

**“Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”**

- John 8:7

## Guide for Prayer for the Fifth Week of Lent: March 25 -31, 2007

### The Fifth Week of Lent

This is the final of three Sundays in Lent when, in many of our parishes, on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent, we pray for the RCIA elect in a special way. Often, at least one Mass will use the Cycle A readings. This week, on the **Fifth Sunday**, that includes **John's gospel** of the raising of Lazarus. (For more information, see [Praying the Gospels of Weeks 3, 4 and 5.](#))

For the rest of us using the Cycle C readings for this liturgical year, **John's gospel** brings us the story of the woman accused of adultery. Religious leaders bring a woman to Jesus challenging him: "Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" Jesus responded only, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." The crowd quietly dispersed. Jesus seeing there is no one left to accuse the woman says gently, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more."

**Monday is the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.** Here we celebrate Mary's trust and fidelity. Mary and Joseph can be guides for us in our Lenten journey, if we ask for these graces.

The Lord sends serpents to punish the perpetually complaining and ungrateful children of Israel. The bronze serpent on a pole reminds us of Jesus's saving cross. Three young men refuse to commit idolatry and show us how God protects "the servants who trusted in him." God entered a covenant with Abraham. In the midst of his persecution, Jeremiah praises God, "For he has rescued the life of the poor from the power of the wicked!" God promises to unite the people in an everlasting covenant.

Our gospels are again from the **Fourth Gospel**. On Tuesday, reminding us of the bronze serpent and his death, Jesus says, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM." To the children of Abraham and to us Jesus declares, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." "Whoever keeps my word

### Daily Prayer This Week

This is the last full week of Lent. We can feel the conflict and struggle developing in the readings. As we read about the drama that surrounded Jesus' last days on earth and reflect upon its meaning, we experience how the drama that is going on in our own hearts is more intense the closer we get to the end of Lent.

The Spirit of the Lord is really trying to help us be more open and more free, to receive the graces our Lord wants to offer us. There is another spirit that is fighting just as hard to distract us, discourage us, and prevent us from being open and attentive to God's gifts. The closer we get to the mystery of our Lord's passion, death and resurrection for us, the more we can experience struggle. If I experience myself somewhat "at war" with myself, then these are very important days to keep deliberately asking our Lord to help me.

It is also a great time to begin to prepare to renew the baptismal promises at Easter. We can reject the unloving choices we've made, all that is unjust, dishonest, disrespectful and violent. We want to refuse to be mastered by empty promises. Declaring our desire for freedom is a great preparation to receive this great gift. If we are celebrating the Scrutinies with the RCIA candidates and catechumens, this is a wonderful time to pray for them as well, for their protection from the evil one in the last days of their journey.

If we have developed the habit of naming a desire the first thing each morning, and carrying on a conversation with our Lord in the brief background moments of the day, we are already comfortable with letting the Word or the Season interact with the concrete events of the week. This way of finding intimacy with our Lord,

will never see death. ... Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM." They heard what they thought was blasphemy and tried to stone him. Jesus simply told the truth, because, "the Father is in me and I am in the Father." By the end of the week, we see the tension very high as people plot to kill Jesus and he "no longer walked about in public among the Jews."

On **Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord** we make our way into **Holy Week**. We read the gospel about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, Paul's invitation to us to imitate Jesus who emptied himself, and the whole **Passion**, this year from **Luke's Gospel**.

through our daily interaction - even in a very busy life - is so appropriate for the Fifth Week of Lent. We can discover areas that are still resistant to God's grace. We can ask for help to practice new ways of being free, or new ways of loving. We can find ways to make financial sacrifices to give to the poor this week.

Each night this week, we can give thanks. The closer we get to celebrating Holy Week and the events that brought us our salvation, each of us can express our gratitude, realizing this was all for me.