

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



Journey With Me

Lord God,
fill my heart with love,
so that I can see you in others
and recognize them as the temples
in which you reside on earth.
May your spirit guide my every step.

In my struggles,
give me strength and courage
so that I will be steadfast in faith
as I continue my journey.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 3, 2024

Renewed Temples



Today's readings: Exodus 20:1–17; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11; 1 Corinthians 1:22–25; John 2:13–25. Lent is a time for interior and exterior cleansing. Jesus was outraged when he saw what was taking place in the temple. The moneychangers failed to show reverence for the house of God when they used it as a marketplace. While some could not understand Jesus' overturning of the moneychangers' tables, the disciples recalled the words of Scripture, "Zeal for your house will consume me." Jesus' reaction to the sales in the temple make it apparent that such zeal was missing from others.

In baptism, we become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Our consideration of Christ's care for the temple in Jerusalem is an opportunity to reflect on how we care for all human beings, who are made in the image and likeness of

God. Do we treat them with the dignity that a child of God deserves, remembering each person is sacred?

Just as you show concern for others, you need to care for yourself. How do you care for your interior life? Do you seek reconciliation with God through the sacrament of penance? Do you take to heart that God's mercy is for you as well as for others? In the remaining weeks of Lent, be especially attentive to the words of the penitential act. During this part of the Mass, the faithful may pray the Confiteor, after which the priest calls on God's mercy. The other option is for the faithful to pray the Kyrie, saying, "Lord, have mercy / Christ have mercy" to the priest's invocations. Seeking mercy, our zeal for God is apparent.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 4 Faith and Humility

When Jesus is asked to perform signs in his hometown as he did in other places, he refuses, saying, “No prophet is accepted in his own native place.” Jesus accepted that his former neighbors would not believe and so did not seek to prove himself. Sometimes we face humbling situations; we, too, do not need to prove ourselves. It is necessary only to accept that all we have is by the grace of God. *Today’s readings: 2 Kings 5:1–15ab; Psalm 42:2–3; 43: 3–4; Luke 4:24–30.*

Tuesday, March 5 Love and Kindness

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells Peter that he must forgive another “not seven times but seventy-seven times.” From that instruction, we may ascertain that we are to forgive over and over again. Such forgiveness is an act of kindness, one which any of us would hope to receive after our own transgression. When wronged, we have an opportunity to create enmity or to nurture love. Who needs your forgiveness? From whom do you need to request forgiveness? *Today’s readings: Daniel 3:25, 34–43; Psalm 25:4–5ab, 6, 7bc, 8–9; Matthew 18:21–35.*

Wednesday, March 6 Praise the Lord

“Praise the Lord, Jerusalem,” we sing today in the refrain for Psalm 147. In recognizing all that God has done, the psalm is a reminder that prayers of praise should be part of our prayer life. During these remaining weeks of Lent, schedule a time at the end of the day to recall the ways that God has blessed you. Compose your own prayer of praise and thanksgiving. You might include today’s refrain in your prayer. *Today’s readings: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20; Matthew 5:17–19.*

Thursday, March 7 Soften Your Hearts

In the reading from Jeremiah, the Lord speaks of how his people have ignored his voice and his commands. The Lord tells the prophets: “But they obeyed not, nor did they pay heed. They walked in the hardness of their hearts.” Hardened hearts are still noticed, as people are concerned with many things. Efforts can be made to soften hearts. Today, tell someone that God loves him or her, and that you do too. Do not expect a response. *Today’s readings: Jeremiah 7:23–28; Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9; Luke 11:14–23.*

Friday, March 8 Listen with Your Heart

Sometimes we ask questions when we already know the answer. Are we hoping for a different answer from what we know is from God? The third week of Lent is winding down. Have you committed to a process of transformation? Have you set aside time for discernment and reflection? As the Lenten season continues, take courage and listen with your heart. *Today’s readings: Hosea 14:2–10; Psalm 81:6c–8a, 8bc–9, 10–11ab, 14, 17; Mark 12:28–34.*

Saturday, March 9 Spring Cleaning

The phrase “Practice makes perfect” is kept in mind while seeking to improve performance. In today’s readings, we hear that God desires our love and mercy, not our sacrifice. Each season of the liturgical year is a new opportunity to grow in our love for God and others and to learn to be generous with our mercy. Lent’s emphasis on penitence and baptism is an invitation to discard what keeps us from God and bring to the fore those practices that conform us to the promises of our baptism. Some might call this an interior spring cleaning. *Today’s readings: Hosea 6:1–6; Psalm 51:3–4, 18–19, 20–21ab; Luke 18:9–14.*

