

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2017

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### The price is wrong

Prosperity theology, sometimes called the prosperity gospel, is the notion that believers who confess their faith and are generous with tithes and offerings will in turn be rewarded generously by God with material riches. Most popular in Pentecostal traditions, it can be heard on some or another television station every hour of the day and night. Be wary of any teaching that disguises the love of riches behind the veil of such teachings. Jesus warned us that we can only serve one master. Ask yourself which it will be—the love of money or the love of God—around which you will center your life.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 49:14-15; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Matthew 6:24-34 (82)*. "No one can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and wealth."

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27

### The Ten Commandments count

"The Ten Commandments are not multiple choice," a church sign stated. Admittedly we sometimes do pick and choose among them. But most of the time it may be that we just haven't thought through how they apply to our own lived experience. Here's one way to rediscover the Commandments and be more conscious of living them. Create a chart with four columns. In the first, list the Ten Commandments. In the second, write something from Jesus' life and teaching that relates directly or indirectly to that Commandment. In the third, prayerfully write your own paraphrase of the Commandment. In the fourth, list specific ways that you can incorporate the spirit of the Commandment into your daily life.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 17:20-24; Mark 10:17-27 (347)*. "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

### Give your body a rest

"Carnival" ends today, and tomorrow our time of attentiveness to spiritual matters begins. Being in the world of the senses, and then stepping back for a time through a bit of denial, is part of the process of deepening our spiritual identity in the world. Flesh and spirit are essential elements in Christian discipleship, as are justice and mercy and intimacy and awe. Knowing how to appropriately weave these elements in our daily lives is the role of wisdom. Use Lent as a time to give your full attention to prayer, spiritual reading, and devotional practices. Ultimately your body and soul will be the stronger and wiser for it.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 35:1-12; Mark 10:28-31 (348)*. "But many that are first will be last, and the last will be first."

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

ASH WEDNESDAY; DAY OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE

### Out and about

With the beginning of Lent we might tend to look inward, to focus on prayer and repentance, on resetting our interior compass in a more God-ward direction. But the three traditional practices of Lent—prayer, fasting, almsgiving (which work all year round,



by the way)—point us outward as much as inward. We pray for both ourselves and others. We fast to clear our lives of what prevents us from seeing God in others and the world. And we learn to show more generosity to those around us. So this year don't let yourself get Lenten cabin fever. Practice also in the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (219)*. "We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us."

## THURSDAY, MARCH 2

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

### Make the right choice

Choosing life over death seems like a no-brainer—instinctive, natural, wholesome. Yet our culture, with its emphasis on escaping pain at all costs, can easily lead us to emotional, spiritual, and even physical death: Don't want to face the humiliation of asking for forgiveness? Cut off your relationship with a loved one. Don't want to be hurt by anyone? Close the door on intimacy. Don't want to feel the pain of loss, confusion, or failure? Numb yourself with alcohol or drugs. Our faith offers a different strategy. It's called love. Try loving yourself, others, and God just a little bit more to get you past the pain.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 9:22-25 (220)*. "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then."

## FRIDAY, MARCH 3 MEMORIAL OF KATHARINE DREXEL, VIRGIN

### Hold nothing back

What would you sacrifice to keep a good thing going? After 125 years serving Catholics of color, the Blessed Sacrament Sisters, founded by Katharine Drexel, put their motherhouse near Philadelphia up for sale a few years ago in order to dedicate more funds to ministry. Drexel, the "Millionaire Nun," would have approved. She herself gave away a fortune to educate struggling communities few Americans cared about. A white woman of privilege, Drexel used pencils to the nub and wrote on the backs of envelopes to save precious resources for land, schools, and teachers. Fast today and support the liberation of the disenfranchised with an education.

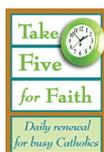
TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 58:1-9a; Matthew 9:14-15 (221)*. "Would that today you might fast so as to make your voice heard on high!"

## SATURDAY, MARCH 4 SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

### Family is the treasure behind family income

While for most Americans, working has as its goal the creation of a stable home, it can become a hindrance to people's coming together as a family. Is making money more important than the family life the income is meant to support? With the high cost of living in America today, the majority of families find two incomes are needed simply to stay afloat, but how can we make sure the family stays front and center? We are called by the prophet Isaiah to be rebuilders of our household. That, of course, begins at home. Bring the family together whenever possible.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 58:9b-14; Luke 5:27-32 (222)*. "Repairer of the breach, they shall call you, Restorer of ruined homesteads."



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

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