

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Guide Us

God of life,
you raised Lazarus from death
and in doing so revealed your divine love.
Open our ears to your truth,
help us see your glory,
and empower us to trust and believe.
Guide our minds and hearts
in these final days of Lent,
purify us from anything
that blocks us from belief,
so that we will be ready
to sincerely profess our faith
with the Church community at Easter.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 26, 2023

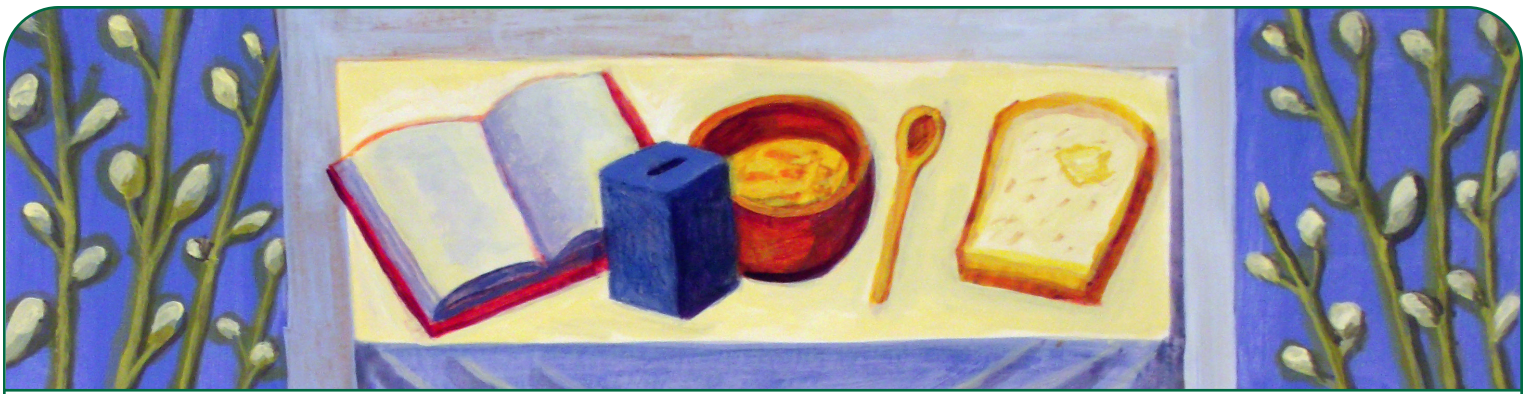
Do You Believe This?



Today's readings: Ezekiel 37:12–14; Psalm 130:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8; Romans 8:8–11; John 11:1–45. The readings from the Gospel of John proclaimed on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent are explicitly tied to the scrutiny rites celebrated with those preparing for baptism at Easter. Throughout Lent, the assembly participates in these rites that are part of the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The assembly, too, benefits spiritually as all pray that the candidates be enlightened with a deeper knowledge of Christ and purified from anything that blocks their full assent of belief. Those seeking baptism are preparing to approach the font and make a profession of faith in front of the community. Simultaneously, the rest of us are preparing to renew our baptismal promises with full hearts.

These Gospel accounts guide us so that we may hear and believe (like the Samaritan woman), see and believe (like the man born blind), and finally believe without proof (like Martha, Mary, and Lazarus). In each of these Gospels, Jesus reveals his true identity. They culminate in the exchange between Jesus and Martha on the road to Bethany. Jesus proclaims to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25) and then asks Martha, “Do you believe this?”

This final week of Lent invites us to join those preparing for baptism in prayer and reflection. Are you ready to affirm with Martha: “Yes, Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world” (John 11:27)?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 27

True Justice

Daily news sources regularly report stories of innocent people wrongly imprisoned. Seeking exoneration for the wrongfully convicted is the life work of many people committed to truth and justice. Today's Scripture stories remind us that this sin has repeated itself across the centuries. One of the corporal works of mercy urges care for the imprisoned. How are you called to a deeper awareness of the need for an unbiased criminal justice system? *Today's readings: Daniel 13:1–9, 15–17, 19–30, 33–62 or 13:41c–62; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; John 8:1–11.*

Tuesday, March 28

Not Alone

Patience runs thin in today's Scripture readings. The Israelites complain with weariness on their sojourn to the Promised Land. The Pharisees of Jerusalem shudder in exasperation at the words of Jesus. Jesus offers a message of assurance in response, "The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone." No matter our frustration or lack of understanding, God remains steadfast and close to us. When impatience flares, try this antidote: take five deep breaths, recall God's nearness, and then respond. *Today's readings: Numbers 21:4–9; Psalm 102:2–3, 16–18, 19–21; John 8:21–30.*

Wednesday, March 29

Keep Holy the Lord's Name

There is a beloved *VeggieTales* episode recounting the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's trust in God's faithfulness in the face of King Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace. These trusting servants of God stand in the fire and sing with one voice to God, "Blessed is your holy and glorious name, praiseworthy and exalted above all for all ages" (Daniel 3:52). They provide a poignant model of trust in God and reverence for God's holy name. Pay attention to your use

of the Lord's name today. Are there instances when you do not honor the name of the Lord in your speech? *Today's readings: Daniel 3:14–20, 91–92, 95; Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56; John 8:31–42.*

Thursday, March 30

Remain Steadfast

As Holy Week draws near, the promises made to the faithful through the covenant with Abraham echo stronger in our daily Scriptures. Jesus faces threats from all sides and the psalmist assures us that the Lord "remembers forever his covenant" (Psalm 105:8). We are close to the end of our Lenten journey. God has constantly communicated his desire to be close to us. Have you responded with faithfulness to your Lenten intentions? *Today's readings: Genesis 17:3–9; Psalm 105:4–5, 6–7, 8–9; John 8:51–59.*

Friday, March 31

The Lord, Our Strength

The prophet Jeremiah, the psalmist, and Jesus all face threats and enemy attacks. Yet all three readings echo trust in God's mantle of protection and steadfast faithfulness. They provide a powerful reminder for us that God is near in times of great distress. *Today's readings: Jeremiah 20:10–13; Psalm 18:2–3a, 3bc–4, 5–6, 7; John 10:31–42.*

Saturday, April 1

Dwell in God

The promises of the prophet Ezekiel are a source of hope for the faithful across all generations. Ezekiel delivers the assurance of God, "My dwelling shall be with them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Ezekiel 37:27). The enemies of Jesus circle in close and the Scriptures remind us that God is even closer, "like a shepherd guarding his flock" (Jeremiah 31:10). Holy Week begins tomorrow. Make plans to accompany Jesus through the solemn remembrances of his journey from suffering to resurrection. *Today's readings: Ezekiel 37:21–28; Jeremiah 31:10, 11–12abcd, 13; John 11:45–56.*

