

Sunday, Mar 07, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Balancing act

Saint Paul lived in that perilous posture you see in cartoon characters whose feet are on opposite supports that are swiftly gliding apart. As a privileged Roman citizen of Cilicia (modern Turkey), Paul had one foot firmly planted in the reality of Greco-Roman culture. Yet the other was just as securely fixed in his Jewish faith. It was a tough posture to maintain. Then Paul encountered the Risen Lord and understood in the gospel the most excellent way to unite Jews and Greeks in an elegantly reconciling Christian message. Christianity is for uniting, not dividing.

TODAY'S READINGS: Year B: Exodus 20:1-17; I Corinthians 1:22-25; John 2:13-25 (29). *"Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified."*

Monday, Mar 08, 2021

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Sisters act

How fitting that the first day of Catholic Sisters Week is also International Women's Day, celebrating achievements of women in politics, culture, and society. Catholic sisters have been making the world a better place for centuries! By teaching children, healing the sick, fighting injustice, promoting peace, defending the planet, creating community, and empowering other women, Catholic sisters are a powerful gospel witness—and many of us have been on the receiving end of their work and prayers. Celebrate sisters this week—find information and resources at catholicsistersweek.org.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Kings 5:1-15ab; Luke 4:24-30 (237). *"Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place."*

Tuesday, Mar 09, 2021

MEMORIAL OF FRANCES OF ROME, RELIGIOUS

A religious life for all

During a week that celebrates Catholic sisters, women religious, we remember an Italian saint who found a way to work and pray like a nun while staying committed to her immediate family. In fact, Frances of Rome—who nursed her sick husband and children, as well as the poor, during a plague in the 1400s—is commonly called a Benedictine oblate. An oblate is anyone who wants to share in the common vision and prayer of a religious community without officially entering religious life. Explore religious communities at VocationNetwork.org.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 3:25, 34-43; Matthew 18:21-35 (238). *"Let our sacrifice be in your presence today as we follow you unreservedly."*

Wednesday, Mar 10, 2021

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Love will change the world

"Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world." This quote belongs to Harriet Tubman, who died on this day in 1913. This courageous woman, who escaped the chains of slavery and then led hundreds of slaves to freedom, reminds us that no matter the odds, no matter the restrictions, God gives us strength to reach for the stars and become the Love we were created to be. On this mid-March day, in the third week of Lent,

perhaps we could use a little encouragement to keep reaching for the stars as we respond to our Lenten call to love as God loves.

Take one courageous step toward racial healing today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Matthew 5:17-19 (239).

"But whoever obey and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Thursday, Mar 11, 2021

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Stretch your heart

One year ago this week, COVID-19 began to seriously disrupt lives in North America. During this tumultuous year, everyone has suffered, whether from isolation, illness, unemployment, or another pandemic problem. Pope Francis has urged us to grow from these experiences: "If we are to come out of this crisis less selfish than when we went in, we have to let ourselves be touched by others' pain," he wrote. Has COVID-19 stretched your heart? Whether you give to a food pantry or call a shut-in, act on your compassion today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 7:23-28; Luke 11:14-23 (240). *"Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house."*

Friday, Mar 12, 2021

LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder

As we practice Lenten abstinence today, we might keep in mind these words from fourth-century Saint Basil the Great: "True fast is the estrangement from evil, temperance of tongue, abstinence from anger, separation from desires, slander, falsehood, and perjury. Privation of these is true fasting." Being mindful of what goes into our mouths is important today, but being mindful of what comes out of them, even more so. Strive to abstain from the unkind, false, or hostile word today. And if you find you have broken the fast, make amends as best you can. Let this be your spiritual discipline today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 14:2-10; Mark 12:28-34 (241). *"You are not far from the kingdom of God."*

Saturday, Mar 13, 2021

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Pray the mercy mantra

Gregory Palamas, a saint of the Eastern Orthodox, Melkite, and Ukrainian Catholic Churches, taught that the use of the Jesus Prayer—"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner"—prepares one to receive the grace-filled light of the Lord. This short, formulaic prayer has its roots in today's parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. Saint John Paul II repeatedly cited Palamas as one of the great spiritual writers of history. Today, join with John Paul II and Palamas in heaven and the multitude of Catholics throughout the world who recite this spiritual mantra over and over again seeking the Lord's mercy.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 6:1-6; Luke 18:9-14 (242). *"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

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



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