



SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2015

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT; SECOND SCRUTINY OF THE ELECT

Fall on your knees

Gesture and posture are as much a part of ritual as words. We bow our heads before receiving Communion as a show of reverence and humility. We genuflect or kneel to acknowledge the greatness of God—and our great need. Full prostration, as priests perform at their ordinations or on Good Friday, is an act of total homage and self-abnegation. When the Elect are invited to kneel to receive the community's prayers for them today, it's not to embarrass them publicly. Gestures of humility remind us all who we are, and who God is.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Year A: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41 (31).* "One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see."

MONDAY, MARCH 16 LENTEN WEEKDAY

A thoroughly modern savior

Worldwide empires, a vast network of international trade, high taxation, an underpaid working class, ethnic diversity, minorities on the margins ... sound like a description of your world? It is also the world Jesus lived and preached in. Everything Jesus said and did is set against the backdrop of the Roman Empire and the vast political and social currents of the ancient world. We can take comfort from the fact that despite the differences in time and technology, Jesus' age was as complicated as our own. He spoke with a clarity that cut through the complexity. Listen well!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54 (244).* "A royal official ... went to [Jesus] and asked him to come down and heal his son."

TUESDAY, MARCH 17 FEAST OF PATRICK, BISHOP, MISSIONARY

Christ be with you

The very mention of Saint Patrick stirs enthusiasm and probably more celebration than the saint himself would endorse. Beyond the parades and green beer is a prayer attributed to him. It has many versions, but all focus upon the love and protection of the Trinity. Here are a few lines to pray today: *I arise today through God's strength to pilot me, God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me . . . Christ with me, Christ before me, / Christ behind me, Christ within me, / Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me, / Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, / Christ in every eye that sees me, / Christ in every ear that hears me.*

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; John 5:1-16 (245).* "Rise, take up your mat, and walk."

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 FEAST OF CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH; LENTEN WEEKDAY

The network of love

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem developed a series of lectures as part of the initiation process for new Christians. His colorful language surely captured the imagination of his listeners: "You have been caught in the nets of the church," he told the catechumen. "Be taken alive; do not escape for it is Jesus who is fishing for you!" A great lesson to ponder as we move through Lent: It is Jesus who has sought us out, not the other way around. Don't struggle. Simply accept his embrace.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 49:8-15; John 5:17-30 (246).* "For he who pities them leads them and guides them beside springs of water."

THURSDAY, MARCH 19 FEAST OF JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY

Fatherly advice

Joseph seems to easily slip into the background of our Christian story (if not literally into the earth when people bury his image to sell their homes). Yet his place in the life of Jesus can't be exaggerated. As children, many of us were cautioned to add "foster" to Joseph's title as Jesus' father, but Jesus knew him as papa, as dad. Luke clearly calls Joseph and Mary Jesus' parents. When Jesus' consciousness awakened him to God as his father, where else would he find what it means to be God's son except by what it meant to be the son of Joseph, the father who loved him and taught him to "so love the world"?

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a (543).* "When Joseph awoke, he . . . took his wife into his home."

FRIDAY, MARCH 20 LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Make your heart grow fonder

Think of something you worked hard to prepare for—a final exam at school, a 5K race, a better financial future. Maybe you did things like reading and self-quizzes, training on a regular basis, and setting up a savings account. Those activities probably required other choices too. Instead of watching hockey on TV, you studied or went for a run. Instead of buying something extra at the store, you saved the money. Giving things up can be hard, yet it opens a space in our life for new directions and spiritual rejuvenation. How might abstinence open you to renewal today?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30 (248).* "Let us put him to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience."

SATURDAY, MARCH 21 LENTEN WEEKDAY

Contradiction of terms

Prejudice is a common human shortcoming. Nearly everyone has been both victim and perpetrator of it. Many of Jesus' contemporaries were prejudiced against him simply because he was Galilean, regarded as unsophisticated by the cosmopolitan Judeans. Prejudice is an opinion not based on reason, facts, or experience and it severely limits the fullness of everyone touched by it. The word *catholic* means "universal." That which is universal exists and is true at all times and in all places; it is experienced by and available to everyone. Prejudice has no place in a universal church.

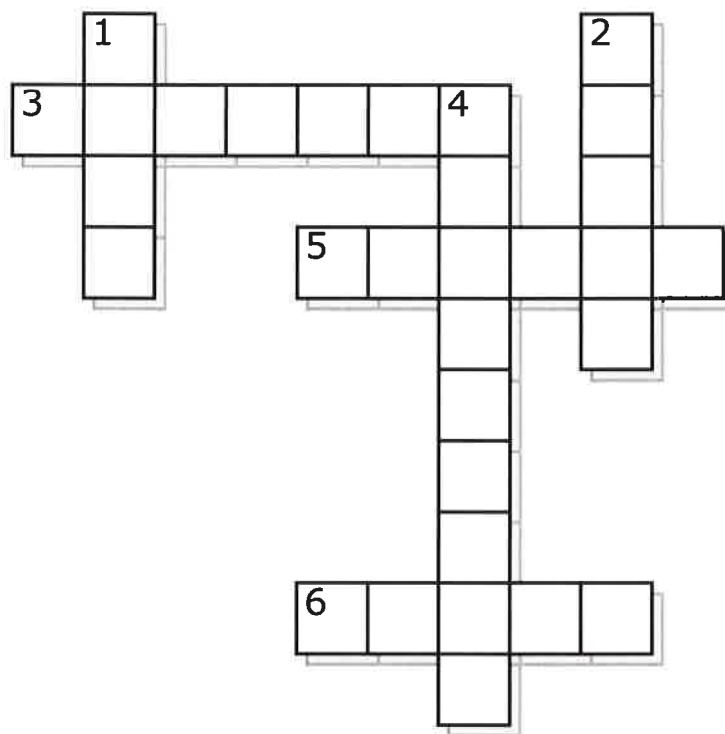
TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 11:18-20; John 7:40-53 (249).* "Does our law condemn a man before it first hears him and finds out what he is doing?"



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

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CatholicMom.com Gospel Activities - John 3:14-21



Across

- 3) God did not send his Son into the world to ___ the world
- 5) Everyone who does _____ things hates the light
- 6) Whoever lives in the _____ comes to the light so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

Down

- 1) This week we read from the Gospel according to _____
- 2) For God so _____ the world that he gave his only Son
- 4) In this Gospel passage, Jesus was speaking to _____.