that through the Sacrament of Reconciliation your sins are completely forgiven and you can begin a new life of grace.

“DO NOT GRIEVE OVER THE TEMPTATIONS YOU SUFFER. WHEN THE LORD INTENDS TO BESTOW A PARTICULAR VIRTUE ON US, HE OFTEN PERMITS US FIRST TO BE TEMPTED BY THE OPPOSITE VICE. THEREFORE, LOOK UPON EVERY TEMPTATION AS AN INVITATION TO GROW IN A PARTICULAR VIRTUE AND A PROMISE BY GOD THAT YOU WILL BE SUCCESSFUL, IF ONLY YOU STAND FAST.”

—ST. PHILIP NERI

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

✧ YEAR A ✧



LIVING WITH CONTRASTS

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

FIRST READING

~Genesis 12:1-4a~

The LORD said to Abram: “Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you.

“I will make of you a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
so that you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you
and curse those who curse you.
All the communities of the earth
shall find blessing in you.”

Abram went as the LORD directed him.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~ Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22~

**R/ Lord, let your mercy be on us,
as we place our trust in you.**

Upright is the word of the LORD,
and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right;
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

R/

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
to deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.



R/

Our soul waits for the LORD,
who is our help and our shield.
May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us
who have put our hope in you.

R/

SECOND READING

~ 2 Timothy 1:8b-10 ~

Beloved: Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

GOSPEL

~ Matthew 17:1-9 ~

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Mercifully, O Lord,
work thy sanctification within us
by means of these mysteries;
may they both cleanse us from earthly vices,
and lead us to heavenly gifts.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Thy Son, who livest and reignest with thee
in the unity of the Holy Ghost,
One God, world without end.
Amen.

LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What are some of the contrasts that the presenter talks about in today's Gospel account of the Transfiguration?

How can this week's reading help prepare us to live with the contrasts that occur in the Christian life?



LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are with the disciples when Jesus is transfigured. You see him appear with Moses and Elijah. What goes through your mind as you witness this event? What do you feel? Excitement or fear? How does seeing Jesus in his glory change your idea of who he is? How does it change your life?

RESOLUTION:

This week, think about areas in your life that need to be “transfigured” by the power of the Holy Spirit. Choose one, and ask God to help you begin to work on that area for the remaining weeks of Lent.

“Whatever you do, think not of yourself, but of God.” —St. Vincent Ferrer

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Lord,
We come before you today
with our needs and desires,
hopes and wants,
joys and fears.
We are aware that it is only
through your Word,
your grace,

your love,
that we can become the people
you have created us to be.
Help us become transformed
into your image,
that we may better love and serve
you with our lives.
Amen.



Monday

St. Timothy says in the Epistle, “He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design...”
Journal about what you think a holy life would look like, taking into account your individual circumstances.

“All of us can attain to Christian virtue and holiness, no matter in what condition of life we live and no matter what our life work may be.” —St. Francis de Sales

Tuesday

In the first reading, we are told, “Abram went as the Lord directed him.” What is the Lord directing you to do today?

“You know well enough that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them.” —St. Therese of Lisieux

Wednesday

Reread this week's Gospel. Is there something new that strikes you in the rereading? If you have access to the Internet, study James Tissot's painting of the Transfiguration at: <http://tinyurl.com/agnjvf9>. What details of the painting stand out for you?

"We need no wings to go in search of him, but have only to look upon him present within us." —St. Teresa of Avila

Thursday

This week's presenter talked about the abundant life Jesus said he came to give us. Make a list of all the things you are grateful for in your life, counting them as abundance.

"Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude." —A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh

Friday

The disciples were afraid when they heard the voice of the Father coming from heaven. What makes you afraid? If you experience fear today (or anytime), ask Jesus to help you place your confidence and trust in him.

***“We must fear God out of love, not love him out of fear.”
—St. Francis de Sales***

Saturday

God told Abram in the first reading that his name would become a blessing. What does your name mean? Look up the meaning if you don't know it. How can you make your name into a blessing for those around you?

“You may call God love, you may call God goodness. But the best name for God is compassion.” —Meister Eckhart

3RD SUNDAY
OF LENT

✧ YEAR A ✧



A MESSIAH FOR
ALL PEOPLE

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

FIRST READING

~Exodus 17:3-7~

In those days, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?” So Moses cried out to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? A little more and they will stone me!” The LORD answered Moses, “Go over there in front of the people, along with some of the elders of Israel, holding in your hand, as you go, the staff with which you struck the river. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb. Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink.” This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel. The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled there and tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD in our midst or not?”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9~

R/ If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

R/

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

R/



Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah in the desert,
where your fathers tempted me;
they tested me though they had seen my works.”

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 5:1-2, 5-8~

Brothers and sisters: Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

GOSPEL

~John 4:5-42~

[Short Version: John 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42; text in brackets and indented is omitted]

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

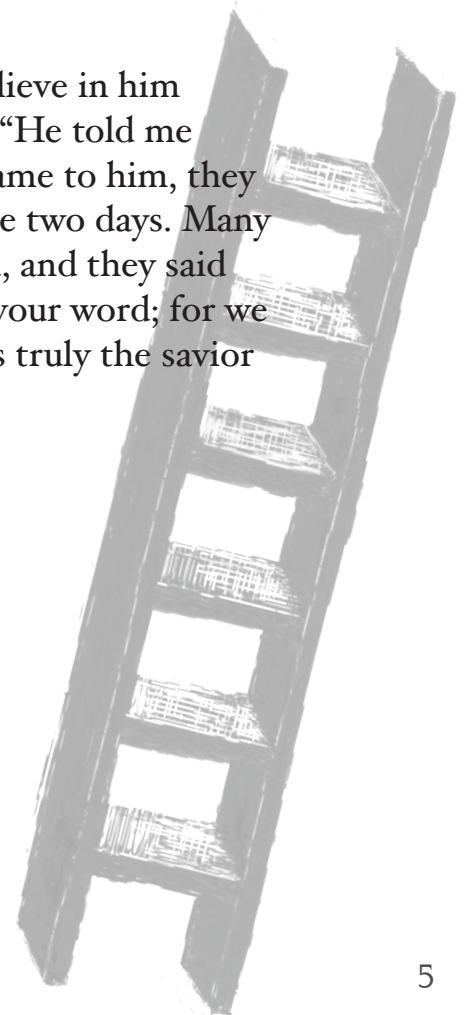
A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” —For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.— Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

[Jesus said to her, “Go call your husband and come back.” The woman answered and said to him, “I do not have a husband.” Jesus answered her, “You are right in saying, ‘I do not have a husband.’ For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true.” The woman said to him,]

“Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one speaking with you.”

[At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, “What are you looking for?” or “Why are you talking with her?” The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, “Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Christ?” They went out of the town and came to him. Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” So the disciples said to one another, “Could someone have brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, ‘In four months the harvest will be here?’ I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. The reaper is already receiving payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here the saying is verified that ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work.”]

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me everything I have done.” When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, “We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world.”



Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

We pray that, like the woman of Samaria, we may review our lives before Christ and acknowledge our sins...

That we may be freed from the spirit of mistrust that deters people from following Christ...

That, while awaiting the gift of God, we may long with all our hearts for the living water that brings eternal life...

That, by accepting the Son of God as our teacher, we may become true worshipers of the Father in spirit and in truth...

That we may share with our friends and neighbors the wonder of our own meeting with Christ...

—from the First Scrutiny of the Elect

LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down notes on the video reflection in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What does the presenter say happened at wells in ancient times?

Why do you think that Jesus chose the Samaritan woman to reveal he is the Christ, the Messiah?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Prayerfully consider what you thirst for in life—what you spend your time and energy pursuing most. Perhaps it is success at work, the success of your kids, your favorite sport, entertainment, being liked, financial security. Now imagine Jesus saying specifically to you: “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” How do these words apply to you? Reflect in prayer on your own experience of how your pursuits for the things of this world leave you “thirsty again” and on how only Jesus can fulfill your deepest thirsts.

RESOLUTION:

Ask Jesus how you can turn to him more this week to find your deepest thirsts quenched in him instead of turning to the things of this world.

***“If a spring has not been opened in a soul, a spring of living water from God's own Son, no waters can flow and there is no life in you.”
—G.V. Wigram***

CLOSING PRAYER:

This time of fasting has opened to us the gates of paradise.
Let us accept it praying and beseeching
that on the day of resurrection
we may be glorified in the Lord.
In all circumstances we must conduct ourselves
as God's ministers,
in much patience.
Let us pray. Lord, God all-powerful,
accept our poor prayers
and stretch out your powerful hand to defend us.
This we ask of you through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.
Amen.

Monday

In the first reading, the Israelites are grumbling because they didn't have enough water, so God had Moses open a spring in a desert rock. Write down a time in which you have grumbled to God because you didn't have what you wanted. Ask him to forgive you and then ask humbly if your request might be granted.

***“It is because of faith that we exchange the present for the future.”
—St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen***

Tuesday

The responsorial psalm says: “If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” What does it mean to you to “harden your heart”? If you can “harden your heart,” can you also “soften your heart”? Reflect on ways in which you might have a hard heart and ways in which you might soften it.

“The whole course of human history may depend on a change of heart in one solitary and even humble individual—for it is in the solitary mind and soul of the individual that the battle between good and evil is waged and ultimately won or lost.” —M. Scott Peck

Wednesday

The woman at the well was an outcast and ignored by polite society. If you pass by someone asking for money or begging, give him or her something, even if it is just a smile.

“Give something, however small, to the one in need. For it is not small to one who has nothing. Neither is it small to God, if we have given what we could.”

—St. Gregory Nazianzen

Thursday

Do you know someone in your parish or family who is divorced or in an irregular marriage? Pray for that person and be willing to share the Church's teachings on divorce and remarriage if appropriate.

"And these are the nuptials of the Lord, so that like that great Sacrament they might become two in one flesh, Christ and the Church. From these nuptials a Christian people is born, when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon that people."

—St. Pacian, Sermon on Baptism, 6 (ante A.D. 392)

Friday

St. Paul writes to the Romans: "Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die." Read the life of St. Maximilian Kolbe, who gave up his life in a Nazi concentration camp so that another man with a family might live.

"No one in the world can change truth. What we can do and should do is to seek truth and to serve it when we have found it. The real conflict is the inner conflict. Beyond armies of occupation and the hetacombs of extermination camps, there are two irreconcilable enemies in the depth of every soul: good and evil, sin and love. And what use are the victories on the battlefield if we ourselves are defeated in our innermost personal selves?" —St. Maximilian Kolbe

Saturday

Do you truly believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah? If you do, write a short prayer of praise. If you don't, ask God for the grace to believe.

"I do believe; help my unbelief!" —Mark 9:24

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

✧ YEAR A ✧



HEALING OUR BLINDNESS

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

FIRST READING

~Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a~

The LORD said to Samuel: “Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons.”

As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is here before him.” But the LORD said to Samuel: “Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart.” In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any one of these.” Then Samuel asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” Jesse replied, “There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here.” Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance. The LORD said, “There—anoint him, for this is the one!” Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.



RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6~

R/ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

R/

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

R/

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
with your rod and your staff
that give me courage.

R/

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

R/

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

R/

SECOND READING

~Ephesians 5:8-14~

Brothers and sisters: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says:

“Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

GOSPEL

~John 9:1-41~

[Short Version John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38 text in brackets and indented is omitted]

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. [His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this,]

he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam” —which means Sent—. So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is,” but others said, “No, he just looks like him.” He said, “I am.”

[So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?” He replied, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went there and washed and was able to see.” And they said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I don’t know.”]

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see.” So some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a sinful man do such signs?” And there was a division among them. So they said to the blind man again, “What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

[Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?” His parents answered and said, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; question him.”

So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner.” He replied, “If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see.” So they said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?” They ridiculed him and said, “You are that man’s disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from.” The man answered and said to them, “This is what is so amazing, that you do not know

where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything.”]

They answered and said to him, “You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?” Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered and said, “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “I do believe, Lord,” and he worshiped him.

[Then Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind.”

Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not also blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.”]



Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, you gave sight to the blind man,
So we come now and ask:
Give all who are sick this day
the courage to face and overcome their fears.
Be with them when they are alone or rejected.
Comfort them when they are discouraged.
And touch them with your healing Spirit that
they may find and possess eternal life, now and forever. Amen.

LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.



LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What are some of the false perceptions the disciples had about the blind man?

What are some of the ways that the characters in this story were blind? The disciples? The Pharisees? The neighbors?

What are some of the ways that you might be blind?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are with the blind man who was cured when Jesus comes to find him. You hear Jesus ask, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” and you hear the man respond, “I do believe, Lord.” Now see Jesus turn toward you and ask you the same question. Do you believe that Jesus is truly the Son of Man? How do you respond to Jesus? What might he say to you in return?

RESOLUTION:

We all need to ask ourselves the hard questions about our beliefs so that we can grow and mature in our faith. This week, consider Jesus’ question, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” and ask that he help you come to a greater understanding of who he really is and that you live your life more in union with him.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, you invite all who are burdened to come to you.
Allow your healing hand to heal me.
Touch my soul with your compassion for others;
touch my heart with your courage and infinite love for all;
touch my mind with your wisdom,
and may my mouth always proclaim your praise.
Teach me to reach out to you in all my needs,
and help me to lead others to you by my example.
Most loving heart of Jesus,
bring me health in body and spirit that I may serve you with all my
strength.
Touch gently this life which you have created,
now and forever. Amen.

“We can cure physical diseases with medicine but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread but there are many more who are dying for a little love.” —Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta



Monday

Often things don't go the way we think they should. The "wrong" person gets elected, gets the promotion, gets the job. When tempted to think that way, remember this week's first reading where none of Jesse's sons who Samuel thought should be king was actually God's choice! Today pray for someone you thought was the wrong choice.

"Man proposes, but God disposes; neither is the way of man in his own hands." —Thomas a Kempis

Tuesday

St. Paul tells us in the second reading to "live as children of light." What does this mean to you? What is one way that you can live as a child of light today?

"The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world." —John 1:9

Wednesday

In the Gospel, when Jesus healed the blind man, he didn't do it instantly, but put clay on the man's eyes and told him to go to the Pool of Siloam and return. Only then was he able to see. If there is an unanswered prayer in your life, is there something God is telling you to do before it can manifest in your life?

"We are uncertain of the next step, but we are certain of God. Immediately we abandon to God, and do the duty that lies nearest, and he packs our life with surprises all the time....Leave the whole thing to him, it is gloriously uncertain how he will come in, but he will come." —Oswald Chambers

Thursday

Today read the responsorial psalm and list all the things that the psalmist says God will do for us. (For example, "Give us repose.")

"Christ is our hope, our cleansing and sanctification, our resurrection, life, and repose. He alone is what we all need." —St. John of Kronstadt

Friday

In this week's video presentation, we looked at some ways we can be "spiritually blind." Look over your responses to Sunday's questions. Do you have any new insights into areas where you may need God's illuminating light? Pray over each one.

"What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like." —St. Augustine of Hippo

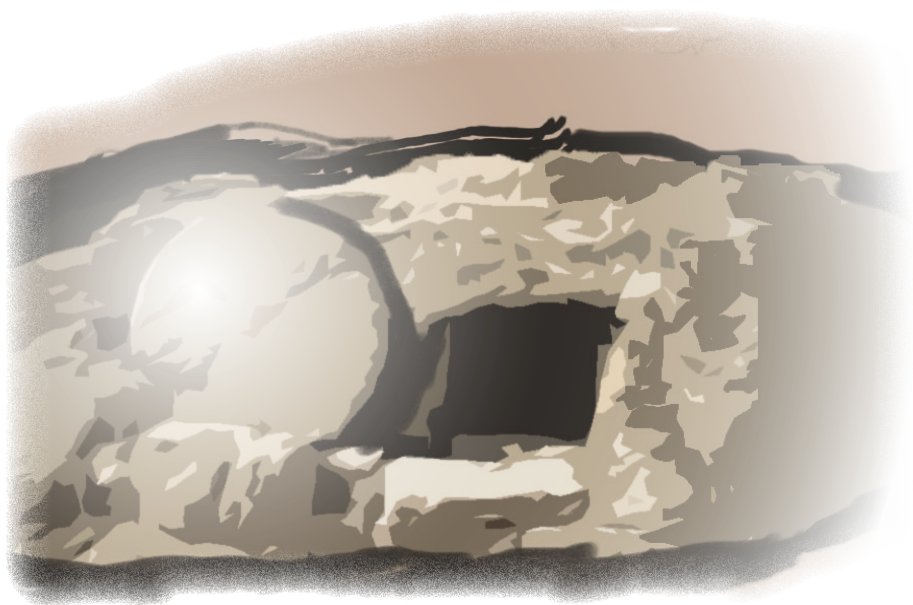
Saturday

After the blind man returned to Jesus, he proclaimed, "I do believe, Lord." Do you believe? Ask God to strengthen your faith and resolve your doubts.

"I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God... And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father..." —from The Creed

5TH SUNDAY
OF LENT

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

FIRST READING

~Ezekiel 37:12-14~

Thus says the Lord GOD: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and have you rise from them, O my people! I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the LORD. I have promised, and I will do it, says the LORD.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8~

R/ With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;
LORD, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to my voice in supplication.

R/

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,
LORD, who can stand?
But with you is forgiveness,
that you may be revered.

R/

I trust in the LORD;
my soul trusts in his word.
More than sentinels wait for the dawn,
let Israel wait for the LORD.



R/

For with the LORD is kindness
and with him is plenteous redemption;
and he will redeem Israel
from all their iniquities.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 8:8-11~

Brothers and sisters: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the One who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you.

GOSPEL

~John 11:1-45~

[Short Version: John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45;
text in brackets and indented is omitted]

[**Now a man was ill**, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill.]

[So] the sisters [of Lazarus] sent word to him saying, “Master, the one you love is ill.” When Jesus heard this he said, “This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

[The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?” Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” He said this, and then told them, “Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him.” So the disciples said to him, “Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved.” But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. So then Jesus said to them clearly, “Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him.” So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go to die with him.”]

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

[Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.]

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise.” Martha said to him, “I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.”

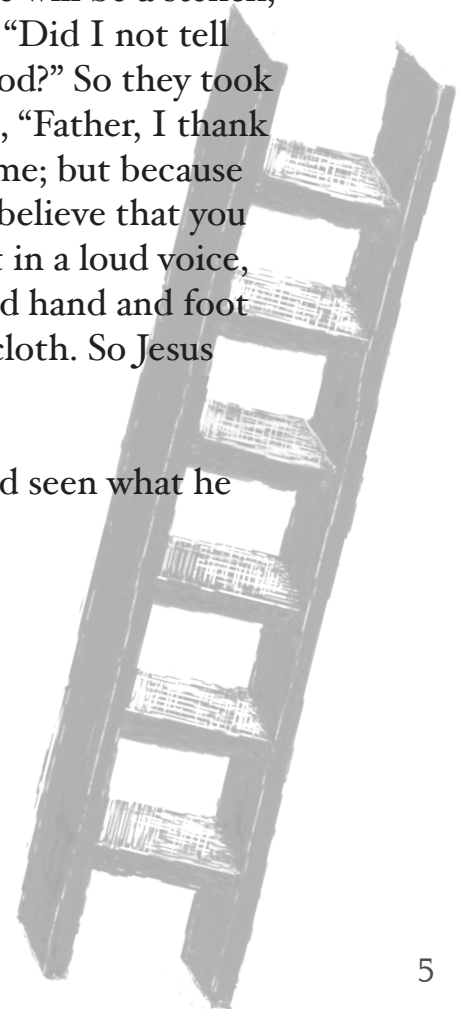
[When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, “The teacher is here and is asking for you.” As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him. For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him. So when the

Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping,]

he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see." And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.



Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

God, heavenly Father,
look upon me and hear my prayer
during this holy Season of Lent.
By the good works you inspire,
help me to discipline my body
and to be renewed in spirit.
Without you I can do nothing.
By your Spirit help me to know what is right
and to be eager in doing your will.
Teach me to find new life through penance.
Keep me from sin, and help me live
by your commandment of love.
God of love, bring me back to you.
Send your Spirit to make me strong
in faith and active in good works.
May my acts of penance bring me your forgiveness,
open my heart to your love,
and prepare me for the coming feast
of the Resurrection of Jesus.
Amen.

LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down notes on the video reflection in the space below.



LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

How does the story of the raising of Lazarus show both Jesus' human and divine natures?

How do sins that others have committed bind us?

How can Jesus free us from them?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Think back over your life and choose a moment where, through your sin or the sin of another, you might have become spiritually dead and entombed like Lazarus. Feel the way the sin binds you, entrapping you in ways that prevent you from being the whole and holy person God created you to be. Take a few moments to consider that sin and all the ways it has hindered your life. Ask God to forgive you if it is a sin you committed. If the sin has been committed against you, ask God to forgive that person and to help you let it go. Imagine Jesus calling your name and saying to you what he said to Lazarus: "Come out!" Hear him say that you are now untied and free.

RESOLUTION:

This week, ask Jesus to release you from any sin or hurt that might still be binding you. Consider receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation for forgiveness and for the grace to be unbound.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Jesus,
Like Martha, “I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God,
the one who is coming into the world,”
but sometimes I find it hard to see a way to change.
Help me to trust more fully in your desire to free me
and to give me a new, restored life
in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

“He who walking on the sea could calm the bitter waves, who gives life to the dying seeds of the earth; he who was able to loose the mortal chains of death, and after three days' darkness could bring again to the upper world the brother for his sister Martha: he, I believe, will make Damasus rise again from the dust.”

**—St. Damasus
(from an epitaph written for himself)**

Monday

In the first reading, Ezekiel quotes God: “I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord.” What is something that you have asked of God? Do you believe that he will do it? Why or why not? If you are doubting, ask for the gift of increased faith.

“Who except God can give you peace? Has the world ever been able to satisfy the heart?” —St. Gerard Majella

Tuesday

The responsorial psalm this week says, “I trust in the Lord; my soul trusts in his word.” Set aside 10 to 15 minutes today to read God’s Word and promises in Scripture. (The psalms are a good place to start.)

“The reading of Scripture is like the foundation for the building up of our hope. It is the means to consolidate our faith, the food for our charity, and our unerring guide on the way of life.”
—St. Cyprian, Treatise of Prayer

Wednesday

Read the second reading of St. Paul to the Romans. Do you have the Spirit of God dwelling within you? Ask him to make his presence known in your life in a visible and concrete way.

“Let us therefore give ourselves to God with a great desire to begin to live thus, and beg him to destroy in us the life of the world of sin, and to establish his life within us.” —St. John Eudes

Thursday

We all have parts of our lives where we are not living as fully and abundantly as we might. List one or two areas where you know you are not living up to your full potential in Christ, such as being patient with family members, taking care of your body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit, or being willing to give of your time, talent, and treasure. Commit to working on that area for the remaining days of Lent.

“Not the goods of the world, but God. Not riches, but God. Not honors, but God. Not distinction, but God. Not dignities, but God. Not advancement, but God. God always and in everything.” —St. Vincent Pallotti

Friday

Read the long form of this week's Gospel. Pick out one sentence that has special meaning to you. Memorize it and repeat it to yourself throughout the day.

“When you read God's Word, you must constantly be saying to yourself, ‘It is talking to me, and about me.’” —Soren Kierkegaard

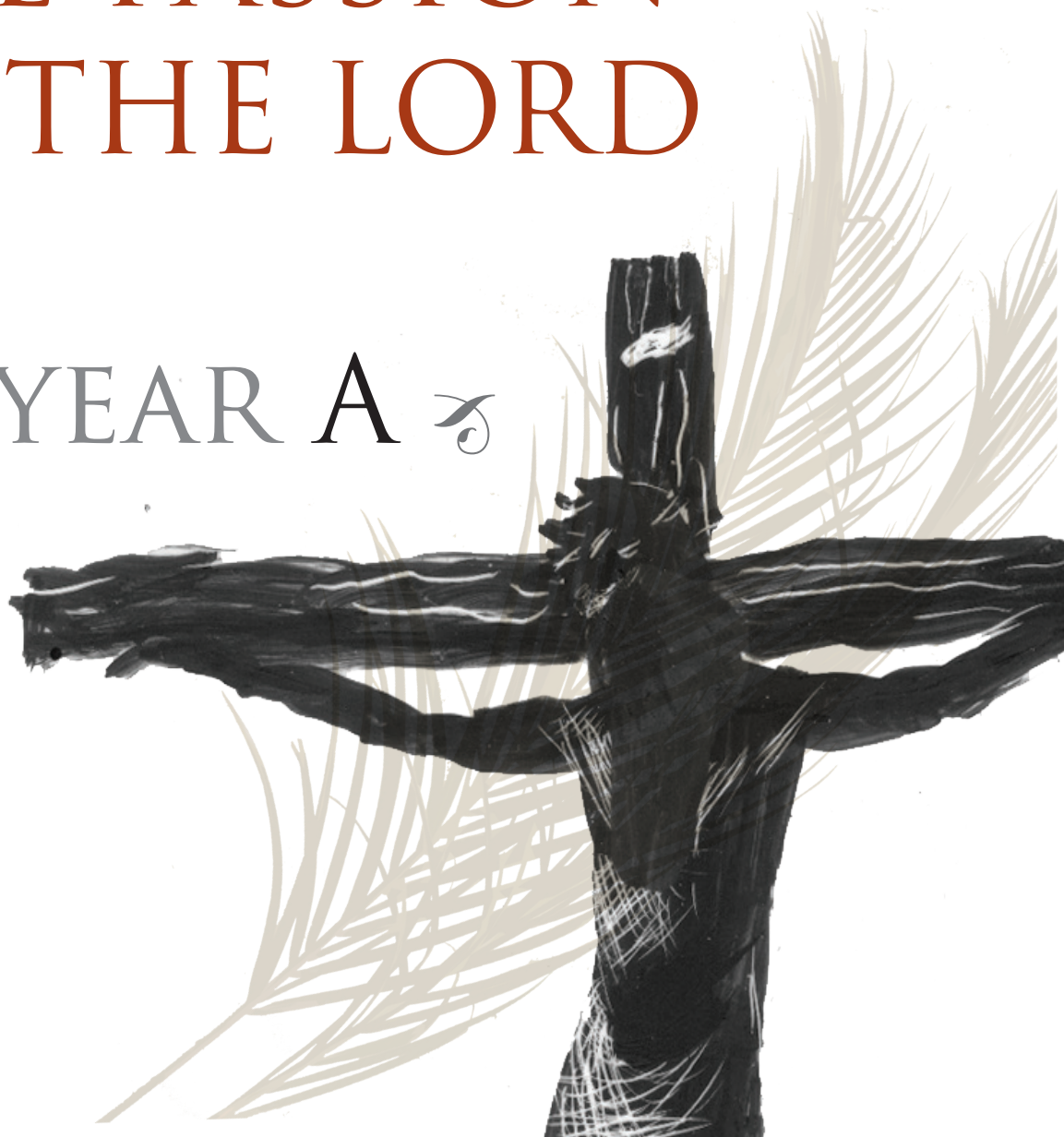
Saturday

“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!” Is there something in the depths of your soul that is crying out to the Lord? Write down your deepest fears and greatest desires, and then turn them over to the Lord.

“Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors to Christ.” —Pope St. John Paul II

PALM SUNDAY OF
THE PASSION
OF THE LORD

✧ YEAR A ✧



NOT MY WILL

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 50:4-7~

The Lord GOD has given me
a well-trained tongue,
that I might know how to speak to the weary
a word that will rouse them.
Morning after morning
he opens my ear that I may hear;
and I have not rebelled,
have not turned back.
I gave my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;
my face I did not shield
from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help,
therefore I am not disgraced;
I have set my face like flint,
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24~

R/ My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All who see me scoff at me;
they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:
“He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, if he loves him.”

R/

Indeed, many dogs surround me,
a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;
they have pierced my hands and my feet;
I can count all my bones.

R/

They divide my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.
But you, O LORD, be not far from me;
O my help, hasten to aid me.

R/

I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:
“You who fear the LORD, praise him;
all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

R/

SECOND READING

~Philippians 2:6-11~

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, / did
not regard equality with God something to be grasped. /
Rather, he emptied himself, / taking the form of a slave, /
coming in human likeness; / and found human in appearance, / he
humbled himself, / becoming obedient to the point of death, / even
death on a cross. / Because of this, God greatly exalted him / and
bestowed on him the name / which is above every name, / that at
the name of Jesus / every knee should bend, / of those in heaven
and on earth and under the earth, / and every tongue confess that /
Jesus Christ is Lord, / to the glory of God the Father.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 26:14-27:66~

[Short Version 27:11-54]

N. One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said,

V. *“What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?”*

N. They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said,

V. *“Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?”*

N. He said,

† *“Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The teacher says, ‘My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples.’”*”

N. The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said,

† *“Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”*

N. Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another,

V. *“Surely it is not I, Lord?”*

N. He said in reply,

† *“He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me. The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born.”*

N. Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply,

V. *“Surely it is not I, Rabbi?”*

N. He answered,

† *“You have said so.”*

N. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said,

† *“Take and eat; this is my body.”*

N. Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,

† *“Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.”*

N. Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

N. Then Jesus said to them,

† *“This night all of you will have your faith in me shaken, for it is written: I will strike the shepherd, / and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed; / but after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee.”*

N. Peter said to him in reply,

V. *“Though all may have their faith in you shaken, mine will never be.”*

N. Jesus said to him,

† *“Amen, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.”*

N. Peter said to him,

V. *“Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you.”*

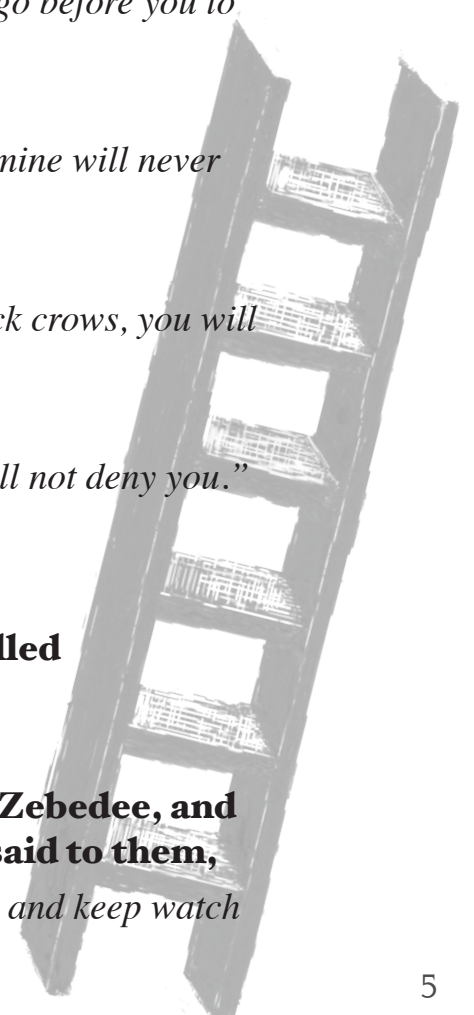
N. And all the disciples spoke likewise.

N. Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples,

† *“Sit here while I go over there and pray.”*

N. He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them,

† *“My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.”*



N. He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying,

† *“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.”*

N. When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter,

† *“So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

N. Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again,

† *“My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!”*

N. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them,

† *“Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand.”*

N. While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a large crowd, with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people. His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying,

V. *“The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him.”*

N. Immediately he went over to Jesus and said,

V. *“Hail, Rabbi!”*

N. and he kissed him. Jesus answered him,

† *“Friend, do what you have come for.”*

N. Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. And behold, one of those who accompanied Jesus put his hand to his sword, drew it, and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him,

† *“Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled which say that it must come to pass in this way?”*

N. At that hour Jesus said to the crowds,

† *“Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me. But all this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled.”*

N. Then all the disciples left him and fled.

N. Those who had arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter was following him at a distance as far as the high priest’s courtyard, and going inside he sat down with the servants to see the outcome. The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward who stated,

C. “This man said, ‘I can destroy the temple of God and within three days rebuild it.’”

N. The high priest rose and addressed him,

V. “Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?”

N. But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him,

V. “I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

N. Jesus said to him in reply,

† *“You have said so. But I tell you: From now on you will see ‘the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power’ and ‘coming on the clouds of heaven.’”*

N. Then the high priest tore his robes and said,

V. “He has blasphemed! What further need have we of witnesses? You have now heard the blasphemy; what is your opinion?”

N. They said in reply,

C. “He deserves to die!” Then they spat in his face and struck him,

while some slapped him, saying, “Prophecy for us, Christ: who is it that struck you?”

N. Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said,

C. “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.”

N. But he denied it in front of everyone, saying,

V. “I do not know what you are talking about!”

N. As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there,

C. “This man was with Jesus the Nazorean.”

N. Again he denied it with an oath,

V. “I do not know the man!”

N. A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter,

C. “Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away.”

N. At that he began to curse and to swear,

V. “I do not know the man.”

N. And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: “Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.” He went out and began to weep bitterly.

N. When it was morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, deeply regretted what he had done. He returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying,

V. “I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.”

N. They said,

C. “What is that to us? Look to it yourself.”

N. Flinging the money into the temple, he departed and went off and hanged himself. The chief priests gathered up the money, but said,

C. “It is not lawful to deposit this in the temple treasury, for it is the price of blood.”

N. After consultation, they used it to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why that field even today is called the Field of Blood. Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of a man with a price on his head, a price set by some of the Israelites, and they paid it out for the potter’s field just as the Lord had commanded me.

N. [Now Jesus stood before the governor, Pontius Pilate, who questioned him,] and he questioned him,

V. “Are you the king of the Jews?”

N. Jesus said,

† “You say so.”

N. And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him,

V. “Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?”

N. But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them,

V. “Which one do you want me to release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus called Christ?”

N. For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over. While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a

dream today because of him.” The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus. The governor said to them in reply,

V. “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

N. They answered,

C. “Barabbas!”

N. Pilate said to them,

V. “Then what shall I do with Jesus called Christ?”

N. They all said,

V. “Let him be crucified!”

N. But he said,

V. “Why? What evil has he done?”

N. They only shouted the louder,

V. “Let him be crucified!”

N. When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying,

V. “I am innocent of this man’s blood. Look to it yourselves.”

N. And the whole people said in reply,

V. “His blood be upon us and upon our children.”

N. Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

N. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying,

C. “Hail, King of the Jews!”

N. They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.

N. As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

And when they came to a place called Golgotha—which means Place of the Skull—, they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall. But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink.

N. After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And they placed over his head the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying,

C. “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, and come down from the cross!”

N. Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him and said,

C. “He saved others; he cannot save himself. So he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

N. The revolutionaries who were crucified with him also kept abusing him in the same way.

N. From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

† “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*”

N. which means,

† “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*”

N. Some of the bystanders who heard it said,

C. “This one is calling for Elijah.”

N. Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said,

C. “Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him.”

N. But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.

[Here all kneel and pause for a short time.]

N. And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many. The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said,

C. “Truly, this was the Son of God!”

N. There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. Among them were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

N. When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb

that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb.

The next day, the one following the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said,

C. “Sir, we remember that this impostor while still alive said, ‘After three days I will be raised up.’ Give orders, then, that the grave be secured until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him and say to the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead.’ This last imposture would be worse than the first.”

N. Pilate said to them,

V. “The guard is yours; go, secure it as best you can.”

N. So they went and secured the tomb by fixing a seal to the stone and setting the guard.



Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Passion of Christ, strengthen me!
Strengthen me under the pressure of temptation.
Strengthen me when principle is at stake.
Strengthen me to do your will, my God.
Strengthen me in moments of suffering, in times of loneliness, in
periods of depression. Strengthen me that I may never swerve
from you, dear Christ,
nor weaken through human respect,
through a desire to be popular,
through hope of social distinction.
Strengthen me to accept my cross and carry it generously to the
end.
On the battlefield of life, stand by me that I may never prove a
traitor in the ranks.
Stand by me that I may not be dazzled by the glitter and glow of
the enemy camp.
Amen.

(<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=1687>)

LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.



LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

Dr. Sri says that Jesus’ statement “Thy will be done” tells us something very important about him. What does this statement show us, and why is it important?

In the video, we are told that love always places a demand on us. What is that demand?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Put yourself in the scene of Jesus in the Garden at Gethsemane. You are with the other disciples in the Garden as Jesus leaves you to pray alone. Dimly, through the darkness, you can see him fall prostrate in prayer and you hear him say, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” What do you think as you hear Jesus, the strong, confident man, cry out to the Father to be spared the “cup”? Now imagine that you can say something to Jesus. What would you say? What does he say back to you? Hold those thoughts in your heart for a few minutes.

RESOLUTION:

Is there a bitter “cup” that you are being asked to drink? Perhaps you sense that you should do something that you dread to do—such as admit a fault, apologize to someone, tell someone the full truth about something you’ve been hiding, or confess your sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Or perhaps you are facing some trial with family, an illness or a financial problem. This week, remember Jesus in the Garden and pray for the strength and resolve to do God’s will and accept your cup.

CLOSING PRAYER:

I will look to the LORD;
I will wait for God my savior;
my God will hear me!
Do not rejoice over me, my enemy!
Though I have fallen, I will arise;
though I sit in darkness, the LORD is my light.

—Micah 7:7-8

“If you love, you will suffer. The only way to protect yourself against suffering is to protect yourself against love—and that is the greatest suffering of all, loneliness.” —Peter Kreeft



Monday

This week, plan to read the account of the Passion that was read on Sunday. You may want to divide the reading so that you read the passage that corresponds to each day of the week. Today read Matthew 26:14-16. When in your life do you hand Jesus over?

“We may never be faced with the big decision for or against Christ, but we are faced fifty times a day with the little decisions for or against him.” —Dr. Kevin Hughes

Tuesday

Imagine what it must have been like for Jesus, knowing that in a few days he was going to suffer an agonizing death on the cross. Spend a few minutes in meditation today.

***“The reason we have a life is so that we may lay it down for others.”
—Dr. Janet Haggerty***

Wednesday

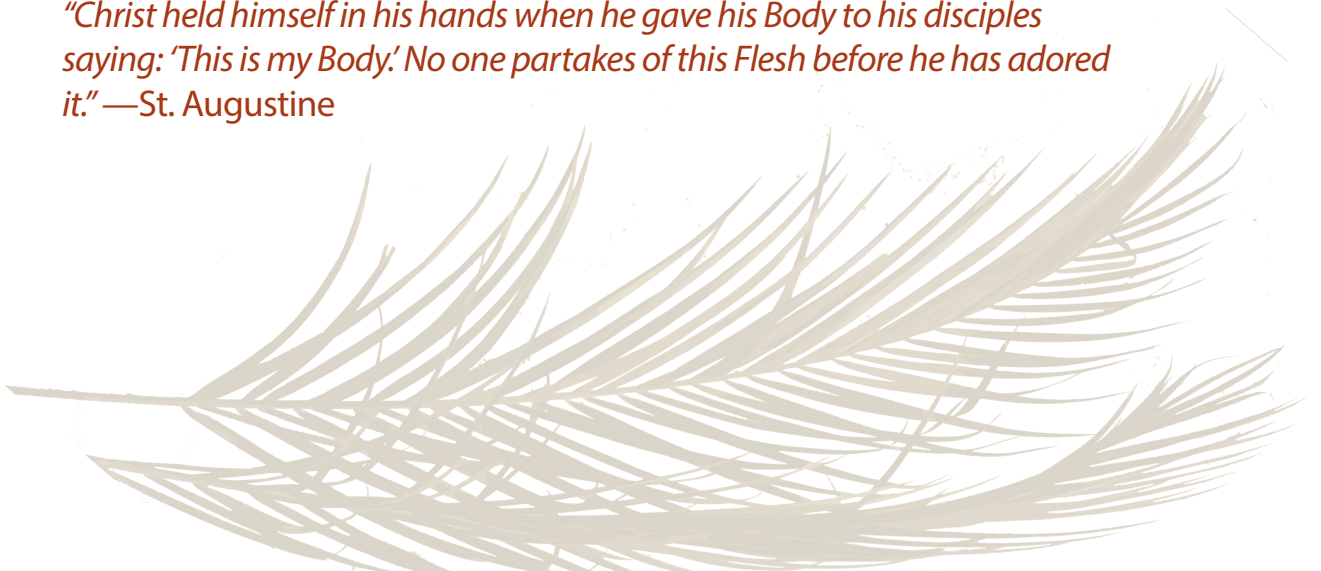
Pray the responsorial psalm today as your evening prayer or mealtime grace.

“God’s plan remains God’s plan despite our sin.” — Christopher West ✓

Thursday

Read Matthew 26:17-35 and Matthew 27:1-10. Attend Holy Thursday services if possible.

“Christ held himself in his hands when he gave his Body to his disciples saying: ‘This is my Body.’ No one partakes of this Flesh before he has adored it.” — St. Augustine



Friday

Read Matthew 27:11-56. Attend Good Friday services if possible.

“Behold Jesus Christ crucified, who is the only foundation of our hope; he is our Mediator and Advocate; the victim and sacrifice for our sins. He is goodness and patience itself; his mercy is moved by the tears of sinners, and he never refuses pardon and grace to those who ask it with a truly contrite and humbled heart.”

—St. Charles Borromeo

Saturday

Read Matthew 27:57-66. Attend the Easter Vigil Mass if possible.

“God passionately desires and ardently yearns for our salvation....Nothing is greater than this: that the blood of God was poured out for us.”

—Pope St. John Paul II

EASTER SUNDAY

SOLEMNITY OF THE
RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

✧ YEAR A ✧



HE IS RISEN

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR EASTER SUNDAY

FIRST READING

~Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43~

Peter proceeded to speak and said: “You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23~

R/ This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

or: Alleluia.

R/

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his mercy endures forever.
Let the house of Israel say,
“His mercy endures forever.”

R/

“The right hand of the LORD has struck with power;
the right hand of the LORD is exalted.
I shall not die, but live,
and declare the works of the LORD.”

R/

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.

R/

SECOND READING

~Colossians 3:1-4~

Brothers and sisters: If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.

Or Optional Second Reading

1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

Brothers and sisters: Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

GOSPEL

~John 20:1-9~

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, I believe:
 I wish to believe in thee.
 Lord, let my faith be full and unreserved,
 and let it penetrate my thought,
 my way of judging Divine things and human things.
 Lord, let my faith be joyful
 and give peace and gladness to my spirit,
 and dispose it for prayer with God
 and conversation with men,
 so that the inner bliss of its fortunate possession
 may shine forth in sacred and secular conversation.
 Lord, let my faith be humble and not presume
 to be based on the experience of my thought and of my feeling;
 but let it surrender to the testimony of the Holy Spirit,
 and not have any better guarantee than in docility to Tradition
 and to the authority of the magisterium of the Holy Church.
 Amen.

—Pope Paul VI



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

Who forgot that Jesus said he would rise again? Who remembered?

How did the presenter define *faith*? How did he define *hope*?

Who does the presenter suggest was the first person to see the Risen Lord? Why might that person have been the first?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture yourself in a room with the other disciples early on that first Easter Sunday. Suddenly Mary Magdalene bursts through the door and announces that someone has taken Jesus's body out of the tomb. What is your first thought? Would you remember that Jesus said he would rise again on the third day? What would you do in response to this announcement?

RESOLUTION:

Sometimes we say that we believe Jesus rose from the dead without really thinking about what we are saying. Take some time to prayerfully consider what it means to you in your daily life that Jesus has truly conquered death and is alive.

CLOSING PRAYER:

We do not pretend that life is all beauty. We are aware of darkness and sin, of poverty and pain. But we know Jesus has conquered sin and passed through his own pain to the glory of the Resurrection. And we live in the light of his Paschal Mystery - the mystery of his Death and Resurrection. "We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!" We are not looking for a shallow joy but rather a joy that comes from faith.

(Pope St. John Paul II, Angelus, Adelaide, Australia)

"Faith in the Resurrection of Jesus says that there is a future for every human being; the cry for unending life which is a part of the person is indeed answered.... God exists: that is the real message of Easter. Anyone who even begins to grasp what this means also knows what it means to be redeemed."

—Pope Benedict XVI

Monday

In this week's lesson, the presenter talked about how God breathes faith and hope into our lives. How much faith and hope do you have right now? Ask God to increase both in you this Easter week.

*"The cross means there is no shipwreck without hope;
there is no dark without dawn; nor storm without haven."
—Pope St. John Paul II*

Tuesday

St. Paul tells us in the Second Reading, "Think of what is above, not of what is on earth." List some of the things that are "above." Choose one and reflect on what it means in light of the Resurrection.

***"The Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known—it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life."
—Pope Benedict XVI***

Wednesday

Copy the following verse from the Responsorial Psalm onto a card and put it where you can see and read it frequently during the day: “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”

“God, deliver me from sullen saints.”
—St. Teresa of Avila

Thursday

When St. Peter told the crowds about Jesus, the first thing he said was, “He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil...” Do one good thing today in imitation of Jesus.

***“We must give witness and only in this way
will we be able to propagate the Gospel.”***
—Joseph Ti Kary of Taiwan

Friday

The presenter in the video suggested that Mary Magdalene might have been the first person to see the risen Lord. Reflect for a moment on why that might be. Consider how Mary's faith can be a model for your own faith.

“Thus, throughout her life, the Church maintains with the Mother of God a link which embraces, in the saving mystery, the past, the present and the future, and venerates her as the spiritual mother of humanity and the advocate of grace.” —Pope St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*

Saturday

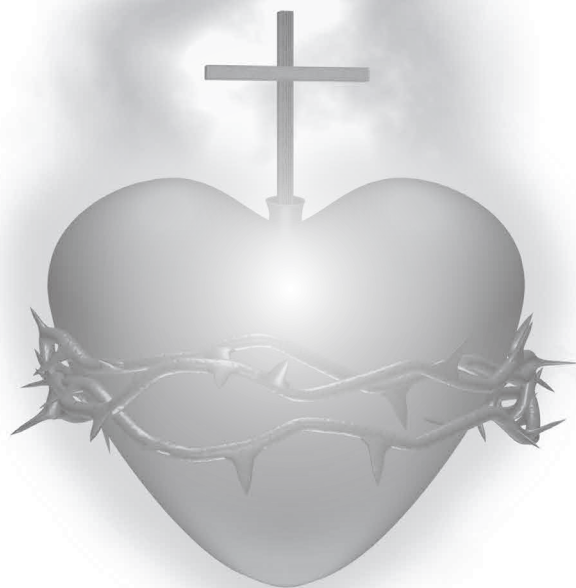
St. Peter admonishes us in the First Reading: “Everyone who believes in him [Jesus] will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.” Make arrangements to go to Confession during this Easter season. In the meantime, say an Act of Contrition.

***O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you,
and I detest all my sins, because of your just punishments,
but most of all because they offend you, my God,
who are all-good and deserving of all my love.
I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace,
to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin.***

2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

✧ YEAR A ✧



PEACE AND MERCY

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING

~Acts 2:42-47~

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24~

R/ Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or: Alleluia.

R/

Let the house of Israel say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let the house of Aaron say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let those who fear the Lord say,
"His mercy endures forever."

R/

I was hard pressed and was falling,
 but the Lord helped me.
 My strength and my courage is the Lord,
 and he has been my savior.
 The joyful shout of victory
 in the tents of the just:

R/

The stone which the builders rejected
 has become the cornerstone.
 By the Lord has this been done;
 it is wonderful in our eyes.
 This is the day the Lord has made;
 let us be glad and rejoice in it.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Peter 1:3-9~

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

GOSPEL

~John 20:19-31~

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he has said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hand and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Eternal Father,
I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity
of your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ,
in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.
For the sake of his sorrowful Passion,
have mercy on us and on the whole world.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

In the video, the presenter, Jules Miles, explains how and why Pope St. John Paul II designed this Sunday as Divine Mercy Sunday. What did she say about this feast?

What does Jesus say when he comes into the midst of the Apostles in the locked room? What is the significance of these words?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine you are in the closed room with the other disciples hiding in fear early on that first Easter Sunday. The door is bolted but suddenly Jesus is standing right before you and says, “Peace be with you.” How do you envision the other Apostles responding to Christ’s appearance? How might you respond?

RESOLUTION:

If we are to have the peace Jesus wants for us, we must learn to trust in his mercy and goodness. Consider one area in your life where you lack peace. How can you increase your peace by increasing your trust? As you contemplate this, pray, “Jesus, I trust in you.”

CLOSING PRAYER:

The closing prayer is from the Chaplet of Divine Mercy:

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself. Amen.

***“We shall steer safely through every storm
so long as our heart is right, our intention fervent,
our courage steadfast,
and our trust fixed on God.”***

—St. Francis de Sales

Monday

Think for a moment about the people in your life—your family, co-workers, neighbors, and friends. To whom can you extend forgiveness and mercy? Even if you can't do so in a personal encounter, take some time in prayer today to offer your forgiveness through Jesus.

*"I demand from you deeds of mercy which are to arise out of love for me.
You are to show mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere.
You must not shrink from this or try to excuse yourself from it."
—From the Diary of St. Faustina*

Tuesday

In the first reading from Acts, we are told that the first Christians lived communally and spent their days in prayer. Since it isn't feasible for most of us to live that way today, how can you pray more in your daily life? List ideas that come to mind. Experiment this week and find one that works for you.

*"I strongly suspect that if we saw all the difference even the tiniest of our prayers to God make, and all the people those little prayers were destined to affect, and all the consequences of those effects down through the centuries, we would be so paralyzed with awe at the power of prayer that we would be unable to get up off our knees for the rest of our lives."
—Peter Kreeft*

Wednesday

This last Sunday was Divine Mercy Sunday. Pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy today. (Find it online at: www.thedivinemercy.org)

***“Oh, how great is the goodness of God,
greater than we can understand.
There are moments and there are mysteries of the divine mercy
over which the heavens are astounded.
Let our judgment of souls cease,
for God's mercy upon them is extraordinary.”
—St. Faustina Kowalska***

Thursday

This week's Responsorial Psalm says, “I was hard pressed and was falling, but the LORD helped me.” Recall a time when you felt “hard pressed” and the Lord helped you. Give thanks for his deliverance. If you are currently feeling hard pressed, ask the Lord to bring you out of your distress and give thanks for what he is about to do.

***“No one, however weak, is denied a share in the victory of the cross.
No one is beyond the help of the prayer of Christ.”
—St. Leo the Great***

Friday

In the Gospel, we hear about Thomas, who would not believe the Lord had risen until he touched the wounds of Christ. Reread that passage and pray for all who doubt the Resurrection (including yourself if you have doubts.) Ask that the Lord grant the gift of faith to all who ask for it.

“Hope means hoping when things are hopeless, or it is no virtue at all. And faith means believing the incredible, or it is no virtue at all.”
—G.K. Chesterton

Saturday

In the Second Reading, Peter says that we should rejoice in our salvation even though we may have to suffer through various trials. Journal what this means to you in your life today. Are you rejoicing? Why or why not?

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”
—1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

✧ YEAR A ✧



OUR EMMAUS ROAD

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING

~Acts 2:14, 22-33~

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed: “You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you, and listen to my words. You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God with mighty deed, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it.

For David says of him:

*I saw the Lord ever before me,
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.
Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted;
my flesh, too, will dwell in hope,
because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,
nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.
You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.*

“My brothers, one can confidently say to you about the patriarch David that he died and was buried, and his tomb is in our midst to this day. But since he was a prophet and knew that God has sworn an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld nor did his flesh see corruption. God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured him forth, as you see and hear.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM
~Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11~

R/ Lord, you will show us the path of life.

or: **Alleluia.**

R/

Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge;
I say to the Lord, "My Lord are you."
O LORD, my allotted portion and my cup,
you it is who hold fast my lot.

R/

I bless the LORD who counsels me;
even in the night my heart exhorts me.
I set the LORD ever before me;
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

R/

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices,
my body, too, abides in confidence;
because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,
nor will you suffer your faithful one
to undergo corruption.

R/

You will show me the path to life,
abounding joy in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Peter 1:17-21~

Beloved: If you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one's works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb.

He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

GOSPEL

~Luke 24:13-35~

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things

just as the women had described, but him they did not see.” And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter in his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?” So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the Eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

The Easter Prayer of St. Hippolytus of Rome (AD 190–236)

Christ is Risen: The world below lies desolate
Christ is Risen: The spirits of evil are fallen
Christ is Risen: The angels of God are rejoicing
Christ is Risen: The tombs of the dead are empty
Christ is Risen indeed from the dead,
the first of the sleepers,
Glory and power are his forever and ever.

LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.



LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

The story of the two disciples meeting Jesus gives us a template for how we encounter Jesus in the Mass. How does the Liturgy of the Word begin our meeting with Jesus?

How is the Liturgy of the Word in the Mass like the experience of the disciples on the way to Emmaus?

Why do you think the disciples were unable to recognize Jesus before the Breaking of the Bread?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are in the inn with the two disciples. During the meal, the man who has been talking to you all day takes bread and blesses it. In that moment, you realize that he is Jesus. He is alive! The women were right—Jesus has been raised from the dead. He disappears, but you think: “Was not my heart burning within me while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?” How do you recognize Jesus today in the Scriptures? In the Eucharist?

RESOLUTION:

As you read Scripture and receive Holy Communion this week, be open to the ways Jesus reveals himself to you.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, we long to recognize your presence in our lives. Help us to feel the burning in our hearts as we read the Scriptures. Enable us to experience you in the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the cup. But most of all, Lord, grant us the ability to be a witness to you as our Savior and Redeemer so that all the world might know that you have entered into the glory of the Father. Amen.

“In one sense we are always traveling, and traveling as if we did not know where we are going. In another sense we have already arrived. We cannot arrive at the perfect possession of God in this life, and that is why we are traveling and in darkness. But we already possess Him by grace, and therefore, in that sense, we have arrived and are dwelling in the light. But oh! How far have I to go to find You in Whom I have already arrived!”
—Thomas Merton, *Dialogues with Silence: Prayers & Drawings*

Monday

In the video, the presenter suggested several Old Testament passages that Jesus might have quoted to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. One of these is Isaiah 53, the suffering servant. Look up this chapter and reflect on how it refers to Jesus's Passion and Death.

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."

—1 Peter 2:24 (RSV: 2CE)

Tuesday

The First Reading from Acts encourages us to "dwell in hope." Are you dwelling in hope? Why or why not? Write a prayer today from your heart telling God exactly what you are feeling.

"Live, then, and be happy, beloved children of my heart, and never forget, that until the day God will deign to reveal the future to man, all human wisdom is contained in these two words, 'Wait and Hope.'"

—Alexandre Dumas

Wednesday

The disciples recognized Jesus in the “breaking of the bread,” the Eucharist. Take a few minutes and journal about your First Holy Communion. If it happened when you were a child and you don’t remember it, write about a time when you received the Eucharist that was especially meaningful to you.

“O Sacrament of Love! O sign of Unity! O bond of Charity! He who would have Life finds here indeed a Life to live in and a Life to live by.”
—St. Augustine

Thursday

In the Second Reading, St. Paul tells us that we have been ransomed by “the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb.” What is one thing that you can give to Christ today in recognition of his sacrifice? A few minutes of your time? A donation to a charity? A kind word to a stranger?

“Above all the grace and the gifts that Christ gives to his beloved is that of overcoming self.”
—St. Francis of Assisi

Friday

Reread Sunday's Gospel. Note all the details of the story such as the day it took place, what the disciples said, etc. Now notice what is missing from the story. Reflect for a moment on why certain details were provided and others were omitted. If you were telling the story, what details would you have included?

***"The road to Emmaus is the road of every Christian,
even of every man and woman.
The Risen Jesus becomes our traveling companion
to rekindle the fire of faith and hope in our hearts
and to break the bread of eternal life."
—Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, April 6, 2008***

Saturday

Pray the Responsorial Psalm aloud. Pause at each line and reflect on what it means to you in your life right now. At the end, ask God to show you the "path to life." Write down whatever insights come to mind.

***"Love God, serve God: everything is in that."
—St. Clare of Assisi***

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING

~Acts 2:14a, 36-41~

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed: “Let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, “What are we to do, my brothers?” Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call.” He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6~

R/ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

or: Alleluia.

R/

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

R/

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
with your rod and your staff
that give me courage.

R/

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

R/

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Peter 2:20b-25~

Beloved: If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.

He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.

When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

GOSPEL

~John 10:1-10~

Jesus said: “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.” Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, “Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.

He guides me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage.

—Psalm 23:1-4



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

When we began our study today, we talked about what our culture thinks it means to be called a "sheep."

What does the presenter say is essential if we are to hear God's voice?

Have you ever had a time when you sensed God's voice—maybe not an audible voice, but you sensed him speaking to you in your soul? Share a bit about that experience.

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine you are with the disciples as Jesus begins to talk. He looks directly at you and says, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep." What does this mean to you? Do you see yourself as one of Jesus's sheep? How is he your gate? Now hear him say to you, "Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture." What kind of pasture does your soul long for?

RESOLUTION:

Set aside some time this week and turn off your computer, your cell phone, and any other electronic devices. Go into a private place where you can meditate on what it means to have Jesus as your shepherd.

CLOSING PRAYER:

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Only goodness and kindness follow me all
the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

—Psalm 23:5-6

***“We are no longer able to hear God;
there are too many frequencies filling our ears.”
—Pope Benedict XVI***

Monday

This week's Responsorial Psalm is one of the most famous in all of Scripture. This week, begin to memorize at least the first verses.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

—Psalm 23:1

Tuesday

St. Peter tells us in the Second Reading that when we suffer for doing what is good, it is a grace before God. Consider an area in your life where you might be suffering right now. Offer your suffering to God. (If you aren't suffering, then give thanks!)

*"If God causes you to suffer much
it is a sign that He has great designs for you
and that He certainly intends to make you a saint.
And if you wish to become a great saint,
entreat Him yourself to give you much opportunity for suffering;
for there is no wood better to kindle the fire of holy love
than the wood of the cross,
which Christ used for His own great sacrifice of boundless charity."*

—St. Ignatius of Loyola

Wednesday

List three things that a good shepherd does for his sheep. Do you believe Jesus does those things for you?

***“Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever,
not even if your whole world seems upset.
If you find that you have wandered away from the shelter of God,
lead your heart back to Him quietly and simply.”***
—St. Francis de Sales

Thursday

In this week’s lesson, we were asked to put aside some time without distractions to listen for God’s voice in our life. If you haven’t already done so, take that time today.

***“Only in silence does man succeed in hearing in the depth of his conscience
the voice of God, which really makes him free.”***
—Pope St. John Paul II

Friday

Jesus said, “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” What does having abundant life mean to you? In what areas is your life already abundant? Where would you like more abundance?

***“God is constantly knocking at the gate of my heart to invite me to go beyond the state I have reached, because my whole life should be a journey on the way to Love.”
—Charles Cardinal Journet***

Saturday

In the Second Reading, St. Peter tells us, “By his wounds you have been healed.” If there is an area in your life that needs healing, pray that through Jesus’s sacrifice on the Cross you might be restored to health.

***“In the love that pours forth from the heart of Christ, we find hope for the future of the world.
Christ has redeemed the world:
‘By his wounds we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:5).”
—Pope St. John Paul II***

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE WAY,
THE TRUTH,
THE LIFE

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING

~Acts 6:1-7~

As the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them. The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19~

**R/Lord, let your mercy be on us,
as we place our trust in you.
or: Alleluia.**

R/

Exult, you just, in the LORD;
praise from the upright is fitting.
Give thanks to the LORD on the harp;
with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises.

R/

Upright is the word of the LORD,
and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right;
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

R/

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
to deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Peter 2:4-9~

Beloved: Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it says in Scripture:

Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame.

Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith:

*The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,*

and

*A stone that will make people stumble,
and a rock that will make them fall.*

They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny.

You are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

GOSPEL

~ John 14:1-12 ~

Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

You are the way, the truth, the life
Without the way there is no going
Without the truth there is no knowing
Without the life there is no growing
Show us the way, that we may go
Teach us the truth, that we may know
Grant us the life, that we may grow
Eternally.
Amen.

—Theodore J. (Ted) Tracy, S.J.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What is the difference between saying that Jesus is “the” way and Jesus is “a” way?

According to the presenter, how can we come to know Jesus, who is the Way?

What were Christians called before they were known as Christians?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

In prayer, imagine Jesus saying the words of today's Gospel directly to you: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Ask Jesus to show you what it means that he is the Way for you. Is there a certain way he wants you to follow him more closely now? Then ask Jesus what it means that he is the Truth for your life. Is there a certain truth—a truth about him, about yourself, or about the Catholic Faith—that he wants you to believe in or understand better? Finally, ask Jesus to show you what it means that he is the Life. Do you seek fullness of life in Jesus or in other things or people of this world?

RESOLUTION:

During the week, refer back to the insights you gained in our prayer time. Reread the Gospel and the quote from St. Thomas Aquinas in your journal. If you have questions about what it means for Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, bring those concerns to him in prayer or talk about them with another member of this group.

CLOSING PRAYER:

We praise thee, O God;
 we acknowledge thee to be our Lord.
 All the earth doth worship thee,
 the Father everlasting.
 To thee all Angels;
 to thee the heavens and all the powers therein.
 To thee the Cherubim and Seraphim
 cry with unceasing voice:
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.
 The heavens and the earth are full
 of the majesty of thy glory.
 Amen

“If then, you ask which way to go, accept Christ, for he is the way....If you ask where to go, cling to Christ, for he is the truth we desire to reach....If you ask where to remain, remain in Christ, because he is the life.”

—St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Ioannem*, Chapter 14, Lecture 2, 1866-1870

Monday

Look over your journal entry after Sunday's prayer time. Expand on one of your thoughts about what it means that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

***"The secret of the missionary is...I am his,
and he is carrying out his work through me."
—Oswald Chambers***

Tuesday

In the Second Reading, Peter says, "Let yourselves be built into a spiritual house." What are some things that you can do in your family to create a "spiritual house"?

***"Let your door stand open to receive him, unlock your soul to him,
offer him a welcome in your mind,
and then you will see the riches of simplicity,
the treasures of peace, the joy of grace.
Throw wide the gate of your heart,
stand before the sun of the everlasting light."
—St. Ambrose***

Wednesday

Jesus tells his Apostles that whoever has seen him has seen the Father. This truth lies at the heart of our Christian faith: Jesus and the Father are one God. When you pray, do you pray to God the Father, Jesus the Son, or the Holy Spirit? Is your prayer different depending on which Person of the Trinity you are addressing?

“He is the Creator and merciful Father; he is the Only-Begotten Son, eternal Wisdom incarnate, who died and rose for us; he is the Holy Spirit who moves all things, cosmos and history, toward their final, full recapitulation. Three Persons who are one God because the Father is love, the Son is love, the Spirit is love.”

—Pope Benedict XVI

Thursday

Do you have trouble trusting the Lord? Pray this week’s Responsorial Psalm out loud and ask for the grace to increase your trust.

“For me to believe is to fling myself into the darkness of the night, following a star I once saw though I do not know where it will take me... to believe is to trust God and place my hope in him.”

—Unknown

Friday

In this week's video, the presenter ended by encouraging us to live our lives so that others will see Christ in us. Today, be as Christ-like as you can to everyone you meet.

***"We must carry Jesus in our hearts to wherever he wants to go,
and there are many places to which he may never go
unless we take him to them.***

***None of us knows when the loveliest hour of our life is striking.
It may be when we take Christ for the first time
to that grey office in the city where we work,
to the wretched lodging of that poor man who is an outcast,
to the nursery of that pampered child,
to that battleship, airfield, or camp..."***

—Caryll Houselander

Saturday

Jesus said that he has prepared a dwelling place in Heaven for each of us. Make a list of five other things that Jesus has promised us, and give thanks for each of them.

***"I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death;
I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press
on to that other country and to help others to do the same."*** —C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING

~Acts 8:5-8, 14-17~

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Christ to them. With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing. For unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed or crippled people were cured. There was great joy in that city.

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20~

R/ Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

or: Alleluia.

R/

Shout joyfully to God, all the earth,
sing praise to the glory of his name;
proclaim his glorious praise.
Say to God, "How tremendous are your deeds!"

R/

“Let all on earth worship and sing praise to you,
sing praise to your name!”
Come and see the works of God,
his tremendous deeds among the children of Adam.

R/

He has changed the sea into dry land;
through the river they passed on foot.
Therefore let us rejoice in him.
He rules by his might forever.

R/

Hear now, all you who fear God, while I declare
what he has done for me.
Blessed be God who refused me not
my prayer or his kindness!

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Peter 3:15-18~

Beloved: Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the Spirit.

GOSPEL

~John 14:15-21~

Jesus said to his disciples: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him. But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And in our souls take up your rest;
Come with your grace and heavenly aid
To fill the hearts which you have made.

O Comforter, to you we cry,
O heavenly gift of God Most High,
O fount of life and fire of love,
And sweet anointing from above.

You in your sevenfold gifts are known;
You, finger of God's hand we own;
You, promise of the Father, you
Who do the tongue with power imbue.

Kindle our senses from above,
And make our hearts overflow with love;
With patience firm and virtue high
The weakness of our flesh supply.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes and reflections on the video in
the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

According to the presenter, why did the Samaritans not fully accept Jesus himself, but then accept Philip when he preached to them?

What is the distinction between Baptism and Confirmation?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture yourself in the crowd in Samaria as Peter and John pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. You watch as they lay hands on the people. Now imagine that Peter comes to you and lays hands on you. What do you tell him? What does he say to you?

RESOLUTION:

Ask the Holy Spirit to enter into your being in a new and profound way this week. Watch for evidence of his presence and give thanks.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And in our souls take up your rest;
Come with your grace and heavenly aid
To fill the hearts which you have made.

Far from us drive the foe we dread,
And grant us your peace instead;
So shall we not, with you for guide,
Turn from the path of life aside.

Oh, may your grace on us bestow
The Father and the Son to know;
And you, through endless times confessed,
Of both the eternal Spirit blest.

Now to the Father and the Son,
Who rose from death, be glory given,
With you, O holy Comforter,
Henceforth by all in earth and heaven.

Amen.

***“Our wish, our object, our chief preoccupation must be to form
Jesus in ourselves, to make his Spirit, his devotion, his affections,
his desire, and his disposition live and reign there.”***

—St. John Eudes

Monday

In the First Reading from Acts, we are told that many people were healed of physical illness and “possession,” which could mean demonic possession, or mental or emotional problems. Do you have something in your life that needs healing? Write it down and pray in faith that the Spirit will bring about healing.

*“There is still time for endurance, time for patience, time for healing, time for change.
Have you slipped? Rise up. Have you sinned?
Cease. Do not stand among sinners, but leap aside.”*

—St. Basil

Tuesday

St. Peter tells us in his epistle to keep our consciences clear. Take some time this week to examine your conscience and see if there are areas of sin that you need to confess. (You can find an examination of conscience at: <http://www.ewtn.com/library>)

*“Which direction do we take? The one prompted by the passions or the one indicated by the star which shines in your conscience?
The Magi heard the answer: ‘In Bethlehem of Judea;
for so it is written by the prophet’... enlightened by these words,
they chose to press forward to the very end.”*

—Pope Benedict XVI

Wednesday

This week's Responsorial Psalm reads: "Say to God, 'How tremendous are your deeds!'" Make a list of all the "tremendous deeds" that God has done for you. Give thanks for each one.

***"The fire of God's love needs to be fed. It must grow each day,
gathering strength in our soul;
and a fire is maintained by burning more things.
If we don't feed it, it may die."
—St. Josemaria Escriva, Christ Is Passing By***

Thursday

In this week's lesson, the presenter talked about how Baptism and Confirmation work together to activate the Holy Spirit in our lives. Today, renew your Baptismal promises.

(Available at: <http://www.catholic.org/prayers>)

***"Believers do not surrender. They can continue on their way to the truth because they are certain that God has created them 'explorers,' whose mission is to leave no stone unturned, though the temptation to doubt is always there. Leaning on God, they continue to reach out, always and everywhere, for all that is beautiful, good, and true."
—Pope St. John Paul II, Fides et Ratio 21***

Friday

Samaria, where Philip preached in the First Reading, is currently part of the West Bank of Palestine. Today, as in Philip's time, the Jews and the area's residents are still in conflict. Pray today for a real and lasting peace in the Middle East.

*"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that."
—Martin Luther King, Jr.,
A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches*

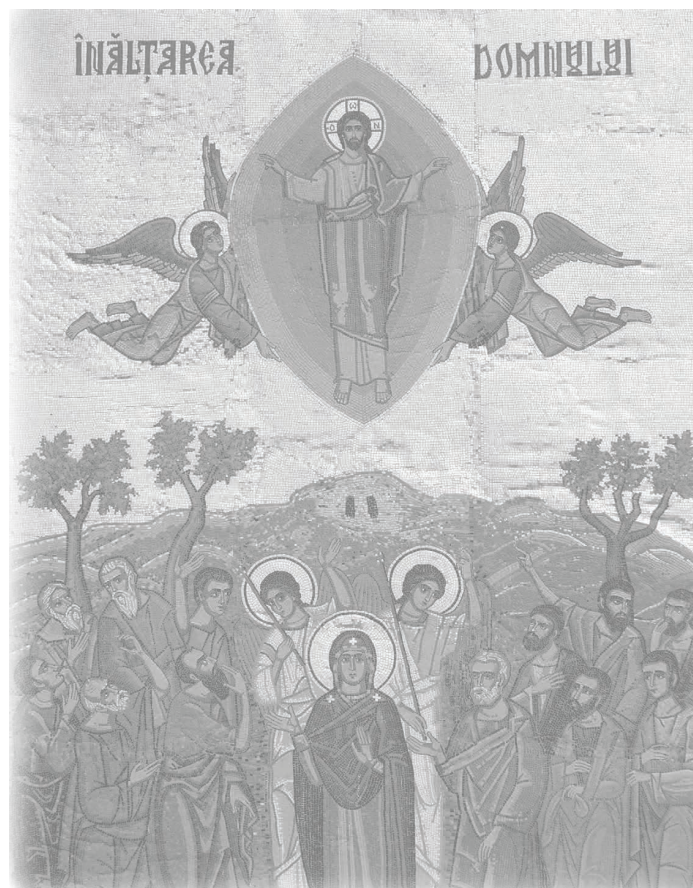
Saturday

Jesus says to us, "If you love me, keep my commandments." Read the Ten Commandments if you haven't recently, and consider how you can live them out in your daily life. If you are feeling adventurous, ask your family which one you need to work on the most in your life!

***"Who except God can give you peace?
Has the world ever been able to satisfy the heart?"
—St. Gerard Majella***

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

✧ YEAR A ✧



THROUGH THE EYES OF FAITH

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

FIRST READING

~Acts 1:1-11~

In the first book, **Theophilus**, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he has chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, through Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9~

R/ God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

or: **Alleluia.**

R/

All you peoples, clap your hands,
shout to God with cries of gladness,
for the LORD, the Most High, the awesome,
is the great king over all the earth.

R/

God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy;
the LORD, amid trumpet blasts.
Sing praise to God, sing praise;
sing praise to our king, sing praise.

R/

For king of all the earth is God;
sing hymns of praise.
God reigns over the nations,
God sits upon his holy throne.

R/

SECOND READING

~Ephesians 1:17-23~

Brothers and sisters: May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right

hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 28:16-20~

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, in this Easter season
we celebrate today your Ascension to God's right hand
as the goal of your Resurrection from the dead.
We thank you that you have not left us orphans,
because you remain with us to the end of time.
May we always be glad
when we think of the many ways you are with us
to the end of time:
in the Eucharist,
in your Word,
in one another,
in your ministers.
May we respond to your presence
by keeping your commandments, above all,
to love one another as you have loved us.
Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

According to Fr. Riley, why did the Son have to ascend to the Father?

What is the work of every baptized Christian, as outlined in the video?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine being with the apostles just before Jesus ascends into Heaven. You hear Jesus say to the disciples, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem ... to the ends of the earth.” Now prayerfully consider those words being spoken directly to you. Imagine Jesus asking you specifically to be his witness in the world. In prayer, ask Jesus how you can be a better witness to his Kingdom on earth today.

RESOLUTION:

Based on this prayerful meditation, come up with one specific thing you can do this week to be a better witness to Christ in your daily life. Then ask Jesus to help you live out this resolution.

CLOSING PRAYER:

O Almighty God,
whose blessed Son our Savior Jesus Christ ascended far above all
heavens that he might fill all things:
Mercifully give us faith to perceive that,
according to his promise, he abides with his Church on earth,
even unto the end of the ages;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

***“Let us therefore give ourselves to God with a great desire to begin
to live thus, and beg him to destroy in us the life of the world of sin,
and to establish his life within us.”***

—St. John Eudes

Monday

Jesus told us that he would be with us until the end of the age. Do you think that people really believe Jesus is with us? Do you really believe he is with you right now?

“Before I come as the just judge, I am coming first as the King of Mercy.”
—St. Faustina, quoting a vision of Jesus

Tuesday

As the Easter season draws to a close, choose one activity that you will do daily that will deepen and strengthen your relationship with the Lord. (For example, pray the Rosary daily like Pope Francis; read a passage of Scripture every morning; abstain from meat on all Fridays, not just those in Lent.)

“Give me an army saying the rosary and I will conquer the world.”
—Blessed Pope Pius IX

Wednesday

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul says that we should ask for a “Spirit of wisdom” so that we might have “knowledge” of God. Consider the difference between wisdom and knowledge and how that affects your relationship with God.

“We are only syllables of the perfect Word.”
—Caryll Houselander

Thursday

The Responsorial Psalm urges us to sing praise to God. Today (maybe in your car!) sing a song of praise to the Lord. The next time you are at Mass, sing as if you mean it!

“Bis orat qui bene cantat.” (Who sings well pray twice.)
—St. Augustine of Hippo

Friday

In the video presentation, we were reminded that we all have a special calling, a vocation, that allows us to serve the Lord. List some of your talents and abilities, and think about ways that you might use them to serve in your parish.

“Creating the human race in His own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation ... of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.”
—Pope St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 11

Saturday

Did you know that in case of emergency, anyone can baptize? Read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1256 and memorize the baptismal formula, found below.

“N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE WORK OF THE FATHER

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING

~Acts 1:12-14~

After Jesus had been taken up to heaven, the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away.

When they entered the city, they went to the upper room where they were staying—Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 27:1, 4, 7-8~

**R/I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in
the land of the living.**

or: **Alleluia.**

R/

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid?

R/

One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek:
to dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
that I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD
and contemplate his temple.

R/

Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call;
have pity on me, and answer me.
Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Peter 4:13-16~

Beloved: Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let no one among you be made to suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as an intriguer. But whoever is made to suffer as a Christian should not be ashamed but glorify God because of the name.

GOSPEL

~John 17:1-11a~

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that your son may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

“I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world while I am coming to you.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God,
We come before you now, with all our needs, our hopes, our
dreams, our sorrows.
We want to do the work you have given us.
We want to love the people you have placed in our lives.
We want to become the men and women
you have created us to be.
But we cannot do these things alone.
We need you to help us, to guide us, to strengthen us.
Come now, Lord God,
And enter into our lives in a new and powerful way
So that we can become all that you desire for us.
Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

*Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the
space below.*

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

**According to the presenter, what is the “work” that Jesus
believed he was given by the Father?**

How is the work the Father gives us related to Jesus's own work?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine Jesus praying to the Father the prayer from today's Gospel reading specifically for you. He says to the Father: "I do not pray for the world but for the one you have given me, because (insert your name) is yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in (insert your name)." What goes through your mind as you hear this prayer? How does it feel to know that Jesus is praying for you right now? What would you want Jesus to ask the Father on your behalf?

RESOLUTION:

This week, whenever you are tempted by fear, discouragement or doubt, remember that Jesus is praying for you before the Father. Allow that thought to drive out any negative feelings or emotions.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Our Father, Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name;
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

“Don’t get upset with your imperfections. It’s a great mistake because it leads nowhere—to get angry because you are angry, upset at being upset, depressed at being depressed, disappointed because you are disappointed. So don’t fool yourself. Simply surrender to the power of God’s love, which is always greater than our weakness.”

—St. Francis De Sales

Monday

In this week's video, we reflect on the work the Father has given us, which involves our relationships with others. List the five most important people in your life. How are you being a witness of God's love and grace to them?

***"There are no ordinary people.
You have never talked to a mere mortal.
Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal,
and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat.
But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry,
snub and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors."
—C.S. Lewis***

Tuesday

Think about what you do for work. Is your work the same as your vocation? Think of some ways that you can make your work be a deeper reflection of your faith.

***"What the soul is in the body, let Christians be in the world."
—St. John Chrysostom***

Wednesday

In the epistle, Peter talks about suffering. He says that not all suffering is admirable, only that suffering that comes from being a Christian. Examine the areas in your life where you are suffering. If your pain isn't because you are being a Christian witness, ask God to help you correct any behavior that is creating pain and ask him to remove any suffering that isn't in his will.

***"With thy very wounds I will heal thee."
—Talmud***

Thursday

In the First Reading, we are told that the Apostles and the holy women gathered in an upper room to pray. What do you think they were praying for? Let your imagination take you into that scene, and pray along with them.

***"The prayer of a Christian is personal,
but it should not be isolated.
Whenever we prayer the Our Father we immediately
increase and amplify the Communion of the Saints."
—Francis Fernandez, In Conversation with God***

Friday

We all have desires buried deep in our hearts. Today, bring your deepest desire to the Lord. Be honest with him; he already knows what you want and is waiting for you to ask.

***"Hear my voice, LORD, when I call; have mercy on me and answer me."
—Psalm 27:7***

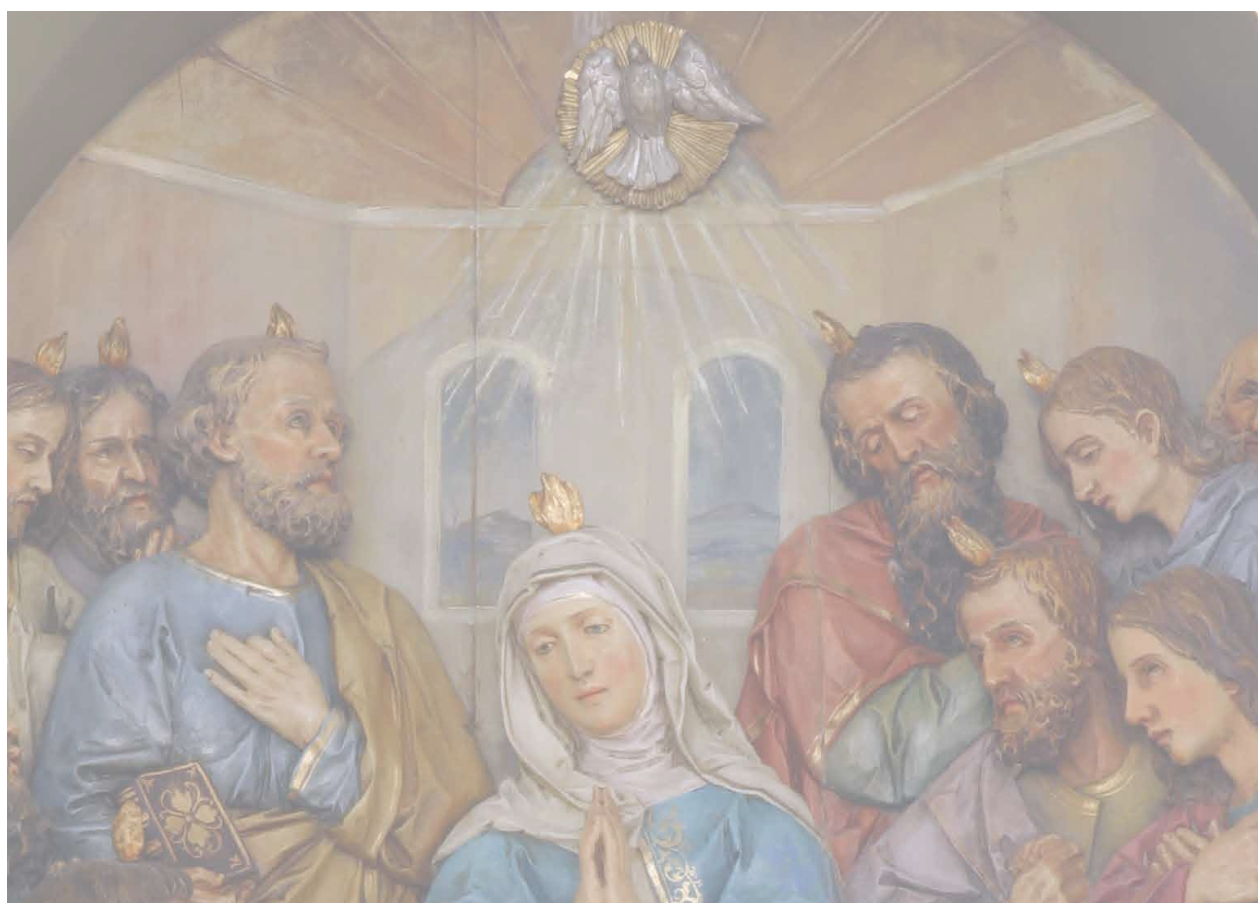
Saturday

If you could do only one more thing in your life, what would that be? Who would you be with? What would you say? None of us know how much longer we have to be in the world, so don't put off the good you know you should do.

***"If I have achieved anything in my life, it is because
I have not been embarrassed to talk about God."
—Dorothy Day***

PENTECOST SUNDAY

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE HOLY SPIRIT

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR PENTECOST SUNDAY

FIRST READING

~Acts 2:1-11~

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34~

**R/ Lord, send out your Spirit,
and renew the face of the earth.**

Or: Alleluia.

R/

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!
How manifold are your works, O Lord!
the earth is full of your creatures.

R/

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may
the LORD be glad in his works!
Pleasing to him be my theme;
I will be glad in the LORD.

R/

If you take away their breath, they perish
and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13~

Brothers and sisters: No one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

GOSPEL

~John 20:19-23~

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Holy Spirit,
Divine Consoler,
I adore You as my true God,
with God the Father and God the Son.
I adore You and unite myself to the adoration
You receive from the angels and saints.
I give You my heart
and I offer my ardent thanksgiving
for all the grace which
You never cease to bestow on me.
Amen.
—St. Alphonsus Liguori



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes and reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

According to Father Riley, *what is the Holy Spirit?*

Who is the Holy Spirit?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

“The Spirit makes one man a teacher of divine truth, inspires another to prophesy, gives another the power of casting out devils, enables another to interpret holy Scripture. The Spirit strengthens one man’s self-control, shows another how to help the poor, teaches another to fast and lead a life of asceticism, makes another oblivious to the needs of the body, trains another for martyrdom. His action is different in different people, but the Spirit himself is always the same.” —St. Cyril of Jerusalem

What action of the Holy Spirit that St. Cyril mentions do you notice most in your life? What action of the Spirit do you want to allow more into your life? Spend a few minutes in silent prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you in that way.

RESOLUTION:

Once you have determined a potential gift of the Spirit in your life, consider ways that you might bring that gift into fullness in your family, your work, and your parish.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Father,
Through Cyril of Jerusalem
you led your Church to a deeper understanding
of the mysteries of salvation.
Let his prayers help us to know your Son better
and to have eternal life in all its fullness.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.
Amen.

“The times are bad! The times are troublesome!” This is what humans say. But we are our times. Let us live well and our times will be good. Such as we are, such are our times.”

—St. Augustine

Monday

In the reading from Acts, more than a dozen different places are named. If you have access to a computer, Google these and see just where the people who heard Peter preach came from.

*“Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world.
For, indeed, that’s all who ever have.”*

—Margaret Mead

Tuesday

When Jesus appeared to his disciples after the Resurrection, the first thing he said was “Peace be with you.” Did you realize that we quote Jesus each time we say that in Mass? Next time, at the Kiss of Peace, think of Jesus extending his peace through you.

*“Go forth in peace, for you have followed the good road.
Go forth without fear, for he who created you has made you holy,
has always protected you, and loves you as a mother.
Blessed be you, my God, for having created me.”*

—St. Clare of Assisi

Wednesday

St. Paul teaches that there are many gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. Refer back to this week's video exercise. What gifts did you identify in yourself? Have you thought of ways you can use them more fully?

“The Spirit comes gently and makes himself known by his fragrance. He is not felt as a burden, for he is light, very light. Rays of light and knowledge stream before him as he approaches.”
—St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Thursday

What does it mean to you to be part of the Body of Christ? If you are a part of Christ's own Body, how do you treat yourself? Do you take care of your physical body as well as your mind?

“It can also be said that this ‘body’ reveals the ‘living soul,’ such as man became when God-Yahweh breathed life into him (cf. Gn 2:7).”
—Pope St. John Paul II

Friday

Print this week's Responsorial Psalm on a card and put it on your desk or bathroom mirror where you will see it frequently: "Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth."

"Let us be protectors of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment."
—Pope Francis

Saturday

We often address our prayers to Jesus or God, the Father, but it can be more difficult to pray to the Holy Spirit. Today, focus on the Spirit whenever you pray, and ask that the presence of the Spirit become abundantly apparent in your life.

"The Holy Spirit is the most perfect gift of the Father to men, and yet He is the one gift which the Father gives most easily."
—Thomas Merton

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY

✧ YEAR A ✧



THREE PERSONS—
ONE GOD PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE MOST HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY

FIRST READING

~Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9~

Early in the morning Moses went up Mount Sinai as the LORD had commanded him, taking along the two stone tablets.

Having come down in a cloud, the LORD stood with Moses there and proclaimed his name, "LORD." Thus the LORD passed before him and cried out, "The LORD, the LORD, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." Moses at once bowed down to the ground in worship. Then he said, "If I find favor with you, O LORD, do come along in our company. This is indeed a stiff-necked people; yet pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55~

R/ Glory and praise forever!

R/

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers,
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever;
and blessed is your holy and glorious name,
praiseworthy and exalted above all for all ages.

R/

Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory,
praiseworthy and glorious above all forever.

R/

Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom,
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.

R/

Blessed are you who look into the depths
from your throne upon the cherubim,
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.

R/

SECOND READING

~2 Corinthians 13:11-13~

Brothers and sisters, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the holy ones greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

GOSPEL

~John 3:16-18~

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

O my God, Trinity whom I adore; help me to forget myself entirely that I may be established in you as still and as peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing trouble my peace or make me leave you, O my Unchanging One, but may each minute carry me further into the depths of your mystery. Give peace to my soul; make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling and your resting place. May I never leave you there alone but be wholly present, my faith wholly vigilant, wholly adoring, and wholly surrendered to your creative action.

—Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes and reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

According to the presenter, what is one key to God’s identity, his “mission statement,” so to speak?

What are some qualities of the Trinity that the presenter talks about?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

In the reading from Exodus, we are told that the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and rich in kindness and fidelity. Do you think God is merciful in your life? Slow to anger? In what ways have you experienced God’s kindness and fidelity? How does this description of God’s character help you grow in your relationship with God?

RESOLUTION:

Consider all the ways that God has been gracious, slow to anger, and kind to you. You may want to write down these things this week so that you remember them and can see how God is intimately involved in your life.

CLOSING PRAYER:

O my 'Three,'
my All,
my Beatitude,
infinite Solitude,
Immensity in whom I lose myself,
I surrender myself to you as your prey.
Bury yourself in me
that I may bury myself in you
until I depart to contemplate in your light
the abyss of your greatness.

—Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity

***"The Blessed Trinity is the mystery of mysteries,
before which even the seraphim veil their countenances singing
with astonished wonder their thrice-repeated 'Holy.'"***

—Matthias Joseph Scheeben

Monday

Reread this week's Gospel. Spend some time reflecting on what it means to you that the Father has given the Son for your salvation.

***"The Best ideal is the true and other truth is none.
All glory be ascribed to the holy Three in One."***

—Gerard Manley Hopkins

Tuesday

St. Faustina says that whoever is united to one Person of the Trinity is united to all three. Which Person of the Trinity do you feel the closest to? Which one do you feel the most distant from?

***"I knew more distinctly than ever before the Three Divine Persons,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
But their being, their equality, and their majesty are one.
My soul is in communion with these Three;
but I do not know how to express this in words;
yet my soul understands this well.
Whoever is united to One of the Three Persons is thereby united to the
whole Blessed Trinity, for this Oneness is indivisible."***

—St. Faustina

Wednesday

Although we can never fully understand the mystery of the Trinity, spend some time today thinking about how the love of the Father and the Son is the Person of the Holy Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to grant you wisdom in your daily decision making.

***“O eternal Trinity, you are a deep sea in which the more I seek the more I find,
and the more I find, the more I seek to know you. You fill us insatiably,
because the soul, before the abyss which you are, is always famished;
and hungering for you, O eternal Trinity, it desires to behold truth in your light.
As the thirsty hart pants after the fount of living water,
so does my soul long to leave this gloomy body and see you as you are, in truth.”***
—St. Catherine of Siena

Thursday

Pray this week’s Responsorial Psalm out loud, adding one of the Persons of the Trinity after the word “you.” For instance, “Blessed are you, Jesus, in the temple of your holy glory, praiseworthy and glorious above all forever.”

***“There is a perfect Trinity, in glory and eternity and sovereignty,
neither divided nor estranged.
Wherefore there is nothing either created or in servitude in the Trinity;
nor anything superinduced, as if at some former period it
was non-existent, and at some later period it was introduced.
And thus neither was the Son ever wanting to the Father,
nor the Spirit to the Son;
but without variation and without change, the same Trinity abideth ever.”***
—St. Gregory of Neocaesarea

Friday

Read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 238–248 for more insight into the Church’s teaching about the Trinity.
(The *Catechism* can be found online at <http://ccc.usccb.org>)

***“Before Christ’s coming,
faith in the Trinity lay hidden in the faith of the learned,
but through Christ and the apostles it was shown to the world.”
—St. Thomas Aquinas***

Saturday

The First Reading tells us that God is merciful and slow to anger. Ask God for mercy on your wrongdoing and confess any serious sins.

***“O Trinity, eternal Trinity! Fire, abyss of love ...
Was it necessary that you should give
Even the Holy Trinity as food for souls? ...
You gave us not only your Word
Through the Redemption and in the Eucharist,
But you also gave yourself
In the fullness of love for your creature.”
—St. Catherine of Siena***

THE MOST
HOLY BODY AND
BLOOD OF CHRIST
(CORPUS CHRISTI)

✧ YEAR A ✧



TAKE AND EAT

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST SUNDAY

FIRST READING

~Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a~

Moses said to the people: “Remember how for forty years now the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert, so as to test you by affliction and find out whether or not it was your intention to keep his commandments. He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD.

“Do not forget the LORD, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery; who guided you through the vast and terrible desert with its saraph serpents and scorpions, its parched and waterless ground; who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock and fed you in the desert with manna, a food unknown to your fathers.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20~

R/ Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

or: **Alleluia.**

R/

Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem;
praise your God, O Zion.

For he has strengthened the bars of your gates;
he has blessed your children within you.

R/

He has granted peace in your borders;
with the best of wheat he fills you.
He sends forth his command to the earth;
swiftly runs his word!

R/

He has proclaimed his word to Jacob,
his statutes and his ordinances to Israel.
He has not done thus for any other nation;
his ordinances he has not made known to them.
Alleluia.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Corinthians 10:16-17~

Brothers and sisters: The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

GOSPEL

~John 6:51-58~

Jesus said to the Jewish crowds: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.”



Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from Christ's side, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within thy wounds hide me.
Suffer me not to be separated from thee.
From the malicious enemy defend me.
In the hour of my death call me
and bid me come unto thee,
that I may praise thee with thy saints
and with thy angels,
forever and ever. Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

Have you ever stopped to consider that the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Our Lord?

Does it seem shocking to you that, as Catholics, we believe that we are literally fed by our God?

Can you understand why it would be shocking to others?

What two sacraments did Jesus institute at the Last Supper?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture yourself listening to Jesus. You hear him say that “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.” For a moment put aside what you know about the Eucharist and imagine what might go through your mind when you hear those words. Are you shocked? Horrified? Curious? If you could ask Jesus a question at that moment, what would you ask? Now imagine yourself attending Mass. It’s time to receive the Eucharist and as you approach the altar, think about Jesus’s words. How does this change the way you receive the Eucharist?

RESOLUTION:

The next time you receive Communion, really think about the fact that you are receiving the actual Body and Blood of the Lord, under the species (or appearance) of bread and wine. Make sure that you are in a worthy state (no serious sin) before you receive.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Tantum Ergo Sacramentum

Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the sacred Host we hail;
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing
newer rites of grace prevail;
faith for all defects supplying,
where the feeble senses fail.

To the everlasting Father,
and the Son who reigns on high,
with the Holy Ghost proceeding
forth from each eternally,
be salvation, honor blessing,
might and endless majesty. Amen.

—St. Thomas Aquinas

***“When you approach the tabernacle remember that
he has been waiting for you for twenty centuries.”***

—St. Josemaría Escrivá

Monday

Do you truly believe that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ? Spend a few minutes writing down your innermost thoughts. If you have doubts, be honest and ask for the gift of greater faith. If you have certainty, give thanks.

“If we but paused for a moment to consider attentively what takes place in this Sacrament, I am sure that the thought of Christ’s love for us would transform the coldness of our hearts into a fire of love and gratitude.”

—St. Angela of Foligno

Tuesday

Do you receive Communion more or less routinely? If so, read the words of St. Thomas Aquinas (below) and consider abstaining the next time you are at Mass in order to increase your reverence and devotion.

“If someone knows from experience that daily Communion increases fervor without lessening reverence, then let him go every day. But if someone finds that reverence is lessened and devotion not much increased, then let him sometimes abstain, so as to draw near afterwards with better dispositions.”

—St. Thomas Aquinas

Wednesday

Pray the *Anima Christi* from Sunday's lesson. Pause over each phrase and let its meaning sink into your heart.

*"If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason:
Holy Communion."*

—St. Maximilian Kolbe

Thursday

If your parish or one near you has an Adoration Chapel, set a time to spend an hour (if possible) before the Blessed Sacrament. If your schedule permits, consider setting up a regular, weekly time to spend in Adoration.

***"Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament
is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God
and the one most helpful to us."***

—St. Alphonsus Liguori

Friday

Meditate today on the fact that the only place we can actually see and touch our God is through the Eucharist.

“In this world I cannot see the Most High Son of God with my own eyes, except for His Most Holy Body and Blood.”

—St. Francis of Assisi

Saturday

In preparation for Mass on Sunday, reread your journal and your thoughts about the Eucharist. Pray for a deepening of faith and greater love for Jesus in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

“There is no prayer or good work so great, so pleasing to God, so useful to us as the Mass.”

—St. Lawrence Justinian

12TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



DO NOT BE AFRAID

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~**Jeremiah 20:10-13**~

Jeremiah said: “I hear the whisperings of many: / ‘Terror on every side!
/ Denounce! Let us denounce him!’ / All those who were my friends /
are on the watch for any misstep of mine. / ‘Perhaps he will be trapped;
then we can prevail, / and take our vengeance on him.’ / But the LORD
is with me, like a mighty champion: / my persecutors will stumble, they
will not triumph. / In their failure they will be put to utter shame, /
to lasting, unforgettable confusion. / O LORD of hosts, you who test
the just, / who probe mind and heart, / let me witness the vengeance
you take on them, / for to you I have entrusted my cause. / Sing to the
LORD, / praise the LORD, / for he has rescued the life of the poor /
from the power of the wicked!”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35~

R/ Lord, in your great love, answer me.

For your sake I bear insult,
and shame covers my face.
I have become an outcast to my brothers,
a stranger to my children,
because zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who blaspheme you fall upon me.

R/

I pray to you, O LORD,
for the time of your favor, O God!
In your great kindness answer me
with your constant help.
Answer me, O LORD, for bounteous is your kindness;
in your great mercy turn toward me.

R/

“See, you lowly ones, and be glad;
you who seek God, may your heart revive!
For the LORD hears the poor,
and his own who are in bonds he spurns not.
Let the heavens and the earth praise him,
the seas and whatever moves in them!”

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 5:12-15~

Brothers and sisters: Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all men, inasmuch as all sinned—for up to the time of the law, sin was in the world, though sin is not accounted when there is no law. But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come.

But the gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ overflow for the many.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 10:26-33~

Jesus said to the Twelve: “Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Welcome to our study of *Opening the Word* for the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Let's begin by praying together Saint Thomas Aquinas's "Prayer before Study."

Creator of all things,
 true source of light and wisdom,
 lofty origin of all being,
 graciously let a ray of your brilliance penetrate into the
 darkness of my understanding and take from me the double
 darkness in which I have been born,
 an obscurity of both sin and ignorance.
 Give me a sharp sense of understanding,
 a retentive memory,
 and the ability to grasp things correctly and fundamentally.
 Grant me the talent of being exact in my explanations,
 and the ability to express myself with thoroughness and charm.
 Point out the beginning, direct the progress, and help in
 completion;
 through Christ our Lord. Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA – SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to take notes on the video reflection in the space below.

LECTIO DEVINA — MEDITATION

Why does the presenter in the video say that we shouldn't have fear when faced with difficulties, or even death?

In the video, Patrick gives some examples of how we can deny Jesus without putting up a billboard or writing an editorial. What are some of the ways he mentions?

What are some other ways you can think of?

LECTIO DIVINA – PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Jesus says to us, “Do do not be afraid.” Stop and consider what you fear. Are you afraid of something happening to your family? To your health? Financially? Are you afraid of death? Bring those fears up and then allow yourself to hand them over to Jesus. Hear him say again, “Do not be afraid” as you turn each one over to him. Which one is the most difficult to relinquish? Why?

[Optional second step of this meditation: Now close your eyes and pay attention to your breathing. On each inhale, say to yourself, “Be not afraid.” On each exhale, say, “I trust in you, Jesus.” Continue doing this for the count of ten. When you have finished, open your eyes and write down your thoughts in your journal].

RESOLUTION:

This week, make a deliberate effort not to be afraid and in moments when you find yourself tempted to fear, remember Jesus’s words that you are worth more than many sparrows in God’s eyes.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Psalm 91 (NASB)

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shade of the Almighty,
Say to the LORD, “My refuge and fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”
He will rescue you from the fowler’s snare,
from the destroying plague,
He will shelter you with his pinions,
and under his wings you may take refuge;
his faithfulness is a protecting shield.
You shall not fear the terror of the night
nor the arrow that flies by day,
Nor the pestilence that roams in darkness,
nor the plague that ravages at noon.
Though a thousand fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
near you it shall not come.
You need simply watch;
the punishment of the wicked you will see.
Because you have the LORD for your refuge
and have made the Most High your stronghold,
no evil shall befall you,
no affliction come near your tent.
For he commands his angels with regard to you,
to guard you wherever you go.
With their hands they shall support you,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.
You can tread upon the asp and the viper,
trample the lion and the dragon.
Because he clings to me I will deliver him;
because he knows my name I will set him on high.
He will call upon me and I will answer;
I will be with him in distress;
I will deliver him and give him honor.
With length of days I will satisfy him,
and fill him with my saving power.

“When, on October 22, 1978, I said the words ‘Be not afraid!’ in St. Peter’s Square, I could not fully know how far they would take me and the entire Church. Their meaning came more from the Holy Spirit, the Consoler, promised by the Lord Jesus to His disciples, than from the man who spoke them. Nevertheless, with the passing of the years, I have recalled these words on many occasions.... Why should we have no fear? Because man has been redeemed by God.... The power of Christ’s Cross and Resurrection is greater than any evil which man could or should fear.”

—Pope St. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 1994.

Monday

In this week’s Gospel Jesus says, “Even all the hairs of your head are counted.” The average person has more than 100,000 hairs. Consider that God knows exactly how many hairs are on each person’s head. What does this tell you about God?

“Nothing is far from God.”

—St. Monica

Tuesday

In the First Reading, Jeremiah says, “I hear the whisperings of many: ‘Terror on every side!’” How is this as true today as it was in Jeremiah’s time? What do you think people fear most these days? How can you, as a Christian, help alleviate some of that fear?

“Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1932

Wednesday

This week’s Responsorial Psalm reads, “Lord, in your great love, answer me.” In your journal, write down the deepest request of your heart. Now spend a few minutes, asking God, in his great love, to grant it to you.

“You pay God a compliment by asking great things of Him.”

—St. Teresa of Avila

Thursday

Read this week's epistle from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans. Pick one phrase that stands out to you. Are you puzzled by it? Comforted? Confused? Look it up in a Bible Commentary to gain additional insights. (The USCCB has good commentaries on every book of Scripture. See www.usccb.org/bible.)

“And consider the patience of our Lord as salvation, as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, also wrote to you speaking of these things as he does in all his letters. In them there are some things hard to understand...”

—2 Peter 3:15-16

Friday

In the First Reading, the prophet says, “O Lord of hosts, you who test the just, who probe mind and heart...” Have you allowed the Lord to probe your mind and heart? Are there areas of your life that you try to keep hidden from God? Remember Jesus said, “Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known.” If you have a secret sin, make plans to go to Confession this week.

“In failing to confess, Lord, I would only hide You from myself, not myself from You.”

—Saint Augustine

Saturday

Reread this week’s Gospel and pay close attention to the reasons Jesus says that we should not fear. If you are prone to fear and worry, make a list of the things you are concerned about and date it. Come back to it in a few weeks and see how many of the things that worried you have actually come true.

“Stop entertaining those vain fears.”
—Padre Pio

13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



FINDING OUR LIVES

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~2 **Kings** 4:8-11, 14-16a~

One day Elisha came to Shunem, where there was a woman of influence, who urged him to dine with her. Afterward, whenever he passed by, he used to stop there to dine. So she said to her husband, “I know that he is a holy man of God. Since he visits us often, let us arrange a little room on the roof and furnish it for him with a bed, table, chair, and lamp, so that when he comes to us he can stay there.” Sometime later Elisha arrived and stayed in the room overnight.

Later Elisha asked, “Can something be done for her?” His servant Gehazi answered, “Yes! She has no son, and her husband is getting on in years.” Elisha said, “Call her.” When the woman had been called and stood at the door, Elisha promised, “This time next year you will be fondling a baby son.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM**~Psalm 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19~****R/ For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever,
 through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness.
 For you have said, “My kindness is established forever”;
 in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness

R/

Blessed the people who know the joyful shout;
 in the light of your countenance, O LORD, they walk.
 At your name they rejoice all the day,
 and through your justice they are exalted.

R/

For you are the splendor of their strength,
 and by your favor our horn is exalted.
 For to the LORD belongs our shield,
 and the Holy One of Israel, our king.

R/**SECOND READING****~Romans 6:3-4, 8-11~**

Brothers and sisters: Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him. As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 10:37-42~

Jesus said to his apostles: “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward. And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

I give myself and consecrate to the Sacred Heart
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
my person and my life, my actions, pains and sufferings,
so that I may be unwilling to make use of any part of my being
other than to honor, love and glorify the Sacred Heart.
This is my unchanging purpose, namely, to be all His,
and to do all things for the love of Him,
at the same time renouncing with all my heart
whatever is displeasing to Him.
I therefore take You, O Sacred Heart,
to be the only object of my love,
the guardian of my life,
my assurance of salvation,
the remedy of my weakness and inconstancy,
the atonement for all the faults of my life
and my sure refuge at the hour of death.

Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification before God the Father,
and turn away from me the strokes of his righteous anger.
O Heart of love, I put all my confidence in You,
for I fear everything from my own wickedness and frailty,
but I hope for all things from Your goodness and bounty.

Remove from me all that can displease You or resist Your holy will;
let your pure love imprint Your image so deeply upon my heart,
that I shall never be able to forget You or to be separated from You.

May I obtain from all Your loving kindness
the grace of having my name written in Your Heart,
for in You I desire to place all my happiness and glory,
living and dying in bondage to You.

Amen.

—St. Margaret Mary Alacoque



LECTIO DIVINA – SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to take notes on the video reflection in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

Have you ever experienced a time when you lost your life for the sake of Christ only to find it? In other words, has there been a time when you made a sincere gift of yourself only to find you received more than you gave?

Based on the video and Jesus’s words, what might you say to someone who says they don’t need to belong to a church?

LECTIO DIVINA – PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are with Jesus as he is teaching. Perhaps you are in a courtyard together after having eaten a meal. Jesus has been talking about the price of becoming his disciple and he suddenly says, “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” You aren’t sure you understand, so you take a deep breath and ask, “What do you mean?” Now see Jesus coming to you, looking directly at you and answering you personally. What does he tell you? Listen carefully to his response and then write down whatever comes first to your heart and mind.

RESOLUTION:

Reread what you wrote down after the prayer and choose one concrete action that you can perform with regard to your insight. If you are still struggling with this, resolve to spend a few minutes each day this week praying about it until you receive some clarity from the Lord.

“Even today, some say, ‘Christ yes, the Church no,’ like those who say, ‘I believe in God, but not in priests.’ Nevertheless, it is the Church that brings us Christ and that brings us to God. The Church is the great family of God’s children.”

—Pope Francis

CLOSING PRAYER:

O my God, help me to remember that
I came into this world with nothing,
and shall take nothing from it when I die.
To gain You, I must leave all.
But in loving You,
I already have all good things,
the infinite riches of Christ and His Church in life,
Mary's motherly protection and perpetual help,
and the eternal dwelling place Jesus has prepared for me.

Amen.

—St. Alphonsus Liguori

Monday

Reread Sunday's Gospel, paying particular attention to Jesus's words about taking up your cross and following him. What cross might you be asked to carry today? Are you resisting it?

“Direct your thoughts to... bearing the crosses, little or great, that you will find there. Believe me, this is the most important and least understood point to the spiritual life.”

—St. Francis de Sales

Tuesday

Today, pray for your pastor, your bishop, and for all seminarians follow in the footsteps of the Apostles.

“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

—Matthew 10:40

Wednesday

Reread this week’s First Reading from 2 Kings. Is there something you want done for you that seems impossible? Ask God for his help and blessing.

“Only wonder can comprehend His incomprehensible power.”

—St. Maximus the Confessor

Thursday

St. Paul says in the Second Reading, “Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.” What sin do you need to think of as dead in your life? Make an examination of conscience and then thank Christ Jesus that you no longer need to be a slave to your sins.

“Our Lord loves you and loves you tenderly; and if He does not let you feel the sweetness of His love, it is to make you more humble and abject in your own eyes.”

—St. Pio of Pietrelcina

Friday

We are all asked to sacrifice something in our lives. What is God asking you to give up so that you might have a richer and more abundant life?

“Sacrifice is always the raw material God uses to convert man to love.”

—Father Brian Bransfield

Saturday

Reread your resolution from last Sunday. Have you done the thing you said you were going to do? If not, find some time today to complete it.

“I am very far from practicing what I understand.”

—St. Therese of Lisieux

14TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



LIGHT BURDENS

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Zechariah 9:9-10~

Thus says the LORD:

Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion,
shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king shall come to you;
a just savior is he,

meek, and riding on an ass,
on a colt, the foal of an ass.

He shall banish the chariot from Ephraim,
and the horse from Jerusalem;

the warrior's bow shall be banished,
and he shall proclaim peace to the nations.

His dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14~

R/ I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

R/ or: Alleluia.

I will extol you, O my God and King,
and I will bless your name forever and ever.
Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and ever.

R/

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

R/

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might.

R/

The LORD is faithful in all his words
and holy in all his works.
The LORD lifts up all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 8:9, 11-13~

Brothers and sisters: **You are not in the flesh;** on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you. Consequently, brothers and sisters, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 11:25-30~

At that time **Jesus exclaimed:** “I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Our Father,
Who art in Heaven,
hallowed be Thy name;
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

(<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=216>)



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

The presenter gave one possible explanation for what Jesus was talking about when he referred to things hidden from the wise. What are these hidden things?

What new insights about Jesus's "easy" yoke did you gain from this presentation? What is this yoke?

How has this changed your idea of why he said his burden is light?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Meditate on Jesus' words, "My yoke is easy, and my burden light. What is the heaviest burden you carry now in your life? Envision that burden resting on your shoulders and ask Jesus to help you carry it. Imagine turning the weight over to him. Prayerfully envision Jesus with you, helping you carry your heaviest burden.

RESOLUTION:

Each morning this week, begin your day by asking Jesus to help you carry this burden—and trust that he is truly with you and that he loves you so much he does not want you to carry this on your own.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Jesus,
So often I insist on carrying my burdens all by myself.
I forget or resist asking you for help,
Perhaps because I am afraid that you won't help
Or perhaps because I believe I can do it alone.
Help me to let go of my burdens
And trust that you mean what you said:
That your burden is easy and your yoke is light.
And that you will give me the rest I so long for.
Amen.

“Only the man who follows the command of Jesus single-mindedly, and unresistingly lets his yoke rest upon him, finds his burden easy, and under its gentle pressure receives the power to persevere in the right way. The command of Jesus is hard, unutterably hard, for those who try to resist it. But for those who willingly submit, the yoke is easy, and the burden is light.”

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

Monday

There's an old saying: Let go and let God. What do you need to let go of in your life in order to let God take over?

***“And what is this yoke of yours that does not weary, but gives rest?
It is, of course, that first and greatest commandment:
‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.’”
—St. Robert Bellarmine***

Tuesday

Take some time today to reflect on what meekness and humility have to do with the yoke Jesus talks about. Pray for insights into how to apply this to your life.

***“Our Lord loves you and loves you tenderly; and if he does not let you feel the sweetness of his love, it is to make you more humble and abject in your own eyes.”
—St. Pio of Pietrelcina***

Wednesday

What part of your life needs rest and peace? Your relationships? Your career? Your health? Remember Jesus's words and ask him to enter into the wounded areas of your life.

***"Who except God can give you peace?
Has the world ever been able to satisfy the heart?"
—St. Gerard Majella***

Thursday

In the Second Reading St. Paul says that the Spirit of God dwells within us. How can you know that the Spirit is within you? Spend a few minutes today writing a prayer to the Holy Spirit, either thanking him for being with you or asking him to come into your life.

***"When shall it be that we shall taste the sweetness of the Divine Will in all that happens to us, considering in everything only his good pleasure, by whom it is certain that adversity is sent with as much love as prosperity, and as much for our good? When shall we cast ourselves undeservedly into the arms of our most loving Father in Heaven, leaving to him the care of ourselves and of our affairs, and reserving only the desire of pleasing him, and of serving him well in all that we can?"
—St. Jane Frances de Chantal***

Friday

Each time you are tempted to take back your full burden, stop and ask Jesus to help you remember that he has taken it with him to the tomb.

“Just as Christian came up to the Cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, fell from off his back, and began to tumble down the hill, and so it continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre.

There it fell in, and I saw it no more!”

—John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*

Saturday

Jesus’s teachings can be difficult to understand—and apply—to our lives. Reread this week’s Gospel and make a commitment to trust, even if you don’t understand completely.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

—Proverbs 3:5–6 (RSV)

15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE SOIL OF OUR LIVES

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 55:10-11~

Thus says the LORD:
Just as from the heavens
the rain and snow come down
and do not return there
till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
giving seed to the one who sows
and bread to the one who eats,
so shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
my word shall not return to me void,
but shall do my will,
achieving the end for which I sent it.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 65:10, 11, 12-13, 14~

**R/The seed that falls on good ground will yield a
fruitful harvest.**

You have visited the land and watered it;
greatly have you enriched it.
God's watercourses are filled;
you have prepared the grain.

R/

Thus have you prepared the land: drenching its furrows,
breaking up its clods,
softening it with showers,
blessing its yield.

R/

You have crowned the year with your bounty,
and your paths overflow with a rich harvest;
the untilled meadows overflow with it,
and rejoicing clothes the hills.

R/

The fields are garmented with flocks
and the valleys blanketed with grain.
They shout and sing for joy.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 8:18-23~

Brothers and sisters: I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 13:1-23~

[Short Form—Matthew 13:1-9—omit text indented and in brackets]

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

[The disciples approached him and said, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” He said to them in reply, “Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because they *look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand*. Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says:

*You shall indeed hear but not understand,
you shall indeed look but never see.
Gross is the heart of this people,
they will hardly hear with their ears,
they have closed their eyes,
lest they see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their hearts and be converted,
and I heal them.*

“But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

“Hear then the parable of the sower. The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it, and the evil one comes and steals away what was sown in his heart. The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit. But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.”]



Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

O Jesus, come back into our society,
our family life, our souls
and reign there as our peaceful sovereign.
Enlighten with the splendor of faith
and the charity of your tender heart
the souls of those who work
for the good of the people, for your poor.
Impart in them your own spirit,
a spirit of discipline, order and gentleness,
preserving the flame of enthusiasm
ever alight in their hearts.
May that day come very soon,
when we shall see you
restored to the center of civic life,
borne on the shoulders of your joyful people.
Amen.

—Pope St. John XXIII



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

According to the video, why must we be “ready soil” to receive the Word of God?

Why do you think that Jesus told this parable to the crowd?

Why did he tell it to his disciples?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Are you a hard path, where the birds of doubt devour the seed of faith as soon as it is sown? Do you have in your soul some rocky ground, where the seed of good works sprouts quickly, but soon withers under trial or suffering? Do you have in your soul some thorny soil, in which material possessions and worldly concerns choke off good intentions as soon as they come to you? Or do you have rich soil, ready and willing to accept the Word of the Lord and let it take root to transform your entire life? Now ask Jesus, the Divine Gardener, to help you prepare the soil of your heart and mind in a way that will produce abundant fruit.

RESOLUTION:

If the soil of your life isn't the way you would like it to be, prayerfully ask the Lord about one thing you can do to till the hardness of doubt, remove the rocks of sin, or pull out the thorns of worry and materialism. And then ask God to give you the grace to follow through on this intention this week.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Oh Divine Sower,
Grant that the soil of my heart be rich and fertile,
Ready to receive your word,
Ready to accept your love.
Let me become a garden of your grace
So that I might bear good fruit in this life
And enjoy the bountiful harvest with you in the next. Amen.

“The field of earth and of our human nature is now no longer barren but full of the seed of divine life. But it takes time for the seed to grow, for the Kingdom to come, and we are commanded to pray and work for that coming, that growth, even if we do not yet see the fruits, or even the blossoms, or even the leaves...”

—Peter Kreeft

Monday

Read the parable of the sower in the short form of this week's Gospel, and then read Jesus's explanation in the long form. Compare the two versions. What strikes you the most about Jesus's interpretation to his disciples?

"We cultivate a very small field for Christ, but we love it, knowing that God does not require great achievements but a heart that holds back nothing for self."

—St. Rose Philippine Duchesne

Tuesday

Jesus says that things such as lack of understanding, suffering, worldly anxiety, desire for riches, and tribulations all cause the seed of the Gospel to die in our lives. If any of these are present in your life, pray that they be removed so that you can bear good fruit.

"Prayer reveals to souls the vanity of earthly goods and pleasures. It fills them with light, strength and consolation; and gives them a foretaste of the calm bliss of our heavenly home."

—St. Rose of Viterbo

Wednesday

St. Paul tells us in the Second Reading that all of creation is groaning in labor pains. Today recycle something, turn off a light, or walk instead of drive—do one thing to help the environment.

“To protect Jesus with Mary, to protect the whole of creation, to protect each person, especially the poorest, to protect ourselves: this is a service that the Bishop of Rome is called to carry out, yet one to which all of us are called, so that the star of hope will shine brightly.”
—Pope Francis

Thursday

The prophet Isaiah says, “My word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.” What is the “end” of your words? Guard your tongue today, and make an effort to speak only good and uplifting words.

“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” —
Proverbs 12:18 (RSV: 2CE)

Friday

We are both the soil in which the Gospel is planted and the sower of the seed for others. By your actions and your words, “sow” the seeds of Catholic Truth to everyone you meet—at least for today.

“Let your words teach and your actions speak.”
—St. Anthony of Padua

Saturday

Use the first verse of this week’s Responsorial Psalm as a grace before meals.

***You visit the earth and water it,
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide their grain.
(Psalm 65:9; RSV: 2CE)***

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



FAITH AND PATIENCE

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Wisdom 12:13, 16-19~

There is no god besides you who have the care of all,
that you need show you have not unjustly condemned.
For your might is the source of justice;
your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all.
For you show your might when the perfection of your power
is disbelieved;
and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity.
But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency,
and with much lenience you govern us;
for power, whenever you will, attends you.
And you taught your people, by these deeds,
that those who are just must be kind;
and you gave your children good ground for hope
that you would permit repentance for their sins.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16~

R/ Lord, you are good and forgiving.

You, O LORD, are good and forgiving,
abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.

Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my pleading.

R/

All the nations you have made shall come
and worship you, O LORD,
and glorify your name.
For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds;
you alone are God.

R/

You, O LORD, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity.
Turn toward me, and have pity on me;
give your strength to your servant.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 8:26-27~

Brothers and sisters: The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 13:24-43~

[Short Form—Matthew 13:24-30—omit text indented and in brackets]

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you

want us to go and pull them up?’ He replied, ‘No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

{He proposed another parable to them. “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the ‘birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.’”

He spoke to them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened.”

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: *I will open my mouth in parables, / I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.*

Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” He said in reply, “He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”}

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

God, teach me to be patient,
teach me to go slow.
Teach me how to wait on you
when my way I do not know.

Teach me sweet forbearance
when things do not go right,
so I remain unruffled
when others grow uptight.

Teach me how to quiet
my racing, rising heart,
so I might hear the answer
you are trying to impart.

Teach me to let go, dear God,
and pray undisturbed
until my heart is filled with inner peace
and I learn to know your will. Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What is the common theme in all three of Jesus's parables in this week's Gospel?

Which one of the three parables in today's Gospel (sower and seed, mustard seed, woman with bread) do you relate to the most? Explain how the parable might apply to your life.

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture yourself in a kitchen. There is a large bowl of flour on the counter and a measure of yeast. Mix the yeast into the flour. Now imagine Jesus says to you, "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast." What thought comes to mind? Is there a question you would like to ask Jesus about this? What does he say?

RESOLUTION:

Think of at least two ways you might be “yeast” for the Kingdom in your family or your work. How important is it to you to be that yeast?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Patience is a virtue of the Lord:
He awaits the return of his children.
Forgive my trespasses, Oh Lord Jesus,
for many times have I tested you.
I deserved the wrath of your hand,
but you saw greater things for me;
your patience has been enormous!
Grant me a droplet of such endurance,
that I may abolish my impious impatience,
refraining from using unpleasant words,
and always reflecting your serenity.
Great is the Lord Jesus in his ways!

***“The strongest of all warriors are these two—Time and Patience.”
—Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace***

Monday

If you find yourself having to wait for something or someone today, say a decade of the Rosary, read a passage of Scripture, or say an Our Father to keep from becoming impatient.

***“A waiting person is a patient person.
The word patience means the willingness to stay where we are
and live the situation out to the full in the belief
that something hidden there will manifest itself to us.”
—Henri J.M. Nouwen***

Tuesday

Pray for family and friends who do not share the Faith or who are no longer practicing it. Ask that the “good seed” that has been planted will come to maturity.

***“Do not be depressed. Do not let your weakness make you impatient.
Instead, let the serenity of your spirit shine through your face.
Let the joy of your mind burst forth.”
—St. Peter Damian***

Wednesday

How much faith do you have? Is your faith like a newly planted seed or is it a mature bush? Give thanks for whatever faith you have and ask that it grow and be increased this week.

“For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”

—Matthew 17:20; RSV: 2CE

Thursday

Is there someone you would like to share your faith with? Watch for the right time and the right opening, and then have the courage to speak out.

“Patience is power. Patience is not an absence of action; rather it is ‘timing’; it waits on the right time to act, for the right principles and in the right way.”

—Fulton J. Sheen

Friday

None of us can exercise the virtue of patience without God’s help. Make a visit to a church or Eucharistic chapel and unite your heart with the Lord. If that isn’t possible, sit in your car before going into work or classes for a few minutes of silence.

“The most generous choices, especially the persevering, are the fruit of profound and prolonged union with God in prayerful silence.”

—Pope St. John Paul II

Saturday

Consider that Jesus had to wait patiently for thirty years before beginning his ministry. How can you be more patient as you wait for something in your life?

“Christ subjected himself to the law of the seed in the earth, to the law of rest and growth. He was ‘one of the children of the year,’ growing through rest, secret in his mother’s womb, receiving the warmth of the sun through her, living the life of dependence, helplessness, littleness, darkness, and silence which, by a mystery of the Eternal Law, is the life of natural growth.”

—Caryll Houselander

17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



CHOOSING THE HIGHER GOODS

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Kings 3:5, 7-12~

The LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said, “Ask something of me and I will give it to you.” Solomon answered: “O LORD, my God, you have made me, your servant, king to succeed my father David; but I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act. I serve you in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a people so vast that it cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong. For who is able to govern this vast people of yours?”

The LORD was pleased that Solomon made this request. So God said to him: “Because you have asked for this—not for a long life for yourself, nor for riches, nor for the life of your enemies, but for understanding so that you may know what is right—I do as you requested. I give you a heart so wise and understanding that there has never been anyone like you up to now, and after you there will come no one to equal you.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130~

R/ Lord, I love your commands.

I have said, O LORD, that my part
is to keep your words.

The law of your mouth is to me more precious
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

R/

Let your kindness comfort me
 according to your promise to your servants.
 Let your compassion come to me that I may
 live, for your law is my delight.

R/

For I love your command
 more than gold, however fine.
 For in all your precepts I go forward;
 every false way I hate.

R/

Wonderful are your decrees;
 therefore I observe them.
 The revelation of your words sheds light,
 giving understanding to the simple.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 8:28-30~

Brothers and sisters: We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 13:44-52~

[Short Form—Matthew 13:44-46—omit text indented and in brackets]

Jesus said to his disciples: “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and

buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.

[Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away. Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

“Do you understand all these things?” They answered, “Yes.” And he replied, “Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old.”]

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
Give us the humility wherever pride reigns,
pardon wherever offense abides,
grace wherever sin abounds;
we pray to You;
Jesus Christ, risen Lord, have mercy on us!

—From *Biblical Prayers* by Lucien Deiss



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What is the difference between moral relativism and what Dr. Gray calls the “righteous relativism” the Church is calling us to?

**What does Psalm 119 compare gold and silver to?
What does the Gospel compare Heaven to?**

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

King Solomon was a successful and powerful king. And yet he begged God for greater wisdom to guide his life and his leading of the people of Israel. He prayed, “Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong.” Meditate on these words, and prayerfully consider areas in your life where you, like Solomon, need more wisdom from God to guide you. Ask the Lord to help you.

RESOLUTION:

What can you do this week to seek God's wisdom in a particular area where you sensed you needed his guidance more? Imitate Solomon's desire for wisdom and ask the Lord to help you pursue the true spiritual goods in life, not just the goods of this world.

CLOSING PRAYER:

“Blessed be the LORD
who has given rest to his people Israel, just as he promised.
Not a single word has gone unfulfilled
of the entire gracious promise he made through Moses his servant.
May the LORD, our God, be with us as he was with our ancestors
and may he not forsake us nor cast us off.
May he draw our hearts to himself,
that we may walk in his ways and
keep the commands, statutes, and ordinances
that he enjoined on our ancestors.
May these words of mine, the petition I have offered
before the LORD, our God,
be present to the LORD our God day and night,
that he may uphold the cause of his servant
and the cause of his people Israel as each day requires,
so that all the peoples of the earth may know
that the LORD is God and there is no other. Y
our heart must be wholly devoted to the LORD, our God,
observing his statutes and keeping his commandments, as on
this day.”
Amen.

—King Solomon's prayer from 1 Kings 8:56-61

“Patience is the companion of wisdom.”
—St. Augustine

Monday

Before making any decisions today, ask God for guidance. (You can ask for wisdom for small things as well as big ones!)

*"In all created things discern the providence and wisdom of God,
and in all things give him thanks."*

—St. Teresa of Avila

Tuesday

Is something troubling you? Are you worried about something or someone? Instead of fretting, write down your concerns in the form of questions and then journal whatever answers come to mind.

"A prudent question is one-half of wisdom."

—Francis Bacon

Wednesday

St. Thomas Aquinas described spiritual communion as “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received him.” Make a spiritual communion today.

“Wisdom is a sacred communion.”
—Victor Hugo

Thursday

Have you prayed King Solomon’s prayer for wisdom from Sunday’s entry this week? If not, do so today.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him.”
—James 1:5 (RSV: 2CE)

Friday

If someone in your family is not a Christian, or no longer practices the Faith, send him or her a short note telling them that you love them, for love is the beginning of wisdom and wisdom leads to salvation.

“Today as perhaps never before in history or in this field, wisdom shows itself to be the only firm basis to salvation.”

—Pope St. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*

Saturday

Pray for our country’s leaders, that they might have true wisdom as they guide our nation.

“And if any one loves righteousness, her labors are virtues; for she teaches self-control and prudence,

justice and courage;

nothing in life is more profitable for men than these.”

—Wisdom 8:7 (RSV: 2CE)

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

✧ YEAR A ✧



IT IS GOOD THAT
WE ARE HERE

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

FIRST READING

~Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14~

As I watched:
Thrones were set up
and the Ancient One took his throne.
His clothing was bright as snow,
and the hair on his head as white as wool;
his throne was flames of fire,
with wheels of burning fire.
A surging stream of fire
flowed out from where he sat;
Thousands upon thousands were ministering to him,
and myriads upon myriads attended him.
The court was convened and the books were opened.

As visions during the night continued, I saw:
One like a Son of man coming,
on the clouds of heaven;
When he reached the Ancient One
and was presented before him,
The one like a Son of man received dominion, glory, and kingship;
all peoples, nations, and languages serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that shall not be taken away,
his kingship shall not be destroyed.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 9~

R/ The Lord is king, the most high over all the earth.

The LORD is king; let the earth rejoice;
let the many islands be glad.
Clouds and darkness are round about him,
justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne.

R/

The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,
before the LORD of all the earth.
The heavens proclaim his justice,
and all peoples see his glory

R/

Because you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth,
exalted far above all gods.

R/

SECOND READING

~2 Peter 1:16-19~

BELOVED: We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain. Moreover, we possess the prophetic message that is altogether reliable. You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 17:1-9~

Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother, John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus charged them, Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

O my Divine Savior,
Transform me into yourself.
May my hands be the hands of Jesus.
Grant that every faculty of my body
May serve only to glorify you.
Above all,
Transform my soul and all its powers
So that my memory, will and affections
May be the memory, will and affections
of Jesus.
I pray for you
To destroy in me
All that is not of you.
Grant that I may live
But in you, by you and for you,
So that I may truly say,
With St. Paul,
“I live—now not I—
but Christ lives in me.”
Amen.

(Prayer to Christ the King taken from www.catholic.org)



LECTIO DIVINA – SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to take notes on the video reflection in the space below.

LECTIO DEVINA — MEDITATION

The Gospel reading says that Peter, James, and John were “terrified” at what they witnessed at the Transfiguration. Why do you think they felt terrified? Do you ever experience any kind of fear in reaction to God? Why?

God is always present with us, but we are not always aware of him. What can we do to not take God’s presence for granted? What can we do to honor his glory and remind ourselves that “it is good that we are here” with him specifically at Mass?

LECTIO DIVINA – PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Peter, James, and John were Jesus’ most intimate friends. They had traveled with him, learned from him, ate with him, and (we can assume) laughed with him for three years. But on the mountaintop they witnessed something totally beyond their years of experience with Jesus. Prayerfully put yourself in this Gospel reading. What are your expectations as you climb the mountain with Jesus? How do you feel when you see him transfigured and see his glory revealed? What do you think when you hear the voice of the Father speaking from the cloud, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him”?

RESOLUTION:

God in all his glory dwells within the hearts of the faithful. He comes to us in the Eucharist at each and every Mass—his glory is veiled, but it is still fully present. This is a great and beautiful mystery of our Faith.

Peter may not have fully understood what he witnessed and heard at the Transfiguration, but he did recognize the importance of being in Jesus' presence. Ask God if there are any areas in your life where something is getting in the way of simply being present with him. Surrender those obstacles to God in prayer. Each day this week, try to be more aware of God's glorious presence with you.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Father of mercies, you glorified your heavenly Son
and revealed yourself in the bright cloud,
grant that we may listen in faith to have a love for the word of Christ.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

(Adapted from the Novena to our Lord of Transfiguration
www.ewtn.com/Devotionals/novena/Transfiguration.htm#1)

“The mystery of the Transfiguration hints at the restoration in the age to come. For in the same way that ‘his face blazed like the sun, while his garments became white as light’ [Matt. 17:2], in the same way he will come from heaven like lightning, with power and great glory to judge the universe. And as Peter, James and John were with him on the holy mountain, so the elect will be with him in the kingdom of heaven, enjoying his ineffable manifestation as God and inexpressible joy. And who is adequate for all this? Who is worthy to attain that joy? Who else but one whose way of life is pure and undefiled?”

—St. Theodore the Studite

Monday

Read Sunday's First Reading again, Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14. What similarities are there between Daniel's vision of the Ancient One and the Son of man and Jesus' appearance when he is transfigured?

"He led them up the mountain to show them the glory of the godhead and to make known to them that he is the redeemer of Israel, as he had shown through the Prophets, and they should not be scandalized in him when they saw his voluntary sufferings, which as man he was about to suffer for us. For they knew him as a man, but did not know that he was God."

—St. Ephrem the Syrian

Tuesday

In the Gospel reading, only Sts. Peter, James, and John are taken up the mountain to witness the Transfiguration. But in Sunday's Responsorial Psalm we hear that "all peoples see his glory." How does God reveal his glory on this side of the Resurrection?

***"O King of glory, though You hide Your beauty,
yet the eye of my soul rends the veil.
I see the angelic choirs giving You honor without cease."***

—St. Faustina Kowalska

Wednesday

In last Sunday's Gospel reading, we see that Sts. Peter, James, and John questioned what Jesus meant when he talked about rising from the dead. There were many of Jesus' sayings and teachings that even the Apostles found difficult to understand. What is something that you struggle to understand about God? Ask him for wisdom and understanding—and the grace to continue to trust even when you don't understand.

***“For understanding is the reward of faith.
Therefore do not seek to understand in order to believe,
but believe that you may understand.”***

—St. Augustine

Thursday

Reread last Sunday's Second Reading from 2 Peter 1:16–19. Why do you think Peter places such strong emphasis on being an eyewitness? In prayer today, ask St. Peter for his intercession for your faith and hope in Christ.

***“And the Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory as of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth.”***

—John 1:14

Friday

The Father's voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." What does Jesus have to say to you today? Pick one of the four readings from last Sunday to reread slowly and carefully, listening for the words Jesus is speaking to you.

***You must listen to everything God says
at the keyhole of your heart."***

—St. John Vianney

Saturday

When he saw his Lord transfigured, Peter exclaimed, "It is good that we are here!" Find time today to rest in God's presence, contemplating his glory and his love for you.

***"The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a mighty savior,
Who will rejoice over you with gladness,
and renew you in his love,
Who will sing joyfully because of you."***

—Zephaniah 3:17

19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



STORMS OF LIFE

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a~

At the mountain of God, Horeb, Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter. Then the LORD said to him, “Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will be passing by.” A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD—but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire—but the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm: 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-14~

R/ Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what God proclaims;
the LORD—for he proclaims peace.
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him,
glory dwelling in our land.

R/

Kindness and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.

R/

The LORD himself will give his benefits;
our land shall yield its increase.
Justice shall walk before him,
and prepare the way of his steps.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 9:1-5~

Brothers and sisters: I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie; my conscience joins with the Holy Spirit in bearing me witness that I have great sorrow and constant anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites; theirs the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; theirs the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

GOSPEL**~Matthew 14:22-33~**

After he had fed the people, Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. “It is a ghost,” they said, and they cried out in fear. At once Jesus spoke to them, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” Peter said to him in reply, “Lord if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, “Truly, you are the Son of God.”

*Sunday***OPENING PRAYER**

Lord, increase my faith,
 bless my efforts and work,
 now and for evermore. Amen.

—St. Teresa of Kolkata



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

When the Apostles first saw Jesus, they were terrified and cried out in fear. What is the significance of Jesus's response to them, according to the video?

At what point does Jesus rescue Peter?

Why does he wait when he can see that Peter is drowning?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine you are with the disciples seated, or perhaps fearfully lying in the stern of the boat. You see the ghostly image coming toward you and at first you are not sure who it is. Suddenly you realize it is Jesus when he says, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” Jesus then bids you, like he did Peter, to come out onto the water and walk with him. What would you do? How would you feel about leaving the boat? Would you take Jesus up on the invitation?

RESOLUTION:

Prayerfully consider how Jesus may be wanting you to “get out of the boat” and give up control by entrusting something in your life to him. Ask Jesus to help you surrender that to him with confidence, remembering what he told the Apostles: “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.”

CLOSING PRAYER:

O Lord, hear my cry pouring out from a troubled heart.
 The sorrow which clutches at my soul has driven me to you
 my protector,
 my true friend in time of need.

You know, my God, all my failings, my faults
 and my sins as well as the torment gripping my soul.
 My greatest sorrow should be for my disregard of your holy
 commandments in the past, and I sincerely hope that you will
 grant me the grace of true contrition.

O my Savior, hide not your face from me in this tribulation,
 let the light of your countenance shine upon me that I may be
 illuminated by its love.

If it be your will, lighten this burden from me,
 yet should it be a means of my salvation, help me,
 help me O Lord, to carry this cross,
 for alone I can do nothing.

Radiate your love upon your prodigal child O Lord,
 this beggar who knocks at your door seeking shelter
 in your sacred heart;
 this once proud earthen vessel made of clay seeks you, O Christ,
 and in a newly found faith, firmly believes that you
 will receive him in your limitless love and mercy.

Amen

—ourcatholicprayers.com/tribulation-prayer

*"It is seldom we have the heart to throw ourselves,
 if I may so speak, on the Divine Arm;
 we dare not trust ourselves on the waters, though Christ bids us.
 We have not St. Peter's love to ask leave to come to him upon the sea.
 When we once are filled with that heavenly charity, we can do all things,
 because we attempt all things—for to attempt is to do."*

—Blessed John Henry Newman

Monday

Reread Sunday’s Gospel. Whatever is troubling you, call out with Peter, “Lord, save me.” Be observant this week for evidence that God has heard and is answering your plea.

“We are uncertain of the next step, but we are certain of God. Immediately we abandon to God, and do the duty that lies nearest, and he packs our life with surprises all the time ... Leave the whole thing to him, it is gloriously uncertain how he will come in, but he will come.”

—Oswald Chambers

Tuesday

In the first reading, Elijah hears the voice of God in a “tiny, whispering sound.” How do you hear the voice of God? Spend some quiet time today being attentive to God’s voice.

“The music is all around us. All you have to do is listen.”

—August Rush

Wednesday

Pope Paul VI famously said, “If you want peace, work for justice,” echoing the words of this week’s Responsorial Psalm: “Justice and peace shall kiss.” Find a cause that cries out for justice and lend your support—monetarily, personally, or in prayer.

“The world calls for and expects from us simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, charity towards all, especially towards the lowly and the poor, obedience and humility ... Without this mark of holiness, our word will have difficulty in touching the heart of modern man. It risks being vain and sterile.”

—Pope Paul VI

Thursday

Jesus rebukes Peter, saying “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” Do you ever doubt God’s ability to answer your prayers? The next time you ask God for something, begin by first asking for an increase in faith.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him.”

—James 1:5

Friday

In our time together on Sunday, it was suggested that you memorize Jesus's words to Peter. If you haven't done so, write them on a card and begin to commit them to your heart.

*"In prison the Catholic prisoners divided the New Testament,
which they had hidden and taken with them, into little sheets;
they distributed them and learned them by heart.
Since the ground was earth or sand,
when the guards' steps were heard,
the Word of God was hidden under earth.
In the afternoon, at sundown, each one
took turns reciting the part he knew;
it was impressive and moving to hear the Word of God
in the silence and darkness, the presence of Jesus, the 'living Gospel,'
recited with all the soul's strength,
the priestly prayer, the Passion of Christ..."*

—Archbishop Nguyễn Văn Thuận
(who spent nine of the thirteen years he was in
Vietnamese prisons in solitary confinement)

Saturday

This week's Gospel begins by saying that Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. Carve out at least fifteen minutes in your day, perhaps early in the morning or late at night, when you can be alone and pray.

“It is pleasant to spend time with him, to lie close to his breast like the Beloved Disciple and to feel the infinite love present in his heart....How can we not feel a renewed need to spend time in spiritual converse, in silent adoration, in heartfelt love before Christ present in the Most Holy Sacrament?”

—Pope St. John Paul II

20TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



GREAT FAITH
AND PRAYER

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 56:1, 6-7~

Thus says the LORD:
Observe what is right, do what is just;
for my salvation is about to come,
my justice, about to be revealed.

The foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
ministering to him,
loving the name of the LORD,
and becoming his servants—
all who keep the sabbath free from profanation
and hold to my covenant,
them I will bring to my holy mountain
and make joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be acceptable on my altar,
for my house shall be called
a house of prayer for all peoples.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8~

R/ O God, let all the nations praise you!

May God have pity on us and bless us;
may he let his face shine upon us.
So may your way be known upon earth;
among all nations, your salvation.

R/

May the nations be glad and exult
because you rule the peoples in equity;
the nations on the earth you guide.

R/

May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you!
May God bless us,
and may all the ends of the earth fear him.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 11:13-15, 29-32~

Brothers and sisters: I am speaking to you Gentiles.
Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I glory in
my ministry in order to make my race jealous and thus
save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of
the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. Just as you
once disobeyed God but have now received mercy because
of their disobedience, so they have now disobeyed in order
that, by virtue of the mercy shown to you, they too may now
receive mercy. For God delivered all to disobedience, that he
might have mercy upon all.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 15:21-28~

At that time, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, “Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon.” But Jesus did not say a word in answer to her. Jesus’ disciples came and asked him, “Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us.” He said in reply, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But the woman came and did Jesus homage, saying, “Lord, help me.” He said in reply, “It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.” Then Jesus said to her in reply, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And the woman’s daughter was healed from that hour.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

God’s eye to look before me,
 God’s ear to hear me,
 God’s word to speak for me,
 God’s hand to guard me,
 God’s way to lie before me,
 God’s shield to protect me,
 God’s hosts to save me
 Afar and anear,
 Alone or in a multitude. Amen.

—St. Patrick



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

According to the presenter, why did Jesus initially refuse the woman's request to heal her daughter?

What does Jesus say is the reason he was willing to grant her request?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

What is the deepest prayer on your heart? Imagine that you are with the woman in today's Gospel. You hear her exchange with Jesus and you see her joy at being granted her request. Now you come before Jesus with your desire, your prayer. Picture

yourself presenting that petition to him. Do you truly believe that he will answer your prayer? Are you willing to persevere in making this request if it is not answered right away? Are you open to having your heart conform to his will if he should respond to your prayer in a way other than what you request?

RESOLUTION:

Make a “Prayer List.” Write down what you are praying for and then record the response: Yes, No, or Wait. Keep the journal for at least a month and pay attention to how God is responding to your requests. Also trust that God wants what is best for you and sometimes answers our prayers in unexpected ways that are truly for our best.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Behold me at your most holy feet, O dear Jesus,
to manifest to you my gratitude for the continual favors
which you have bestowed upon me,
and still wish to bestow upon me.
As many times as I have invoked you, O Jesus,
You have made me content;
I have often had recourse to you, and you have always consoled me.
How shall I express myself to you, dear Jesus?
I thank you!
Yet one more grace I desire of you, O my God,
If it would be pleasing to you... [here silently mention your request].
If you were not omnipotent, I would not make this request.
O Jesus, have pity on me.
May your most holy will be done in all things.

—St. Gemma Galgani

*“If God seems at times to be slow in responding,
it is because he is preparing a better gift. He will not deny us.
We well know that the long-awaited gift is all the more precious
for the delay in its being granted.”*

—St. Augustine

Monday

The Canaanite woman took a great risk in approaching Jesus, since she was both a Gentile and a woman. Are you willing to risk bringing your deepest desires to Jesus? Do you believe he will truly answer your prayers?

*“Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives.
Prayer, mercy, and fasting: these three are one,
and they give life to each other.”*
—St. Peter Chrysologus, Sermon 43

Tuesday

The First Reading encourages us to keep the Sabbath free from profanation. Make plans today as to how you will keep Sunday as a day of rest.

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”
—Exodus 20:8 (RSV: 2CE)

Wednesday

The woman in the Gospel persisted in her request despite the rebukes by the apostles and Jesus's initial coolness. List three qualities about the woman that might have made her so insistent. How can you emulate her in your own prayers?

“Ask, seek, insist. Through this asking and seeking you will be better prepared to receive God’s gift when it comes. God withholds what you are not yet ready for. He wants you to have a lively desire for his greatest gifts. All of which is to say, pray always and do not lose heart.”

—St. Augustine

Thursday

The presenter in the video said the only other time that Jesus healed at a distance was when he healed the centurion’s servant. Read that account in Luke 7:1-10 and compare it with the healing in this week’s readings. What is the one thing both Gentiles have in common?

“Truly I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you many will come from east and west, and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

—Matthew 8:10-11 (RSV: 2CE)

Friday

St. Paul says in the Second Reading, “For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.” List some of the gifts that you have received from God. Spend time giving thanks for each one.

“No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.”
—St. Ambrose

Saturday

In last Sunday’s resolution, it was suggested that you create a prayer list where you keep track of your prayers and how they are answered. If you haven’t done so yet, start one today. If you have started, what responses have you received so far?

“He who prays most receives most.”
—St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori

21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~**Isaiah 22:19-23**~

Thus says the LORD to Shebna, master of the palace:
“I will thrust you from your office
and pull you down from your station.
On that day I will summon my servant
Eliakim, son of Hilkiah;
I will clothe him with your robe,
and gird him with your sash,
and give over to him your authority.
He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
and to the house of Judah.
I will place the key of the House of David on Eliakim’s shoulder;
when he opens, no one shall shut
when he shuts, no one shall open.
I will fix him like a peg in a sure spot,
to be a place of honor for his family.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~**Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6, 8**~

R/ Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart,
for you have heard the words of my mouth;
in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;
I will worship at your holy temple.

R/

I will give thanks to your name,
because of your kindness and your truth:
when I called, you answered me;
you built up strength with me.

R/

The LORD is exalted, yet the lowly he sees,
and the proud he knows from afar.
Your kindness, O Lord, endures forever;
forsake not the work of your hands.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans II:33-36~

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable
his ways!

*For who has known the mind of the Lord
or who has been his counselor?
Or who has given the Lord anything
that he may be repaid?*

For from him and through him and for him are all things.
To him be glory forever. Amen.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 16:13-20~

Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi and he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Then he strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Thou art the Shepherd of the sheep, the Prince of the Apostles, unto thee were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. “Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church.” Raise us up, we beseech thee, O Lord, by the apostolic assistance of blessed Peter, Thine Apostle; so that the weaker we are, the more mightily we may be helped by the power of his intercession; and that being perpetually defended by the same holy apostle, we may neither yield to any iniquity, nor be overcome by any adversity. Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

According to Dr. Gray, how does the relationship of Jesus to the Catholic Church resemble the relationship of a king to his Kingdom?

Dr. Gray explains that Jesus was a “tekton.” What is a tekton? How does Jesus’ being a tekton relate to his renaming Simon to be Peter, the rock?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Put yourself into this pivotal scene in which Jesus elevates Peter to this important leadership role in his kingdom. Picture Jesus with all of the twelve Apostles but singling out Simon and changing his name to “Rock” (Peter). Then imagine Jesus saying those sacred words to him: “You are rock and on this rock I will build my Church.” Prayerfully ponder what you think this means for you and for the Church Jesus established.

RESOLUTION:

Come up with one resolution you can do this week that either helps you accept the leadership role of Peter’s successors, the popes, more in your life or helps you express greater gratitude for this gift Jesus left his Church.

CLOSING PRAYER:

God, you give us an example of faith in St. Peter.
 Grant that your Church may follow his teachings
 and example in all things,
 for it is through him that the Church began.
 Help us to love and respect all those who follow in his path,
 Our priests, bishops, and especially the Successor of Peter, our
 pope. Amen.

*“When Christ at a symbolic moment was establishing his great society,
 he chose for its cornerstone neither the brilliant Paul
 nor the mystic John, but a shuffler, a snob, a coward—
 in a word, a man.
 And upon this rock he has built his Church,
 and the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.
 All the empires and the kingdoms have failed,
 because of this inherent and continual weakness,
 that they were founded by strong men and upon strong men.
 But this one thing, the historic Christian Church,
 was founded on a weak man, and for that reason it is indestructible.
 For no chain is stronger than its weakest link.”
 —G.K. Chesterton*

Monday

Do you have a patron saint? If you weren't given one's name at Baptism or Confirmation, choose one today and ask for his or her prayers and protection.

"Becoming Catholic involves entering into a relationship with the Catholic Church."

—Carl Olson

Tuesday

What would you say to someone who says that all churches are equal and that the Catholic Church has no special claim to being Jesus' church? Think about how you would defend Catholic teaching.

"There are not one hundred people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be."

—Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

Wednesday

Pray for unity among all Christians.

***“The house of God is one, and there can be no salvation
to anyone except in the church.”
—St. Cyprian of Carthage (“Letter 61,” c. 250 A.D.)***

Thursday

Read the Book of Acts (or part of it) to get a sense of what the first days of the early church were like.

***“Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude also be;
even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”
—St. Ignatius of Antioch***

Friday

Are there teachings of the Church that challenge you? Pray about those challenges. Read the *Catechism* to clarify doctrines that might confuse you.

***“Let us note that the very tradition, teaching,
and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning,
which the Lord gave, was preached by the Apostles,
and was preserved by the Fathers.
On this was the Church founded...”***

—St. Athanasius

Saturday

Offer a rosary today for the protection and health of our Holy Father, the successor of Peter.

***“Indeed, if Christ himself gave Peter this special mission in the Church
and exhorted him to strengthen his brethren,
he also made clear to him his human weakness
and his special need of conversion.”***

—Pope St. John Paul II

22ND SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE WORD
BURNING WITHIN

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~**Jeremiah 20:7-9**~

You duped me, O LORD, and I let myself be duped;
you were too strong for me, and you triumphed.
All the day I am an object of laughter;
everyone mocks me.

Whenever I speak, I must cry out,
violence and outrage is my message;
the word of the LORD has brought me derision
and reproach all the day.

I say to myself, I will not mention him,
I will speak in his name no more.
But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart,
imprisoned in my bones;
I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~**Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9**~

R/ My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

O God, you are my God whom I seek;
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.

R/

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
to see your power and your glory,
for your kindness is a greater good than life;
my lips shall glorify you.

R/

Thus will I bless you while I live;
lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.
As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied,
and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.

R/

You are my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.
My soul clings fast to you;
your right hand upholds me.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 12:1-2~

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 16:21-27~

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, “God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you.” He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

O God, you are my God—
it is you I seek!

For you my body yearns;
for you my soul thirsts,
In a land parched, lifeless,
and without water.

I look to you in the sanctuary
to see your power and glory.

For your love is better than life;
my lips shall ever praise you!

—Psalm 63:2-4



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to take notes on the video reflection in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

Despite his anger, Jeremiah could not deny the Word burning within him. What, according to the presenter, was the reason Jeremiah could not deny the Word?

What does the presenter say happens when we become transformed and pleasing to the Lord?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

“O God, you are my God whom I seek; My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.” In what ways are you seeking God right now? How is your soul thirsting for God? Consider a time when you felt particularly close to God, when you experienced some kind of inner transformation and you could say with the psalmist: “You are my help, and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.”

RESOLUTION:

This week, allow yourself to spend some quiet time in the presence of the Lord. Ask yourself how, like Jeremiah, the Word of God can burn within you.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, what do you want me to do?
What decision do you want me to make?
Where do you want my life to go?
The only way I can decide, Lord, is to put myself in your hands.
Like a potter takes clay and makes something of it,
like you took a rib and made a woman,
take me and give me whatever shape you want.
Or if you want, break the clay to pieces and start over again.
Do with me whatever you want.

It doesn't matter if I am loved or hated,
praised or calumniated, consoled or friendless.
What matters is that your will be done in me.
Help me to follow the example of your Mother
and say, "Let it be done to me according to your Word."

I'm not looking for any big sacrifice, Lord, or any heavy cross.
Something like that would only make me proud.
Help me to do your will in little things,
to put up with misunderstandings, rash judgments,
confusion and frustration,
to be patient and peaceful with those who drive me crazy.

Let me love you by doing the little things
that will not bring me any satisfaction.

Amen.

*"My daughter...why do you not tell me about everything
that concerns you, even the smallest details?
Tell Me about everything, and know that this will give Me great joy.
I answered, 'But You know about everything, Lord.'
And Jesus replied to me, 'Yes I do know;
but you should not excuse yourself with the fact that I know,
but with childlike simplicity talk to Me about everything, for my ears
and heart are inclined towards you,
and your words are dear to Me.'"*

—St. Faustina, Divine Mercy in My Soul

Monday

If you have difficulty expressing your feelings to God, pray the psalms. They cover every emotion from joy to sorrow, anger to thanksgiving.

***“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
his mercy endures forever.”***

—Psalm 118:1 (NABRE)

Tuesday

It’s human nature to be afraid of pain and suffering, but Jesus tells us that the more we attempt to avoid our cross, the more painful it will be. Ask for the grace to accept your cross—just for today.

***“Put on Christ!’ in your life,
and you will find a friend in whom you can always trust;
‘put on Christ’ and you will see the wings of hope spreading and
letting you journey with joy towards the future; ‘
put on Christ’ and your life will be full of his love;
it will be a fruitful life.”***

—Pope Francis, World Youth Day, 2013

Wednesday

Do you consider God to be your friend?

*“We must speak to God as a friend speaks to his friend,
servant to his master; now asking some favor,
now acknowledging our faults,
and communicating to Him all that concerns us, our thoughts,
our fears, our projects, our desires,
and in all things seeking His counsel.”*

—St. Ignatius of Loyola

Thursday

Sometimes prayer can become a monologue—we talk to God but never stop to listen for his response. Concentrate today on making your prayer into a dialogue.

*“Let us all resign ourselves into His hands,
and pray that in all things He may guide us to do His Holy Will...
When thoughts of this or that come I turn to Him and say:
‘Only what you will, my God. Use me as You will.’”*

—St. Mary MacKillop

Friday

Reread this week's Gospel, focusing particularly on the passage, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself." Choose one small way you can deny yourself today, such as turning off the TV in order to read something uplifting.

*"Read some chapter of a devout book...
It is very easy and most necessary,
for just as you speak to God when at prayer,
God speaks to you when you read."
—St. Vincent de Paul*

Saturday

One "formula" for prayer is ACTS: adore, confess, thank, supplicate. Pray today using that formula. Be sure to spend as much time on ACT as you do on S!

*"We set forth our petitions before God,
not in order to make known to Him our needs and desires,
but rather so that we ourselves may realize that in these things
it is necessary to turn to God for help."
—St. Thomas Aquinas*

23RD SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



OUT OF BONDAGE

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Ezekiel 33:7-9~

Thus says the LORD:

You, son of man, I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel; when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for me. If I tell the wicked, “O wicked one, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak out to dissuade the wicked from his way, the wicked shall die for his guilt, but I will hold you responsible for his death. But if you warn the wicked, trying to turn him from his way, and he refuses to turn from his way, he shall die for his guilt, but you shall save yourself.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9~

R/ If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

R/

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

R/

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
 “Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
 as in the day of Massah in the desert,
 Where your fathers tempted me;
 they tested me though they had seen my works.”

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 13:8–10~

Brothers and sisters:

Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 18:15–20~

Jesus said to his disciples: “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that ‘every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord my God,
teach my heart this day where and how to seek you,
where and how to find you.
You have made me and remade me,
and you have bestowed on me
all the good things I possess,
and still I do not know you.
I have not yet done that
for which I was made.
Teach me to seek you,
for I cannot seek you
unless you teach me,
or find you
unless you show yourself to me.
Let me seek you in my desire,
let me desire you in my seeking.
Let me find you by loving you,
let me love you when I find you.

—*St. Anselm*



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What is forgiveness, according to the video?

What are some of the things forgiveness *doesn't* mean?

According to the presenter, what happens to us when we don't forgive? What happens to the person we haven't forgiven?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Listen now as Jesus comes before you and says, “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.” As you hear those words, is there someone you believe has “sinned against you”? Have you done as Jesus commands by telling this person how you feel, or are you harboring secret ill will? How do you respond to Jesus?

RESOLUTION:

Consider the people in your life whom you may need to forgive.
Make a plan to talk with them in order to resolve your differences.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Our Father, Who art in heaven
Hallowed be Thy Name;
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

***“Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on
the heel that has crushed it.”***

—Mark Twain

Monday

Today make a list of all the people you may need to forgive. Don't worry about actually forgiving them; just write down their names.

***“Solidarity is an eminently Christian virtue.
It practices the sharing of spiritual goods even more than material ones.”
—CCC 1948***

Tuesday

Go over the list of people you need to forgive. If there are some you feel ready to forgive now, say their names, preferably out loud, adding, “I forgive you for... [say the offense].”

***“He who knows how to forgive
prepares for himself many graces from God.
As often as I look upon the cross,
so often will I forgive with all my heart.”
—St. Faustina***

Wednesday

Take the first person on your list that you are having the most difficulty forgiving. Pray for the desire to desire to forgive.

***“Forgiveness is an act of the will,
and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.”***
—Corrie ten Boom

Thursday

If you now feel ready, ask the Lord to grant you the grace of seeing that person you are trying to forgive as he sees them. Allow compassion to soften your heart.

***“Forgiveness is the remission of sins.
For it is by this that what has been lost, and was found,
is saved from being lost again.”***
—St. Augustine

Friday

If necessary, keep praying for the grace to be able to forgive. If you feel ready, use Tuesday's exercise as a model for forgiveness.

***"The church is the great family of children of God.
Certainly it has human aspects from the members who comprise it,
pastors and faithful.***

***They have defects, imperfections, sins.
Even the pope has them—and he has many—
but what is beautiful is that when we become aware
that we are sinners, we find the mercy of God.***

***God always forgives. Don't forget this.
God always forgives."***

—Pope Francis

Saturday

Continue the process of forgiveness with each person on your list. If you have completed your list, ask God to forgive you for all the times you have wounded another person—those times you remember and those you may not even realize.

“People are often unreasonable and self-centered.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough.

Give your best anyway.

For you see, in the end, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.”

—Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



FORGIVEN DEBT

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Sirach 27:30-28:9~

Wrath and anger are hateful things, / yet the sinner hugs them tight. / The vengeful will suffer the LORD's vengeance, / for he remembers their sins in detail. / Forgive your neighbor's injustice; / then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven. / Could anyone nourish anger against another / and expect healing from the LORD? / Could anyone refuse mercy to another like himself, / can he seek pardon for his own sins? / If one who is but flesh cherishes wrath, / who will forgive his sins? / Remember your last days, set enmity aside; / remember death and decay, and cease from sin! / Think of the commandments, hate not your neighbor; / remember the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8-9, 11-12~

**R/ / The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger,
and rich in compassion.**

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.

R/

He pardons all your iniquities,
heals all your ills.
He redeems your life from destruction,
he crowns you with kindness and compassion.

R/

He will not always chide,
nor does he keep his wrath forever.
Not according to our sins does he deal with us,
nor does he requite us according to our crimes.

R/

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he put our transgressions from us.

R/

SECOND READING

~Romans 14:7-9~

Brothers and sisters:

None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself.
For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 18:21-35~

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus answered, “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.’ Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ But he refused. Instead, he had the fellow servant put in prison until he paid back the debt. Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?’ Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Eternal God,
in whom mercy is endless
and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible,
look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us,
that in difficult moments we might not despair
nor become despondent,
but with great confidence
submit ourselves to Your holy will,
which is Love and Mercy itself. Amen.

—From the Divine Mercy prayer



LECTIO DIVINA – SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to take notes on the video reflection in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

How many times does Jesus say that we are to forgive?

What effect does the generosity and compassion of the master have on the first servant? What effect should God’s generosity and compassion have on us?

LECTIO DIVINA – PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

We all know that we have sinned. As you think about your life, and areas where you have failed to do the good you know you could have done, imagine Jesus reaching out and saying to you, “My dear Servant, I have paid this debt for you. It is completely erased, taken off my Father’s books. It is no longer held against you. As the Father has forgiven you, now, go and do the same to anyone who has harmed or offended you.” As you consider this, offer your own prayer of gratitude to the Lord.

RESOLUTION:

Is there someone you need to forgive? Set aside some time this week to spend before the Blessed Sacrament—either in an Adoration Chapel if your parish has one or before or after Sunday Mass—thanking Jesus for having paid the debt of your sins and asking for the grace to forgive those who have sinned against you.

CLOSING PRAYER:

O Lord, Jesus Christ,
Redeemer and Savior,
forgive my sins, just as you forgave Peter's denial
and those who crucified you.
Count not my transgressions, but, rather, my tears of repentance.
Remember not my iniquities, but, rather, my sorrow
for the offenses I have committed against you.
I long to be true to your Word.
Please come to make your dwelling place within me,
that my heart may be transformed by your mercy and grace,
and I will give you praise and glory in love and in service
all the days of my life.
Amen.

(Adapted from Prayer for the Forgiveness of Sins,
found on www.catholic.org)

***"This Blood that but one drop of has the power
to win all the world forgiveness of its world of sin."
—St. Thomas Aquinas***

Monday

In the First Reading we are told, “Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them tight.” Do you ever hang onto anger and find it difficult to forgive? Why? Ask God for his help to let go and forgive those who have hurt you.

***“The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us.
It was with such love that the Lord loved the world.”***

—St. Mark the Ascetic

Tuesday

The master in the Gospel reading forgave a “huge” debt that the servant was completely unable to repay. No matter what offenses someone else might commit against you, God has offered you an even greater mercy in forgiving your sins and offering you eternal life. Ponder the magnitude of this as you pray before the Crucifix.

***“If a man finds it very hard to forgive injuries,
let him look at a Crucifix,
and think that Christ shed all His Blood for him,
and not only forgave His enemies,
but even prayed His Heavenly Father to forgive them also.
Let him remember that when he says the Pater Noster,
every day, instead of asking pardon for his sins,
he is calling down vengeance on himself.”***

—St. Philip Neri

Wednesday

Do you ever wonder why prayers aren't answered? The First Reading and the psalm give us a hint. They say that unless we forgive others, we cannot expect answers to our prayers. If you have an unanswered prayer, examine your own heart to see if you are harboring some anger or resentment that is blocking the answer.

***“Forgetting offences is a sign of sincere repentance.
If you keep the memory of them,
you may believe you have repented
but you are like someone running in his sleep.
Let no one consider it a minor defect,
this darkness that often clouds the eyes
even of spiritual people.”***

—St. John Climacus

Thursday

Pray Sunday's Responsorial Psalm slowly and carefully, reflecting on God's loving kindness toward you and asking that he conform you to his mercy.

***“Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again;
for forgiveness has risen from the grave.”***

**—St. John Chrysostom,
Easter sermon**

Friday

St. Faustina told the world about the Divine Mercy of Jesus. We celebrate the feast on the first Sunday after Easter. Go back in your journal and read about Divine Mercy Sunday and then say this week's opening prayer again.

***"He who knows how to forgive
prepares for himself many graces from God.
As often as I look upon the cross,
so often will I forgive with all my heart."***

—St. Faustina Kowalska

Saturday

Go to Confession. Most parishes offer Confession sometime on Saturday. If yours doesn't, make an appointment with your priest for the next available time.

***"Do not put off any longer confessing all your sins,
for death will soon come.
Give and it will be given you; forgive and you will be forgiven...
Blessed are they who die repentant,
for they shall go to the Kingdom of Heaven!"***

—St. Francis of Assisi

25TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



ENVY AND
GOD'S GENEROSITY

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 55:6-9~

Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call him while he is near.
Let the scoundrel forsake his way,
and the wicked his thoughts;
let him turn to the LORD for mercy;
to our God, who is generous in forgiving.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor
are your ways my ways, says the LORD. As
high as the heavens are above the earth, so
high are my ways above your ways
and my thoughts above your thoughts.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18~

R/ The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD and highly to be praised; his
greatness is unsearchable.

R/

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

R/

The LORD is just in all his ways
 and holy in all his works.
 The LORD is near to all who call upon him,
 to all who call upon him in truth.

R/

SECOND READING

~Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a~

Brothers and sisters: Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, for that is far better. Yet that I remain in the flesh is more necessary for your benefit.

Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 20:1-16a~

Jesus told his disciples this parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o’clock, the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.’ So they went off. And he went out again around noon, and around three o’clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o’clock, the landowner found others standing around, and said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard.’ When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.’ When those who had started about five o’clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day’s burden and the heat.’ He said to one of them in reply, ‘My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?’ Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, I am yours,
and I must belong to no one but you.
My soul is yours, and must live only by you.
My will is yours, and must love only for you.
I must love you as my first cause, since I am from you.
I must love you as my end and rest, since I am for you.
I must love you more than my own being,
since my being subsists by you.
I must love you more than myself, since I am all yours
and all in you.
Amen.

—St. Francis de Sales



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What do the owner's actions tell us about the nature of God?

Why, according to the presenter, is envy so destructive?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Put yourself in the parable. It's the end of the workday. The owner calls all of the workers together and hands out the day's pay. You notice that everyone gets exactly the same amount—those who have worked all day and those who arrived just a few minutes ago. How does that make you feel about the owner? How does that make you feel about your fellow workers? Are you tempted to say something? Does this make you want to work for this owner in the future? Why or why not?

RESOLUTION:

This week, end each day recalling all the gifts that God has given you and thank him for his presence and generosity in your life. Then spend some time in prayer for those who are in need and ask God to pour his generosity upon them.

CLOSING PRAYER:

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
taking, as he did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
trusting that he will make all things right
if I surrender to his will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with him
forever in the next.
Amen.

“God’s plan remains God’s plan despite our sin.”
—Christopher West

Monday

Make a list of at least ten things God has given you that you are grateful for right now.

***“Be not envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them;
for their minds devise violence, and their lips talk of mischief.”***
—Proverbs 24:1-2 (RSV)

Tuesday

Is God prompting you to be more generous with your time, talent, or treasure? Pay attention to that prompt, and then act upon it as soon as possible.

“Be attentive to the voice of grace.”
—St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Wednesday

Envy is one of the seven deadly sins. Examine your conscience and if you find that you are envious of someone, immediately ask God to bless that person, and ask God to help you to be more generous to others and thankful for the gifts that God has given you. Then make an appointment to go to Confession as soon as possible.

“If you cut any hint of envy out at the roots, and if you sincerely rejoice in other people’s success, you will not lose your joy.”

—St. Josemaría Escrivá, *The Furrow*

Thursday

Reread this week’s Gospel and place yourself in the scene, first as a worker who has labored all day and then as one who worked only an hour. Try to be as grateful in one situation as in the other.

“As a moth gnaws a garment, so doth envy consume a [person].”

—St. John Chrysostom

Friday

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.”

What are some instances in which you have realized that God’s
thoughts and ways are not your ways?

*“Do not wish to be anything but what you are,
and try to be that perfectly.”*

—St. Francis de Sales

Saturday

Pray for the grace to accept whatever happens to you today as
part of God’s plan for your life.

*“O God, who is ever at work and ever at rest.
May I be ever at work and ever at rest.”*

—St. Augustine, *Confessions*

26TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



ACTIONS SPEAK
LOUDER THAN WORDS

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Ezekiel 18:25-28~

Thus says the Lord: You say, “The Lord’s way is not fair!” Hear now, house of Israel: Is it my way that is unfair, or rather, are not your ways unfair?

When someone virtuous turns away from virtue to commit iniquity, and dies, it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must die. But if he turns from the wickedness he has committed, and does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life; since he has turned away from all the sins that he has committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9~

R/ Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;
teach me your paths,
guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my savior.

R/

Remember that your compassion, O LORD,
and your love are from of old.
The sins of my youth and my frailties remember not;
in your kindness remember me,
because of your goodness, O LORD.

R/

Good and upright is the LORD;
 thus he shows sinners the way.
 He guides the humble to justice,
 and teaches the humble his way.

R/

SECOND READING

~**Philippians 2:1-11**~

[Short Form—Philippians 2:1-5—omit text indented and in brackets]

Brothers and sisters: If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others.

Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus,

[Who, though he was in the form of God,
 did not regard equality with God
 something to be grasped.
 Rather, he emptied himself,
 taking the form of a slave,
 coming in human likeness;
 and found human in appearance,
 he humbled himself,
 becoming obedient to the point of death,
 even death on a cross.
 Because of this, God greatly exalted him
 and bestowed on him the name
 which is above every name,
 that at the name of Jesus
 every knee should bend,
 of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 and every tongue confess that
 Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father.]

GOSPEL

~Matthew 21:28-32~

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people: “What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ He said in reply, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, ‘Yes, sir,’ but did not go. Which of the two did his father’s will?” They answered, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

O Jesus! Meek and humble of heart,
make my heart like unto thine.
From the desire to be esteemed,
Deliver me.

From the desire to be honored...Deliver me.
From the desire to be praised...Deliver me.

From fear of being humiliated...
From fear of being held in contempt...
From fear of suffering rebukes...
From fear of being slandered...
From fear of being ignored...
From fear of being insulted...
From fear of being wronged...

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire...
that others be admired more than I;
that others be praised and I unnoticed;
that others be preferred to me in everything;

that others be holier than I, provided I
become as holy as I should;
that I might imitate the patience and
obedience of your mother, Mary.
Amen.

—Based on a prayer by Cardinal Merry del Val



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

The presenter explained a bit about the context in which Jesus told this parable. Who was Jesus talking to?

What prompted his response?

What was Jesus inviting the priests and elders to do when he talked about the two sons?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Put yourself in the scene. Imagine you are with Jesus as the priests and elders come up and begin to question his authority to teach. In response, you hear him tell the parable of the two sons who were asked to work in their father’s vineyard. When he finishes, he asks you the same question he asked the priests and elders: “What is your opinion? Which son did the father’s will?” Now prayerfully consider which of the two sons you are most like. Listen as Jesus says that tax collectors and prostitutes will enter the kingdom of heaven before some of those who are listening to him. What does it challenge you to do?

RESOLUTION:

When you feel prompted to do something for the kingdom, ask yourself which son you are being—the one who says “yes” but does not follow through, or the one who initially refuses but then performs the action?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace;
 where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 where there is injury, pardon;
 where there is error, truth;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
 to be consoled as to console;
 to be understood as to understand;
 to be loved as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive;
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

(Although commonly attributed to St. Francis, this prayer first appeared in the French publication *La Clochette* in 1912. No author is cited, but it may have been written by the founder of La Ligue, Fr. Esther Bouquerel.)

***“Holiness does not consist in not making mistakes or never sinning.
 Holiness grows with capacity for conversion, repentance,
 willingness to begin again, and above all
 with the capacity for reconciliation and forgiveness.”***

—Pope Benedict XVI

Monday

Repentance is the beginning step toward holiness and wholeness.
Pray this week's responsorial psalm aloud.

***“Repentance is the renewal of baptism.
Repentance is a contract with God for a second life.
A penitent is a buyer of humility.
Repentance is constant distrust of bodily comfort.
Repentance is self-condemning reflection, and carefree self-care.
Repentance is the daughter of hope and the renunciation of despair.
A penitent is an undisgraced convict.
Repentance is reconciliation with the Lord
by the practice of good deeds contrary to the sins.
Repentance is purification of conscience.
Repentance is the voluntary endurance of all afflictions.”
—St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent****

Tuesday

Too often we say what we don't mean and don't say what we do
mean. Today mean every word you say.

***“In the same way the tongue is a small member and yet has great
pretensions. Consider how small a fire can set a huge forest ablaze.”
—James 3:5***

Wednesday

Have you failed to do the good you intended? You aren't alone. St. Paul lamented the same thing. Give yourself permission for a fresh start today.

"For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want."

—Galatians 5:17

Thursday

If God has given you a task to accomplish, don't talk about it. Just do it.

"God always gives a greater blessing to humble beginnings than to those that start with the chiming of bells."

—St. Vincent de Paul

Friday

St. Paul writes “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend.” If you hear someone using the name of Jesus as a swear word today, say a silent prayer in reparation.

*“Set a guard, LORD, before my mouth,
keep watch over the door of my lips.”*
—Psalm 141:3

Saturday

How long has it been since your last Confession? Go to Confession today or as soon as possible. In the meantime, make a sincere act of contrition.

*“The main thing in repentance is the anguish of the heart
over being deficient in the Lord’s eyes
and a firm resolution to try to be diligent in everything in the future.”*
—St. Theophan the Recluse, *The Spiritual Life*

27TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE VINEYARD
OF THE LORD

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 5:1-7~

Let me now sing of my friend,
my friend's song concerning his vineyard.
My friend had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside;
he spaded it, cleared it of stones,
and planted the choicest vines;
within it he built a watchtower,
and hewed out a wine press.
Then he looked for the crop of grapes,
but what it yielded was wild grapes.

Now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard:
What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I had not done?
Why, when I looked for the crop of grapes,
did it bring forth wild grapes?
Now, I will let you know
what I mean to do with my vineyard:
take away its hedge, give it to grazing,
break through its wall, let it be trampled!
Yes, I will make it a ruin:
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
but overgrown with thorns and briars;
I will command the clouds
not to send rain upon it.
The vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah are his cherished plant;
he looked for judgment, but see, bloodshed!
for justice, but hark, the outcry!

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 80:9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20~

R/ The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

A vine from Egypt you transplanted;
you drove away the nations and planted it.
It put forth its foliage to the Sea,
its shoots as far as the River.

R/

Why have you broken down its walls,
so that every passer-by plucks its fruit,
the boar from the forest lays it waste,
and the beasts of the field feed upon it?

R/

Once again, O LORD of hosts,
look down from heaven, and see;
take care of this vine,
and protect what your right hand has planted
the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

R/

Then we will no more withdraw from you;
give us new life, and we will call upon your name.
O LORD, God of hosts, restore us;
if your face shine upon us, then we shall be saved.

R/

SECOND READING

~Philippians 4:6-9~

Brothers and sisters: Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 21:33-43~

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: “Hear another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey. When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to obtain his produce. But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed, and a third they stoned. Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones, but they treated them in the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.’ They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?” They answered him, “He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times.” Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures:

*The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
by the Lord has this been done,
and it is wonderful in our eyes?*

Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

R/ **The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.**

A vine from Egypt you transplanted;
you drove away the nations and planted it.
It put forth its foliage to the Sea,
its shoots as far as the River.

R/
Why have you broken down its walls,
so that every passer-by plucks its fruit,
the boar from the forest lays it waste,
and the beasts of the field feed upon it?

R/
Once again, O LORD of hosts,
look down from heaven, and see;
take care of this vine,
and protect what your right hand has planted
the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

R/
Then we will no more withdraw from you;
give us new life, and we will call upon your name.
O LORD, God of hosts, restore us;
if your face shine upon us, then we shall be saved.

R/



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

According to the presenter, the parable of the vineyard would have been familiar to Jesus' audience, but Jesus gave it a surprise ending. What was the surprise?

How does the parable of the vineyard apply to the history of Israel?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Close your eyes and envision yourself sitting beside Jesus. He reads the passage from Isaiah, directing it personally to you:

My friend had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside;
he spaded it, cleared it of stones,
and planted the choicest vines;
within it he built a watchtower,
and hewed out a wine press.
Then he looked for the crop of grapes,
but what it yielded was wild grapes.
Why, when I looked for the crop of grapes,
did it bring forth wild grapes?

What do you say to Jesus? Do you try to make an excuse for your lack of good grapes? What does Jesus say in response?

RESOLUTION:

What is one thing, one “good fruit,” that you could do this week to build up the kingdom of God? Make a commitment to act on this thought by writing down a specific action and a time when you can do it.

CLOSING PRAYER:

God of mercy, you know the secrets of all human hearts, for you know who is just and you forgive the repentant sinner. Hear my prayer in the midst of destruction; give me patience and hope, so that under your protection and with you as my guide, I may one day be reunited with my family and friends in peace, tranquility, and love. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Pope Francis

**“The Church is a *cultivated field,*
the tillage of God.**

**On that land the ancient olive tree grows whose holy roots
were the prophets and in which the reconciliation of Jews and
Gentiles has been brought about and will be brought about again.**

**That land, like a choice vineyard,
has been planted by the heavenly cultivator.**

**Yet the true vine is Christ who gives life and fruitfulness to the
branches, that is, to us, who through the Church remain in Christ,
without whom we can do nothing.¹⁴⁷”**

—CCC 755

¹⁴⁷ LG 6; cf. 1 Cor 39; Rom 11:13-26; Mt 21:32-43 and parallels; Isa 51-7; Jn 15:1-5.

Monday

Yesterday the presenter suggested that we take some time this week and examine our consciences to see where we might be failing to receive the message or the messengers of the Lord. Reflect on this and write down your thoughts.

“Allow the light and the healing presence of Christ to shine brightly through your lives. In that way, all those who come in contact with you will discover the loving kindness of God.”
—Pope St. John Paul II

Tuesday

Are you a worrier? Memorize the following from today’s Epistle and recall it to mind whenever you are tempted to fear and anxiety: “In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.”

“Nothing is far from God.”
—St. Monica

Wednesday

If people didn't know you were a Christian, could they tell by your actions? Today be a living example of Christ's love in the world.

***"Actions speak louder than words;
let your words teach and your actions speak."
—St. Anthony of Padua***

Thursday

List at least five ways that you know God loves you, and give thanks for each.

***"How much better is your love than wine!"
—The Song of Solomon 4:10b (RSV)***

Friday

There is no time but the present. Do one good deed that you have been putting off.

***“God gave us faculties for our use;
each of them will receive its proper reward.
Then do not let us try to charm them to sleep,
but permit them to do their work
until divinely called to something higher.”
—St. Teresa of Avila***

Saturday

Take one small step toward correcting a bad habit today, realizing that each time you conquer the desires of self, you help build up the kingdom of heaven for all of us.

***People do not put new wine into old wineskins.
Otherwise the skins burst, the wine
spills out, and the skins are ruined.
Rather, they pour new wine into fresh wineskins,
and both are preserved.
—Matthew 9:17 (NAB)***

28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



THE WEDDING FEAST OF THE KING

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 25:6-10a~

On this mountain the LORD of hosts
will provide for all peoples
a feast of rich food and choice wines,
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.
On this mountain he will destroy
the veil that veils all peoples,
the web that is woven over all nations;
he will destroy death forever.
The Lord GOD will wipe away
the tears from every face;
the reproach of his people he will remove
from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.
On that day it will be said:
“Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!
This is the LORD for whom we looked;
let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!”
For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6~

R/ I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

R/

He guides me in right paths
 for his name's sake.
 Even though I walk in the dark valley
 I fear no evil; for you are at my side
 with your rod and your staff
 that give me courage.

R/

You spread the table before me
 in the sight of my foes;
 you anoint my head with oil;
 my cup overflows.

R/

Only goodness and kindness follow me
 all the days of my life;
 and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
 for years to come.

R/

SECOND READING

~Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20~

Brothers and sisters: I know how to live in humble
 circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance.
 In every circumstance and in all things I have learned
 the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in
 abundance and of being in need. I can do all things in him who
 strengthens me. Still, it was kind of you to share in my distress.

My God will fully supply whatever you need, in accord with
 his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father,
 glory forever and ever. Amen.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 22:1-14~

Jesus again in reply spoke to the chief priests and elders of the people in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come. A second time he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those invited: “Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast.”’ Some ignored the invitation and went away, one to his farm, another to his business. The rest laid hold of his servants, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come. Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find.’ The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests.

[But when the king came in to meet the guests, he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment. The king said to him, ‘My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?’ But he was reduced to silence. Then the king said to his attendants, ‘Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.’ Many are invited, but few are chosen.”]

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, our brother,
you have promised to be present among us
whenever we come together in your name.
Remain with us as we meet
for the benefit and love of your people.
Guide us in our discussions,
and help us to do everything for your honor and glory
and for the salvation of your church.

Jesus,
we praise you,
for you are our Lord for ever and ever.
Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What is the relationship between the mountain in the first reading where God provides a banquet and Calvary?

How is the parable in this week’s Gospel a “mini-history” of the story of salvation, according to the presenter?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you have just received an invitation to come to the feast of the King. His servant has personally invited you, saying that everything is ready. What do you do? Do you drop everything and come to the banquet, or do you keep tending to your business? Do you feel upset that going to the celebration interferes with your plans, so you ignore the invitation? Now think of the invitation to the banquet as being Sunday Mass. How do you feel about attending Mass? Do you go joyfully, or do you think of it merely as an obligation? Or do you sometimes not go at all?

RESOLUTION:

Before you attend Mass this Sunday, stop for a moment at the back of the church and make sure that you are coming with enthusiasm and joy. Let go of all your worldly worries and enter the sanctuary as if you are going to the King’s banquet.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Blessed are you, loving Father,
for all your gifts to us.
Blessed are you for giving us family and friends
to be with us in times of joy and sorrow,
to help us in days of need,
And to rejoice with us in moments of celebration.

Father,
We praise you for your Son Jesus,
who knew the happiness of family and friends,
and in the love of your Holy Spirit.
Blessed are you for ever and ever.
Amen.

“The Mass is the most perfect form of prayer!”
—Pope Paul VI

Monday

In keeping with this week's theme of food and feasting, the next time you go to the grocery store, buy two of staples like beans or canned fruit and donate to your local mission.

"Once St. Teresa was overwhelmed with God's goodness and asked Our Lord, 'How can I thank you?' Our Lord replied, 'Attend one Mass.'"
—Pope Benedict XV

Tuesday

This week's responsorial psalm is one of the most famous—and most popular—of all the psalms. Pray it tonight before going to bed.

"The celebration of Holy Mass is as valuable as the death of Jesus on the cross."
—St. Jean Vianney

Wednesday

St. Paul says in the second reading: “I can do all things in him who strengthens me.” Memorize this verse so that you can recall it when you encounter trials and difficulties.

*“All things can be endured and all things become possible
between two Masses: the Mass of yesterday and the Mass of tomorrow.
I need to be able to sustain one day of my life.
I need that Food if I am to live his commandments.
I need him daily because I am a sinner and weak.”*
—Dom Virgil Michel, OSB

Thursday

Invite someone to attend Mass with you this Sunday.

*“From the Eucharist comes strength to live the Christian life
and zeal to share that life with others.”*
—Pope St. John Paul II

Friday

Do you remember what last week's homily was about? Plan to take notes on next Sunday's homily so that you will remember what was said...and can apply it to your own life.

"Jesus speaks in silence in the mystery of the Eucharist and each time reminds us that following him means to come out of ourselves and not make our life our possession, but a gift to him and to others."

—Pope Francis

Saturday

How do you dress when attending Mass? Plan to dress up in your nicest clothes for this Sunday's celebration.

"Every Holy Mass, heard with devotion, produces in our souls marvelous effects, abundant spiritual and material graces which we, ourselves, do not know."

—St. Padre Pio

29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



RENDER UNTO CAESAR

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Isaiah 45:1, 4-6~

Thus says the LORD to his anointed, Cyrus,
whose right hand I grasp,
subduing nations before him,
and making kings run in his service,
opening doors before him
and leaving the gates unbarred:
For the sake of Jacob, my servant,
of Israel, my chosen one,
I have called you by your name,
giving you a title, though you knew me not.
I am the LORD and there is no other,
there is no God besides me.
It is I who arm you, though you know me not, so
that toward the rising and the setting of the sun
people may know that there is none besides me.
I am the LORD, there is no other.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10~

R/ Give the Lord glory and honor.

Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all you lands.
Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.

R/

For great is the LORD and highly to be praised;
 awesome is he, beyond all gods.
 For all the gods of the nations are things of nought,
 but the LORD made the heavens.

R/

Give to the LORD, you families of nations,
 give to the LORD glory and praise;
 give to the LORD the glory due his name!
 Bring gifts, and enter his courts.

R/

Worship the LORD, in holy attire;
 tremble before him, all the earth;
 say among the nations: The LORD is king,
 he governs the peoples with equity.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b~

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: grace to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father, knowing, brothers and sisters loved by God, how you were chosen. For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 22:15-21~

The Pharisees went off and plotted how they might entrap Jesus in speech. They sent their disciples to him, with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. And you are not concerned with anyone’s opinion, for you do not regard a person’s status. Tell us, then, what is your opinion: Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?” Knowing their malice, Jesus said, “Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin that pays the census tax.” Then they handed him the Roman coin. He said to them, “Whose image is this and whose inscription?” They replied, “Caesar’s.” At that he said to them, “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

In order to trap Jesus, the Pharisees partnered with the Herodians. Why was this such a tricky move?

According to the presenter, why must Christians be involved in the public square?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are with the group listening to the Pharisees confront Jesus about paying the census tax. What do you expect him to say? When he says, “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God,” are you surprised? Now think about your own life. What in your life rightly belongs to Caesar? Are you giving to Caesar what is Caesar’s? What in your life belongs to God? Are you giving that to God? Which is easier to do: pay Caesar or pay God?

RESOLUTION:

As difficult as it may be, when you are paid this week, thank God that you are able to “render unto Caesar” by paying your taxes. Then set aside a donation to give to the Church or to the poor in order to “render unto God” as well.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Heavenly Father,
we come to you in the mighty name of Jesus,
thanking you and praising you for our great nation.
We thank you for the plan you gave to our forefathers
by which to govern our nation and for the division of powers
so that our destiny does not rest in the hands of one person.

In praying for those in authority,
we therefore lift up our Congress and Senate to you.
We pray that by your Holy Power,
our legislative bodies would make laws that are just.

Father, we ask you to give them wisdom
to make decisions that would strengthen and prosper our nation.
We desire that they would make right decisions
concerning the politics, the social welfare,
and the economics of our country.
We pray that they will be motivated by your hand
and not their own personal concerns.
Amen.

"I die the king's faithful servant, but God's first."
—St. Thomas More

Monday

Look at a dollar bill and read the inscription: “In God we trust.” What are you trusting God to do with regard to your financial situation?

***“No one can serve two masters;
for either he will hate the one and love the other,
or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.
You cannot serve God and money.”***

—Matthew 6:24

Tuesday

Do you know the names of your senators and representatives? If not, learn them and then pray for each one individually to be a good steward of God’s resources.

***“In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection,
and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God’s gifts!”***

—Pope Francis

Wednesday

If you aren't familiar with Catholic social teaching, begin to learn more. Pope Paul VI's encyclical *On the Development of Peoples* is a good place to begin. (www.vatican.va)

***"Wisdom is a sacred communion."
—Victor Hugo***

Thursday

Well-intentioned Christians can have very different ideas about the role of government. The next time you are in a discussion with someone whose ideas you oppose, agree to disagree, but always look first to the Gospel for guidance.

***"If, then, you are looking for the way by which you should go,
take Christ, because he himself is the way."
—St. Thomas Aquinas***

Friday

How can your Christian beliefs make a difference in your community? Think of at least one way you can make a difference in Caesar's arena.

"Christianity even when watered down is hot enough to boil all modern society to rags." —G.K. Chesterton

Saturday

Read the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and pray for our nation.

"Wherever politics tries to be redemptive, it is promising too much. Where it wishes to do the work of God, it becomes not divine, but demonic." —Pope Benedict XVI

30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



LOVING THE LORD WITH OUR MIND

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Exodus 22:20-26~

Thus says the LORD: “You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry. My wrath will flare up, and I will kill you with the sword; then your own wives will be widows, and your children orphans.

“If you lend money to one of your poor neighbors among my people, you shall not act like an extortioner toward him by demanding interest from him. If you take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, you shall return it to him before sunset; for this cloak of his is the only covering he has for his body. What else has he to sleep in? If he cries out to me, I will hear him; for I am compassionate.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51~

R/ I love you, Lord, my strength.

I love you, O LORD, my strength,
O LORD, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.

R/

My God, my rock of refuge,
my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!
Praised be the LORD, I exclaim,
and I am safe from my enemies.

R/

The LORD lives and blessed be my rock!
 Extolled be God my savior.
 You who gave great victories to your king
 and showed kindness to your anointed.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10~

Brothers and sisters: You know what sort of people we were among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in great affliction, with joy from the Holy Spirit, so that you became a model for all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. For they themselves openly declare about us what sort of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to await his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 22:34-40~

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a scholar of the law tested him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

O My God,
I love you above all things,
with my whole heart and soul,
because you are all-good and worthy of all love.
I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you.
I forgive all who have injured me,
and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.
Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What does Jesus say is the greatest commandment?

Why is it impossible to separate these two commandments?

The Jewish people had long considered loving God as the greatest commandment. What subtle change did Jesus make in this command, according to Dr. Gray? What does this change mean?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture the scene in your mind. You are at the Temple and you hear one of the leaders ask Jesus what the greatest commandment is. How would you respond? When you hear Jesus say, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,” do you agree? Then you hear him add, “The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Now what goes through your mind? Who do you consider your neighbor? How do Jesus’ words challenge you?

RESOLUTION:

Since we are to love God with our minds as well as our souls and hearts, read all of Matthew 22 this week and write down all the attributes of God that Jesus shows us in this chapter. Choose one and practice it in your own life.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Hear, O Israel!
The Lord our God is Lord alone!
You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, with all your soul,
with all your mind, and with all your strength.
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

—Mark 12:29-31

“Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.”
—St. Jerome

Monday

If we want to know anyone, we have to spend time with them. Spend at least ten minutes today either reading the Scriptures for the week or in prayer in order to learn more about God.

*“Grant me, O Lord my God, a mind to know you,
a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you,
faithful perseverance in waiting for you,
and a hope of finally embracing you.”*

—St. Thomas Aquinas

Tuesday

Over the next three days, we are going to reflect on what it means to love the Lord with our hearts, souls, and minds. Today, write about what it means to love the Lord with your heart. How can you best show that love?

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
on your own intelligence do not rely;
In all your ways be mindful of him,
and he will make straight your paths.”*

—Proverbs 3:5-6

Wednesday

Today, write about what it means to love the Lord with your soul.
How can you best show that love?

***“If we wish to make any progress in the service of God
we must begin every day of our life with new eagerness.
We must keep ourselves in the presence of God as much as possible
and have no other view or end in all our actions but the divine honor.”
—St. Charles Borromeo***

Thursday

Today, write about what it means to love the Lord with your mind.
Reread your notes from Sunday’s lesson if you need some
prompts. How can you best show that love?

***“Our wish, our object, our chief preoccupation
must be to form Jesus in ourselves, to make his spirit, his devotion,
his affections, his desire, and his disposition live and reign there.”
—St. John Eudes***

Friday

Use this week's responsorial psalm as your daily prayer. Choose one phrase that is especially meaningful to you and pray it throughout the day.

***"We must fear God out of love, not love him out of fear."
—St. Francis de Sales***

Saturday

The second greatest commandment is love our neighbor as ourselves. Today, treat everyone you meet the way you would like to be treated.

***"He is so good...love God very much.
All for him, do everything through love."
—St. Jeanne Jugan***

32ND SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



WISE AND
FOOLISH VIRGINS

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Wisdom 6: 12-16~

Resplendent and unfading is wisdom,
and she is readily perceived by those who love her,
and found by those who seek her.
She hastens to make herself known in anticipation of their desire;
whoever watches for her at dawn shall not be disappointed,
for he shall find her sitting by his gate.
For taking thought of wisdom is the perfection of prudence,
and whoever for her sake keeps vigil
shall quickly be free from care;
because she makes her own rounds, seeking those worthy of her,
and graciously appears to them in the ways,
and meets them with all solicitude.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8~

R/ My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

O God, you are my God whom I seek;
 for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
 like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.

R/

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
 to see your power and your glory,
 for your kindness is a greater good than life;
 my lips shall glorify you.

R/

Thus will I bless you while I live;
 lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.
 As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied,
 and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.

R/

I will remember you upon my couch,
 and through the night-watches I will meditate on you:
 you are my help,
 and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.

SECOND READING

~Thessalonians 4: 13-18~

[Short Form—Thessalonians 4: 13-14—omit text in brackets]

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. [Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.]

GOSPEL

~Matthew 25:1-13~

Jesus told his disciples this parable: “The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise ones replied, ‘No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.’ While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, ‘Lord, Lord, open the door for us!’ But he said in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

We thank you, O God,
for the Love You have implanted in our hearts.
May it always inspire us to be kind in our words,
considerate of feeling,
and concerned for each other's needs and wishes.
Help us to be understanding and forgiving
of human weaknesses and failings.
Increase our faith and trust in You
and may Your Prudence guide our life and love.
Bless us, O God,
with Peace and Happiness,
and make our love fruitful for Your glory
and our Joy both here and in eternity.



LECTIO DIVINA – SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to take notes on the video reflection in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

What does the oil in this story symbolize, according to the presenter?

What are some of the things we can do to “increase our oil,” i.e. grow in faith?

LECTIO DIVINA – PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Imagine that you are one of the wise virgins who has brought extra oil. One of the foolish virgins comes up to you and asks that you share your oil with her. How does this request make you feel? Do you want to share your oil, or are you annoyed that she didn't plan ahead? You tell her that you can't share and send her to the merchant to buy some. How do you feel as you watch her leave? Is she angry with you? Do you feel guilty or vindicated? What do you resolve to do after this experience?

RESOLUTION:

This week, redo the Lectio Divina exercise, only this time, put yourself in the place of the foolish virgin.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Teach me, my Lord, to be sweet and gentle in all the events of my life, in disappointments, in the thoughtlessness of others, in the insincerity of those I trusted, in the unfaithfulness of those on whom I relied. Let me forget myself so that I may enjoy the happiness of others. Let me always hide my little pains and heartaches so that I may be the only one to suffer from them. Teach me to profit by the suffering that comes across my path. Let me so use it that it may mellow me, not harden or embitter me; that it may make me patient, not irritable; that it may make me broad in my forgiveness, not narrow or proud or overbearing. May no one be less good for having come within my influence; no one less pure, less true, less kind, less noble, for having been a fellow traveler with me on our journey towards eternal life. As I meet with one cross after another, let me whisper a word of love to you. May my life be lived in the supernatural, full of power for good, and strong in its purpose of sanctity. Amen.

“The five wise virgins, watchful and alert, had taken oil in the vessels of their heart. That oil, not part of their own nature, means the grace of the Spirit. They were enabled to enter with the Bridegroom into the heavenly bridal chamber. The other five virgins, however, were content with their own nature. They neither watched nor busied themselves to receive the oil of gladness [Ps. 44:6] in their vessels, while they were yet in the flesh. Instead, they sank into sleep through carelessness, slackness, idleness, and ignorance, or even fancied righteousness. Hence, they were shut out of the bridal chamber of the Kingdom, unable to give satisfaction to the heavenly Bridegroom.”

—Saint Macarios the Great (Fifty Spiritual Homilies, Homily IV)

Monday

Select one spiritual discipline such as reading the Scripture, attending daily Mass, or praying the rosary and resolve to do it to the best of your ability every day this week.

“Either you are one of the foolish virgins, if, indeed, you are a virgin, or one of the wise.”
—St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Tuesday

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you enthusiasm for doing good works, especially in your family and workplace.

“They were called foolish because they forgot about the necessary fruit of virtue, the grace of the Holy Spirit, without which no one is saved and no one can be saved, for: ‘it is by the Holy Spirit that any soul is vitalized and exalted in chastity, and any soul is lit by the Trinitarian unity in holy mysteries!’”

—St. Seraphim of Sarov

Wednesday

The first reading says that whoever watches for Wisdom at dawn will be rewarded. This morning, get up 15 minutes early and spend time reading the Scriptures.

“Then the virgins shall awake, because both good and wicked are roused from the sleep of death. They shall trim their lamps, that is, they shall count the number of their good works for which they hope to receive the reward of eternal happiness.”

**—St. Gregory the Great
(Parables of the Gospel, “The Ten Virgins”)**

Thursday

How are you doing on this week’s spiritual discipline? If you have fallen short, start again today.

“O brothers, let us love the Bridegroom, Let us make ready our lamps, Shining out with brightness and true faith, So that, like the wise virgins at the Lord’s coming, We may arrive with Him at the marriage, For He, the Merciful, since He is God, Offers to all as a gift The incorruptible crown!”

**—St Romanos the Melodist - Vol. II,
Kontakion On the Ten Virgins I**

Friday

Is there someone in your life who needs a little “tough love”? Follow the example of the Wise Virgins and do what you know is right, even if it is painful.

“For, though nothing could be more merciful than those wise virgins, who for this very mercifulness were approved, yet would they not grant the prayer of the foolish virgins. Hence we learn that none of us shall be able in that day to stand forth as patron of those who are betrayed by their own works, not because he will not, but because he cannot.”

—St. John Chrysostom in the Catena Aurea

Saturday

If you have trouble sleeping, recall the words of the Responsorial Psalm: “I will remember you upon my couch, and through the night-watches I will meditate on you.” Instead of tossing and turning, pray when you have trouble sleeping.

“For these wise virgins do not answer thus out of covetousness, but out of fear. Wherefore, each man shall receive the recompense of his own works, and the virtues of one cannot atone for the vices of another in the day of judgment.”

—St. Jerome

3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



USING OUR TALENTS

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31~

When one finds a worthy wife,
her value is far beyond pearls.
Her husband, entrusting his heart to her,
has an unfailing prize.
She brings him good, and not evil,
all the days of her life.
She obtains wool and flax
and works with loving hands.
She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her fingers ply the spindle.
She reaches out her hands to the poor,
and extends her arms to the needy.
Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting;
the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
Give her a reward for her labors,
and let her works praise her at the city gates.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5~

R/ Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Blessed are you who fear the LORD,
who walk in his ways!
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
blessed shall you be, and favored.

R/

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in
the recesses of your home;
your children like olive plants
around your table.

R/

Behold, thus is the man blessed who
fears the LORD.

The LORD bless you from Zion:
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Thessalonians 5:1-6~

Concerning times and seasons, brothers and sisters,
you have no need for anything to be written to you. For
you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord
will come like a thief at night. When people are saying, “Peace
and security,” then sudden disaster comes upon them, like labor
pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day
to overtake you like a thief. For all of you are children of the
light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of
darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us
stay alert and sober.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 25:14-30~

[Short Form: Matthew 25:14-15, 19-21—omit text indented and in brackets]

Jesus told his disciples this parable: “A man going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one—to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

[Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. Likewise, the one who received two made another two. But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master’s money.]

“After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’

[Then the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’ Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.’ His master said to him in reply, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you

knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.”}]

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
 My memory, my understanding and my entire will,
 all I have and call my own.
 You have given all to me.
 To you, Lord, I return it.
 Everything is yours;
 do with it what you will.
 Give me only your love and your grace;
 that is enough for me.

—St. Ignatius of Loyola



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

The parable of the talents can be read on two levels; one is financial responsibility and a possible lesson in investing. What is the other?

What does this parable tell us God expects us to do with our talents?

What are some of the talents the presenter talks about that you may possess?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Think of yourself as one of the servants in the parable. Consider that a talent would be worth about \$300,000 in today's money. How many "talents" has the master given you? Look at them and then, honestly, decide what you would do if you were given responsibility for \$300,000, \$900,000 or \$3,000,000. Would you be excited about investing it, or would you be afraid to lose it? What would you do with that much money? Now focus on your own gifts and abilities. How are you using them? Are you afraid to "invest" them for fearing of losing them?

RESOLUTION:

Take a few minutes to write down some of the talents and gifts you possess. Make a decision to take at least one small step in implementing a neglected or undeveloped talent that you can put in the service of others this week.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Loving God, I come to you in thanksgiving,
knowing that all I am and all that I have is a gift from you.
In faith and love, help me to do your will.
I am listening, Lord God.
Speak your words into the depth of my soul,
that I may hear you clearly.
I offer to you this day all the facets of my life,
Whether it be at home, at work, or at school—
to be patient, to be merciful, to be generous, to be holy.
Give me the wisdom and insight to understand your will for me
and the fervor to fulfill my good intentions.
I offer my gifts of time, talent and possessions to you
as a true act of faith,
to reflect my love for you and my neighbor.
Help me to reach out to others as you, my God,
have reached out to me.

(www.archchicago.org)

**“Use what talent you possess; the woods would be very silent
if no birds sang except those that sang best.”**

—Henry Van Dyke

Monday

How do you give? Gladly or begrudgingly? Pray for the grace to be a gracious giver.

“Teach us to give and not count the cost.”
—St. Ignatius of Loyola

Tuesday

Sometimes we downplay our abilities out of a false sense of modesty. Modesty doesn't mean pretending we don't have gifts; it means using our gifts properly without bragging about them.

“Give what you have.
To someone it may be better than you dare to think.”
—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Wednesday

How do you use your financial resources? Take a look at what you have given to charity this year and decide if it is truly a reflection of your ability to give. If necessary, select a few charities and give them an end-of-the-year contribution.

***“Never measure your generosity by what you give,
but rather by what you have left.”***
— Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

Thursday

Look back over the list of potential gifts you listed on Sunday. Have you taken any steps toward using one or more of them? If not, do so today. If you have, take another small step.

***“God has given you a gift, a charism.
A charism isn’t something you earn.
It’s a gift entrusted to you for the sake of the whole community,
including your church.
The only question is whether you will put it at the service
of the community or not.
Pray that you will grow in your understanding of stewardship
of your talents and abilities.”***
— Author Unknown

Friday

Where have you invested your time, talent, and treasure? Are your “investments” giving you the kind of return that you will be able to take with you in the next life, or will all your investments be left behind at your death?

“The only investment I ever made which has paid consistently increasing dividends is the money I have given to the Lord.”

—James L. Kraft (1874-1953),
Kraft-Phoenix Cheese Corp. Chairman

Saturday

How much do you trust in God’s provision? If you don’t already, consider starting to tithe. If you don’t feel you can give a tenth of your earnings, start with giving just a little bit more than you think you can.

“A missionary in Africa had taught his people to tithe. He had explained that ‘tithe’ meant ‘one-tenth,’ and that this should be their goal. He also had emphasized the difference between giving what is left over, and giving off the top. Early one morning a man came to the door with a fine fish, explaining that this was his tithe. ‘You must have done well,’ said the missionary, ‘if you already caught 10 fish.’ ‘No,’ said the man. ‘This is the one I’ve caught so far. I’m going back now to catch the other nine.’”

—Author Unknown

34TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY
TIME

✧ YEAR A ✧



YOU DID IT TO ME

PRAYER JOURNAL

READINGS FOR THE THIRTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

~Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17~

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark. I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord GOD. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy, shepherding them rightly.

As for you, my sheep, says the Lord GOD, I will judge between one sheep and another, between rams and goats.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 23:1-2, 2-3, 5-6~

R/ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose.

R/

Beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.

R/

You spread the table before me
 in the sight of my foes;
 you anoint my head with oil;
 my cup overflows.

R/

Only goodness and kindness follow me
 all the days of my life;
 and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
 for years to come.

R/

SECOND READING

~1 Corinthians 15:20–26, 28~

Brothers and sisters: Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through man, the resurrection of the dead came also through man. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

GOSPEL

~Matthew 25:31-46~

Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Sunday

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in thy beloved Son,
the King of the whole world,
hast willed to restore all things,
mercifully grant that all the kindreds of the nations that are
divided by the wound of sin, may be brought under the sweet
yoke of his rule.
Who liveth and reigneth with God the Father in the unity of the
Holy Ghost,
one God,
world without end. Amen.



LECTIO DIVINA — SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA — MEDITATION

**What is Jesus going to ask us when we appear before him
at the Final Judgment?**

What, according to the presenter, is the culture of death based on?

How does modern individualism lead us to neglect and hurt other people?

LECTIO DIVINA — PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER:

Picture yourself standing before the throne of God. Jesus asks you the following questions that are based on today's Gospel readings. As you hear them, answer them honestly in your heart.

- Did you give me food when I was hungry?
- Did you give me drink when I was thirsty?
- When I was a stranger, did you welcome me?
- When I was naked, did you clothe me?
- When I was sick, did you care for me?
- Did you visit me when I was imprisoned?
- What did you do for the least of those in your life?

RESOLUTION:

As we approach the beginning of a new church year, make a resolution to live out the commands of Matthew 25 to the best of your ability next year. Choose one of the commands to focus on particularly in the next month.

CLOSING PRAYER:

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
 deliver the souls of all the faithful departed
 from the pains of hell and from the bottomless pit;
 deliver them out of the lion's mouth,
 lest hell should swallow them up,
 lest they fall into the outer darkness;
 but let thy standard-bearer, Saint Michael,
 bring them back into thy holy light,
 which thou didst promise of old to Abraham and to his seed.
 Amen.

**“Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty
 or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison,
 and did not minister to your needs?”
 —Matthew 25:44**

Monday

Often we act as if we can avoid death if we eat right, exercise, and do all the “right” things. Yet death comes to each of us. Spend a few minutes thinking about how you have lived and if you are ready to die if you were to be called in the next few minutes.

***“And just as it is appointed for men to die once,
and after that comes judgment.”***

—Hebrews 9:27 (RSV)

Tuesday

The primary thing we will be judged on is how we have treated the poor and the suffering. What is your attitude toward people in poverty? Do you think it is somehow their fault? What are you doing to alleviate poverty and suffering when you encounter it?

***“It is not from your own possessions that you are bestowing aims on
the poor, you are but restoring to them what is theirs by right.***

***For what was given to everyone for the use of all,
you have taken for your exclusive use.***

The earth belongs not to the rich, but to everyone.

Thus, far from giving lavishly, you are but paying part of your debt.”

—St. Ambrose

Wednesday

One of the great works of art is Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel. Take a virtual tour of the chapel here:

http://www.vatican.va/various/cappelle/index_sistina_en.htm

If before the Last Judgment we are dazzled by splendor and fear, admiring on the one hand the glorified bodies and on the other those subjected to eternal damnation, we also understand that the entire vision is deeply permeated by one light and one artistic logic: the light and logic of the faith that the Church proclaims by confessing: I believe in one God...creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible."

—St. Pope John Paul II

Thursday

Buddhism scorns wealth as an accommodation to desire, based on illusion. Hinduism sees poverty as the result of bad karma or as an aid to righting karma. Only in Christianity does poverty take on a human face, indeed, a divine face.

"The Church's love for the poor...is a part of her constant tradition.' This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor."

CA 57; cf. Lk 6:20-22, Mt 8:20; Mk 12:41-44 — CCC 2444

Friday

As the Christmas season approaches, look for ways that you can concretely serve the poor through work at missions, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and the like.

***“Look, you can’t speak of poverty
without having experience with the poor.
You can’t speak of poverty in the abstract: that doesn’t exist.
Poverty is the flesh of the poor Jesus, in that child who is hungry,
in the one who is sick, in those unjust social structures.
Go forward; look there upon the flesh of Jesus.”***

—Pope Francis

Saturday

Invite a widow or widower to dinner—consider those you know who have recently lost a spouse as well as those who have been alone for a long time.

***“Love for widows and orphans, prisoners,
and the sick and needy of every kind is as essential to her [the Church]
as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel.
The church cannot neglect the service of charity anymore
than she can neglect the sacraments and the word.”***

—Pope Benedict XVI