



Reflections for Lent 2026
from the people of
Church of the Redeemer



February 18, 2026

As our parish celebrates our 50th anniversary year, this collection of Lenten reflections truly shows the spirit of Redeemer as “a church of the people.” We have broken bread together. We have broken ground together. We have come together to help those in need, to support each other in friendship, and together have practiced and deepened our faith. For fifty years, Redeemer and its people have grown in size, in service, in love, and in faith.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reminds us that during Lent we practice self-control through fasting, we serve by giving alms, and we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture.

Through this collection of reflections, we share with each other our genuine, personal encounters with the Lord through his Word.

Thanks to Fr. Jim and the Redeemer staff for supporting this annual booklet. More than forty parishioners and five clergy contributed reflections, with five parishioners assisting with editing and coordination: Susan Darling, Martha O’Keefe, Paula Otto, Tad Stilwell, and Carol Ann Ziolkowski.

May your Lenten journey be enriched by the pages ahead.

Please note that all references to the Deity (i.e., pronouns, adjectives) have been lower-cased for the sake of consistency and in accordance with usage in The New American Bible.

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ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Once again, we receive the call to turn away from sin and return to the Gospel. Ash Wednesday begins the season of reconciliation and the invitation there found to return to right relationships with God and one another. There is something very powerful about making a public sign—with ashes on our foreheads as evidence of hope in our hearts—a sign that says we are loved by God beyond measure and that our God always calls us home to that love.

As we begin this Lenten time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we do well to remember that this season is not about our failures so much as it is about the amazing success of God's saving grace made real through the love of Jesus. In the tradition of our faith, we have been called upon in this time to make little sacrifices to remind us of the great sacrifice Jesus made for us in securing our salvation. In those practices of self-denial, we can begin to sharpen our focus on the big things in our lives that need to change. We do so with confidence that our God, the same God born into our midst at Christmas only forty-five days ago, the one we call Emmanuel, God with us, Wonder Counselor, God Hero, Prince of Peace, Lord of Lords and Redeemer, walks with us as our companion on this Lenten journey.

This year, let us strive to pray more often, to share our gifts more freely with the poor and needy and to fast more consistently from the sources of sin in our lives. In these forty holy days, we properly seek God's help as we try again to turn away from the lures of power, prestige, pride and possessions. Without doubt, there is much we need to change in our lives as we prepare again for the glory of Easter. Trusting in God's mercy and grace and confident of God's forever love for us, let us begin this journey together and let us believe that everything is still possible with God.

Deacon Chris Malone



THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

February 19, 2026

Luke 9:22-25

Jesus lays it all out rather bluntly in today's Gospel: he must suffer, be rejected, and die—but he will rise again. He then turns to us, his followers, and calls us to a life of surrender: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

This is not a casual invitation; it is a radical call to discipleship. To follow Christ means letting go of our grip on our own ambitions and embracing a life shaped by his example of sacrifice and love. If we cling to our lives, we lose them; but if we surrender our lives for his sake, we discover true life.

Carrying the cross daily is not just about enduring hardship—it is about choosing Christ over self, moment by moment. It is forgiving when we'd rather hold a grudge, serving when it costs us, and standing for truth even when that truth is unpopular. These daily acts of surrender echo the greater surrender Jesus made on the cross.

The world tempts us with promises of gain—success, possessions, recognition—but Jesus reminds us that gaining the whole world means nothing if we lose our soul. His way may seem costly, but it leads to eternal life, joy, and peace that the world cannot give.

Today, let us choose one area of our lives where we would normally put ourselves first—whether it's our time, our comfort, or our preferences. Let us intentionally surrender that area to Christ by serving someone else, forgiving someone, or speaking truth with love.

Randy Ferrance



FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

February 20, 2026

Matthew 9:14-15

In this passage, Jesus responds to a question about religious fasting — He answers with a wedding image.

John the Baptist's disciples were known for fasting as a spiritual practice connected to repentance, mourning over sin, longing for God, and serious devotion. So, they are asking Jesus, "Why do we fast so much, but your followers do not?"

Jesus answers with the idea, You don't fast at a wedding. A wedding is a time of joy and celebration, not mourning. He compares His own presence with His disciples, to that of a bridegroom being with the wedding guests. His followers are not fasting because they are experiencing the joy of being with Him.

But then He says that the bridegroom will be "taken away." Here, Jesus foreshadows what is to come — His suffering, death, and departure. That would be the time when His followers would fast, in grief, longing, and prayer.

Jesus is teaching that fasting is not a performance or a rigid rule. It has a purpose and a season. There is a time for celebration in God's presence, and there is a time for longing for His return.

During Lent, we live in that season of longing. We fast, pray, and reflect not because Jesus is absent forever; but because we await the fullness of His presence and prepare our hearts to receive Him more deeply.

This Lent, as we wait for the Bridegroom, what could you set aside as a quiet expression of your desire to be closer to Him?

Ronni Wiles

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

February 21, 2026

Luke 5:27-32

In his 2015 Corpus Christi homily, Pope Francis emphasized the efficacy of the Holy Eucharist by saying, "...it is Viaticum that helps us to move forward, to walk...enabling believers to become instruments of Christ's love...". In other words, despite any sense of unworthiness, the Eucharist demands our consent to discipleship.

Today's gospel features Levi, a sinful tax collector, called by Jesus to be his disciple. Overwhelmed by joy in his presence, Levi followed Jesus immediately. We know Levi as the Apostle Matthew.

In response to his call, Levi invited Jesus to dine at his home. Jesus obliged, gathering with many of his friends. Jewish officials observed this affair and criticized Jesus for mingling and eating with sinners. Jesus responded to his critics by declaring, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (vs. 32).

My friends, this gospel is a call to the Table of the Lord, to the Eucharist. When we see and taste the precious body and blood of Jesus, are we not transformed? Are we not washed in the restorative mercy of a loving Lord? Do we not leave Mass with renewed life and vigor? Are we not called to be more than we thought we ever could be?

Lent awakens our consciences to the ever-present Christ, who continually calls us to repentance so that we might have life within us. Refreshed, we move forward into the passion of Jesus, that we may join the eternal banquet in heaven, there to dine in the Communion of all of the Saints.

Tad Stilwell

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

February 22, 2026

Matthew 6:7-15

Early in Lent (1st Sunday) we hear one of the most famous teachings of Jesus, I'm referring to his teaching on prayer, and the "Our Father" in particular. There have been thousands of books written on the Our Father; here are a few quick reflections.

Our Father in heaven. It's OUR Father (not MY Father!), we're in this together. "Father" implies a beloved parent.

Hallowed/holy be your name. God is the ultimate “ground of all being,” before whom we bow. God is both holy/beyond, yet immanent as the source of all creation.

Your kingdom come, your will be done. We welcome the kingdom of heaven, which Jesus earlier said (Mt. 4:17) “is at hand”.

On earth as it is in heaven. We invite the eternal truth of heaven to be with us NOW! We have “tastes” of God’s love for us in this life (think of who you are in love with!), yet we will only be fulfilled, become whole and one with God in eternity.

Give us today our daily Bread. Trust that each day will take care of itself. God will provide for us today. As 12-steppers say, “one day at a time.”

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. An economic metaphor for “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” which Jesus closes the Sermon on the Mount with later in Mt. 7:12.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. We rely upon God in our daily lives because we can’t do it by ourselves. Trust that God will never lead us where God’s love cannot sustain us.

Dennis Beeman

MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

February 23, 2026

Matthew 25:31-46

WHERE IS HE? Are you travelling at the “Speed of Life” like cars on the roads in your community? Are you jostling for position in a lane or zooming through the yellow “Lights of Life”? WHERE IS HE? Are you wearing blinders like the horses in the days of the buggies—going down the “Road of Life” and only looking towards YOUR goals—going to work, coming home, taking care of chores, checking your phone, getting a promotion, going on vacation? WHERE IS HE?

Do you hand someone sitting on a corner with a sign in the pouring rain an umbrella from your car while you sit at the stoplight? As you are travelling in an airport, on a train, or other venue, do you offer to get a worn-out mother with small children a cup of coffee and entertain the children while she enjoys it? Do you help a neighbor in the yard because her hands and knees don’t work like they used to? WHERE IS HE? Do you offer to pray for someone’s sick or injured relative? Do you smile at strangers as you pass them? Do you call or

spend time with someone living alone? Do you take the time to just listen to a friend pour their heart out—for the hundredth time? WHERE IS HE?

He is here in the mercy you are showing to others by your kindness, your thoughtfulness, your love. Nothing planned. Nothing is gained by your actions but his love and his mercy. By these things you will know him now AND in everlasting life.

Judy Saunders

TUESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

February 24, 2026

Matthew 6:7-15

When I need to pray but can't find the words, I turn to the Lord's prayer. I know I will always be praying "correctly" when I use the words Jesus taught us. I have confidence that I have been heard. The Lord's prayer says everything I need: praised and hallowed is your name, provide for our needs today, forgive us our wrongdoings, remind us to forgive others, help us to avoid temptation and evil. It is the first prayer I learned in Sunday school. It is the prayer I use when taking the Eucharist to the homebound. It is perfect in any situation where you need the presence of the Lord. Verse 15 reminds us to forgive if we want to be forgiven. It reminds me to give mercy to others today because I might need it myself tomorrow!

Barbara Gross

WEDNESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK IN LENT

February 25, 2026

Luke 11:29-32

Jesus rebukes the people who are seeking signs and not recognizing the truth of his teachings. He warns them of the consequences and of their lack of faith.

Jesus refers to them as an evil generation who seek signs but do not recognize that he is the true messenger. He reminds the crowd to turn back to God.

Referencing the story of Jonah, Jesus tells us that Jonah became a sign to the people of Ninevah. Jonah's three days in the whale and his repentance are a challenge to us. We must achieve spiritual growth without seeking a sign. Then and only then, will we have a genuine relationship with God.

How do you and would you recognize God's message and messengers? Would you seek it as the Queen of the South did? That is a journey that you must be willing to take. You must be willing to pursue wisdom and truth to increase your faith, to deepen your faith, and to let God know that you love him.

Stop seeking external validation and signs to believe. The greatest truths are found within and not in a book or a lecture. Jesus calls us to trust in his teachings and his resurrection. Luke wants us to embrace faith, repentance, and divine wisdom.

Eileen Dumansky



*Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites,
so will the Son of Man be to this generation. (Luke 11:30)*

THURSDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

February 26, 2026

Matthew 7:7-12

How many times have we been working on a project and have not asked for help? Knowing that if we asked for help, we could get it done faster. What we hear in this reading is God telling us that Yes, we are weak on our own but if we learn to ask for help, we will gain the gifts of the eternal kingdom.

We also need to be able to give good gifts when asked for help by others. The golden rule says, “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” How many times have you been having a bad day and taken it out on someone else? Put yourself in this situation. You are at the park with one of your kids and at the edge of the park on the sidewalk is some dog poop. You know that you have an extra grocery bag in the trunk of your car and that you could get it and clean up the poop. Do you? Or do you just walk by and think “that’s disgusting,” “why would someone do that?” And aloud you tell your child, “Don’t step in that; some poor person left it there.” As humans we often forget that everyone is going to have a bad day. Perhaps the person whose dog left the doodoo on the sidewalk ran out of doggy bags and didn’t have enough money left from their paycheck after providing food and housing for their family and simply cannot afford to clean it up. You only see the situation from your side and assume that you have it the worst when often someone else has it worse but at this moment it feels like the world is out to get you. Forgive your brothers and sisters and give them the gift of forgiveness, hope, comfort and joy this Lenten season and throughout the year.

Alex Brehm

FRIDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

February 27, 2026 Matthew 5:20-26

The first verse of this reading reminds us, as often throughout the Gospels, that Jesus more harshly condemns the pompous, false righteousness of the religious leaders than the sinfulness of ordinary people. “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” He is encouraging the people not to simply memorize the laws and follow them in a superficial way, but to dig deeper within themselves to grasp the spirit of the laws. Yes, murder is bad, but even thoughts of murder are equally bad; even mocking or demeaning your neighbor is equally bad. He’s trying to make them understand that shameful intentions are as damaging to the soul as if they are acted upon.

Jesus implores the people to reconcile their differences “quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court... before he hands you over to the judge,” who may have them thrown in prison where they won’t get out until they’ve “paid every penny.” What a powerful message for all of us, to humbly seek guidance for healing our pain and anger before they manifest into damning behaviors. Seems like the only people Jesus consistently reprimands are the self-righteous ones who quote the laws but miss the point. May our hearts always be open to understanding the guidance Jesus provides for us.

Celie Thomas

SATURDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

February 28, 2026 Matthew 5:43-48

In this passage, Jesus tells us to love our enemies. An enemy is someone who either causes us to suffer or who wants us to suffer.

If you google online how much suffering is self-inflicted, the answer is a whooping 90 to 99 percent. Most of this self-inflicted suffering is due to the bad lifestyle choices we make. Poor nutrition and physical inactivity are significant risk factors for obesity and other chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, and depression.

Unfortunately, since we are the source of the majority of our own suffering, then we are our own worst enemy. We need to start loving and taking better care of ourselves. That means healthy diet, healthy weight, stop smoking, limit alcohol, get enough sleep, exercise, and eat more vegetables.

In Matthew 22:39, Jesus says: “You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself.” This is a problem because we are not doing a good job of loving ourselves. Due to our poor lifestyle choices, the life expectancy in the US is falling. And last year, the avoidable mortality in the US increased by 32.5 deaths per 100,000. By comparison, the avoidable mortality in Europe decreased by 25.2 deaths per 100,000.

The Cleveland Clinic says that 90 percent of heart disease is preventable through healthier diet, regular exercise, and not smoking. I don't understand why we continue to mistreat ourselves so badly. Please stop being your own worst enemy and start loving yourself by developing better lifestyle habits. Then you will be able to spread that love out to everyone including your enemies.

Shirley Winter



SUNDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 1, 2026 Luke 9:28b-36

Long, long ago when the earth was young and hot, the ground was shaped by shifting of land masses as continents were torn apart. Mountains were pushed up from low places as molten magma spewed from the deep. In the Middle East, a great rift valley formed from Syria in the north, down the Jordan River, beyond the Dead Sea, through the Red Sea into Africa, culminating at Lake Victoria. Earthquakes shook the land and a heart shaped plug dropped down in the rift forming the Sea of Galilee. To the west of this lake a volcanic mountain

rose from the valley floor fertilizing the land around it. It stood alone, coned shaped, a sentinel to the distant mountains in the north but looked south across the Jezreel Valley to the hill, called a harm, of Megiddo. Many battles had been fought in that Valley and it is found in prophecy to be the site of the final battle, H'armegeddon. In the west lay the open Mediterranean.

To this mountain, Mount Tabor, Jesus took Peter, John and James to pray. Steep was the climb following ancient goat paths to the flattened summit. Jesus knelt to pray and his face changed in appearance and his clothes became dazzling white. Significantly, Moses and Elijah appeared and were talking with Jesus. Twelve hundred years earlier Moses saw the Promised Land from a distance but he was not destined to cross the River Jordan. This day he walked with Jesus in the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They discussed Jerusalem which lay ahead for Jesus. Exhausted by their climb, the three disciples fell into a deep sleep but awoke to his glory. A low lying cloud from the normally azure blue sky obscured the others like a dense fog and from the cloud came a voice which said, "This is my Son, my Chosen One, Listen to Him." From this holy mountain, we have been told.

Ron Weik

MONDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 2, 2026 Matthew 17:1-9

In his Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius Loyola recommends a better understanding of the Scriptures by using our senses and imagination. That seems like a beautiful way to reflect on the Transfiguration. So let's close our eyes, breathe, and place ourselves walking with Jesus, Peter, James, and John slowly upward to Mount Tabor.

I'm not sure why Jesus has asked me to join them, but I am pleased. I feel the dry sand and stones under my sandals and enjoy listening to the comfortable banter of my companions. The weather is perfect for a stroll, but this feels like more than a casual stroll. As we approach an open area atop of the mountain, Jesus walks a bit ahead of us. Suddenly his appearance changes. His clothes are brighter than I've ever seen. He is radiant. Do I cover my eyes? I must; he is so dazzling. Yet I need to see my Lord! Is this how he truly is? How do I feel? (pause and reflect) Wait! Moses and Elijah are with him, talking to

him! I strain my ears to hear them, but I can't. Peter says they can't either. Then while in great confusion we feel a cloud overshadow us. We fall on our knees. Frightened, in awe? AND THEN A VOICE. "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, WHO ENJOYS MY FAVOR. LISTEN TO HIM." What? Am I really hearing the voice of the Father? (pause, hear, listen, reflect) Ah, now I know why He wanted me here, to see him in his Glory, to hear the Father. Jesus wants me to know the Son of God as my GLORIOUS SAVIOR. The Father wants me to follow the WORD OF GOD and the words of Scripture. And as it says in verse 9, "when I open my eyes {each and every day} see ONLY JESUS." Dear, Jesus, open the eyes of my heart to you this Lenten season. Amen. Jane Adkins

TUESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 3, 2026

Matthew 23:1-12

In today's reading from Matthew, Jesus tells the crowds that they should pay attention and follow what the scribes and Pharisees tell them to do; however, they should NOT pay any attention to their actions because they do not practice what they preach. Everything they do is for show. They enjoy the praise and deference paid to them on the streets, they like the attention and the adulation and they like being called "Rabbi."

Jesus advises his disciples that they should call no one here on earth Rabbi, nor allow themselves to be called Rabbi; and they have only one teacher, one Father and one Master. He reminds them further that they are all brothers and that "the greatest among you must be your servant." He concludes by adding: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted" – good advice for us today as well.

"Practice what you preach," "Beware of false action," "Actions speak louder than words," "Walk the walk" – take your pick – but do we? If my mouth says, "I love my Lord and Savior," then my actions need to say it, too. This is a message Jesus also wants us to hear and to follow. Lent 2025 may be the perfect time to start. Shall we?

Mary Atkinson (2025)

WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 4, 2026

Matthew 20:17-28

We live in a world that tells us that it is better to be first: first in sports, first in line, first to stand out. Social media only adds pressure to look successful, important, or “ahead” of everyone else. But in Matthew 20:17–28, Jesus teaches his disciples and us that God’s idea of greatness looks completely different.

As Jesus walks toward Jerusalem, he knows what’s waiting for him: suffering, sacrifice, and the cross. Yet his disciples are still thinking about status. James’ and John’s mother even asks Jesus to give her sons the highest positions in his kingdom. The other disciples get angry, not because they understand humility, but because they want those top spots too. Jesus responds with a message that flips everything upside down: “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”

In God’s kingdom, greatness isn’t about being noticed, it’s about noticing others. It’s not about being served, it’s about serving others. Jesus leads by example, saying he came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for others.

The message in today’s reading is powerful. Real greatness isn’t about popularity or achievements. It’s about the everyday choices to put others first: helping a friend who’s struggling, standing up for someone who feels invisible, or choosing kindness when it’s easier to walk away.

Jesus invites us to follow his path, which is one of humility, courage, and service. When we live this way, we reflect his love in a world that desperately needs it.

Greatness in God’s eyes begins with a servant’s heart.

Ellen Spain

THURSDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 5, 2026 Luke 16:19-31

Today's gospel reading is about Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man ignored Lazarus until after he died and saw that Lazarus was in heaven while he was in torment.

Am I aware of the many blessings, the many riches in my life? Food to eat, a roof over my head, the freedom to worship God, the relative safety of Mechanicsville; eyes to see the beauty of God's kingdom at the dawn of the day and the setting of

the sun; ears to hear the birds singing and the voices of loved ones. It's important to realize the riches in our lives and to thank God for them.

Am I aware of those who are less fortunate? People right in central Virginia – those without adequate food or housing, those who are ill, those who are lonely, those who face prejudice. Those in farther away places who live in war-torn areas, lack clean water, face starvation, confront religious persecution.

Today, take time to ponder ... what are the riches in my life? How can I share these riches with those in need?

(Redeemer has so many ways to share our riches - bringing canned goods for the food pantry, supporting the Lenten initiative for Shalom Farms, packing snack bags for Mo Hope, helping at the food bank on Tuesday night, visiting the homebound, creating prayer shawls, stamping greeting cards...)

Susan Darling

FRIDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 6, 2026

Matthew 21:33-43,45-4

This reading marks a pivotal moment in the ministry of Jesus, beginning with his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The chapter vividly captures the contrast between the joyous reception of the crowds who lay palm branches before Him and the growing tension with the religious authorities. Who do you say that he is?

Jesus' actions in cleansing the temple reveal his zeal for true worship and justice, challenging us to examine our own hearts for misplaced priorities or empty rituals. How can we “change our hearts” about our own priorities and how we live out our beliefs?

Throughout this chapter, Jesus shares parables that call for faithfulness, humility, and fruitfulness in our walk with God. He confronts hypocrisy and underscores the necessity of genuine repentance and faith. Matthew 21 invites us to recognize Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah and to respond with lives transformed by his presence, living out his teachings with integrity and compassion toward others.

Sing Hosana to the Holy One!

Terry Crowl

SATURDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 7, 2026 Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

The Parable of the Lost Son.

The lost son takes his inheritance and squanders it on a life of dissipation (reckless, wasteful and self-indulgent lifestyle). He commits many sins. When his money is gone and he is in dire need, he comes to his senses and returns to the father. He is repentant of his sins against heaven and his father. The father rejoices that the son who was dead in sin has come back to life, he was lost and has come to life again. The older brother is angry that his father could be so forgiving of the younger son. He wanted to be rewarded for his faithfulness. Do we resent God's generosity toward sinners who repent? Shouldn't we rejoice with the Father when someone is saved from their sins?

In Jesus' parable, the father is God who rejoices over each one of us who has sinned but repents and seeks forgiveness in the sacrament of Reconciliation. This parable teaches that God our Father loves us despite our sins and is ready to forgive us. Sin separates us from God's love.

During Lent, we are called to receive this sacrament of forgiveness and resolve to sin no more. We are healed of our sin and given a chance to change, to live free of sin and to focus on the love of God and neighbor. The more often we seek reconciliation through this sacrament, the more grace we receive to defend against the temptation of sin. Let's remember the blessings we receive when we turn from sin and turn back to our Father.

Janet East

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

March 8, 2026

John 4:5-42

John's account of Christ's encounter with the flawed Samaritan woman at the well is a classic example of his willingness to interact with those on the margins of society.

Ignoring her background and circumstance, Christ surprised her with a request for water but also confused her when revealing he was no ordinary Jewish man. "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband' for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"

The light turned on when he responded to her probe about the Messiah, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

Now spiritually driven, like the Apostles after Christ’s resurrection, she left quickly to proclaim the news to other Samaritans, inspiring them to spend time with Christ and then to accept him.

An interesting aspect is that a seemingly unfit human sowed a seed of Christianity, which took root and sprouted, leaving us to wonder if God blueprinted it.

Dan Corso

MONDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 9, 2026

Luke 4:24-30

In today’s Gospel reading, Luke tells us that the people of Nazareth were angry at Jesus’ message and actually wanted to kill him! Why were they so angry? Jesus identifies two prophets, Elijah and Elisha, who helped the poor and marginalized outside of Israel – and implies that Jesus will do the same. Jesus showed them that God doesn’t have favorites. Maybe they felt slighted because they thought they were God’s favorites? Don’t we all want to believe we are somehow God’s favorite?

We are loved – all of us are loved – equally by God. Jesus’s teaching spoke of a bigger God, one with wider horizons, and a heart big enough for the Israelites and their enemies. God’s love is for all.

As I go through my day today, may I be more like Jesus – my heart open in prayer to everyone, regardless of the many ways we are divided (politically, nationally, religious beliefs, race, gender, etc.). May I leave certainty behind – opening my mind to movement of the Holy Spirit. May I hear God’s voice through scripture – opening my ears to his challenging messages to grow in faith and love. May I freely share the gift of the Good News with everyone I meet.

For all this I pray.

Diane Atkins

TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 10, 2026

Matthew 18:21-35

Today's Gospel delivers a powerful message about forgiveness. How easy it is to hold a grudge against someone when you feel you've been wronged. But Jesus instructs us to forgive "not seven times but seven times seven."

I am always amazed when I hear of people who forgive those who harmed them or their loved ones. A few years ago, a friend's father was involved in a terrible car accident caused by a distracted young driver. Her father spent weeks in the hospital and has permanent disabilities caused by the accident. Yet, when the case went to court, my friend and her father did not pursue a big settlement or a harsh punishment. Rather, they told the young man that he had made a terrible mistake, but they didn't want him to pay for it for the rest of his life. They lived Jesus' words to "forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

May we find forgiveness in our hearts each day.

Paula Otto

WEDNESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 11, 2026

Matthew 5:17-19

The phrase that really stands out to me is "I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." As a 15-year-old trying to understand what my faith actually means in my daily life, this line hits me because it reminds me that Jesus didn't come to throw everything away or make an easier shortcut. Instead, He came to complete what God had already been preparing. Sometimes it's tempting to think the commandments are just a list of rules, or that they're old-fashioned and don't fit with what everyone else my age seems to be doing. But when Jesus says He came to fulfill the law, it makes me realize the commandments aren't random—they're part of God's plan to guide us toward love, goodness, and becoming the best version of ourselves.

It also challenges me. If Jesus didn't ignore the hard parts, then I shouldn't just pick and choose what's convenient for me either. It pushes me to try to live my faith more fully, not halfway. Even though I'm still learning and messing up sometimes, this verse makes me want to take my choices more seriously and remember that following God isn't about perfection—it's about letting Him complete something in me. And that feels both challenging and comforting at the same time.

Emma Fitzsimmons, Confirmand

THURSDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 12, 2026

Luke 11:14-23

In this reading where Jesus has cast out demons from a person who was mute, Jesus presents us with a clear “fork in the road” moment. After witnessing a miracle, some in the crowd sought to make Jesus prove his godliness by “demanding from him a sign from heaven.” They were focused on the demons. On the other hand, those who brought the mute person to Jesus were focused on the one who sought to banish the demons.

In all times, people have been presented with evil, failure and disappointment. We have a choice to become preoccupied with the negative or to instead abandon these and direct our thoughts, energies and prayers towards the one who will solve all our issues. May we strive the Lent to reform our hearts and minds to be always attuned to the goodness of Jesus. LuAnn Orie

FRIDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 13, 2026

Mark 12:28-34

Sometimes I ask myself, what really matters in life? What does God really want from me? Like you, I am called in many directions – work, family, friends, politics, community. What can I focus on and know I am getting it right? In today’s gospel, the scribe asks Jesus just that – of all the commandments, what is most important? And I love his answer – to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.” Jesus adds, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” He doesn’t just give the first rule – he connects them forever as one – to love God with your whole being AND to let that love overflow to those whom God loves, our neighbors.

Seems easy enough, right?

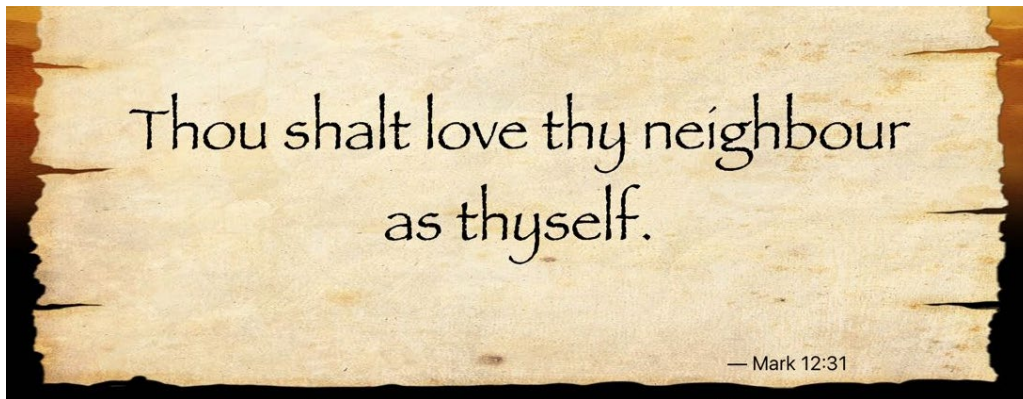
For me, it’s not always easy. Can I love those I disagree with? Can I love someone who has hurt me or those I love? Can I love those who are mean? Or always angry? Can I love someone on the other side of the world who wants to end my way of life? Is everyone really lovable? Who is Jesus calling me to love? I believe the love that Jesus is talking about is an all or nothing kind of love.

Everyone is in.

After Jesus spoke, there was only silence. A silence that challenges us and

reveals the gulf between what is and what might be. Sit in the silence. Sit with the challenge. Listen to what God is asking. Are you really ready to love? And can that love change our world? I think so – I'm counting on it!

Diane Atkins, 2025



SATURDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 14, 2026

Luke 18:9-14

Jesus's is talking about two entirely different types of people in this scripture. A Pharisee, a self-righteous man, and a tax collector, a corrupt man. The two men go into the temple to pray.

The Pharisee begins to pray "I am not a sinner, I don't cheat, I don't commit adultery, I go without food twice a week, I give a tenth of what I earn to the church" and on and on as to his good deeds. The other man, begins to beat his breast and pray, "God I am a sinner, have mercy on me."

Jesus explained to the people that the sinner who earnestly ask for mercy would be forgiven. He explained that the proud would be humbled and the humble would be honored.

Pray on this as we continue our Lenten journey. Are we the one who boasts of all we do or are we the humble who asks for mercy?

Kay Berlin

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 15, 2026

John 9:1-41

Have you ever read this story, in John's gospel, and wondered what it would be like, to be blind? No lights, no images, no colors, no beauty—nothing but darkness.

This man must have thought he had struck gold when he encountered Jesus and His disciples, on the sabbath and Jesus offered to heal him of his blindness.

What a perfectly delightful surprise, Jesus made real, with His own saliva, a bit of dirt rubbed together [mud] and applying it to the man's eyes, then telling him to go to the pool of Siloam to wash, where he experienced complete healing.

[Could this washing be his baptism into the life of Christ?] This man was healed by Jesus, but not without a lot of questions and confusion, from family, community and the Pharisees. Whose sins caused his blindness, his or his parents and his identity was challenged, as well as that of his parents.

Jesus works that way—physical and spiritual healing. Jesus wants our hearts and He invites us into His circle every chance He gets. In this story, Jesus, also, declares that He is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Perhaps, during Lent, we will take a really good look at ourselves and our lives and ask THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD to help us to see and to serve better, so that we will not be blind, no longer.

June Quisenberry

MONDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 16, 2026

John 4:43-54

“Who wants seconds?” was a common question I heard at big family meals. It was a sign that you had finished your plate but you wanted more. That being said, why did Jesus feel the need to give seconds to the people of Cana. After all, he had turned water into wine there and began his public ministry at the behest of the Holy Mother. Maybe it was not to prove who he was . . . maybe the greater purpose was that the people yearned for more. They were hungry. They were not quite full.

Jesus is the only force that can fill out hearts, satisfy us, nourish us, heal us, fortify us for all the challenges of life. Our wonderful and awesome sacramental tradition gives us a method to be satiated and healed much like the people of Cana and the royal official's son.

This Lent, let Jesus fill our emptiness as we journey to the Cross, Grave, and miracle of God's undying love in the resurrection.

John Amoroso

TUESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 17, 2026

John 5:1-16

Do you want to be well?

Jesus knew the man by the pool had been sick for a very long time. Jesus asked the man, “Do you want to be well?”

Jesus didn’t ask if the man wanted his help to enter the pool. He asked if he wanted to be well. The man complained of what he could not do. He could not enter the pool fast enough on his own and no one around him would help him enter the pool. He considered his healing as something that depended on his own effort or worthiness and his suffering sustained by the unkindness of others. After thirty-eight years of suffering, he had come to identify himself as not worthy of being healed.

Jesus told the man to rise, take his mat, and walk. Immediately, without need of the pool, the man became well, took up his mat, and walked. Later, Jesus found the man in the temple area and said to him, “Look, you are well; do not sin any more so that nothing worse may happen to you.”

Jesus made the man well – body, mind, and spirit. Jesus met the man where he was in his suffering and sin, made him well, and told him to sin no more. Does this sound familiar?

Jesus offers this blessing to all of us, right now, where we are, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Jewish leaders took notice of the miracle that had occurred, but chose to focus on the carrying of a mat on the Sabbath. They persecuted Jesus for performing a miracle on the Sabbath, rather than acknowledge the greater good and the will of the Father.

Dan Aunspach

WEDNESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 18, 2026

John 5: 17-30

This gospel passage tells of Jesus' healing of a man who had been paralyzed for many years -- an act performed on the Sabbath that unsettled the Pharisees. Jesus explains that he is reflecting God’s ongoing work, urging those who question him to honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He makes it clear

that he acts only in accordance with what he sees the Father doing, claiming equality with God and the divine authority to give life and judge humanity.

Jesus always sought to do his Father's will, and as his followers, we should strive for the same. He portrays God as a compassionate Father, working every day on our behalf. This calls us to reflect on how God's grace has carried us, encouraging us to remain faithful, and not lose heart. God's compassion is constant. Jesus' motivation was never about power, pride, or status, but about seeking and saving the lost, and bringing healing to the hurting -- no matter the day of the week. What motivates you?

Peggy Yontz

SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

THURSDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 19, 2026 Matthew 1:16,18-21,24a

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In Matthew's writing, we read about how God guides St. Joseph. As I reflect on this reading, I can't help but to think about the faith that was shown by St. Joseph. We see his obedience and trust in God's plan. When he learned that Mary was pregnant, he planned to divorce her quietly because he wanted to protect her from shame and harm. When the angel of the Lord appeared to St. Joseph in a dream to share God's plan and guide him, he changed his mind and followed. What a tremendous act of faith in the midst of crisis and fear!

This reading teaches us that God has a plan for our lives, which may not always align with the path we see for ourselves. In times of crisis and fear, have you felt like you are completely alone? We are reminded that God is with us and has a plan that is revealed in his perfect timing. We may not always understand his plan, but need to be obedient and trust in him. St. Joseph modeled this for us perfectly.

Just as he was visited multiple times by the angel of the Lord to help protect and guide the Holy Family, may we see God's gentle leading in our lives, even when we think he is nowhere to be found. Let us use this Lenten time of prayer,

fasting, and almsgiving to take the opportunity to draw ourselves closer and strengthen our relationship to him. May we follow St. Joseph's perfect example of how to have faith and trust in God's plan for our lives and be models for others of how to do the same.

Lisa Stough

FRIDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 20, 2026

John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

In today's gospel, even though there was a threat on his life, Jesus still traveled secretly to Judea and attended the Feast of the Tabernacle, a feast of great importance. He openly spoke in the temple area at the risk of his life. His courage originates from his deep oneness and intimacy with God.

Unlike some of our sisters and brothers in faith elsewhere, we don't fear for our lives if we mention Jesus. Are we reluctant to bring up our faith when discussing things happening which are contrary to his teaching? When people talk about our neighbors with housing insecurity being worthless, do you turn away without speaking up?

Do you KNOW Jesus or is he like your neighbor you exchange weather comments with when you pass him?

Ask yourself how well you know Jesus. During Mass, do you just sit passively in your seat, or do you read the weekend readings prior to coming to Mass to connect more deeply with the liturgy? It's like an athlete who shows up for the game ready to play, but doesn't bring equipment. Or, a cook who has to go get a key ingredient because he forgot to read ahead on the recipe.

Getting to really know Jesus and love him is not a one-time encounter. It takes effort, work, and time on your part. Lent is a path we're on for a short time. Your faith journey is a lifetime commitment. Make the time to learn more about Jesus and how to live the life he challenges.

Martha O'Keefe

SATURDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 21, 2026

John 7:40-53

When I first read this Gospel, I was struck by how relatable it was. People are curious. Who is this man? Is he a prophet or the Messiah? The Pharisees don't

want to know him. They want to arrest Jesus. They want to jail Jesus. They aren't curious. They have a preconceived notion and aren't willing to listen or interact with Jesus. They don't want to have a connection with him. They expect the prophecy to be exactly as it said without realizing that God is revealing himself through Jesus.

We don't get to decide how God will reveal himself to us, but hopefully we can hear and accept his message. To me, it's like when you first meet strangers: do you judge them by how they're dressed, or do you try to get to know them? Do you find some connection - something in common - to build a bridge between you? How many times have you let your thinking or your experiences color your interactions? Can we open our eyes and see the bridge that God is building to us through his son, Jesus? Or will we close our eyes and hearts to him like the Pharisees did?

Megan Geary

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 22, 2026

John 11:1-45

There was a certain woman named Grace who was sick. She was from Arlington, a county in northern Virginia, near where she raised her family of six children. She laid down and did not leave her bed for two weeks. The staff, from the independent living home where she lived, brought her meals in bed. Several years earlier, Simonetta, my wife, and I chose this home for her -- not just for the beautiful azalea gardens but, rather, that it was within walking distance to St. Thomas Moore Catholic Church. She would start the twelve hours of daylight by walking to attend mass each day and did not stumble because the world was bathed in light.

We heard that she was deeply saddened and had taken to her bed, but we delayed our visit since Thanksgiving was just a few days away. We previously made arrangements with the house to have Thanksgiving dinner there with her in the main dining room with all the hundreds of residents.

Upon our arrival, we found her lying in bed, her head on the pillow with no desire to rise or eat. As we sat by her bedside, she told us of her worries and concerns for the future but expressed her belief in the resurrection on the last day. She then asked to be read to from the Bible on the topic of eternal life. Paging through scripture, "The Raising of Lazarus" caught my eye and the story was proclaimed to her. As the words flowed forth, there came the part where Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: whoever believes in me, though

he should die, will come to life; and whoever is alive and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" At that time there was a pause in the reading, and as I looked into her eyes, she answered, "yes, I do believe." From there, the rest of the reading was completed and a certain peace came over her as she relaxed in the loving embrace of our Lord.

The time for preparing for dinner arrived. I gently took her by the hand and said, "Mom, let us get up and go downstairs for dinner;" she arose as light as a feather and dressed for the occasion. That afternoon feast was a joyous event and carried through many more years of living for the Lord.

The Word of the Lord set her free.

Ron Weik (2025)

MONDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

March 23, 2026

John 8:1-11

In today's reading, we are told of a woman caught in adultery and brought before Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees. Punishment for such an act was stoning and they wanted to hear what Jesus had to say. They were using the woman to try to trick Jesus, but he would not be tricked.

Jesus said nothing to them; he simply began to write in the dirt with his finger. Finally, he said, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." No one did; her accusers went away, one by one. After they had gone, Jesus asked the woman if anyone had condemned her. When she answered, "No one," Jesus replied, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

This reading is a reminder to us that Jesus is always willing to offer us his love, his mercy, and his forgiveness - over and over again. He is indeed a God of second (and third and fourth) chances. There are still two weeks of Lent remaining, more than enough time to let God know how much we love him, how much we trust him to lead us to a wonderful resurrection period, how much we want to please him, and how much we need to thank him. With God, it is never too late.

Mary Atkinson

TUESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

March 24, 2026

John 8:21-30

This story describes a disheartening reality: many of the Jews just didn't get it. They couldn't wrap their brains around the radical forgiveness and love that Jesus preached and demonstrated. But, to defend the Jews just a bit, it WAS a radical change to their cultural mindset. Earlier in John, Chapter 8, the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus and he did not condemn her. This was a radical change to the law with which they were familiar. In this passage, Jesus continued to reveal his identity as God's only son, but the Jews remained confused. They flatly asked him, "Who are you?"

Jesus gave an incredibly sobering answer: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me." Basically, Jesus had to die at their hands to fully "get through" to them. Unfortunately, we resemble the Jews in this story far too often. Our sin and resulting confusion is frustrating. Fortunately (and mercifully), Jesus DID die for the forgiveness of their sins - and ours. We are blessed to have this time to reflect on the story of Jesus' death and resurrection so that we will know EXACTLY who Jesus is - and the radical forgiveness he offers us.

Greg Chittum

WEDNESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

March 25, 2026

Luke 1:26-38

This passage describes the annunciation. God sends the Angel Gabriel to tell Mary she will conceive Jesus. Mary accepts, saying, "May it be done to me according to your word."

This is called Mary's fiat - freely accepting what God asks of her. Mary put her trust in God, even in her uncertainty. She is courageous and open to whatever God has planned for her.

Lent is a time for prayer and reflection. Lent calls us to be closer to God. It calls us to be open with Him and with others. We should try to say yes to those things God is asking of us.

How can we say yes to God? We can do this, even in small ways - praying for guidance, resisting temptation, letting go of a fear, forgiving someone, trying to live our charity for others.

Saying yes will not always be easy, but it can lead us to a deeper relationship with Him.

Think about same ways you can say yes to God in your own life.

Alex Kulinowski

THURSDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

March 26, 2026

John 8:51-59

One year, on Good Friday, my very young pastor had each congregant come up and drive a nail into a simple wooden cross. As I drove mine in, I remember thinking that every time I commit a sin, I am driving a nail into my Savior's cross.

I think we have been so blessed over our lifetimes, to have learned everything Jesus did for us while he was on earth. So, I thought about the nailing of the cross when I read about the certain "Jews" who did not know he was the Messiah. Some of them had to be blind to the fact that this person, nailed to a cross in front of them, was truly the Messiah they had heard about. Otherwise, there would be no Holy Thursday, no Crucifixion, no glorious Resurrection, no Ascension into heaven, no Pentecost, no Salvation.

Jesus' responses to those who had treated him like this, even those who suggested he was a demon, was to be truthful and humble. He pointed to the greatness of his Father, and not to himself. Jesus spoke of Abraham's joy when he was told of the Messiah's coming. It makes one think about how we react when we are called a name, ignored, left out, or misunderstood.

During this Lent, maybe one thing to concentrate on is Jesus' way of treating others, whether they loved him or not, and to strive to follow much more closely the way of our Great Messiah, the Savior of the world. And following Jesus is truly a learning and relearning of all he did for us.

Kathy Pasch

FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

March 27, 2026

John 10:31-42

The Jewish leaders wanted to stone Jesus for saying that he was the son of God. Jesus told them that if they do not believe he is who he says he is, then they should at least believe in the works he has done. He tells the Jewish leaders this so they can understand that God the Father and he are one and the same. When they tried to arrest him, he escaped across the Jordon River. The people on the other side of the Jordon believed in him and in who he was.

Some who see Jesus' works still do not believe in God the Father or God the Son. What does it take for us to believe and live by his words?

Terry Ferrance

SATURDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

March 28, 2026

John 11:45-56

This passage brings to mind the current divisions in our country. Many people are fearful of what lies ahead, raising the question: do we want things to remain unchanged? Jesus was fully willing to give his life for us, so the plot against him actually fulfilled his intentions. In today's world, we can interpret this as a call to trust that God will guide us toward what is best.

The passage highlights spiritual darkness and shows that people's moral state influences how they respond to Jesus; some choose disbelief and conspire to do harm, yet God ultimately uses their actions for His redemptive purposes.

Scholars point out the irony that even after witnessing the seventh sign—Jesus raising Lazarus—the religious leaders didn't dispute the miracle but instead saw it as a threat to their power and status. This is frequently seen as a cautionary message about how idolatry and pride can prevent people from recognizing the truth.

Carolyn Brand

PALM SUNDAY

March 29, 2026

Matthew 27:11-54

After Barabbas was set free and Jesus the Messiah was held prisoner, the chief priests, elders, soldiers and crowds gathered around him. He was stripped of all of his clothing, and a scarlet military cloak was thrown around him. Weaving a crown of thorns, they placed it on his head and put a reed in his hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” They spat on him and used the reed to strike at his head. After they mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him away to be crucified.

When they came to the Place of the Skull, they crucified Jesus, divided his clothing by casting lots, and sat down to keep watch over him until he died. From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon when Jesus cried in a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” When you feel that God has forsaken or abandoned you, join your suffering with Jesus’ suffering because in your heart of hearts, you know that he has not forsaken you or stopped loving you.

Persevere. Trust. Surrender.

Deacon Bill



HOLY WEEK



MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

March 30, 2026

John 12:1-11

This passage brings us to our Savior's last week on earth. This week had extreme highs and lows. Yesterday, the people cheered Jesus as their king by waving palms. Thursday, he became a slave and washed the disciples' feet, showing them that they must be humble servants to each other. Then, knowing that he was leaving, he created a living legacy that would last until the end of the world. Jesus turned bread into his body and wine into his blood. Then, he went and prayed so intensely in the garden that he spilled the first droplets of his blood.

His suffering started with his disciples. One betrayed him, most abandoned him, and one denied knowing him outright. He was scourged at a pillar, crowned with thorns, beaten and made to carry his own cross. Then, he was nailed to that cross and hung for three hours in excruciating pain before he died. Why did he have to die? One reason is that he had to atone for our sins by giving up his life. (He lost 28,430 droplets in his torture and crucifixion). On the third day, he raised himself from the dead and defeated death, giving us immortality.

The Creator, who is pure love, has given us a choice of where we may spend eternity. I pray that we all join him in heaven. But you cannot earn or work for salvation. The only way to salvation is by praying that God will open the door to eternity and that the Holy Spirit will lead you into it.

Jesus is my Creator and best friend because I talk with him every day. Every time I hear a scream, I pray an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be for all involved. Praying to God is easy. You must be humble and reveal the true you to him. Every time you have a prayer request, you must end with the conviction, "...not my will, but your will be done." He created you and knows everything

about you. He has a plan for you and wants to help you. You only have to let him complete his plan within you to be saved.

Dennis Fiore

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

March 31, 2026

John 13:21-33, 36-38

Oh Peter! So inspired by the love Jesus shares with him, so confident that he can take on the world (“I will lay down my life for you”), only to discover that without Jesus, his fortitude is weak.

I can relate to Peter’s experience. I have left Sunday Mass fully motivated by the scriptures, the homily and the Eucharist, and still manage to be angry with the driver in front of me before I even get to the first traffic light. Or, I come home from a retreat ready to proclaim and share my newly strengthened faith, but instead, I end up in an argument with my wife over household chores before the sun has set. “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,” (Matthew 26:41).

I think that, like Peter, I become a little too self-confident and forget that the foundation of my exuberance is Jesus. And when I lose my focus on him, my fortitude crumbles. God, help me to remember that my strength and confidence comes from you.

Robbie Prezioso

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

April 1, 2026

Matthew 26:14-25

“Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” Christ had just broken bread and shared wine with his apostles at the Last Supper when he states that one there at the table would betray him. Are we like Judas? Do we deny when we have turned our backs on Jesus? Are we coming to the Eucharist with clean hearts or do we continue to make choices of sin? Are we reaching for worldly pleasures instead of reaching for the love of God? God never gives up on us, he does not get angry, he feels sad that we turn from him, and he knows we will hurt because worldly pleasures do not last-just like the thirty pieces of silver Judas tossed away. He always gives us a chance to repent; we must accept his forgiveness to forgive ourselves.

When we are out in the world, we need to look for Christ in others. We need to “see” Christ in those we often avoid. Do not be a Judas and turn your back on him. Do as God has told us: clothe the naked, feed the hungry, give shelter to the poor, and welcome the immigrants. Share the love of God in your hearts with others.

Cathy Durvin



HOLY THURSDAY

April 2, 2026

John 13:1-15



The Washing of the Disciples' Feet

I'm the primary caregiver for my mother-in-law who is now 101 years old. In 2024, Gigi suffered a rather large skin cancer on her shin. She endured three months of chemo injections, an infection after the biopsy and ultimately, a successful Mohs surgery. I offered to bathe and manage her wound care so she could avoid being transferred to a healthcare facility. It turned out to be a long, but sacred journey.

Gigi does not possess a "warm fuzzy" personality. Dignified, reserved, the wife of a politician, she seldom lets anyone in. She's a determined skeptic and I'm too easily frustrated-exasperated with one another, we often bump heads. Yet, the months of intimate caring for Gigi penetrated her defenses and opened her in ways I'd never imagined possible. Kneeling at her feet day after day, tenderly washing her wound and feet, I witnessed a transformation of us both. I was more often able to smile and accept her stubbornness with genuine compassion. Gigi softened, trusting me more often, warmly accepting my goodbye hugs. In time, she miraculously began offering me hugs too.

Is this what Jesus was trying to impart to the disciples and ultimately to all humanity when he insisted on washing their feet? "...as I have done for you, you should also do." This simple, tender, intimate act of compassion is transformational love in action for both souls involved. Our Redeemer tradition of inviting everyone to take part in the Holy Thursday communal foot-washing has always moved me to tears. This act is more deeply meaningful for me now than ever before.

Kristi Lane

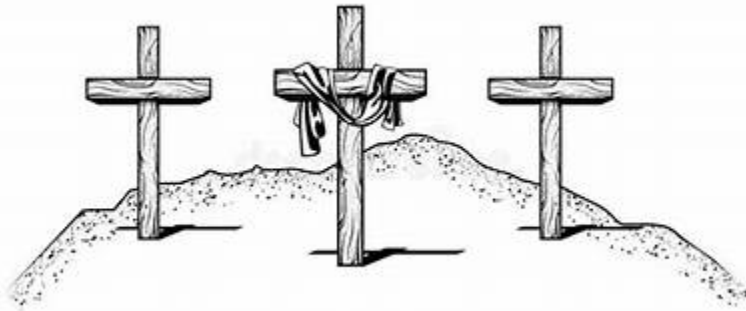
GOOD FRIDAY

April 3, 2026 John 18:1—19:42

Sadly, most of us have felt the heartache of witnessing a loved one in pain. Often, we would rather experience the pain ourselves than watch our loved one suffer. The Good Friday gospel relates how Mary felt that pain at the foot of the cross. In the Gospel of Luke, Simeon foretold to Mary, “You yourself a sword will pierce.” The sword of sorrow pierced Mary’s heart as she stood at the foot of the cross and watched her only son suffer the greatest humiliation and most extreme pain the Romans could inflict on anyone. She was powerless to change anything and all she could do was be present to her son and to share his suffering. As we too share in the suffering of our loved ones, so did Mary share in the suffering of her dying son. Her strong faith and the teachings of resurrection could not make the pain or suffering any less intense.

When a loved one suffers, let us turn to the intercession of Mary, who has been in the same place as we find ourselves. Let us ask Our Lady of Sorrows to intercede for us in those times. May we find help and consolation through her prayers and maternal tenderness.

Deacon Ron



HOLY SATURDAY

April 4, 2026

John 20:1-9

The Empty Tomb

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is one of the cornerstone beliefs of our faith. Without this historic event our faith would be meaningless. Yet, there are no eyewitnesses to the event. Ostensively the disciple, who arrived at the tomb first, witnessed something that caused him to believe. What did he witness? He witnessed that Jesus wasn't there and his preaching numerous times about his death and resurrection, probably came back, flooding his consciousness. He came to fully believe because it had happened, just as Jesus had told them. This belief was also substantiated or reinforced by the physical appearances of Jesus over the next forty days.

For us, the empty tomb by itself isn't proof of the resurrection. Proof of the resurrection comes to us in the Gospel and the accounts of Jesus' appearances after the resurrection to the Apostles and the early Church. We have the witness of people through the ages as testimony of the Gospel message. We have the witness of how the Apostles lives changed and they became bold proclaimers of the Gospel and witnesses of Jesus Christ.

We believe because of the witness of the Apostles and others who have come before us. Others will become believers because of our witness to the Gospel. If we are true believers, our lives must be different. We must become Easter people, whose lives are radically different because of our belief in the Gospel. If we are, then others will become believers of the Gospel, not because of an empty tomb, but because of the way we live our lives.

Deacon Chris Colville



EASTER SUNDAY

April 5, 2026

Matthew 28:1-10

Alleluia! Christ has risen! He has risen indeed! Imagine the first rays of dawn breaking over a silent garden, the air still heavy with the sorrow of Good Friday. Two women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, make their way to the tomb, hearts aching, spices in hand, expecting only to anoint a lifeless body. Instead, what they find shatters every expectation: an empty tomb, a dazzling angel, and then – the Risen Lord Himself!

Today, on this glorious Easter Sunday, Matthew 28: 1-10 invites us into that transformative moment. The heart of this Gospel is Jesus' repeated command: **"Do not be afraid."** It is a call to leave fear behind, to embrace joy, and to return to Galilee – to the place of our first encounter with Christ, where we begin anew in the light of the Resurrection.

The Easter Story has echoes of fear and overwhelming Joy. Think of Peter, denying Jesus 3 times, or the disciples shattered like sheep without a shepherd. Their world crumbled – certainties shattered, hopes dead. Does this sound familiar? Like them, we've all had our tombs: the job loss that felt like burial, the fractured relationship that left us weeping, the addiction or doubt that sealed us in darkness.

Easter is our ultimate transformation – death rolled away, glory revealed. In our lives, it's that moment addiction breaks, forgiveness heals a family, or a prodigal returns. Fear and joy mingle, propelling us forward. A very blessed Easter Sunday and season to all!

Fr. Jim Cowles

