



BIT WITTMAN

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2015

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

What's the point?

“What do you ask of God’s church?” “Faith.” “What does faith offer you?” “Eternal life.” These two brief question-and-answer exchanges are part of the Rite of Acceptance celebrated in all parishes receiving new members this year at the Easter Vigil. Cradle Catholics seldom consider what they hope to “get” out of church membership, or what the purpose of a life of faith is. Faith isn’t a set of rules to believe, and eternal life isn’t something that awaits us in the afterlife. Faith means trusting in God. The everlasting returns on that trust begin immediately!

TODAY’S READINGS: *Genesis 9:8-15; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:12-15 (23)*. “I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living things.”

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23 LENTEN WEEKDAY

Keep it simple

“Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy.” What if the secret to life boils down to this simple instruction that God gave to Moses? Lent, with its focus on prayer, fast, and almsgiving, is a perfect time to try your hand at holy living. But don’t complicate things. The journey toward holiness really is as simple as feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty—whether physically or spiritually. It’s all good, and it’s all part of God’s holy plan.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18; Matthew 25:31-46 (224)*. “Lord, when did we see you . . . and not minister to your needs?”

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

LENTEN WEEKDAY

God would like a word with you

Listening to God’s word may sound like a difficult and mysterious task. But actually it is quite simple. God is a being of few words. In fact, the only word God ever utters is *love*—now and forever. Live that word and your soul will be healed. Enough said.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 6:7-15 (225)*. “One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.”

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25 LENTEN WEEKDAY

One week in—how we doing?

Staying focused is one of the great challenges of our multi-tasking, multiplex lives. Lent is a week old and perhaps already forgotten in the rush to stay connected. Take 15 minutes tonight to completely disconnect from all devices and shut off all screens. Turn off the lights and sit in the dark and imagine yourself in Jesus’ sandals a few weeks before Good Friday, knowing this life was nearing its end yet determined to stay focused on the mission. Would you be up to the challenge? Probably not—but that is why you have a savior. Thank him quietly in the dark for going the distance so you could see the light.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Jonah 3:1-10; Luke 11:29-32 (226)*. “No sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah.”

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26 LENTEN WEEKDAY

Call your mother

Among the many titles of the Blessed Virgin Mary is Our Mother of Perpetual Help, bestowed by Pope Pius IX in the 19th century and associated with a famous, 15th-century Byzantine icon of the same name. The icon, depicting Mary’s motherly love for the Child Jesus, is enshrined in Rome. Redemptorist priests are entrusted with both care of the icon and propagating devotion to Mary under this title. Our Mother of Perpetual Help is always there for you, as is your Heavenly Father, waiting to hear from you, waiting to answer your prayers.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Matthew 7:7-12 (227)*. “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27 LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

The sum of Christianity

“What is the joy of God? It is to forgive!” Pope Francis told pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the Angelus. In this teaching, “is the whole Gospel; it is all of Christianity!” Take time during these weeks of Lent leading up to the glory of Easter to reconcile with God and others. Begin with a simple: “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned,” in a Confessional, and then offer the gift of forgiveness to others. The benefits will be immediate and lasting.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Ezekiel 18:21-28; Matthew 5:20-26 (228)*. “Leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother.”

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28 LENTEN WEEKDAY

Thank heaven for God’s peculiar ways

We are to be a people “peculiarly” God’s own, according to Moses (Deut. 26:18). *Peculiar* seems an odd choice of words. But, in fact, it is quite peculiar that God calls us flawed humans to be his sacred people. Generation after generation has fallen short on God’s commandments, particularly the call to forgive, which is the centerpiece of Jesus’ mission and ministry. Luckily for us, God, the master of forgiveness, “never tires of forgiving us” as Pope Francis says in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Despite our shortcomings, we face each day knowing that God will be perfect in the love and mercy he shows us. How perfectly wonderful!

TODAY’S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Matthew 5:43-48 (229)*. “So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”



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
Mark 1:12-15

I G C Z K P R O C L A I M I N G Y C C Z
X Z P V Z W Y Z Y Q Z Z V W W C Z B A X
G L J N B E L I E V E Z X K F F C C A Z
T J K M C Y W Y M I N I S T E R E D R B
X Q N B B Z V R W X O Q J Z F S Z Y R Q
S V J O H N X N B P K Q H Q X P Q F E Z
Z F Y B Z Z Q C Z P P K W A X I Z K S Q
V U H D R O V E C W F Y V N X R B F T Q
J L X J Q Z K Z W J D Z F G Z I E W E W
Z F X H D E S E R T J X W E W T A W D Q
V I J V Q K F Z Z W M N W L W W S K W T
X L X M D Y B O Q X B W S S Z Q T V Q E
X L Q A V W Q Q R F J Q A B Q D S Z W M
Q M Y R W Q T H V T B X T V T J F Z K P
Q E Y K Q N L H M F Y D A J V B G B Z T
K N Q Y E Y X Y G Z W W N Z Q Q O B W E
K T Z P Y C Y R J G A L I L E E S Z K D
J W E K F Z G J V Q Y Z X Z Q Z P F K H
U R Y J E S U S K I N G D O M Q E K V Z
Z J Q C Q W Z G G V Z W P Y X W L Y B F

Word Bank

Angels, Arrested, Beasts, Believe, Desert, Drove, Forty, Fulfillment, Galilee, Gospel, Jesus, John, Kingdom, Mark, Ministered, Proclaiming, Repent, Satan, Spirit, Tempted

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