SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT
Our commitment to daily prayer using the weekday Mass readings as our guide

MONDAY 3/12
Second Kings 5:1-15
Luke 4:24-30

TUESDAY 3/13
Daniel 3:25, 34-43
Matthew 18:21-35

WEDNESDAY 3/14
Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9
Matthew 5:17-19

THURSDAY 3/15
Jeremiah 7:23-28
Luke 11:14-23

FRIDAY 3/16
Hosea 14:2-10
Mark 12:28-34

SATURDAY 3/17
Hosea 6:1-6
Luke 18:9-14

Feasts, Solemnities, and Memorials This Week:
Saturday, Patrick

St. Joseph Lenten Parish Mission
Sacraments: The Life of the Church
Weekend Masses, March 17 & 18
Monday and Tuesday, March 19 & 20

Fr. Tim Keppel, C.R., director
Monday 7:00 AM: Lenten Weekday Mass in the Rectory
Monday 7:00 PM: Mass & Mission, St. Joseph Church
Tuesday, 7:00 AM: Lenten Weekday Mass in the Rectory
Tuesday, 7:00 PM: Mission Penance Service, St. Joseph Church
Fr. Tim will hear individual confessions at the Tuesday evening penance service.

Fr. Tim Keppel is a priest of the Congregation of the Resurrection and pastor of Our Lady of the Desert Church in Apple Valley, CA, and St. Paul Church in Lucerne Valley, CA.

During the mission, Fr. Paul will be in Apple Valley directing a Lenten mission for Fr. Tim’s church. Pretty cool, eh?

PRAYERS
Our prayers are requested for Bonnie Zwart, Mark & Mary Anne Bewsher, Tina Quan, James Zvetina, Pat Glynn, Bobbie Engstrom, Diane Evans, Raquel Rodriguez, John Gracey, Bob Tomko, Jr., Virginia Reyes, Elizabeth Cauzza, Kay Reilly, Mary Jo Ferreira, Julie Rogers, Antonio Salinas, Josefina Flores, Jim Rothe, John Wallis, James Patrick Hawkins, Beatrice Tomko, David Russell, Ted Wiedemann, and Sue Ann Logar

DAILY MASS
Weekday Mass is celebrated Monday through Saturday in St. Joseph’s Rectory in Mammoth Lakes. Beginning at 7 AM. The door is open; just come in; don’t ring the bell. Everyone is welcome to stay after for coffee and fellowship.

FRIDAY LENTEN DEVOTIONS
Stations of the Cross & Benediction beginning at 7:00 PM in St. Joseph Church, Mammoth Lakes.
FIRST READING: Exodus 20:1–17

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

The Decalogue (a fancy name for The Ten Commandments) lays down the rules for healthy, effective and efficient community living. They are highly developed, drawn from multiple sources over a long history of ancient civilizations that have experimented with systems of law, discovering what works and what doesn't. The final code becomes the inspired Scripture, the commandments of God handed down through Moses.

It is not hard to imagine the mechanisms of experience through which these laws were inspired. Murder, theft and adultery are tough on a community, causing discord and stressing the relationships needed to maintain security, prosperity and harmony in a developing society. The reasons for the prohibition against coveting are subtler and can only be discovered in the secret world of the inner self. And this makes it easier to work around the law.

People who fancy themselves righteous have always been able to rationalize behavior that leans on human strength. And this makes it easier to sinfulness and reform our lives, it might be a good idea to understand what we are doing when we “shop”. So the next time a clerk asks, “May I help you?” we can respond, “No thanks; I'm just coveting.”

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:22–25

We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block and foolishness. But to those who are called, it is the power and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

Ancient Corinth was a Mediterranean seaport city, and as such attracted folks who served the needs of sailors and dock workers. To say it was a rough town would be an understatement. But the message of Jesus Christ was just right for the Corinthians who were the poor, the lowly and the culturally marginalized, the “lost sheep” of Jesus came to gather. So Saint Paul founded a community of rügut outcasts who responded to the gospel message. These were people who didn’t fare well in the world—“not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.” Paul continued in the next verse (v 26)—so the kingdom, where the last were first, was right up their alley.

At the beginning of his popular book Everything Belongs, (Crossroads, 1999) Franciscan Father Richard Rohr poses these problems for the gospel preacher: “How do you make attractive that which is not? How do you sell emptiness, vulnerability and non-success? How can you possibly market letting go in a capitalist culture? How do you talk about dying to a church trying to appear perfect?”

A pastor tends to value the wise, the powerful and the noblest of his congregation. He enjoys their company, the comfort of their hospitality, and they often provide the material resources he needs to maintain parish facilities. But do they possess the perennial wisdom of God, or just the passing foolishness of human weakness? Are they attracted by an authentic call of the gospel, or by what they perceive to be a moral structure they can accommodate? In the coming kingdom, are the accomplished, the wealthy and the powerful of this world the first or the last?

GOSPEL: John 2:13–25

In the temple Jesus found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. He drove all of them out and overturned their tables. He said, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!”

The temple was where you did the first sacrifice, and the sacrifice was the worship. The Old Testament is riddled with stories about the sacrifices, from the very first offering by Abel and Cain, to the huge sacrifices offered by the great kings and nobles of Israel and Judah. Every prescription of the law involved some kind of a sacrifice. Livestock, produce and money were heaped upon the altar to fulfill all religious obligations. Even Mary and Joseph brought a little money to the temple with baby Jesus to purchase and offer the prescribed sacrifice for poor people. (Luke 2:22–24)

Trouble was (and still is) that the priests benefited from the wealth of the offerings and couldn't help but be corrupted to some degree, as were Hophni and Phinehas, priests at the temple in Shiloh. (See 1st Samuel 2:12–17) And it was the priests who controlled the texts of the Hebrew Scripture, what we call the Old Testament, who had the greatest influence on the religious practices of the people. You can see where this is going.

Jesus says twice in Matthew (9:13, 12:7) that God wants mercy and not sacrifice. The saying has an obscure source in Hosea 6:6, but Matthew brings it to the forefront of gospel teaching. This is the beloved Son to whom God commanded we listen last week. Jesus is the definitive revelation of God. Temple worship and sacrifice is at an end. There remains only one sacrifice: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ made “once and for all” (Romans 6:10). It is this one sacrifice that is made present in the Eucharist, a sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. This is OUR worship.