

Sunday, Mar 15, 2020

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT; FIRST SCRUTINY OF THE ELECT

Great expectations

The view from today is limited. From here, some things may look irreparably broken, from personal relationships to global ones. Yet Jesus promises a future of hope available to anyone who reaches out for it. A Samaritan woman at a well had endured a loop of failure and disappointment that seemed impossible to transcend. When Jesus invited her to step out of it, she did—and was reborn as an apostle to her people. Today, we pray for our Elect (those in the process of joining the Catholic Church) as they choose the way of rebirth and hope. Let's choose the same, with them!

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 17:3-7; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42 (28). *"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth."*

Monday, Mar 16, 2020

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Stand with the prophets

Prophets have never had an easy time of it. It's been pointed out that we often assassinate prophets when they speak out too forcefully, and then once they are safely silenced and buried, we might later build a monument to honor them (or perhaps to flatter ourselves for honoring them?). Jesus saw all this and yet continued to speak out despite the resistance and hostility he often faced from his own people. Not all of us are gifted prophets, but each of us can do our best to recognize the prophets in our midst and stand with them when they speak the truth, even against the angry mob.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Kings 5:1-15b; Luke 4:24-30 (237). *"No prophet is accepted in his own native place."*

Tuesday, Mar 17, 2020

MEMORIAL OF PATRICK, BISHOP

A feast of merriment and mercy

How odd it seems that the feast of Saint Patrick falls during Lent. But despite the merriment of the day, Patrick's story is a serious one—of captivity and freedom, of cruelty and forgiveness—starting with his teen years as a slave to his escape and return to the Emerald Isle where he became a shepherd to his people and shared the Good News. Patrick even set out on a mission of mercy and forgiveness to see his cruel former master. Join Patrick by reciting his lorica (prayer of protection) against the dark forces we battle during Lent, asking "God's host to secure me against snares of devils, against temptations of vices, against inclinations of nature, against everyone who shall wish me ill."

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 3:25, 34-43; Matthew 18:21-35 (238). *"Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him?"*

Wednesday, Mar 18, 2020

MEMORIAL OF CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

People come first

Saint Cyril (c. 318-386) was between a rock and a hard place. A severe food shortage was afflicting Jerusalem and the people were starving. As bishop he had to do something. So he sold

church treasures, in violation of the rules, to buy food for his people. That got him into trouble with church higher-ups, and he was deposed for a time as punishment. Jesus taught that the rules are there for the sake of people, not people for the rules. Cyril understood that. It's good for us to be mindful of it as well.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Matthew 5:17-19 (239). *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets."*

Thursday, Mar 19, 2020

SOLEMNITY OF JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY

Watch for signs

There are times in all of our lives when we face dilemmas or challenges: How to help a child struggling with tantrums. How to guide a teen who is making bad friend choices. How to recognize and act on the need to make a job change. How to listen to a friend who is negative about so much of life. How to support a spouse who is unhappy and grumpy. God is present in all things and will help us if we ask and pay attention to the signs that are sent our way.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a (543). *"When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had directed him."*

Friday, Mar 20, 2020

LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Go where no (wo)man has gone before

Mother Catherine Spalding, who died on this day in 1858, was a pioneer in every sense. Not only did she live on the Kentucky frontier, but she was elected to lead a new community, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth—at a time when female leaders, especially young ones, were almost nonexistent. To top it off, she broke ground bringing education to girls and healthcare and social services to those who received none. Her legacy, alive in her sisters and in groups who do the same work, now spans the globe. Where do you see unfulfilled needs, and how can you blaze new trails to meet them?

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 14:2-10; Mark 12:28-34 (241). *"You are not far from the kingdom of God."*

Saturday, Mar 21, 2020

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Walk humbly

Truly humble people know that in the scheme of life, they have a unique role to play that is theirs alone—but it is no more significant than that of any other human being. Scripture tells us to bring that spirit of humility to prayer, comparing ourselves to no one. We may use words. We may sit in silence. We may tell God what we are thinking, or trust that God knows. We may ask for help or express gratitude. We may share our feelings of sorrow, frustration, contentment, anger, or joy. The most important step is to show up with head bowed. There God awaits you with a crown of love and forgiveness.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 6:1-6; Luke 18:9-14 (242). *"For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, while he who humbles himself shall be exalted."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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