



Ministry of Praise

1~7 February

Weekly Intentions:

~That the parish has a successful blood drive.

~That we will give generously to the food drive to help those who are less fortunate.

~For those who are traveling long distances.

~For our parish leadership, that they help Fr. John make good decisions for our parish.



**BE HOLY IN BODY
AND SPIRIT.**
1 COR 7:34

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2009

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE Sacred lives

How does this sound for a life plan? Share your possessions with one another so that you earn and spend with the good of the community in mind. Make choices with an awareness of the needs of all—and with an openness to listen to God and those around you—and let that inform your priorities. Keep your feelings and desires appropriate to the relationships you're in. Sound good? Catholicism calls these ways of living *poverty*, *obedience*, and *chastity*. They are values people in “consecrated life,” those who belong to religious orders, commit themselves to formally. These folks lead the rest of us to see how all lives are *consecrated*—the word means dedicated to the sacred. Pray and support them and do what you can to encourage others to live a “consecrated life.”

TODAY'S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 7:32-35; Mark 2:21-28*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD Favorable destiny

The information in scripture on Jesus' childhood is a bit sketchy. At the end of the story of the presentation of the infant Jesus in the temple, we read that Jesus “grew and became strong, filled with wisdom . . .” When we next hear of him, Jesus is 12 years old, discussing Jewish teachings at the temple, and “astounding” those who hear him. Quite a bit of growth and development obvi-

ously transpired in the intervening years! Mary and Joseph are the unsung heroes here, for having nurtured and raised Jesus in such a way that he was ready to fulfill his destiny. How can you continue to grow and develop in *your* faith?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Malachi 3:1-4; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40*

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3

FEAST OF BLAISE, BISHOP AND MARTYR Get past the facts

Many stories of saints that have been handed down to us over the centuries are questionable. But to ask, “Did it really happen?” misses the point. Matters of faith aren't based on hard facts. In the story of Saint Blaise, who knows whether a boy really got a fish bone caught in his throat and Blaise saved him, or whether, years later, the boy's grateful mother brought Blaise food and candles while he was in prison? We believe that Blaise was a man of kindness and faith who suffered for his belief in Jesus Christ. And today, in his name, we are offered a blessing on our throats with two candles. Those are all the facts we need.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Hebrews 12:1-4; Mark 5:21-43*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

The flip side

“He could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them.” Jesus was amazed at the lack of faith of the people in his hometown of Nazareth. Mark's throwaway line—“apart from curing a few sick people”—is stunning under-



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“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people.”

“The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.”

“Jesus said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.’ ”

“Jesus was not able to perform any mighty deed in Nazareth, apart from curing a few sick people. He was amazed at their lack of faith.”



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statement, especially if you happened to be one of those few cured at Jesus’ hands. What is more astonishing, however, is the power of a *lack* of faith in Jesus. At times in the gospel Jesus is amazed at a person’s faith, and faith is often what Jesus credits for the healing. Here we see the other side of the coin. Jesus is amazed—would *dismayed* be a better word?—at a lack of faith. What this story may ultimately be about is the power of the narrow mind, the rut, the stereotype, the assumption—all of which inhibit the ordinary miracles of love all around us as well as the extraordinary work only Jesus can perform.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15; Mark 6:1-6*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5

FEAST OF AGATHA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR Faithful graciousness

Have you ever accepted an invitation to do something with a friend and then been tempted to bow out because a better invitation came along? That’s why Jesus told his disciples to stay in one house when they entered a town. Only humble people would welcome humble men with no money. But surely better offers would come along in time. Rather than embarrass their original hosts, they should turn down more comfortable lodgings. Faith in the gospel means a commitment to humility and the option of poverty. It was a big choice for Saint Agatha that cost her her life. It is a hundred little choices in a day that steer

us toward the Kingdom of God.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24; Mark 6:7-13*

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

FEAST OF PAUL MIKI, MARTYR, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS An unchanging creed

Paul Miki (1562-1597) was baptized at age 5. A man of his culture with a profound knowledge of Buddhism, he made an effective and affectionate preacher among the Japanese. When his fellow Jesuits were expelled from Japan, he remained and was eventually crucified with 25 others in Nagasaki. For each generation of Christians the demands of faith and the promises of Christ remain the same: Love God and love one another and you will live in love eternally.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hebrews 13:1-8; Mark 6:14-29*

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

FEAST OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Pray first, then act

Almost every Saturday of the year, we’re encouraged to consider the example of Mary. As Mother of the Church, she shows us what it means to be a disciple. Her Magnificat is the perfect prayer, “the fruit of lips” that lays the groundwork for all that disciples do. As Saint John Climacus wrote, “[Prayer] is an expiation of sin, a bridge across temptation, a bulwark against affliction. It wipes out conflict, is the work of angels, and is the nourishment of everything spiritual.” Embrace every opportunity to lift a prayer heavenward.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21; Mark 6:30-34*