

5th SUNDAY IN 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



On this Fifth Sunday in 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 abundant, and finally eternal, life. Jesus refers to that life in the gospel reading, saying, “Whoever loves [their] life loses it, and whoever hates [their] life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.”

The first reading explains that all shall know God, who “will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more.” In the covenant with Jesus he lays down his life for us on the cross, erasing all sin and

brokenness and reconciling us with God. The epistle 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 God in our hearts, we seek a pure heart, praying from Psalm 51, “Create a clean heart in me, O God.” In this familiar psalm, we ask not only that we 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? ...God’s presence to another?

Today’s readings: Jeremiah 31:31–34; Psalm 51:3–4, 12–15, (12a); Hebrews 5:7–9; John 12:20–33.



Art by / Ilustración de Mike Jarosko © LTP

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.

Readings: Daniel 13:1–9, 15–62; Psalm 23; John 8:1–11.

Tuesday, March 19

Joseph, guardian of Jesus (commemoration day)

“It was not through the law that the promise was made to Abraham [and Sarah] and their 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 Joseph, guardian of Jesus (husband of Mary) 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 Joseph as a model of faith? *Today’s readings: 2 Samuel 7:4, 8-16; Psalm 89:1-29; Romans 4:13-18; Matt. 1:16, 18-21, 24a*

Wednesday, March 20

Becoming the Word

In today’s gospel, Jesus tells his listeners that to be his disciples, they are to remain in his Word. Word means for us Jesus himself (remaining one with him) and the holy scriptures that reveal him. Only by remaining in his Word will disciples know the truth and be set free from what binds them. 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? Do you embody the Word? *Today’s readings: Daniel 3:14–20, 91–92, 95; 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 [and Sarah] that they would be “the father [and mother] 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. *Today’s readings: Genesis 17:3–9; Psalm 105:4–9; John 8:51–59.*

Friday, March 22

Do you believe?

The prophet Jeremiah says, “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 acts of love 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 acts of love? How do you recognize the mercy and action of Jesus in those around you? *Today’s readings: Jeremiah 20:10–13; Psalm 18:2–7; John 10:31–42.*

Saturday, March 23

All praise to God

As Holy Week approaches, reflect on a time when you turned away from God. Perhaps you felt persecuted or ashamed of your relationship with God. Many 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 next 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; Jer. 31:10–13; John 11:45–56.*