



# Ministry of Praise

## 22-28

### March

#### Weekly Intentions:

~That all Church leaders will be sources of grace and inspiration for the people of God.

~That national and world leaders will have the wisdom to discern what is best for their people.

~That the sick may be healed and that those who have died may be granted a home in heaven.



### SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2009

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT;**

**LAETARE SUNDAY**

**Joy for the sinner**

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is known as Laetare Sunday—*laetare* is Latin for “joy.” In a season of fasting, prayer, and abstinence, it’s easy to forget that one of the liturgical prayers for Lent thanks God, saying, “Each year you give us this joyful season.” The Lenten project recalls the fact that God chooses to restore, heal, forgive, raise up, and save rather than what we might expect: punish for sin. God’s plan is “that the world might be saved through [Christ].” All of Lent, then, is not our making up for the sins of the past (they are forgiven), nor persuading God to love us (we are loved beyond all telling), but a joyful preparation to celebrate and take in the freedom Christ has won for us. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God.” It’s enough to make you want to—prematurely for the season—shout “Alleluia!”

**TODAY’S READINGS:** *2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23; Ephesians 2:4-10; John 3:14-21*

### MONDAY, MARCH 23

**FEAST OF TORIBIO DE MOGROVEJO,  
BISHOP**

**The hardest working man in Latin  
America**

A skilled lawyer and a judge of the dreaded Spanish Inquisition, Saint Toribio (1538-1606) got a surprise when the Spanish king plucked him out of his legal career and made him bishop of Lima in colonial Peru. Undeterred, he set to

work, battling priestly corruption and embarking on a difficult visit across his huge diocese that took seven years. In the process he learned indigenous languages, evangelized (eventually baptizing and confirming almost a million people), taught, and defended the rights of the native peoples. The next time you have an opportunity to move out of your comfort zone and do something great, take it and pour yourself into it. You may be surprised at the results—and at yourself.

**TODAY’S READINGS:** *Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 24

**LENTEN WEEKDAY**

**Jesus the fix-it man**

Often we put up with a lot of things in our lives that are broken: a cabinet door that doesn’t close, a chair leg that needs a new foot, a loose handle on a rake that needs tightening. In our lives, too, there are aspects of our personality that don’t work and need to be fixed. There are relationships that are broken and need mending. There are thoughts, words, and deeds that are in need of adjustment. Jesus, the divine fix-it man, is ready, willing, and able to make all the necessary repairs. Give him a call. He’s on your daily prayer speed-dial.

**TODAY’S READINGS:** *Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; John 5:1-16*

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

**SOLEMNITY OF THE  
ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD  
Fear not**

In a homily given at the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth in 2000, Pope John Paul II describes similarities between Abraham, our father in faith, and



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*“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that every-one who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”*

*“Lo, I am about to create a new heaven and a new earth.”*

*“When Jesus saw the man lying there, and knew that he had been ill for a long time, he said to him, ‘Do you want to be well?’ ”*

*“Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.’ ”*

**Do what is true.**

Jn 3:21



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Mary, our mother: “For both Abraham and Mary, the divine promise comes as something completely unexpected. God disrupts the daily course of their lives, overturning its settled rhythms and conventional expectations.” That is why the angel cautions, “Do not be afraid.” Each of us is called to heed that message of courage and hope: Grace thrives amid strange and extraordinary events. Don’t let fear prevent you from experiencing the miraculous love and mercy God has in store for you.

**TODAY’S READINGS:** *Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 26**

**LENTEN WEEKDAY**

**Idol activities**

There are many interpretations of the meaning of the “golden calf” the Israelites constructed during their long exodus. In one way or another, the calf probably represented an idol, or false god, that the Israelites fell into worshipping while in the desert. They wanted their long so-journ to end and had already forgotten the misery of their Egyptian captivity. Like the Israelites we sometimes prefer to worship something shiny and pretty we can see with our eyes rather than wait patiently upon the Lord. Lent is the perfect season in which to conduct an “idol check” in your life. Where are your deepest allegiances? Whom—or what—do you really worship?

**TODAY’S READINGS:** *Exodus 32:7-14; John 5:31-47*

**FRIDAY, MARCH 27**

**LENTEN WEEKDAY**

**Time is love**

Each year as we pass another birthday or significant milestone, we can be thankful for all the time we’ve been given. Yet making it to this moment doesn’t guarantee us one minute more. We could fret about how our days are numbered, but our faith shows us another way to calculate matters. Christians see time measured in love, and love is everlasting. We don’t need to know the hour or the day of our death, because the love we give and receive stems from a never-ending source which is, was, and ever shall be. As we love, we are already tapping into eternity.

**TODAY’S READINGS:** *Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30*

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28**

**LENTEN WEEKDAY**

**Compelling words**

The significance of words seems cheapened in a day when text messaging mangles them so easily, but those who doubt the power of a word need only think of words they wish they’d never uttered. On the other hand, a word of hope or encouragement can change the course of a life. How much more so the Word of God, which Isaiah says is sharp enough to divide bone from marrow. We call Jesus “the Word made flesh,” and apparently when he spoke—simple as his words were—he could prompt a response even from his enemies. Christ has taken root in us when we are judicious in what we say to others (and ourselves). We, too, have the power to build up or devastate others.

**TODAY’S READINGS:** *Jeremiah 11:18-20; John 7:40-53*