



SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2017 SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT You look divine

Extreme makeovers are all the rage. Some of us sense that a more beautiful person is hiding inside, and with a lot of help and loads of money, we try to make our dreams come true. Well, we're half right—something beautiful is hiding inside of us, but plastic surgery and a new wardrobe won't bring it shining forth. All we need is a pure heart—which comes when we realize we are God's beloved children and we each have God's exquisite grace within us. We can help others see us in this heavenly light simply by being true to ourselves and our divine origins.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 12:1-4a; 2 Timothy 1:8b-10; Matthew 17:1-9* (25). "He was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun."

MONDAY, MARCH 13 LENTEN WEEKDAY Let's give it up for Lent

If you grew up Catholic, you probably heard the question (perhaps more often than you would have liked!): "What are you giving up for Lent?" Often enough it was about forgoing goodies such as chocolate or your favorite television show. Good enough as far as it goes, if it taught you something about healthy self-denial. But there is another, more interior way to give things up for Lent—things such as judgmental comments that come from a secret sense of superiority or condemning attitudes that are nothing more than self-righteousness dressed up in sharp clothes. The real action in the spiritual life, we learn as we age, is interior. So—what will you give up this Lent?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 9:4b-10; Luke 6:36-38* (230). "The measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

TUESDAY, MARCH 14 LENTEN WEEKDAY Don't underestimate her

The Bible seems overpopulated by widows. Widows were a social problem in a world owned and operated by men. Without outside help, such women and their children were vulnerable. Yet widows assist prophets in the Old Testament and support Jesus in the gospels. Widows are active in the early church, and a woman named Tabitha was so indispensable, Peter is obliged to raise her from the dead. Helping others can help heal a mourning heart. Invite the widowed to be a contributing force in your community.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Matthew 23:1-12* (231). "Redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow."



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15 LENTEN WEEKDAY Aim low to go high places

"Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your Kingdom," the mother of the apostles James and John was telling Jesus—as if to say, "This Kingdom of yours, I want my boys in on it from the get-go." Everyone, it seemed, was telling Jesus what to do. Jesus, though, had a very different take on who comes first and last: "Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant." To follow Jesus is to imitate him, to do as he would have us do, and that includes serving others.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 18:18-20; Matthew 20:17-28* (232). "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

THURSDAY, MARCH 16 LENTEN WEEKDAY Give the gift of love

One of the keys to Lenten conversion is *almsgiving*, a word seldom heard except in church, which might be apt because while altruism can often be found among all good people, there is something more here than acts of charity. In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul says, "If I give away everything I own . . . but do not have love, I gain nothing." It is the love, your attitude toward the other, not the thing given or even the sacrifice in giving that matters; it is the love that must motivate the gesture. It's not only, "Shall I give this person a few dollars?" but also, "Shall I—*can I*—love them?"

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 17:5-10; Luke 16:19-31* (233). "I, the Lord, alone probe the mind and test the heart, to reward everyone according to his ways."

FRIDAY, MARCH 17 MEMORIAL OF PATRICK Larger than legend

Saint Patrick is often pictured with crosier, shamrock, and snake in hand. Tales of him using the shamrock to explain the Trinity or miraculously expelling snakes from Ireland are products of a later piety. But there's plenty about the historical Patrick to inspire admiration. Captured from his native England by raiders and enslaved in Ireland, after his escape Patrick deliberately returned to the land of his misfortune to bring the gospel. The crosier symbol is accurate: Patrick served as bishop and apostle to Ireland. Today he reminds us of our moral obligations even to those who trespass against us.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46* (234). "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."

SATURDAY, MARCH 18 MEMORIAL OF CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH Doing good

We all want, even need, to feel God's presence, don't we? If not, what would be the point of believing? One way to feel the closeness of God is to live as God wants us to. As long as we give of ourselves and do good, we can be sure that God is with us. For inspiration we can look to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, remembered today, a bishop who worked hard for the people in his care, even while he was engaged in an intense struggle with those who subscribed to Arianism, the major heresy of the time. He even sold church property during a famine to relieve the sufferings of the poor. Give yourself to a good cause.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32* (235). "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."