

**You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind,
and with all your strength.**
- Mark 12

Third Week of Lent: March 7-13, 2010

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The Third Week of Lent

We now begin the time in Lent when on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent, at least one Mass may use the Cycle A readings for the Scrutinies of the RCIA program. On the **Third Sunday**, that includes **John's gospel** of the woman at the well. (For more information, see [Praying the Gospels of Weeks 3, 4 and 5.](#))

For those not attending the Mass with those readings, the **Third Sunday of Lent** offers Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush. The Lord promises Moses that he will lead the captive Israelites out of Egypt and into "a land flowing with milk and honey." **Luke's Gospel** tells us of Jesus' warning that we must be willing to repent now and that our lives could end by accident or through the evil of someone else. The parable of the barren fig tree reminds us of God's patient love for us, even when we show no signs of changing our lives.

The weekday readings are a mix of Gospels by Matthew, Luke and Mark. Jesus teaches in his synagogue at home and is rejected by the people. Peter asks Jesus the limits of forgiveness. Jesus says that we must forgive again and again. He tells the parable about the servant, who though forgiven himself, does not forgive his fellow servants. Jesus has come to fulfill the law and the words of the prophets, not abolish them. Jesus drives out a demon from a mute man. When someone claimed that Jesus must be using Satan's power to heal, Jesus responds "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house." When asked to name the "greatest" commandment, Jesus names two, thus putting together the necessity of loving God with

Daily Prayer This Week

This is a pivotal week of Lent. We can solidify the patterns we have begun or we can make a new start, if we haven't been able to get started yet. If we have begun to recognize what needs realigning in our lives and have begun to fast and abstain from some things that get in the way of our relationship with the Lord, then we are engaging in a struggle.

We are likely uncovering resistance and experiencing our personal sinfulness face-to-face. This is all preparing us for a deeper conversion, a readiness for reconciliation with God and the graces that will allow us to be a source of reconciliation with others. This is the time when we begin to see and experience how much God loves us at a new and more personal level. These graces prepare us to keep our eyes focused on Jesus in the weeks ahead - to learn from him, to fall in love with him more deeply and to be drawn to imitate him more completely.

If we are just getting started with our Lenten journey, renewing our desires for these graces will be all we need to begin with a renewed openness. God does not need a lot of time to convince us of his love for us.

This is a week about God's love for us and our call to love others the same way. It is a week to keep our daily focus on naming a desire each morning. The day

our entire being and loving our neighbor as our very selves. On Saturday, Jesus has challenging words for those who are "convinced of their own righteousness and despise everyone else" saying, "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

For the **Fourth Sunday of Lent** we read the powerful story of the Prodigal Son from **Luke's Gospel**. The younger son, who asks for his inheritance and spends it all, returns and asks to be a servant at his father's house. Instead he is welcomed home with open arms by his father who was filled with compassion, ran to his son and forgave him. The older son is jealous and will not share in the happiness but the father says to "celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found." For Masses using Cycle A readings for the RCIA, **John's Gospel** will offer the story of the man born blind.

ahead will shape what we ask for as our feet hit the floor in the morning. Pausing to thank the Lord for this day and to ask for the grace to let our mind and heart be renewed in the concrete circumstances, relationships and obligations of our day.

Throughout the day, we can then return to those desires in background of our awareness. Our request for the Lord's help is always there and our awareness of it, will help us make the choices we desire to make, to let go of what we need to let go of, to add what we need to add. This will take us deeper and deeper into self-awareness and a sense of our need for a Savior, who is right there to embrace us and give us the graces we ask for with such longing.

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