

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
SAINT THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON—HOUSTON



SAINT THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

10330 HILLCROFT ST. | HOUSTON, TX 77096 | (713) 729-0221

WWW.STMHOUSTON.ORG

**Moment of Prayer and “Urbi et Orbi” Blessing
Presided over by Pope Francis - March 27, 2020**

“When evening had come” (Mk 4:35). The Gospel passage we have just heard begins like this. For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people’s gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying “We are perishing” (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

It is easy to recognize ourselves in this story. What is harder to understand is Jesus’ attitude. While his disciples are quite naturally alarmed and desperate, he stands in the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. And what does he do? In spite of the tempest, he sleeps on soundly, trusting in the Father; this is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. When he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, he turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice: “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” (v. 40).

Let us try to understand. In what does the lack of the disciples’ faith consist, as contrasted with Jesus’ trust? They had not stopped believing in him; in fact, they called on him. But we see how they call on him: “Teacher, do you not care if we perish?” (v. 38). *Do you not care*: they think that Jesus is not interested in them, does not care about them. One of the things that hurts us and our families most when we hear it said is: “Do you not care about me?” It is a phrase that wounds and unleashes storms in our hearts. It would have shaken Jesus too. Because he, more than anyone, cares about us. Indeed, once they have called on him, he saves his disciples from their discouragement.

The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our prepackaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people’s souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly “save” us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity.

In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

“*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*” Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: “Wake up, Lord!”.

“*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*” Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: “Be converted!”,

“Return to me with all your heart” (*Joel 2:12*). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a *time of choosing*. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves. In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: “That they may all be one” (*Jn 17:21*). How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons.

“*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*” Faith begins when we realise we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we founder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God’s strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side. The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. *Is 42:3*) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.

Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

“*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*” Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter’s rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God’s blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: “Do not be afraid” (*Mt 28:5*). And we, together with Peter, “cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us” (cf. *1 Pet 5:7*).

**MOMENTO STRAORDINARIO DI PREGHIERA IN TEMPO DI EPIDEMIA
PRESIEDUTO DAL SANTO PADRE FRANCESCO
VENERDÌ 27 MARZO 2020, ORE 18**

Así comienza el Evangelio que hemos escuchado. Desde hace algunas semanas parece que todo se ha oscurecido. Densas tinieblas han cubierto nuestras plazas, calles y ciudades; se fueron adueñando de nuestras vidas llenando todo de un silencio que ensordece y un vacío desolador que paraliza todo a su paso: se palpita en el aire, se siente en los gestos, lo dicen las miradas. Nos encontramos asustados y perdidos. Al igual que a los discípulos del Evangelio, nos sorprendió una tormenta inesperada y furiosa. Nos dimos cuenta de que estábamos en la misma barca, todos frágiles y desorientados; pero, al mismo tiempo, importantes y necesarios, todos llamados a remar juntos, todos necesitados de confortarnos mutuamente. En esta barca, estamos todos. Como esos discípulos, que hablan con una única voz y con angustia dicen: “perecemos” (cf. v. 38), también nosotros descubrimos que no podemos seguir cada uno por nuestra cuenta, sino sólo juntos.

Es fácil identificarnos con esta historia, lo difícil es entender la actitud de Jesús. Mientras los discípulos, lógicamente, estaban alarmados y desesperados, Él permanecía en popa, en la parte de la barca que primero se hunde. Y, ¿qué hace? A pesar del ajetreo y el bullicio, dormía tranquilo, confiado en el Padre —es la única vez en el Evangelio que Jesús aparece durmiendo—. Después de que lo despertaran y que calmara el viento y las aguas, se dirigió a los discípulos con un tono de reproche: «¿Por qué tenéis miedo? ¿Aún no tenéis fe?» (v. 40).

Tratemos de entenderlo. ¿En qué consiste la falta de fe de los discípulos que se contraponen a la confianza de Jesús? Ellos no habían dejado de creer en Él; de hecho, lo invocaron. Pero veamos cómo lo invocan: «Maestro, ¿no te importa que perezcamos?» (v. 38). *No te importa*: pensaron que Jesús se desinteresaba de ellos, que no les prestaba atención. Entre nosotros, en nuestras familias, lo que más duele es cuando escuchamos decir: “¿Es que no te importo?”. Es una frase que lastima y desata tormentas en el corazón. También habrá sacudido a Jesús, porque a Él le importamos más que a nadie. De hecho, una vez invocado, salva a sus discípulos desconfiados.

La tempestad desenmascara nuestra vulnerabilidad y deja al descubierto esas falsas y superfluas seguridades con las que habíamos construido nuestras agendas, nuestros proyectos, rutinas y prioridades. Nos muestra cómo habíamos dejado dormido y abandonado lo que alimenta, sostiene y da fuerza a nuestra vida y a nuestra comunidad. La tempestad pone al descubierto todos los intentos de encajonar y olvidar lo que nutrió el alma de nuestros pueblos; todas esas tentativas de anestesiar con aparentes rutinas “salvadoras”, incapaces de apelar a nuestras raíces y evocar la memoria de nuestros ancianos, privándonos así de la inmunidad necesaria para hacerle frente a la adversidad.

Con la tempestad, se cayó el maquillaje de esos estereotipos con los que disfrazábamos nuestros egos siempre pretenciosos de querer aparentar; y dejó al descubierto, una vez más, esa (bendita) pertenencia común de la que no podemos ni queremos evadirnos; esa pertenencia de hermanos.

«¿Por qué tenéis miedo? ¿Aún no tenéis fe?». Señor, esta tarde tu Palabra nos interpela se dirige a todos. En nuestro mundo, que Tú amas más que nosotros, hemos avanzado rápidamente, sintiéndonos fuertes y capaces de todo. Codiciosos de ganancias, nos hemos dejado absorber por lo material y trastornar por la prisa. No nos hemos detenido ante tus llamadas, no nos hemos despertado ante guerras e injusticias del mundo, no hemos escuchado el grito de los pobres y de nuestro planeta gravemente enfermo. Hemos continuado imperturbables, pensando en mantenernos siempre sanos en un mundo enfermo. Ahora, mientras estamos en mares agitados, te suplicamos: “Despierta, Señor”. «¿Por qué tenéis miedo? ¿Aún no tenéis fe?». Señor, nos diriges una llamada, una llamada a la fe. Que no es tanto creer que Tú existes, sino ir hacia ti y confiar en ti. En esta Cuaresma resuena tu llamada urgente: “Convertíos”, «volved a mí de todo corazón» (Jl 2,12). Nos llamas a tomar este tiempo de prueba como *un momento de elección*. No es el momen-

to de tu juicio, sino de nuestro juicio: el tiempo para elegir entre lo que cuenta verdaderamente y lo que pasa, para separar lo que es necesario de lo que no lo es. Es el tiempo de restablecer el rumbo de la vida hacia ti, Señor, y hacia los demás. Y podemos mirar a tantos compañeros de viaje que son ejemplares, pues, ante el miedo, han reaccionado dando la propia vida. Es la fuerza operante del Espíritu derramada y plasmada en valientes y generosas entregas. Es la vida del Espíritu capaz de rescatar, valorar y mostrar cómo nuestras vidas están tejidas y sostenidas por personas comunes —corrientemente olvidadas— que no aparecen en portadas de diarios y de revistas, ni en las grandes pasarelas del último *show* pero, sin lugar a dudas, están escribiendo hoy los acontecimientos decisivos de nuestra historia: médicos, enfermeros y enfermeras, encargados de reponer los productos en los supermercados, limpiadoras, cuidadoras, transportistas, fuerzas de seguridad, voluntarios, sacerdotes, religiosas y tantos pero tantos otros que comprendieron que nadie se salva solo. Frente al sufrimiento, donde se mide el verdadero desarrollo de nuestros pueblos, descubrimos y experimentamos la oración sacerdotal de Jesús:

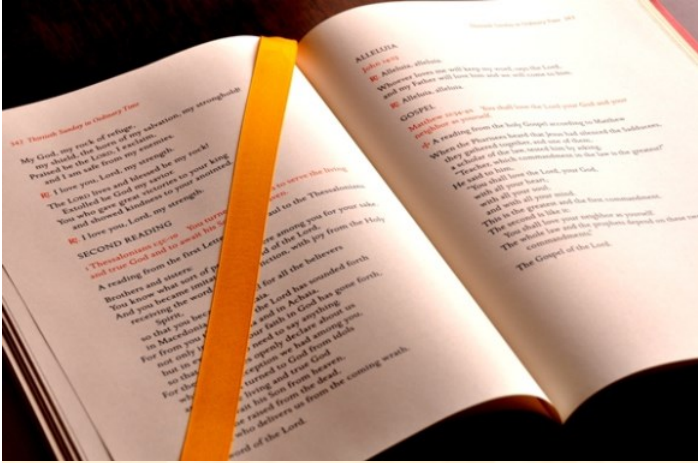
«Que todos sean uno» (*Jn 17,21*). Cuánta gente cada día demuestra paciencia e infunde esperanza, cuidándose de no sembrar pánico sino corresponsabilidad. Cuántos padres, madres, abuelos y abuelas, docentes muestran a nuestros niños, con gestos pequeños y cotidianos, cómo enfrentar y transitar una crisis readaptando rutinas, levantando miradas e impulsando la oración. Cuántas personas rezan, ofrecen e interceden por el bien de todos. La oración y el servicio silencioso son nuestras armas vencedoras.

«¿Por qué tenéis miedo? ¿Aún no tenéis fe?». El comienzo de la fe es saber que necesitamos la salvación. No somos autosuficientes; solos nos hundimos. Necesitamos al Señor como los antiguos marineros las estrellas. Invitemos a Jesús a la barca de nuestra vida. Entreguémosle nuestros temores, para que los venza. Al igual que los discípulos, experimentaremos que, con Él a bordo, no se naufraga. Porque esta es la fuerza de Dios: convertir en algo bueno todo lo que nos sucede, incluso lo malo. Él trae serenidad en nuestras tormentas, porque con Dios la vida nunca muere.

El Señor nos interpela y, en medio de nuestra tormenta, nos invita a despertar y a activar esa solidaridad y esperanza capaz de dar solidez, contención y sentido a estas horas donde todo parece naufragar. El Señor se despierta para despertar y avivar nuestra fe pascual. Tenemos un ancla: en su Cruz hemos sido salvados. Tenemos un timón: en su Cruz hemos sido rescatados. Tenemos una esperanza: en su Cruz hemos sido sanados y abrazados para que nadie ni nada nos separe de su amor redentor. En medio del aislamiento donde estamos sufriendo la falta de los afectos y de los encuentros, experimentando la carencia de tantas cosas, escuchemos una vez más el anuncio que nos salva: ha resucitado y vive a nuestro lado. El Señor nos interpela desde su Cruz a reencontrar la vida que nos espera, a mirar a aquellos que nos reclaman, a potenciar, reconocer e incentivar la gracia que nos habita. No apaguemos la llama humeante (cf. *Is 42,3*), que nunca enferma, y dejemos que reavive la esperanza.

Abrazar su Cruz es animarse a abrazar todas las contrariedades del tiempo presente, abandonando por un instante nuestro afán de omnipotencia y posesión para darle espacio a la creatividad que sólo el Espíritu es capaz de suscitar. Es animarse a motivar espacios donde todos puedan sentirse convocados y permitir nuevas formas de hospitalidad, de fraternidad y de solidaridad. En su Cruz hemos sido salvados para hospedar la esperanza y dejar que sea ella quien fortalezca y sostenga todas las medidas y caminos posibles que nos ayuden a cuidarnos y a cuidar. Abrazar al Señor para abrazar la esperanza. Esta es la fuerza de la fe, que libera del miedo y da esperanza.

«¿Por qué tenéis miedo? ¿Aún no tenéis fe?». Queridos hermanos y hermanas: Desde este lugar, que narra la fe pétrea de Pedro, esta tarde me gustaría confiarlos a todos al Señor, a través de la intercesión de la Virgen, salud de su pueblo, estrella del mar tempestuoso. Desde esta columnata que abraza a Roma y al mundo, descienda sobre vosotros, como un abrazo consolador, la bendición de Dios. Señor, bendice al mundo, da salud a los cuerpos y consuela los corazones. Nos pides que no sintamos temor. Pero nuestra fe es débil y tenemos miedo. Mas tú, Señor, no nos abandones a merced de la tormenta. Repites de nuevo: «No tengáis miedo» (*Mt 28,5*). Y nosotros, junto con Pedro, “descargamos en ti todo nuestro agobio, porque Tú nos cuidas” (cf. *1 P 5,7*).



Mass Intentions

All scheduled Mass Intentions will be moved to a later time. The intention will still be honored and Mass will be said but adjusted to when the public Masses and regular schedule are reinstated by the Cardinal Archbishop.

On The Cover

WEEKLY READINGS

Scripture Readings for the Week of March 29, 2020

Sunday	Fifth Sunday of Lent Ez 37:12-14; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45
Monday	Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; Jn 8:1-11
Tuesday	Nm 21:4-9; Jn 8:21-30
Wednesday	Dn 3:14-20, 91-92. 95; Jn 8:31-42
Thursday	Saint Francis of Paola, Hermit Gn 17:3-9; Jn 8:51-59
Friday	Jer 20:10-13; Jn 10:31-42
Saturday	Saint Isidore, Bishop and Doctor Ez 37:21-28; Jn 11:45-56
Sunday	Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord Mt 21:1-11; Is 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; Mt 26:14 —27:66

LECTURAS SEMANALES

Lecturas de las Escrituras por la Semana del 29 de Marzo de 2020

Domingo	Quinto Domingo de Cuaresma Ez 37, 12-14; Rom 8, 8-11; Jn 11, 1-45
Lunes	Dn 13, 1-9. 15-17. 19-30. 33-62; Jn 8, 1-11
Martes	Nm 21, 4-9; Jn 8, 21-30
Miércoles	Dn 3, 14-20. 91-92. 95; Jn 8, 31-42
Jueves	San Francisco de Paula, Ermitaño Gn 17, 3-9; Jn 8, 51-59
Viernes	Jer 20, 10-13; Jn 10, 31-42
Sábado	San Isidoro, Obispo y Doctor de la Iglesia Ez 37, 21-28; Jn 11, 45-56
Domingo	Domingo de Ramos de la Pasión del Señor Mt 21, 1-11; Is 50, 4-7; Fil 2, 6-11; Mt 26, 14—27, 66

The Raising of Lazarus
By Duccio di Buoninsegna
1311, tempera on panel
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX

Spiritual Tools While Being Unable to Attend Mass

- **Pray...**the Divine Office, the official prayer of the Church. (Resource: divineoffice.org)
- **Pray...**the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Resource: [How to Pray the Rosary](#))
- **Pray...**the Scriptures or *Lectio Divina* (Resource: what is and how to do, [Lectio Divina](#))
- **Pray...**The Divine Mercy Chaplet (Resource: [How to Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet](#))
- **Pray...**to make an Act of Spiritual Communion (Resource: [explanation and how to](#))
- **Pray...**as a family, the domestic church.
- **Pray...**in silent meditation, to seek the Lord in the caverns of our hearts, as we give praise and thanksgiving to him and listen to His words as guides us on our earthly pilgrimage of faith.

Upcoming Events

All meetings, social events, ministries, faith formation classes, and public devotions are canceled until further notice.

Online Catholic Resources

While we all hunker down to help stop the spread of the coronavirus, FORMED provides the very best Catholic content from more than 60 organizations to help parishes, families and individuals explore their faith anywhere.

Here's how to get the content:

- Visit formed.org with a web browser (The link can also be found on STM's [homepage](#))
- Click the "Sign Up" button
- Click the "I belong to a Parish or Organization" option, then click "Next"
- Enter Parish Access Code: **JTDG76** and click "St. Thomas More"
- Then follow the steps by completing the personal data fields.

En español por Magnificat.net

<https://latina.magnificat.net/gratis>

STM Online

[STM Homepage](#)

[STM Facebook](#)

[STM YouTube Channel](#)

Stewardship for March 22, 2020

Collection	\$3,653.00
Online Giving	\$5,177.39
Total	\$8,830.39

Upcoming Special Collections

Holy Land Collection (Good Friday)
April 10, 2020

Home Missions Collection
April 26, 2020



Parish Goal: \$193,000.00

Total Amount Pledged:	\$47,704.50
Total Amount Paid:	30,089.50
Total Number of Participant:	146
Total Number of Households:	4184
Average Participant Pledge:	\$326.74
Paid Over (Under) Goal:	(\$162,910.50)
Pledged Over (Under) Goal:	(\$145,295.50)
Percent Paid:	15.59%

Online Giving

Please remember STM while away from the parish. Our church's website has instructions on how to register for convenient on-line giving. You will have full control of your contribution account and scheduling. Visit our homepage at STMHOUSTON.ORG for details and registration.