

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Always Near

Loving Father,
you who answer when I call,
who continue to love me,
even when I fall,
you are ever present and merciful.
May I be a mirror of your promises.
Never let me stray too far
from your gaze.
May your hand never be far
from mine.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 17, 2024
Covenant of Love



Today's readings: Jeremiah 31:31–34; Psalm 51:3–4, 12–13, 14–15, (12a); Hebrews 5:7–9; John 12:20–33. On this Fifth Sunday of Lent, the readings begin by recalling the covenant God made with the chosen people. The Lord tells the prophet Jeremiah, “I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” In the covenant that God keeps with us today, he offers us eternal life. Jesus refers to that life in the Gospel reading, saying, “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.”

The first reading explains that all shall know God, for he “will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no

more.” In the second covenant, Jesus lays down his life for us on the cross, erasing our sins and reconciling us with God. The Letter to the Hebrews explains that Christ “became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”

To obey God, to have a place for him in our hearts, we seek a pure heart, praying from Psalm 51, “Create a clean heart in me, O God.” In this psalm, we ask not only that our souls be cleansed of sin but for a steadfast and willing spirit. How will you carry this psalm with you through this week so that you can be true to the love God offers? How can this psalm turn you to God’s presence so that you might be a walking testimony of his love?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 18 Traps for Kindness

Even though Jesus was without sin, he did not condemn. How much more should we, with our failings and shortcomings, follow his example and offer a kind word instead of judgment. As we live these final days of Lent, let us practice kindness by complimenting others and refraining from critical words. *Today's readings: Daniel 13:1–9, 15–17, 19–30, 33–62; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; John 8:1–11.*

Tuesday, March 19 Feast of St. Joseph

“It was not through the law that the promise was made to Abraham and his descendants that he would inherit the world, but through the righteousness that comes from faith,” we hear in today’s reading from Romans. The phrase “righteousness from faith” personifies St. Joseph, who was inclined to quietly divorce the pregnant Mary but followed the angel’s instruction and took her into his home. Have you considered looking to St. Joseph as a model of faith? *Today's readings: 2 Samuel 7:4–5a, 12–14a, 16; Psalm 89:2–3, 4–5, 27 and 29; Romans 4:13, 16–18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18–21, 24a or Luke 2:41–51a.*

Wednesday, March 20 Becoming Better

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells his listeners that to be his disciples, they are to remain in his Word. Only by remaining in his Word will they know the truth and be set free from sin. Reading and meditating on Scripture is a regular practice of many to come closer to God during Lent. During your prayer time, ponder how you act out your discipleship. Are the people that you encounter aware that you are a Christian by the way you live? *Today's readings: Daniel 3:14–20, 91–92, 95; Psalm: Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56; John 8:31–42.*

Thursday, March 21 Beyond Imagination

Abraham surely never imagined that God would come to him to make a covenant. It is beyond imagination that God would come to make “an everlasting pact.” Yet God promised the childless Abraham that he would be “the father of a host of nations.” God has a plan for each of us too. In the Gospel, we hear, “Whoever keeps my word will never see death.” To keep God’s Word is the work of each disciple. For that work, the reward is eternal life. *Today's readings: Genesis 17:3–9; Psalm 105:4–5, 6–7, 8–9; John 8:51–59.*

Friday, March 22 Do You Believe?

In the first reading, we hear the prophet Jeremiah say, “All those who were my friends are on the watch for any misstep of mine.” Jesus, too, knew that people who practiced their religion looked for reasons to arrest or stone him. Reminding them of the Father’s good works he had performed, he asked, “For which of these are you trying to stone me?” In the world today, who is being punished for their good works? How do you recognize the work and action of Jesus around you? *Today's readings: Jeremiah 20:10–13; Psalm 18:2–3a, 3bc–4, 5–6, 7; John 10:31–42.*

Saturday, March 23 All Praise to God

As we stand at the precipice of Holy Week, reflect on a time when you turned away from God. Perhaps you felt persecuted or ashamed of your relationship with God. Many young people face this problem; they hide their faith because it is unpopular, yet our faith in God is not about popularity. How can we be examples of hope to the younger generation? How can you turn a tense moment into an opportunity to share God’s love and mercy? *Today's readings: Ezekiel 37:21–28; Psalm: Jeremiah 31:10, 11–12abcd, 13; John 11:45–56.*

