

Lent Daily Devotions

Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024



- **Readings**

- Joel 2:12-18 *Return to me with all your hearts.*
- Psalm 51 *Have mercy, O Lord, for we have sinned.*
- 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 *Be reconciled to God, for now is the acceptable time.*
- Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 *Your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.*

- **Reflection**

The Liturgical use of ashes originated in the Old Testament times. Ashes symbolize mourning, mortality, and penance. In the book of Esther, Mordecai put on sackcloth and ashes when he heard of the decree of King Ahasuerus to kill all the Jewish people in the Persian Empire (Esther 4:1). Job repented in sackcloth and ashes (Job 42:6). Prophesying the Babylonian captivity of Jerusalem, David wrote, "I turned to the Lord God, pleading in earnest prayer with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes." (Daniel 9:3)

Jesus made reference to ashes, "If the miracles worked in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have reformed in sackcloth and ashes long ago" (Matthew 11:21).

The Church adapted the use of ashes to mark the beginning of the penitential season of Lent when we remember our mortality and mourn for our sins. In our present liturgy for Ash Wednesday, we use ashes made from the burned palm branches distributed on Palm Sunday of the previous year. As we begin this holy season of Lent in preparation for Easter, we must remember the significance of the ashes we have received: We mourn and do penance for our sins. We again convert our hearts to the Lord, who suffered, died and rose for our salvation. We renew the promises made at our baptism, when we died to an old life and rose to a new live with Christ. Finally, mindful that the kingdom of this world passes away, we strive to live the Kingdom of God now and look forward to its fulfillment in heaven.

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/reflections/ash-wednesday-20618>

- **Prayer**

Almighty and everlasting God, you despise nothing You have made and forgive all who are penitent.

Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our brokenness, may obtain of You, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever. AMEN

Thursday, February 15, 2024

- **Readings**

- Deuteronomy 30:15-20 *I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity.*
- Psalm 1 *Happy are they who hope in the Lord.*
- Luke 9:22-25 *Those who lose their lives for My sake will save it.*

- **Reflection**

The most important thing about any suffering we experience is not how painful it is but how purifying. No one passes through this life without some suffering. Saint Teresa of Avila universally regarded as one of the greatest of mystics, saw suffering as a source of purification.

She once wrote that God looks around to find where the greatest love is and there He sends the greatest suffering. And where did He find the greatest love? Surely in the One who described Himself as the Son of Man. Could the words of Lamentations apply more to anyone as much as to Jesus: "All you who pass this way, look and see: is there any sorrow like the sorrow inflicted on Me?" (Lam 1:12).

If we have had good health in life let us bow our heads in gratitude. It should also lead us to have great sympathy for those who have to carry the ongoing burden of painful suffering.

<https://www.sacredspace.ie/scripture/luke-922-25#>

- **Prayer**

Dear Lord Jesus, You, the Eternal Word, through whom all things come into being, You became flesh among us so that You could speak with us, walk with us, pray with us, and yes even die with us. You became a human being among other human beings so that nothing human would be alien to you, so that in everything, except sin, You would be like us. AMEN (Heart Speaks to Heart, 19)



Friday, February 16, 2024

- **Readings**

- Isaiah 58:1-9a *Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice*
- Psalm 51 *A broken humbles heart, O God, you will not scorn.*
- Matthew 9:14-15 *When the bridegroom is taken away from them, then my disciples will fast.*

- **Reflection**

Jesus wanted John's disciples, along with His own disciples, to realize that while He was with them, it was a time of joy. This was not a time of mourning or fasting or weeping. It is simply inappropriate to fast at a wedding feast. No, a wedding feast is a time of celebration. But as bold as this statement is about Jesus' presence altering everything, we also find a hint that His death will alter everything again, and this time in a much more painful way. The point: Jesus' presence conditions the time; it changes everything; it determines our joy. (<https://www.heartlight.org/wjd/matthew/0419-wjd.html>)

- **Prayer**

Almighty and tender Shepherd, I thank You for loving me so much that You hear my prayers. I believe that Jesus' presence means joy for my life. But I also recognize that I live between his two appearances on earth, and thus the joy is not as great as it was when He was here and far less than it will be when He returns. Give me strength, courage, and joy so that I can face the challenges of this waiting time with faithfulness. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Saturday, February 17, 2024

- **Readings**

- Isaiah 58:9b-14 *If you remove the yoke of the needy, your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.*
- Psalm 86 *Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may be faithful in your sight.*
- Luke 5:27-32 *I have come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*

- **Reflection**

What a great reply: "I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners." It is a statement open to all humanity in need of redemption. It is an affirmation that shows us that God is not exclusive. Christ has come for all sinners, and He extends to everyone His call to repent and be transformed by His grace. It shows us that Christ wants to reach everybody and forgive everybody. He is not like us, who discriminate and hold grudges. When someone sins more, God makes particular efforts to reach that person and offer His pardon and his elevating grace. What an example for us to follow when we have difficult moments in our dealings with others! Christ teaches us patience. Christ teaches us that we must love and build bridges whenever the opportunity arises.

<https://www.epriest.com/reflections/view/140>

- **Prayer**

Thank you, Lord, for giving me the solution to my life. Help me to forgive wholeheartedly those who have done me wrong. Help me to love them, pray for them and do good to them even though they hinder and harm me. Help me to strive tirelessly to bring to the world Your solution to division, discrimination, hatred, and war.

Sunday, February 18, 2024

First Sunday of Lent

- **Readings**

- Genesis 9:8-15
- Psalm 25
- 1 Peter 3:18-22
- Mark 1:12-15

- **Reflection**

- We often hear comments about "Catholic guilt," as though Catholicism is an inherently disordered religion, a guilt is something best outgrown and left to a bygone era. But imagine a world where no one ever felt guilty for anything. Imagine your spouse and your children, your neighbor and boss-everyone - engaged in every sort of behavior imaginable, without ever feeling the slightest bit of remorse. It wouldn't take long before society sunk into complete chaos.

There is a term for people who engage in destructive behavior without feeling guilty. They're called psychopaths. Guilt can be a positive force when it acts as a boundary, moving us away from destruction and back toward the good.

Why then the joke about Catholic guilt, as though it were an inherently bad thing? Because too many of us experience guilt but do nothing about it. Rather than acknowledge the sin that created the guilt and make "an appeal to God for a clear conscience." We bury the sin deeper in our soul, hoping the sin-and the guilt it engenders-will go away on its own. When it doesn't, we tend to shift the blame outward and jokingly belittle "Catholic guilt."

What would it feel like to live with a completely clear conscience? It's possible, because baptism saves you "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

- **Prayer**

- *Father, show me what it feels like to be free.*



Monday, February 19, 2024

Monday of the First Week of Lent

- **Readings**

- Leviticus 19.1-2, 11-18 *With justice you shall judge your neighbour.*
- Psalm 19 *Your word, Lord, Spirit, and life.*
- Matthew 25::31-46 *Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to Me.*

- **Reflection**

- Being baptized into the Kingship of Jesus is a real challenge for us. After all, kings are people in positions of authority, accustomed to having others take care of their needs and in turn doing as they wish. Jesus inverts this vision of kingship and reveals a much different way. To participate in the Kingship of Jesus means to have an awareness of those around us, a sense of responsibility toward the needs of others and a generosity to put those needs before our own. To be the king is not to rule over others, but to bear the burden of taking care of the needs of others before ourselves. *Henri Nouwen*

- **Prayer**

- *Lord Jesus, help me to really see those in need around me. Help me to forget myself and live for others. Amen.*

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

- **Readings**

- Isaiah 55.10-11 *My Word shall accomplish that which I purpose.*
- Psalm 34 *From all their affliction, God will deliver the just.*
- Matthew 6::7-15 *Pray in this way.*

- **Reflection**

The Lord's Prayer is indeed a summary of the entire Gospel. It is called "The Lord's Prayer" in that Jesus Himself gave it to us as a way of teaching us to pray. In this prayer, we find seven petitions to God. Within those seven petitions we will find every human longing and every expression of faith found within the Scriptures. Everything we need to know about life and prayer is contained in the wonderful prayer.

Jesus Himself gave us this prayer as the model of all prayer. It is good that we repeat the words of the Lord's Prayer regularly in vocal prayer. This is also done in the various sacraments and liturgical worship. However, saying this prayer is not enough. The goal is to internalize each and every aspect of this prayer so that it becomes a model of our personal petition to God and an entrustment of our entire life to Him. <https://catholic-daily-reflections.com>

- **Prayer**

- *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily Bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Jesus, I trust in You, AMEN.*



Wednesday, February 21, 2024

- **Readings**

- Jonah 3.1-10 *The Ninevehites turned from their evil ways.*
- Psalm 51 *A broken, humbled heart, O Lord, you will not scorn.*
- Luke 11.29-32 *This is an evil generation, no signs will be given to it except the signs of Jonah.*



- **Reflection**

- Independently, each person of Nineveh might have hesitated to heed the warning of a foreign prophet. As they eyed each other and exchanged hushed, anxious words, however, they compelled one another to change until the entire nation bowed its head in repentance. The witness of others strengthens our own resolve, which in turn further strengthens others until the whole community changes for the better. *Daily Prayer, Liturgy Training Publications*

- **Prayer**

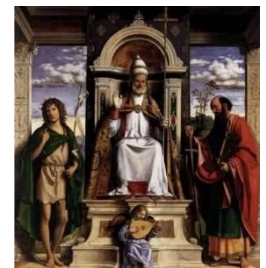
- *Gracious God, when we fall into sin, You reach down and pull us out of it. May we reach out to others who have turned away from you until everyone has turned back and is calling loudly for Your Mercy. Through Christ our Lord, AMEN.*

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Chair of St Peter, Apostle Feast

- **Readings**

- 1 Peter 5:1-4 *I am an elder, a witness to Christ's sufferings*
- Psalm 23 *The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want*
- Matthew 16:13-19 *You are Peter; I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*



- **Reflection**

- Today's feast celebrates not only that chair as a precious relic from the time of Saint Peter, it also celebrates all that this chair represents. This feast was formally celebrated in Rome as early as the fourth century, but honor for the supremacy of Saint Peter and his successors was celebrated from the moment Jesus entrusted Peter with his unique mission.

In the Gospel of [Matthew 16:13–20](#), we have the discourse between Jesus and His disciples, which is the basis of today's feast and our belief in the unique and universal authority of Saint Peter and his successors. Jesus asked the disciples, "[W]ho do you say that I am?" Simon responded, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God." With that profession of faith, Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter, saying to him, "And I tell you, you are Peter (*Petros*), and on this rock (*petra*) I will build My Church." "Peter" in Greek is *Petros*, meaning a single movable stone. The Greek word *petra* means a solid rock formation that is fixed, immovable, and enduring. Therefore, Jesus chose to transform Peter from a single stone into a solid, fixed, and immovable foundation of rock on which the Church would be built and endure until the end of time. Jesus went on to tell Peter that He would give him the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven and that whatever he bound and loosed on earth would be bound and loosed in Heaven.

<https://mycatholic.life/saints/saints-of-the-liturgical-year/february-22-chair-of-saint-peter-apostle/>

- **Prayer**

- *Saint Peter, you were a weak and sinful man, but God entrusted you with great responsibility, despite your unworthiness. Please pray for me, that despite my unworthiness, I may be open to all that God entrusts to me and that I may use those gifts for His glory and the salvation of souls. Saint Peter and all your successors in Heaven, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.*

Friday, February 23, 2024

- **Readings**

- Ezekiel 18.21-28 *If the wicked turn away from all their sins, they shall surely live.*
- Psalm 130 *If you, O Lord, have laid bare our guilt, who could endure it?*
- Matthew 5.20-26 *First be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.*

- **Reflection**

- Church has presented Psalm 130 as a preeminent prayer for sinners who feel the weight of the burden they have brought upon themselves, of those who feel like they've sunk to the depths of the sea, a place of chaos and alienation. Imagine yourself engulfed in violent waters, dragged to the bottom amidst swirling eddies of turgid water with nothing to grasp, no light to find your bearings, sinking ever deeper into cold and murky darkness. That is the premise of this brief Psalm which does overtly what all the Penitential Psalms seek to do, invite us to join the psalmist in turning to the Lord to confess our sins and beg his mercy.

Note that the longer half of the Psalm expresses the psalmist's hope, his stalwart trust in God who is mercy and redemption. The psalmist models the attitude of a sincere penitent: he doesn't deny or hide his sin; he knows God is more mercy than vengeance; he hopes sincerely that dawn will bring the light of mercy, a word of hope, the healing rain of redemption. At the Easter Vigil we sing "*O happy fault; O necessary sin of Adam*" referring to the trespass that brought about the Incarnation and our merciful salvation in Christ. The words "*O happy fault*" could issue only from the mouth of one who, like the psalmist, understands that where sins abound, grace and mercy abound the more. <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/lent/reflection-penitential-psalm-130>

- **Prayer**

- *Heavenly Father, give us a humble, penitent heart that we may be worth of the Sacrifice made by Your Son, Jesus on the cross. AMEN.*



*Be
Reconciled*

Saturday, February 24, 2024

Saturday, March 4, 2023

- **Readings**

- Deuteronomy 26.16-19 *You are to be a people holy to the Lord your God.*
- Psalm 119 *Happy are they who follow the Law of the Lord.*
- Matthew 5.43-48 *Be perfect and Your Heavenly Father is perfect.*

- **Reflection**

- This is one of the most famous of Jesus' commands . . . and one of the hardest to obey. It's hard enough to love those for whom we feel strong affection. So now we're to love those whom we find it natural to hate? We're to pray for those who mistreat us?

Jesus' unprecedented call to love one's enemies surely scandalized many in His own day. Many Jewish groups in the first-century A.D. called for hatred of the enemies of Israel. How easy it would have been for people to hate the sometimes brutal and always demanding Romans. Yet Jesus confronted this natural inclination to hate with an unsettling call to love even one's enemies.

To love such people doesn't mean to feel all sorts of warm fuzzies for them. It means to treat them with unwarranted kindness, even to pray for their well-being. In this way, Jesus said, his followers would be imitating God's own astounding graciousness.

- **Prayer**

- *Jesus, you are the author and originator of love. We only know love because You are love and You loved us first. You love us in our sin and rebellion against You. You love us despite the pain we inflict on others. You love us in our mess. It is that love - that selfless, self-sacrificing love, which allows us to love others. It is an overflow of Your love for us that allows us to love other people. Jesus, we ask You to make us better lovers of one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord, AMEN.*

