



SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2017 THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

This well is deep

We've all been told that God loves us, but if you want to have a deep experience of that love, enter into a practice of contemplative prayer. That is one way to experience the "living water" that Jesus offered the woman at the well. The woman tells Jesus, "The water is deep." So, too, are our souls. And in the practice of contemplative prayer, the grace of God flows through us like clear and cleansing water. That wellspring is always there if we make the effort to dip into it by quieting ourselves and entering into contemplation. Check out a good book on contemplation, like one of those by Thomas Keating.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 17:3-7; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42 (28)*. "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty."

MONDAY, MARCH 20

SOLEMNITY OF JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Strong, silent type

Joseph never uttered a word in scripture. Instead he let his actions speak for what was going on in his heart. By his actions we know that Joseph not only believed in God but listened for God's promptings and was willing to be led—even to some confusing and difficult places. If you have trouble keeping an open mind, pray to Saint Joseph, who was so confident in God that he was willing to let go of the reins and let God lead the way. Saint Joseph proved always eager to help those who call on him for help.

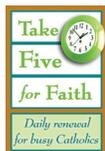
TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a (543)*. "When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him."

TUESDAY, MARCH 21 LENTEN WEEKDAY

Give what you want

Jesus' entire ministry was grounded in love and forgiveness, yet often enough those who call themselves followers of Jesus fail to offer love and forgiveness to others. Instead, they nurture their grudges, hurts, and resentments, keeping them alive and in the present by retelling themselves the same old stories where it's everybody else's fault. Lent is a good time to practice abstaining from this habit. When you find yourself wanting to judge and blame others, turn your gaze inward. How often have you refused to give what you so dearly wish to receive?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 3:25, 34-43; Matthew 18:21-35 (238)*. "Moved with compassion the master . . . let him go and forgave him the loan."



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

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22 LENTEN WEEKDAY

Do you believe in what you do?

For the past several years National Public Radio has broadcast a series of inspiring essays called *This I Believe*. Each essay is a statement of the core principles that guide the everyday life of the writer. In one memorable essay Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J., author of *Dead Man Walking*, writes that she watches "what I do to see what I actually believe." She knows it's one thing to say what you believe and quite another to live it. Today ask yourself: What principles guide my life? For inspiration visit thisibelieve.org.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Matthew 5:17-19 (239)*. "Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

THURSDAY, MARCH 23

MEMORIAL OF TURIBIUS OF MOGROVEJO, BISHOP

"Your mission, should you choose to accept it"

Each episode of the *Mission Impossible* TV series began with an agent getting his assignment from a tape-recorded message that included the words "your mission, should you choose to accept it." One can imagine a similar scene in 1580 when Saint Turibius, who was teaching law, was told by his bishop, "Congratulations, you're the new archbishop of Lima," a 170,000 square-mile diocese. Turibius spent the rest of his life arduously visiting the mostly indigenous population of his vast territory in Peru. Everyone has a mission from God. Choose to accept it.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 7:23-28; Luke 11:14-23 (240)*. "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste."

FRIDAY, MARCH 24 LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Why do we abstain from meat?

When food choices were far less varied than they are today, abstaining from meat was a definite disruption in one's daily meal routine and a sacrifice. The practice of abstinence is intended to reduce our attachments to the normal and the expected so that we might be open to the many other ways God nourishes us. The issue is not the meat, but rather our attachments. Orthodox Bishop Kallistos Ware writes, "Evil resides not in created things as such, but in our attitude toward them, that is, our will. The purpose of fasting, then, is not to repudiate the divine creation but to cleanse our will."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Hosea 14:2-10; Mark 12:28-34 (241)*. "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

Free to consent or refuse

Mary's acceptance of God's proposal is electrifying because she was free to say no. God gives all of us free will, but people often take it from others to oppress and use them. On this feast of Annunciation, we remember victims of slavery. In four centuries of the transatlantic slave trade, 15 million Africans were brought to the New World: four for every European who came to the Americas. Today, many millions of men, women, and children are enslaved in manual labor and prostitution worldwide. See freetheslaves.net for what you can do to make freedom ring.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38 (545)*. "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."