

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



An Answer to Our Cry

Merciful God,
you are always near
to those who call upon you.
You heard the cry of your chosen people
and led them out of Egypt.
You hear our cry when we are in trouble
and lead us away from temptation.
Fill us with your Spirit
and bring us closer to your Son, Jesus,
finding mercy, forgiveness,
and fullness of life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 6, 2022

Trusting in God



Today's readings: Deuteronomy 26:4–10; Psalm 91:1–2, 10–11, 12–13, 4–15; Romans 10:8–13; Luke 4:1–13. Each year on the First Sunday of Lent, we hear the account of Jesus spending forty days in the desert. From the Gospel we learn that our Lord didn't just wander into this desolate land but was led by the Spirit. Jesus trusted that the Spirit would help him through the difficult time ahead.

After long days and nights of fasting in the desert, Jesus was hungry when the devil appeared. The devil challenged Jesus to turn stones into bread, to worship him, and to test God's loving care. At every turn, Jesus knew the Spirit was within him, and that his Father was close.

Confident that he would receive strength to sustain him, he did not yield to temptation.

In the first reading, we hear the prayer that the Israelite said while offering the firstfruits of the harvest. This prayer told of trust in God, who heard the cry of the afflicted, brought the Israelites out of Egypt, and led his people to a land of milk and honey. During Lent, we learn again to place our trust in God, for as St. Paul says in the second reading, "Everyone who calls upon the Lord will be saved." When we cry out in distress, as our ancestors did, we will be heard. With such knowledge, we pray with the psalmist, "Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble."



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 7

Whatever You Did for the Least

Catholic social teaching is grounded in the parable of the sheep and goats we hear in today's Gospel. When Jesus comes in his glory, he will gather those who have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the imprisoned, and given drink to the thirsty. Do something this week that benefits those who are poor, hungry, or forgotten. Make sandwiches, donate to a food pantry, or schedule a time to serve a meal at a local dining hall that tends to those less fortunate. *Today's readings: Leviticus 19:1–2, 11–18; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 15; Matthew 25:31–46.*

Tuesday, March 8

Word and Will

When Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray, he draws parallels to how we are to live. When we do the will of God in heaven, glory is given to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh. Every time the Our Father is prayed, we ask that God's will be done just as it is done in heaven. How can you help ensure that God's will is done on earth today? *Today's readings: Isaiah 55:10–11; Psalm 34:4–5, 6–7, 16–17, 18–19; Matthew 6:7–15.*

Wednesday, March 9

Forgive Us Our Sins

In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks of an "evil generation." Our generation is another among many that could be labeled the same. Racism, sexism, and ageism lead to injustice. Life is not valued from conception to natural death. Pray to the God of all goodness and compassion, and ask that our collective offenses be washed clean, that we repent of our societal sins, and that we begin to create a new world and live with humble and contrite hearts. *Today's readings: Jonah 3:1–10; Psalm 51:3–4, 12–13, 18–19; Luke 11:29–32.*

Thursday, March 10

Be Attentive

In the reading from Esther, the anguished queen cries out to the Lord to save her from enemies. The psalmist responds confidently in the Lord, proclaiming, "Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me." Daily, we hear pleas for help at home, work, and even during recreation. When tired or preoccupied, it is easy to tune out these cries for assistance. Be attentive to those who need help, knowing that your behavior is imitating the goodness of God. *Today's readings: Esther C:12, 14–16, 23–25; Psalm 138:1–2ab, 2cde–3, 7c–8; Matthew 7:7–12.*

Friday, March 11

Reconciliation

Jesus, in today's Gospel, tells his disciples that more is necessary than obedience to the commandments. The Lord expects us not only to refrain from harming another but to seek reconciliation when a relationship has fractured. After making peace with another, our worship to God can be authentic. Take time to examine your relationships and write a letter to someone to whom you need to apologize. *Today's readings: Ezekiel 18:21–28; Psalm 130:1–2, 3–4, 5–7a, 7bc–8; Matthew 5:20–26.*

Saturday, March 12

Blessed Are They

The responsorial psalm proclaims, "Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord." The command that Jesus gives his followers is to love those who persecute them. Jesus instructs that even the pagans and the tax collectors love those who love them. God lets the sun rise on the good and the bad. Christians, who are called to "be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect," are to love when it is difficult. *Today's readings: Deuteronomy 26:16–19; Psalm 119:1–2; 4–5, 7–8; Matthew 5:43–48.*

