

Sunday, Feb 28, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Go all in

Erin became a Roman Catholic in midlife. When asked why, she says she tried fiercely to make life work according to her plan. Erin told God many times how it should go, attempting to persuade the powers that be to see it her way. Then one day God replied: My plan for you is so beautiful, wonderful, elegant. Why not try it instead? When Erin celebrated the Rites for Candidates for Full Communion on a Lenten Sunday just like this one, she found the joy she was missing. Pray for this year's candidates—and for candidates for years to come.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Romans 8:31b-34; Mark 9:2-10 (26). *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"*

Monday, Mar 01, 2021

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Mercy me!

Pope Francis called mercy the "beating heart of the gospel." Mercy is forbearance, divine favor, compassionate treatment of the distressed and undeserving. It's another word for God's love. Consider showing devotion to it by reciting the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a rosary-based prayer that was received by Saint Faustina, a Polish nun in the 1930s, through visions of Jesus. Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated the week after Easter, but many make the Chaplet part of their regular Lenten practice by reciting it every day at 3 p.m. (the traditional hour of Christ's death). You can find the Chaplet on the USCCB website.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 9:4b-10; Luke 6:36-38 (230). *"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."*

Tuesday, Mar 02, 2021

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Celebrate humble history

Women's History Month celebrates well-known women but also unsung heroines. How appropriate, then, that today is the feast of Agnes of Bohemia, a lesser-known saint. First cousin of Elizabeth of Hungary—and descendent of Good King Wenceslaus—Agnes came upon her vocation naturally. She built a hospital for the poor, a Franciscan friary, and a monastery for Poor Clare nuns. When she also became a nun and was urged to become abbess, she referred to herself only as "senior sister." She continued to cook for her sisters and mend the clothing of lepers rather than live a royal life. Celebrate the unsung heroines in your life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Matthew 23:1-12 (231). *"Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."*

Wednesday, Mar 03, 2021

MEMORIAL OF KATHARINE DREXEL, RELIGIOUS FOUNDER

We have work to do

Katharine Drexel (1858-1955) is a saint for our time. Born into a successful Philadelphia banking family, she used her wealth to improve the lives of others. Her Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament devoted their lives to education of Native and African Americans, building more than 100 schools in cities, rural areas, and on reservations. Though Katharine and her sisters at times faced criticism, endured racist taunts, and were threatened by the Ku Klux Klan, they remained steadfast in their mission. Patron saint of racial justice and philanthropy, Saint Katharine epitomizes the

sacrifice of the Blessed Sacrament. How will you commit your own life to making the world more just?

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 18:18-20; Matthew 20:17-28 (232).

"Can you drink the chalice that I am going to drink?"

Thursday, Mar 04, 2021

MEMORIAL OF CASIMIR

Grace under pressure

Saint Casimir seemed destined for riches and power, but this patron saint of Poland, called the Peacemaker, took a different path. Born in 1458 to the king and queen of Poland, he was a devout, ascetic child. At age 14 his father had him lead an army to install himself as king of Hungary, but with an overpowering enemy and troops beginning to desert, Casimir instead returned home. His furious father exiled him, but Casimir would never again take up arms. Rejecting violence when those around you embrace it can take great inner strength. Cultivate an inner compass that can pursue peace despite pressure.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 17:5-10; Luke 16:19-31 (233). *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose hope is the LORD."*

Friday, Mar 05, 2021

LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Pray for besieged people everywhere

Prayer is our life with God. Sometimes we carve out a particular time during the day, and sometimes there are specific words, images, or experiences that help us be more aware of or express our relationship with God. And so of course during Lent prayer is one of the pillars, along with fasting and almsgiving, that help us turn to God. On today's 2021 World Day of Prayer, an ecumenical observance, we are invited to "Build on a strong foundation." This theme comes from the women of Vanuatu, an island hit by Cyclone Harold in 2020. Despite the perils they faced—and we've all faced in a year of pandemic—the message of today's prayer is one of confidence in God's steadfastness and the rock of faith. Unite in prayer for healing and recovery.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46 (234). *"The kingdom of God will be . . . given to a people that will produce its fruit."*

Saturday, Mar 06, 2021

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Sibling rivalry of biblical proportions

The Parable of the Prodigal Son could as easily be called the Parable of the Bitter Brother. The story might have ended with the celebration at the return of the repentant prodigal. But instead we are left to ponder the feelings of the "good son," the obedient one who followed all the rules but never got a party thrown in *his* honor. It's a very human story, reenacted in nearly every family in one form or another. "Mother always liked you best." "You were Dad's favorite." "All we ever did was bail you out of trouble." Will the bitter brother in the gospel story reconcile? Has bitterness or division in your own family been reconciled? Consider being the reconciler who brings it about.

TODAY'S READINGS: Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 (235). *"Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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