



Ministry of Praise

15-21

March

Weekly Intentions:

~For our school as they prepare to meet the incoming Kindergarten class at open house.

~For the RCIA candidates preparing to be received into the Church at Easter Vigil.

~For those whose needs are not met every day, that we are able to support them in some way.



SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2009

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

God's love isn't a commodity

The story of the cleansing of the Jerusalem Temple is one of the few included in all four gospels. It must have made a real impact on the memory of the disciples that Jesus, this man of peace and gentleness, got so worked up over merchants in the Temple providing services for out-of-towners who came to offer sacrifice. Maybe Jesus didn't like the implied idea that people had a *quid pro quo* relationship with God, that God's graces could be somehow "bought." Rather, he was zealous for the Temple to be known as a house of prayer for everyone, a sign that God provides for all who ask.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 20:1-17; 1 Corinthians 1:22-25; John 2:13-25*

MONDAY, MARCH 16

LENTEN WEEKDAY

A return to basics

Naaman, a military leader who suffered leprosy, was angry with the prophet Elisha for suggesting something so ordinary as a bath in a river could heal him. He was looking for a more exotic or dramatic cure. But when his attendants prevailed upon him, he followed instructions and found himself healed. We, too, are tempted to hold out for a dramatic moment of spiritual intervention that will suddenly "fix" what needs fixing in our lives. Instead, turn to traditional paths and practices that have worked for generations—prayer, worship, fellowship, spiritual reading, and reflection. Give the tried-and-true a try!

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Kings 5:1-15a; Luke 4:24-30*

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

FEAST OF PATRICK, BISHOP

Play the numbers game

Until the mid-1800s most Irish immigrants in America were middle-class Protestants, but in 1845 Ireland's Great Potato Famine forced nearly 1 million of its poor Catholics to flee to America's shores. Open and hostile anti-Catholicism made it difficult for the new arrivals to find work and be accepted in American society. What helped the Irish Catholics, they soon discovered, was their large population, which when organized gave them political power. There is strength in numbers whether it is fighting prejudice or showing compassion, as Jesus makes clear in today's gospel. Get yourselves and others organized around a just cause and become a force to be reckoned with.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 3:25, 34-43; Matthew 18:21-35*

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

Rules of the road

Rules exist for a reason. Yielding the right-of-way in traffic is a good rule to keep cars from colliding in the middle of an intersection. The rule—not always observed—of not interrupting another person allows for conversation and encourages people to listen to each other. Following rules also expresses your connection with the values behind the rules. The "rules" of religion, the signs that a person follows a particular faith, show to others they are in communion with a par-



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“Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.”

“I thought that he would surely come out and stand there to invoke the Lord his God.”

“Jesus answered, ‘I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.’ ”

“This will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who . . . will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!’ ”

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.”

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

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particular God and the values God represents. Let your actions broadcast your faith to others.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Matthew 5:17-19*

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

SOLEMNITY OF JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

A trustworthy witness

Trust—even when risky—is at the heart of any good and lasting close relationship. Saint Joseph chose to trust a messenger from God, and he also chose to trust Mary at a time when many would have walked away claiming infidelity. Joseph too often fades into the background when biblical heroes are held up as role models, but he deserves to be front and center. On this day the Catholic Church puts him there. Take a moment to reflect on how in your own most intimate relationships you can aspire to Joseph’s great level of trust.

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*

FRIDAY, MARCH 20

LENTEN WEEKDAY

X-treme love

X-treme sports are entering the mainstream sports world—making them less extreme, apparently. There have even been X-Games that feature sports like freestyle motocross, bicycle motocross, skateboarding, snowboarding, and snowmobiling that’s way different than what you used to do up at Uncle Ernie’s farm on weekends. One thing they have in

common is pushing the limits. In the game of Christian love, Jesus calls us to total love of God and neighbor. It’s something you have to put your whole self into on a regular basis. So strap on your spiritual monoskier and hit the slopes.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hosea 14:2-10; Mark 12:28-34*

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Go ahead and ask

Overheard in church: “I am not going to the reconciliation service this week because I haven’t sinned since the last one four months ago.” While most of us do not commit obviously grievous sins, we still “miss the mark” regularly in subtle ways, for example, by being angry or self-righteous. Although it is not easy or comfortable to admit that we are not perfect, our spiritual well-being depends upon it. May our prayer today be that we are made aware of the times and ways we have sinned so that we can ask for God’s mercy. For although God doesn’t wait to be asked before forgiving us, we cannot receive that forgiveness if we haven’t acknowledged our need for it.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hosea 6:1-6; Luke 18:9-14*

