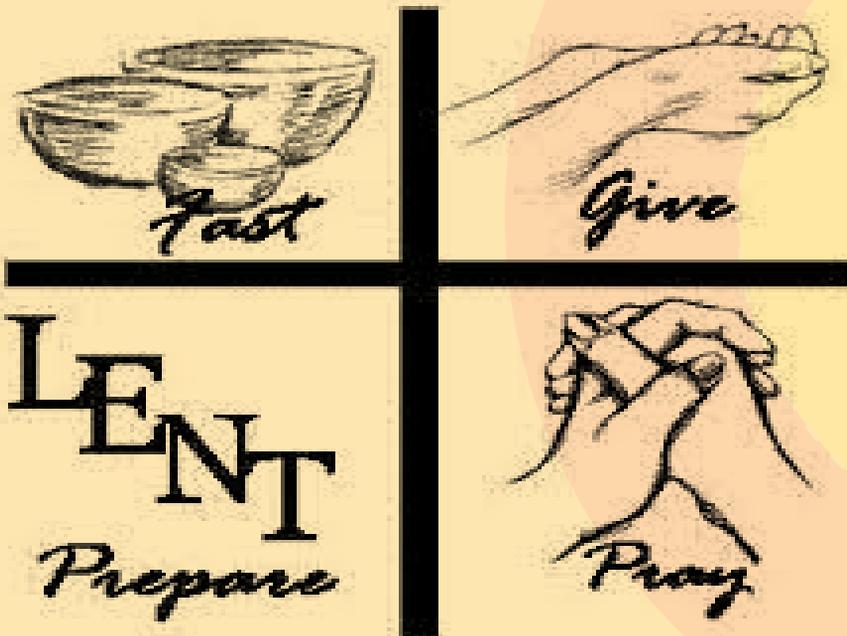


*May the  
Word of God  
Enlighten our lives*



**A V E**

**MARCH 2025**



“The ashes placed on our heads invite us to rediscover the secret of life. They tell us that as long as we continue to shield our hearts, to hide ourselves behind a mask, to appear invincible, we will be empty and arid within.” Pope Francis

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## POPE’S PRAYER INTENTION

### For families in crisis

Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other’s gifts, even in their differences.

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**RIDING THE WAVES  
OF GRACE***Sharun Roy D'Souza, SJ***(EDITORIAL)**

Lent is a season of renewal and grace, a time to journey inward and rediscover our relationship with God. It invites us to enter the desert of our hearts, where the sheer silence reveals the truth of who we are and who God is to us. The phrase 'Waves of Grace' reminds me of the animated movie, *Flow*, which depicts the journey of a solitary cat sailing over a flood, where vulnerability gives way to communion and survival unfolds through trust and shared grace. Like the flood in *Flow*, Lent washes over us, inviting us into deeper communion with God and one another.

The way through Lent is not an easy road but a narrow path leading to the gate of life (Mt 7:13). It is a journey of conversion, marked by prayer, fasting, and alms-giving. Prayer opens our hearts to God's voice, as Henri Nouwen writes: "Praying means above all listening to the voice of Jesus, who dwells in the depths of the heart." Fasting helps us detach from what enslaves us, freeing us to hunger for what truly nourishes. Alms-giving, as the fruit of this inner renewal, expresses the urgency of love in deeds of mercy and solidarity.

As pilgrims of hope, we are called to walk together on this spiritual path, sustained by God's grace. Lent is not only a personal journey but also a communal call to creative acts of love and justice. The longing expressed in the Psalms, "Teach me your way, O Lord!" (Ps 86:11), becomes our prayer as we move forward. Grace flows where we dare to hope, carrying us towards the light of resurrection and the promise of new life in Christ.

The Gospel, today, portrays a tender moment. People bring children to Jesus, seeking his blessing. In response, he embraces the children, lays his hands on them, and blesses them. This simple act of touch conveys love, acceptance, and healing.

Touch is a vital part of human relationships. It speaks when words fail. A warm handshake can show welcome. A pat on the shoulder can encourage. A hug can offer comfort. Jesus understood this deeply. His touch healed the sick, raised the dead, and restored dignity. True Christian touch is not just physical; it is spiritual. It conveys God's love. However, touch is not always positive. It can also wound. A slap can harm. An inappropriate touch can betray trust. Our hands are tools of love or weapons of hurt. What we do with them reflects our inner disposition. Children in Jesus' time were considered insignificant. Yet, he welcomed them with open arms. In doing so, he showed us that every person, no matter how small, deserves respect and care. In today's world, we often hesitate to touch others. Fear of misunderstanding or rejection keeps us distant. But a touch, with pure intention, can be transformative. It can rebuild broken bridges and heal invisible wounds. How do I touch others? Do my hands carry blessings or burdens? Do they lift others up or push them down?

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, enable us to touch others like you did—with gentleness, care, and healing. May our hands be instruments of peace, channels of love, and symbols of your presence.

**01 SAT**

## **THE POWER OF TOUCH**

Alam Parmar, SJ

Sir 17:1-13

Mk 10:13-16

*“And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.”*

## 02 SUN (VIII SUNDAY OF THE YEAR)

### BE COMPASSIONATE TO OTHERS

Amit Soreng, SJ

Sir 27:4-7

1Cor 15:54-58

Lk 6:39-45

*“A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good.”*

interactions. Through interactions, we express ourselves and reveal our true character. When our mistakes are pointed out, we may acknowledge them but seldom take meaningful steps to correct them. Struggles and difficulties are an inherent part of life, and each person must face them with a positive attitude. St. Paul encourages us to remain steadfast in our work for the Lord, persevering with commitment. Through our dedication to his service, we contribute to the greater glory of God. The Gospel reading challenges us to examine our own behaviour before judging others. It is a common human tendency to notice the faults of others and criticise them. However, our character ultimately defines us, and people quickly perceive our true nature. Before correcting others, we should focus on improving ourselves. When confronted with our shortcomings, we often react defensively rather than accepting our mistakes. Today, Jesus emphasises the importance of personal growth and self-reflection.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, fill us with your love and compassion for others and enable us to love them as you love us unconditionally. So that we may bear good fruits and fruits in abundance for your glory.

The readings of the day encourage us to live authentically, with our thoughts, words, and actions in harmony. Life constantly tests us through challenges, struggles, and difficulties that we encounter daily. Since individuals are often judged by their actions, it is important to remain mindful and considerate in our interactions.

Often, we overlook the impact of our words and actions during

Life in this world is not easy. Daily struggles and stress often cover us with despair. We hardly find hope or a way out in those moments. The first reading from Sirach depicts a God who is ever merciful and encourages everyone to embrace life. The reading entreats us to repent and return to a just and forgiving God. It fills us with positivity, enabling us to be resilient and bounce back in our lives.

In the Gospel, another dimension of God is revealed in Jesus. The rich young man asks Jesus how one can attain eternal life. Jesus confronts him with wit and wisdom and invites him to increase his treasures in heaven. All of us are rich in one way or another. Jesus encourages everyone to use these riches for the common good, especially for the poor. One might think it's not possible, but Jesus reminds us that everything is possible with God. When we reach a bend in our life journey, do not think it is the end of the road. Trust in God and have faith in the divine, who can guide us through the most difficult moments of our lives.

**Pray and Practise:** Dear Lord, help us to understand your plans for us. Give us the strength to believe that everything is possible with you; so that with this faith, we could live in this world as better Christians and better human beings.

**03 MON**

**ALL THINGS ARE  
POSSIBLE FOR GOD**

Anjo Thomas, SJ

Sir 17:24-29

Mk 10:17-27

*“For men it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God.”*

04 TUE

## SACRIFICE FOR CHRIST

Basil Hadde, SJ

Sir 35:1-12

Mk 10:28-31

*“But many who are first will be last.”*

Today’s reading from Sirach highlights the fruits of the Holy Spirit. No religion misleads or takes us away from God; instead, every religion shows a path to peace and fulfilment. The first reading challenges us to reflect on the values of faith. How faithful are we to God? How well do we understand the teachings of the Scriptures, and do we apply them in our daily lives? Worship

is not just about rituals or sacrifices; it must be evident in our actions. True worship is rooted in justice, sincerity, and generosity. Sirach emphasises that helping the oppressed, advocating for the poor, and showing compassion are forms of worship. Acts that promote justice and love demonstrate that worship is incomplete without genuine care for others.

In the Gospel according to Mark, Peter asks Jesus about the sacrifices made by the disciples, saying, “We have left everything to follow you.” Jesus assures them that anyone who has given up family, home, or possessions for his sake will receive far greater rewards in this life and eternal life to come. However, these blessings may come with challenges, as disciples often face persecution. Jesus also highlights the value of humility, contrasting it with the pursuit of fame and recognition. In a world where many seek status, God reminds us that the ultimate reward is life with him - A treasure far greater than anything the world can offer.

**Pray and Practise:** Dear God, teach us to live out the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives day after day.

Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday. This serves as a reminder of our mortality. The purpose of Lent is to prepare believers for Easter by helping them contemplate Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection.

“Return to me with all your heart (Joel 2:12) and “Create a pure heart for me, O God” (Ps 51:10). These two verses underscore the call of God and our response to his call.

The Creator invites us to renew our relationship with him, our neighbour, and with ourselves. As God's children, with an unquenchable thirst, we must plead to God for a new heart. This spiritual transformation calls for interior change in us. This change requires sincere repentance for our sins against God, others, and ourselves. This renewal process demands that we fast, weep, and mourn. When we turn to God with our whole hearts, we experience inner strength, joy, and peace of God within. In the Gospel, Jesus re-emphasises fasting, alms-giving, and prayer once again. Fasting disciplines the body to depend on God. Alms-giving reforms the mind to find God in others. Prayer reforms the soul to realise that our being exists in God. Therefore, it's a favourable time to stretch ourselves beyond our capacity to mend ourselves and help our brothers and sisters in this broken world.

**Pray and Practise:** Dearest Creator, create a pure heart in us to live in love. Enable us to bring unity to earth and grant us to live, serve, suffer, die, and to rise again in your love always.

**05 WED  
(ASH WEDNESDAY)**

**RETURN, RECONCILE  
AND REACH-OUT**

*Christ Rajan Minj, SJ*

Jl 2:12-18

2Cor 5:20-6:2

Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

*“As Lent is the time for greater love, listen to Jesus' thirst.... repent and believe”*

06 THU

## THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

*Ebenezer Amalraj B, SJ*

Dt 30:15-20

Lk 9:22-25

*“Do I first look for the absolute good of the others?”*

Today’s Gospel reading invites us to focus on Jesus, who shows us the cost of being a faithful disciple through total self-giving, forgetting one’s self-will and self-love. The cost of discipleship is vividly shown in the Gospel as Jesus lays down three conditions: to deny oneself, take up one’s cross, and follow him.

“Denying oneself” means sacrificing personal interests and ambitions. “Taking up the cross” does not merely involve patiently enduring the trials and difficulties of daily life but, like Jesus, disciples must be prepared to sacrifice their own lives. The reality of saving one’s life and losing it might seem contradictory, but a disciple is often called to prove loyalty in circumstances that demand self-giving and self-sacrifice. Discipleship is an irreversible, irrevocable, and irresistible call that demands us to “burn our boats” of security and comfort, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes in his book ‘The Cost of Discipleship’. In today’s context, social activists like Harsh Mander, Medha Patkar, Aruna Roy, and Dr. John Dayal, who have crossed the boundaries of self-will and self-love and constantly speak for justice, equality, peace, and fraternal love. So, let us step beyond our comforts to serve others by breaking ourselves in service and nourishing those who are helpless, as Jesus did.

**Pray and Practise:** Transform us, O Lord, into faithful disciples who reflect your love through our words and actions. May we remain steadfast in our commitment to serve others, knowing that in doing so, we follow the path to true life with You. Christ our Lord, enable us to be true disciples.

Prince lived in a certain town. He faithfully observed fasting every week, believing it was the key to becoming closer to God. However, despite his efforts, he felt distant from the joy that others around him seemed to have. One day, he was invited to a friend's wedding celebration. There he noticed how everyone, including him, was filled with happiness. A wise friend remarked, "You see, there are moments in life for celebration, and others for fasting. Jesus is always with you in joy, but when you feel distant from him, that's when fasting can help you to seek his presence." From then on, Price learned to fast, not out of obligation or to make his fasting known, but as a way to draw closer to God.

## 07 FRI (Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs)

### TRUE FASTING

*Jipson Pereira, SJ*

Is 58:1-9a

Mt 9:14-15

*"Why..... your disciples do not fast?"*

Today's both readings remind us that true worship and fasting are not about outward rituals, but about living with justice and compassion. God challenges us to look beyond mere religious practices and focus on caring for those in need. He challenges us to loosen the bonds of injustice, feed the hungry, and shelter the homeless. Genuine faith is shown through love, mercy, and helping the oppressed. When we align our actions with God's heart for justice, we experience his presence, healing, and guidance. True fasting is a life of love in action, making the world a reflection of God's justice and mercy.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, you teach us that while you, the 'bridegroom', is present, there is a reason for joy and celebration, not mourning. Help us to understand that fasting has its purpose. May our fasting be a sincere response to our longing for your presence.

08 SAT

## HANDS OF MERCY, HEARTS OF COMPASSION

*Jokim Nongkhlaw, SJ*

Is 58:9b-14

Lk 5:27-32

*“While the Pharisees and scribes point fingers, Jesus extends his hand”*

Pharisees and Scribes as those who are quick to find faults in others. When Jesus dines with sinners and tax collectors, they criticise him for associating with the marginalised. Yet, Jesus responds by emphasising his mission: “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

The contrast here is striking: the Pharisees and Scribes focus on judgment and exclusion, busy “pointing fingers” at those they deem unworthy. Jesus, however, reaches out in love, extending his hand to save and restore those in need. This profound gesture reflects the heart of God, who desires mercy over judgment and seeks to lift up the fallen. As we reflect on the first Saturday after Ash Wednesday, we are called to repent and believe in the Good News. Jesus invites us to follow him in humility, reminding us that God does not condemn us but reaches out with grace. Like Jesus, we too are called to extend our hands in love rather than point fingers, embodying the mercy that leads to true transformation and eternal life.

**Pray and Practise:** Loving God, help us extend hands of mercy, not judgment, following Jesus’ example. Fill our hearts with compassion, lifting others up in love. Lead us in repentance, and guide us to your grace.

In the first reading Isaiah calls us to a life of mercy and justice, urging us to remove oppression, refrain from “pointing the finger,” and instead engage in acts of kindness. God promises restoration and healing when we turn from judgment and embrace compassion for others. In contrast, Luke presents the

On this First Sunday of Lent, we reflect on God's abundant goodness to all, calling us into a journey of gratitude and repentance. In Deuteronomy, Israel's offering of "first fruits" is a gesture of thanksgiving, remembering God's deliverance from bondage—a freedom gifted to a people chosen and loved. In India, we are blessed with rich diversity—people of many faiths, languages, and traditions live together, each contributing to a vibrant variety of life. From Hindu festivals to Islamic charity, Buddhist compassion, and Sikh devotion, our unity in diversity reflects God's impartial love. St. Paul reminds us of this in Romans, affirming that God embraces all who call upon him, without distinction or preference.

In the Gospel, Jesus's temptation in the wilderness reveals that true surrender to God comes not through power or self-reliance but through humility and trust. His example challenges us to ask: when we face temptations, doubts, or struggles, do we draw strength from God, or do we rely solely on ourselves? This Lent, we are invited to repent—not only in turning from sin but in turning toward a God who loves us beyond any boundary of culture or faith. Let our repentance, then, be a response to God's unwavering care. May we, as a diverse nation, offer the "first fruits" of our lives in gratitude and love, choosing to follow the path of self-surrender that Christ laid before us, and embracing one another as beloved children of God.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, help us to surrender fully to your love, embracing all in gratitude and trust.

## 09 SUN (I SUNDAY OF LENT)

### EMBRACING GOD'S LOVE IN UNITY AND SURRENDER

*Joshua Dsouza, SJ*

Dt 26:4-10

Rom 10:8-13

Lk 4:1-13

*"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

10 MON

## CALL TO HOLINESS

*Julius Tudu, SJ*

Lv 19:1-2, 11-18

Mt 25:31-46

*'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.'*

of others. We see God's deep concern for the poor and the lowly.

Today's readings remind us of a powerful truth about holiness and the path to eternal life. In the first reading taken from the book of Leviticus, God calls his people to be holy as he is holy. The Ten Commandments which he gave are the means to Holiness. His call to Holiness is to be shown in action treating all people with fairness, honesty, and respecting the dignity

The way to holiness is also seen in the Gospel according to Matthew today. Jesus speaks about how our love for God is demonstrated through our love for others. Jesus identifies himself with those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, or imprisoned, declaring that whatever we do or fail to do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do to him. Our practise of faith must consist of the works of mercy. We cannot claim to love God if we ignore those in need around us. Therefore, the readings invite us to examine our lives whether we are mindful of those whom society overlooks. In a world marked by division, prejudice, and self-interest, God calls us to be countercultural, living as agents of his mercy and justice.

**Prayer and Practise:** Lord, grant us the courage to live out our faith in concrete acts of love and mercy. May we remember that our service to the least among us is our service to you, and may we strive to live holy as you are Holy.

The first reading of the day tells us about the effectiveness and purposefulness of God's word. Prophet Isaiah reminds us to believe in God's word and trust in his plans as they bring growth and fulfilment in our lives.

**11 TUE**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*Maneesh Lukose, SJ*

**Is 55:10-11**

**Mt 6:7-15**

*"Pray then in this way..."*

In the Gospel Jesus invites us to make our prayers more authentic and meaningful. He gives us a model of prayer which talks about values and priorities which should guide our life. In our prayers we need to seek God's will, acknowledge our need for his assistance and forgiveness in our lives. Through this simple prayer of trust and humility Jesus teaches us to live and to surrender ourselves to God, who is our Father. Our prayers, especially the prayers of our heart, never go unanswered. Therefore, we need to pray in all our situations with humility, patience and hope. We have come across situations where our prayers are not answered in the way we have desired. Often, we come to understand, in time, that it was a hidden blessing when some of our prayers were not answered in the way we once wished. Moreover, some of those difficult situations turn out to be the reasons for our growth and better life over time. Hence, we need not to be disappointed if our prayers are not answered in the desired way. Jesus in this beautiful prayer teaches us to desire what God desires, trusting in the fatherly love of God.

**Prayer and Practise:** Lord, help us to pray with a simple heart, trusting that you know our needs. Let our prayers be authentic that we may seek your will.

12 WED

## BELIEVE IN DIVINE MERCY AND REPENT

*Manish Tigga, SJ*

Jon 3:1-10

Lk 11:29-32

*“Something greater than  
Solomon and Jonah is  
here.”*

Today’s readings offer powerful reflections on repentance and the transformative power of God’s words. Initially unwilling to preach to the Ninevites, Jonah eventually delivers God’s message of repentance. The Ninevites, despite their wickedness, respond with genuine sorrow and a change of heart. Their repentance leads to God’s mercy and the sparing

of the city. In today’s Gospel passage, Jesus contrasts the people of his generation with the Queen of the South and the Ninevites. He points out their refusal to repent, even in the face of his miracles and teachings.

Today’s passages invite us to examine our hearts and lives. Are we open to God’s word and willing to repent for our sins? Like the Ninevites, can we embrace God’s mercy and turn away from our sinful ways? Or, are we like the people of Jesus’ time, resistant to change, and seeking signs instead of seeking God? The message of repentance is a constant theme throughout the Bible. It calls us to acknowledge our shortcomings, turn away from sins, and embrace God’s divine mercy and grace. It reminds us that God’s love and mercy are always available to those who are willing to repent and turn toward him.

**Pray and Practise:** God of mercy and compassion, bless us so that we may be inspired to live a life of repentance and renewal. May we open our hearts to your word and allow it to transform us from within. And may we, like the Ninevites, experience the joy and peace that come from a life lived in obedience to your will.

In today's world, many people are facing challenges like loneliness, anxiety, or dealing with difficult situations. Life seems to be very hard but a little kindness can go a long way. For example, if we see a friend who is sad, we can ask them how they are doing or offer to spend our time with them. This is what today's Liturgy of the Word is inviting us to do.

**13 THU**

**KINDNESS AND  
COMPASSION**

*Nelson Lakra, SJ*

Esther C: 12, 14-16, 23-25  
Mt 7:7-12

*"Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; ..."*

In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus teaches us about asking, seeking, and knocking. He tells us that if we ask God for something, he will listen and help us. This is a reminder that we can always turn to God when we need help or guidance. It encourages us to reach out to God. When we ask him for help, we can trust that he cares for us and will provide what we need. Jesus also talks about treating others the way we want to be treated. This is often called the Golden Rule. When we treat others with love and respect, we create a better world for everyone and ourselves. Therefore, let us remember to ask God for help and to treat others well. By doing this, we can bring a little more goodness in us and in others. God is always there to listen, and we can make a difference by being kind.

**Pray and Practise:** Dear God, help us to ask for your guidance and to be kind to others.

14 FRI

## LAW AND INTERIOR CONVERSION

*Parkash Masih, SJ*

Ez 18:21-28

Mt 5:20-26

*“First be reconciled to your brother or sister...”*

Today we are invited to reflect on obeying the law and conversion of hearts. The guidelines set before us are essential for our safety and the smooth functioning of society. They free us from chaos and uncertainty, allowing us to live in harmony with one another. However, this is possible only when we gain a deeper understanding of their purpose.

The first reading assures life by emphasising the importance of repentance and doing what is lawful. This life is available to all, provided we turn away from our sins. In the Gospel, Jesus takes it a step further, highlighting that it's not just about following the law blindly, but also about the intentions of our hearts. He calls us to surpass the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, moving from a life of mere obedience to interior conversion. Our God is compassionate and eager to welcome back the lost. The readings remind us that it's never too late to turn back to God and seek forgiveness. Our past life, fate, or ancestry do not determine the promised life; our present way of life does. As followers of Christ, we need to examine our motivations, desires, and actions. True repentance involves a change of heart, not just a change of behaviour. It's about turning away from sin and turning towards God with a humble, contrite, and open heart. Therefore, let us ask ourselves: What areas of my life need interior conversion and repentance?

**Pray and Practise:** Compassionate Father, give us the grace to mend our life and to turn towards you with a humble and contrite spirit.

The liturgy of the Word today invites us to meditate upon the true goal of human life. Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa once said, "The supreme purpose and goal for human life is to cultivate love." The readings of the day call us to cultivate the twin Christian vocation of loving God and our neighbours in a radical way, having Jesus Christ as the model.

**15 SAT**

## **A DEDICATED GODLY VOCATION**

*Prosenjit Gomes, SJ*

Dt 26:16-19

Mt 5:43-48

*"To be a people of holiness and dedicated to the Lord."*

The first reading taken from the book of Deuteronomy gives us a picture of Moses' exhortation to the Israelites about the great covenantal bond. God bound God-self with the chosen people through a mutual consent based on faithful love and dedication. The code of holiness of life was through the observance of the commandments of love. The Gospel reading taken from St. Matthew depicts Jesus' exhortation about loving not only our neighbours but also our enemies. Sermon on the Mount brings a radical newness to the commandments which Moses gave to the Israelites. Hence, the call for a radical way of life, a life of holiness based on Christ-like love so that we may become worthy children of our Father in heaven. Therefore, the readings insist on our vocation to cultivate love, though cultivating real and dedicated love is a difficult task. But we have the laws as our teacher and the Holy Spirit as our mother. May we remain ever open to the Spirit which Jesus is willing to offer to those who ask, and may we grow to be a people holy and dedicated to the Lord.

**Pray and Practise:** Jesus, grant us the grace to love everyone without fail.

**16 SUN**  
**(II SUNDAY OF LENT)**  
**TRANSFORMATION**

*Rex Arul, SJ*

Gn 15:5-12, 17-18

Phil: 3:17-4:1

Lk: 9:28b-36

*“This is my Son, my  
chosen; listen to him!”*

Paul speaks to the Philippians about citizenship in heaven. He contrasts the temporal with the spiritual.

We are encouraged to live in a manner worthy of our heavenly calling, reminding us that our true identity is rooted in our relationship with Christ, rather than in worldly values. In the Gospel reading, we see the Transfiguration of Jesus is a profound reminder of his divine nature and his mission. During Lent, we are called to focus on our own transformation, to turn away from sin and to draw closer to God. The Transfiguration reveals the presence of God in the person of Jesus. It reminds us that God is always with us, even in our darkest moments. Transfiguration is an invitation for us to transform. It is the call to listen to Jesus. The voice from the cloud urges us to “listen to” Jesus. Lent is an opportunity to deepen our understanding of Jesus’ teachings and to apply them to our daily lives.

**Pray and Practise:** Dear Lord, deepen our trust in you as you did with Abraham. May our identity be rooted in our relationship with you, not worldly values. Transform us during this Lenten journey to turn from sin and draw closer to you.

The readings of the day give a profound narrative about covenant, identity, and transformation. In the first reading, we see God establishes a covenant with Abraham, promising him descendants as numerous as the stars. This covenant signifies a deep relationship between God and humanity, emphasising trust and faith. In the second reading,

In today's readings, we encounter two seemingly opposing truths: our frailty and God's boundless mercy. Daniel's prayer of repentance acknowledges Israel's collective failure to heed God's voice. It's not a lament of despair but a recognition of grace—the unwavering faithfulness of a God who remains with his people despite their infidelity. In Luke, Jesus invites us to imitate this divine mercy: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” Mercy isn't just a lofty ideal; it's the language of the kingdom. Yet, often we reduce mercy to a single act—a generous handout or a kind word—without letting it transform us.

But what if mercy is more than a virtue? What if it's a radical choice to break cycles of judgment and condemnation? In a world polarised by race, class, and ideology, Jesus' call is revolutionary: measure others not by their failures but by their humanity. Mercy doesn't erase justice—it completes it. To forgive doesn't mean ignoring the truth but embracing it with love. Imagine if we stopped calculating offences and started measuring compassion. What if our greatness was not in being right but in being merciful? This Lent, let mercy shape our repentance. Let it ripple outward—reconciling, healing, and building a world where justice and forgiveness meet.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, transform our hearts with your boundless mercy, that we may forgive, heal, and love as you do.

**17 MON**

## **BOUNDLESS MERCY**

*Reuell Paul, SJ*

Dn 9:4b-10

Lk 6:36-38

*“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”*

**18 TUE**

**TO BE AUTHENTIC  
AND SINCERE**

*Rintu Mondal, SJ*

Is 1:10, 16-20

Mt 23:1-12

*“For do not practise  
what they teach”*

Today’s readings invite us to reflect on the importance of authenticity and sincerity in our faith, highlighting the need for integrity, moral uprightness, and alignment with God’s will. An invitation to examine our faith expressed in both our words and deeds.

In the first reading, prophet Isaiah condemns the Israelites’ empty religious practices, emphasising that genuine worship requires a transformed life. He warns the people of Israel to humbly listen and submit to God’s teaching so they could learn to do good and avoid evil. At the same time, he urges us to stand in solidarity with the oppressed, orphans and widows in society. By responding, we bring hope, dignity and empowerment to broken lives, reflecting God’s love and mercy. In the Gospel, Jesus warns the crowd about the religious leaders, scribes and Pharisees, who preach one thing but live another. They claim to be authorities on God’s word, but their actions don’t match their teachings. Jesus advises the people to listen to their teachings, but not to imitate their hypocritical behaviour. Jesus’ profound teachings on humility draws us to be humble as he says, “All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted”.

**Pray and Practise:** Dear Lord, in a world full of pretence and deception, pride and arrogance, help us abide by your teachings. May we grow sincerely in our faith and practise what we speak. help us to be humble and obedient like your Son, Jesus Christ.

In today's first reading God promises David an everlasting lineage through his descendants. This covenant foreshadows St. Joseph, a descendant of David, who becomes the foster father of Jesus. Though not biologically Jesus' father, Joseph fulfills the promise of the Davidic line, protecting and guiding the Holy Family as part of God's plan.

In the Gospel reading, Joseph trusts God's plan for his family, even when it was hard to understand. Similarly, today, many of us face challenges in our families—whether it's a difficult relationship, a sick relative, or uncertainty about the future. Like Joseph, we can trust that God will guide us, even when we don't have all the answers. St. Joseph teaches us an important lesson: we don't always need to be in the spotlight or get instant rewards. In today's world, where we want everything fast and visible—like getting lots of likes or recognition—Joseph reminds us that the real strength is in quietly doing what's right, even when no one is watching. Just like helping a friend or family member without expecting thanks or trusting that things will work out even when they seem tough. St. Joseph shows us that faith and patience are key to be God's instrument.

**Pray and Practise:** St. Joseph, faithful servant of God, help us to trust in God's plan. Grant us patience, strength, and courage to follow his will. Protect our families and guide us with your love.

**19 WED (St. Joseph, Husband of Mary, Solemnity)**

**TRUE STRENGTH IS TRUSTING IN GOD**

*Roshan Borude, SJ*

2 Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16

Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22

Mt 1:16, 18-21, 24a

*“he shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”*

20 THU

## TRUST IN THE LORD

*Roshan Kelvine Goveas, SJ*

Jer 17:5-10

Lk 16:19-31

*“Blessed are those who trust  
in the LORD...”*

fates diverge beyond the grave. The rich man remains blind to Lazarus even in Hades, addressing Abraham but not the one he ignored. Even in torment, his heart resists humility. Would we, in his place, seek reconciliation first?

Jeremiah reminds us that God searches the heart and tests the mind, rewarding us according to the fruits of our deeds. In our era of social media, where curated perfection reigns, we often showcase our blessings while cropping out the “Lazaruses” around us. If the rich man had an Instagram account, would Lazarus ever appear in his stories? Isn’t that how we sometimes live—disconnecting from the uncomfortable realities of others? This Gospel is not merely a critique of wealth but of indifference, a call to move beyond our gated lives and recognize the humanity of those on the margins. The rich man’s sin was not his riches but his refusal to share, his inability to see Lazarus as his brother. As disciples of Christ, this is a call to open our eyes, hearts, and hands—to share our words, time, and resources. In doing so, we not only honour others but also align our hearts with God’s vision of justice and love.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, open our eyes to see the Lazaruses at our gates and fill our hearts with the courage to respond with love and compassion.

The Gospel today presents a piercing narrative of contrasts—the nameless rich man, cloaked in splendour, and Lazarus, whose name echoes through eternity. Their earthly lives intersect at the gates of wealth, yet their

Today's readings invite us to reflect on rejection, betrayal, and God's unwavering plan for salvation. In the first reading, Joseph is betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery, yet God uses his suffering to prepare him for a role that will save many, including his family. Similarly, in the Gospel parable, the landowner's servants and son are rejected and mistreated by the tenants, echoing Jesus' own rejection. Despite being the "cornerstone" cast aside; Jesus brings salvation to the world through his sacrifice.

Both stories remind us that rejection and suffering do not thwart God's plan. Instead, they become instruments of his greater purpose. Joseph's pain led to his family's salvation during famine, and Jesus' death reconciled humanity with God. As disciples, we are called to follow this example of humble service, even when faced with hardship or rejection. Like Joseph, we may encounter hostility or feel unrecognised in our efforts. Yet, as "unworthy servants," our task is to trust in God's plan and serve him faithfully without seeking personal reward.

**Pray and Practise:** Let us pray for the grace to serve God, even in the face of rejection, understanding that our true reward lies in fulfilling his will. May we find peace in knowing that, like Joseph and Jesus, our sacrifices are part of a greater plan. Let us practise humility and perseverance, trusting in God's purpose even when it is hidden from us.

**21 FRI**

## **REJECTION AND REDEMPTION**

Savy George, SJ

Gn 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28

Mt 21:33-43, 45-46

*"God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son"*

**22 SAT**

**TO BE RECIPIENT  
AND FORGIVE**

Sushil Bage, SJ

Mi 7:14-15, 18-20

Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

*“Compassionate and  
steadfast love of the  
Father.”*

and love remain steadfast, always inviting us back to his embrace.

In today's world, materialism often overshadows genuine relationships and spiritual growth. Many wealthy individuals live extravagantly while placing their elderly loved ones in care homes, neglecting personal connection and care. Disputes over wealth frequently divide families as members prioritise independence and material gain. Society increasingly encourages criticism and backbiting, eroding compassion and fostering disunity. Young people especially struggle with the pull of worldly pleasures, finding it difficult to recognise or respond to God's compassion. The pursuit of instant gratification often eclipses the deeper fulfilment found in faith and virtue. Yet, God invites us to cultivate pure intentions for the common good, rejecting temporary pleasures for lives rooted in Christian values. We are called today to embrace reconciliation, selflessness, and virtue, becoming witnesses to God's unwavering love and instruments of compassion in a fragmented world.

**Pray and Practise:** O loving and merciful Christ Jesus, grant us the sense of compassion and forgiveness. help us to recognise your path, quitting our evil ways and little effort to be obedient and reconciled with the Lord and neighbour.

Today's readings emphasise Abba's unconditional love and the call to reconciliation. As fragile and limited beings, we often succumb to temptations and seek fleeting pleasures that distance us from God through our actions, words, and behaviours. Despite our failures, Jesus does not dwell on our sins but casts our iniquities into the depths of the sea. Even when we fall short, God's faithfulness

Today's readings remind us of God's care and love for us. In the first reading, the Israelites complain of thirst in the desert. God tells Moses to strike a rock, and water flows from it to save his people. This shows us that even when we doubt or feel lost, God always provides for our needs.

In the Gospel, Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well.

She is surprised when Jesus speaks to her, but their conversation changes her life. Jesus offers her "living water," meaning his grace and love, which can satisfy her heart's deepest desires. This meeting shows us that Jesus loves everyone and wants to give his blessings to all, no matter who they are or what their past looks like. St. Paul, in the letter to the Romans, reminds us that God shows his love by giving us hope, even in our struggles, through the Holy Spirit. As we journey through Lent, let us think about what we are thirsty for in our lives. Are we longing for peace, joy, or purpose? Jesus invites us to come to him with our needs, and he promises to fill our hearts with his love. Like the Samaritan woman, we are called to share this love with others and bring them closer to Jesus.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, thank you for being the living water that refreshes and fills us with your love. Help us to trust you when life feels dry and to share your love with those around us.

## 23 SUN (III SUNDAY OF LENT)

### JESUS, THE LIVING WATER

Sooraj K Sebastian, SJ

Ex 17:3-7

Rom 5:1-2, 5-8

Jn 4:5-42

*"The water I give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

24 MON

## EMPOWER YOUR FAITH

Albert Beng, SJ

2 Kgs 5:1-15b

Lk 4:24-30

*“Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s home town.”*

The first reading tells of Naaman, a Syrian army commander, who is healed of leprosy after following the prophet Elisha’s instruction to wash seven times in Jordan river. In the Gospel, Jesus recalls that his mission was to all, especially the lost sheep and the pagans. God’s blessings are extended to the

outsiders: Elijah was sent to a widow in Zarephath during the famine, and Elisha healed Naaman rather than the many lepers in Israel. These examples angered the people in the synagogue, who rejected Jesus and sought to harm him, but he walked away unharmed.

Jesus’ mission is one of universal welcome, embracing all people regardless of creed, nation, or status. his actions remind us that God’s grace is not confined by human divisions. As we journey through Lent, we are invited to reflect on how our biases may limit our ability to embrace others or accept God’s truth. Jesus challenges us to move beyond our rigid perspectives and see the world through God’s eyes. Let us ask for the grace to welcome the message of the prophets, even when it challenges us, and to accept the call to be true disciples of Christ. May we cultivate hearts of humility and compassion, extending God’s love and mercy to everyone.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, grant us hearts of compassion and humility, that we may accept your teachings with love and extend your universal welcome to all. May we reflect your boundless grace in our actions and attitudes toward others.

In the first reading, prophet Isaiah speaks during the reign of King Ahaz, offering a sign from God despite Ahaz's refusal. Isaiah declares, "The young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel," meaning "God is with us." This name symbolises God's divine presence and his commitment to be with his people. The second reading, from the letter to the Hebrews, focuses on Christ's ultimate sacrifice.

## 25 TUE (Annunciation of the Lord)

### GOD'S PRESENCE AND PROMISE FULFILLED

Benjamin Guria, SJ

Is 7:10-14; 8:10

heb 10:4-10

Lk 1:26-38

*"Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your Word."*

In the Old Testament, animal sacrifices were offered for sins, but God replaces these with Jesus' perfect sacrifice. Jesus' obedience to God's will sanctifies believers, abolishing the need for burnt and sin offerings. Through his blood, humanity is made holy, fulfilling God's plan for redemption. In the Gospel, we witness Mary's response to God's call. During Annunciation, Mary listens, reflects, and trusts in God's word. Her humble acceptance - "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word"- shows her deep faith and obedience. As we reflect on these readings, we are reminded of God's unwavering presence and his invitation to trust in his plan. Like Mary, may we listen to God's call with open hearts and respond with faith and obedience.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, thank You for sending your Son into the world. May Mary's faith and obedience inspire us to follow your will. Help us to listen attentively to your call and trust in your divine plan for our lives.

26 WED

## FAITHFULNESS TO GOD'S LAW

Edwin Lakra, SJ

Dt 4:1,5-9

Mt 5:17-19

*"I have come not to  
abolish the law but to  
fulfil it"*

Today's readings remind us of the centrality of God's law in our lives as his people. In the first reading, Moses speaks to the Israelites, urging them to follow the statutes and commandments that God has given them. He emphasises that obedience to the law is not just about legalistic adherence but about living in a relationship with God that brings life, wisdom, and justice.

The law is a gift, meant to shape Israel into a holy nation, a light to others. In the Gospel reading, we hear Jesus reaffirm this message. He tells us that he has not come to abolish the law, but to fulfil it. This means that in Jesus, the law reaches its fullest expression. He is the living embodiment of God's word, the One who reveals the true intent of the law: love, mercy, and righteousness. Jesus invites us to not only obey the commandments but to live them from the heart, going beyond mere external observance. Sometimes, we may view the commandments as burdensome, much like the Israelites did. But today's readings reveal that God's law is about liberation, not restriction. By living in accordance with his ways, we find true freedom—freedom from sin, selfishness, and the ability to live fully as God's children.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord Jesus, grant us the grace to live out the Law of God in spirit and truth. May our lives reflect God's wisdom, justice, and love, so that we too may be called great in the Kingdom of heaven.

The first reading from Jeremiah invites us to listen to God's voice and follow his words. It also underscores the consequences of disobedience and turning away from him. However, as human beings, we often tend to follow our own will rather than God's.

**27 THU**

## **OBEDIENCE TO GOD**

*James Ekka, SJ*

*Jer 7:23-28*

*Lk 11:14-23*

*"Listen to my voice"*

The Gospel demonstrates Jesus' authority over evil. It is not just a miracle he performs but a proclamation of the Good News - the Kingdom of God. Yet, some who witnessed this did not believe and questioned his authority. These accusations reveal a deep lack of understanding and a hardened heart, similar to how Jeremiah describes the people's disobedience. Both readings of today invite us to genuine repentance of heart. Through Jeremiah, God calls the people of Israel back to obedience. Similarly, Jesus, through his miraculous act of casting out the demon, extends an invitation to turn away from evil and accept God in obedience. In our own lives, we too experience spiritual blindness, which distances us from God and others. As a result, we sometimes question our faith and life of charity, failing to recognise the goodness of God, who is our everything. Upon introspection, we realise our failures in being attuned to the voice of God speaking to us in the depths of our being. Therefore, today's message is an invitation to be attentive to God's voice, which comes to us through various people, situations, and experiences.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, grant us the grace to remain obedient to You by listening to your voice in our daily lives and return to you wholeheartedly.

**28 FRI**

**TRUSTING IN GOD  
ALONE**

*Zachrias Surin, SJ*

Hos 14:1-9

Mk 12:28b-34

*“Return, O Israel, to  
the Lord your God....”*

The first reading offers a powerful message of repentance, healing, and wisdom. True repentance begins with acknowledging our mistakes and recognising that only God can provide the healing and forgiveness we seek. God’s promise of healing and renewal requires our return to him with all that we are. In response, he not only forgives but also restores and sustains us with new life and purpose.

This serves as a reminder that no matter how far we have strayed, God’s love is always ready to welcome us back and help us grow again. The reading also emphasises that true wisdom comes from understanding and following God’s ways. Seeking God’s wisdom enables us to return to him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Through this, we can genuinely express our love for him and for our neighbours. Let us examine where we place our trust and how deeply we love God. Despite our failings, God always keeps us under his providential care so that we might prosper and receive life in its fullness. This abundance is ours only when we return to him wholeheartedly, turning away from idols—whether material, relational, or personal. Like Israel, we too are urged to rely on God’s compassion rather than the fleeting promises of the world.

**Pray and Practise:** Merciful and loving God, grant us true wisdom to rely on your ways, which are right and just. Help us recognise You as the true source of life and blessings.

In today's readings, we are called to embrace humility, repentance, and genuine devotion to God. Prophet Hosea urges us to return to God, recognising our brokenness and understanding that God desires true repentance, not empty rituals. What matters to God is steadfast love and a deep knowledge of him.

In the Gospel according to Luke, Jesus teaches us that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. This serves as a powerful reminder that pride, conflict, division, and injustice often plague our families and societies, leading to brokenness, strained relationships, and spiritual stagnation. Yet, God calls us to sincerely return to him, seeking his grace, which offers the gift of renewal. The humility of the tax collector in Jesus' parable invites us to reflect on our own shortcomings rather than judge the faults of others. In our personal lives, families, and communities, humility fosters reconciliation, strengthens relationships, and cultivates understanding. The Church today encourages us to move beyond superficial expressions of faith. True devotion to God emphasises love, mercy, compassion, and the pursuit of truth. By embracing these core values, we transcend pride, self-righteousness, and superficial appearances, creating a community that welcomes all, regardless of their past or status.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord, remind us to walk in humility, reflecting true devotion in our thoughts and actions. May we prioritise love and mercy over judgment and seek your grace in all that we do.

## 29 SAT

### HAVE HUMILITY, REPENTANCE, AND GENUINE DEVOTION TO GOD

*Rita Beck, SCJM*

Hos 6:1-6

Lk 18:9-14

*"For I desire steadfast  
love and not sacrifice."*

## 30 SUN (IV SUNDAY OF LENT)

### LIVING IN GOD'S LIGHT

*Alice Chauhan, SCJM*

1Sm 16:6-7, 10-13

Eph 5:8-14

Jn 9:1-41

*“The Lord looks at the heart, not outward appearance.”*

The readings invite us to reflect on how God's perspective challenges and calls us to transformation. God reminds Samuel that his choices are not based on outward appearances but on the heart. While others overlook David, God sees the future king within him. In the same way, we often judge ourselves and others by external qualities rather than recognising the deeper worth that God sees.

As children of God, we are called to live in his light, allowing his presence to reveal our true selves. Through this process of self-realisation and transformation, we are healed from the darkness in our lives. Transformation begins when we confront the hidden parts of ourselves—our fears, insecurities, and judgments—and allow God's light to guide us. Though this journey may be uncomfortable, it leads to renewal and growth of newness in self and others. When we welcome his divine light, it not only restores us spiritually but also brings positive change to every aspect of our lives. God's presence transforms even the most ordinary moments, filling them with purpose and meaning. Trusting in his presence in every moment, we can see as God sees, including those that feel insignificant or challenging. Hence, we can be the people of light who radiate God's love, joy and hope to all.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord Jesus, help us to see beyond appearances and to live in your truth. May we recognise your presence in everything and everywhere.

Today's first reading portrays a vibrant picture of renewal, where God promised new heavens and a new earth. This signifies not only physical transformation but a profound restoration of the relationship between God and humanity, among humans and with creation itself. The past, with its troubles and sorrows, is to be forgotten, urging the faithful to trust in God's ability to bring forth life from ashes. This promise of renewal unfolds with the imagery of joy and abundance signifying a new order where sorrow gives way to gladness.

**31 MON**

## **HEALING THROUGH FAITH**

*Alok Baghwar, IMS*

Is 65:17-21

Jn 4:43-54

*"Go, your son will live".*

The Gospel of John presents a different perspective, focusing on the power of faith during trials. A royal official seeks out Jesus for the healing of his son. This act of faith, marked by humility and trust in Jesus' authority, underscores the transformative power of seeking divine intervention. In response, Jesus commands healing from a distance, emphasizing the potential of his word transcending physical boundaries. The official's trust in Jesus' promise, even without witnessing a miracle, exemplifies how our faith should be—completely reliant on God's word. Both readings highlight the necessity of faith amidst despair. Isaiah's vision of a restored creation and John's narrative of individual healing converge to affirm hope as the cornerstone of faith. The texts also underscore the importance of community and intercession, with the story of the royal official serving as a good example for us.

**Pray and Practise:** Lord Jesus, just as you showed your power through the healing of the official's son, we trust in your ability to heal, restore, strengthen our faith, Lord, let your love and grace guide us every day.

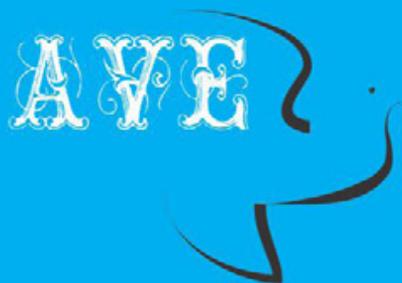


“The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.”

Luke 1:35

## COVER

The Holy Spirit, the all pervading presence of God in Jesus Christ, is symbolised by the dove. The Spirit envelops the entire world with God's grace and action. May the Spirit guide us in our experience of the Divine, enlighten our lives through daily reflection on the Scriptures — the 'AVE'.



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