

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



Listen to Him

Heavenly Father,
by turning to your Son in faith
and answering his call to holiness,
all the communities of the earth find
blessing.
Help us listen to your beloved Son,
especially when other voices also call out
to us.
Attune our ears to the words he speaks.

Open our hearts in mercy, humility,
compassion, and love.
Give us courage and wisdom
to set forth from places that are familiar
and go where you send us,
to walk steadily forward,
confident that our final destination is your
eternal kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 8, 2020

Moving Forward



Today's Readings: Genesis 12:1–4a; Psalm 33:4–5, 18–19, 20, 22; 2 Timothy 1:8b–10; Matthew 17:1–9. The beginning of Abram's story is the beginning of the covenant relationship between humankind and God. Abram, who barely knows the Lord at this point, decides to trust this mysterious God. He leaves all that is familiar to him to set out for a new homeland. He would face frightening challenges along the way, but he would continue to trust in God's hidden plan.

Peter should have known God far better than Abram ever did. Peter spent months with God's own Son, yet this disciple had no clearer idea of where God was leading them than Abram did. When Jesus is transformed, Peter thinks the end of the ages has come, the decisive turning point in

human history when God raises up the just and glorifies his chosen one. In response, Peter stops going forward. He suggests they all stay on that mountain. He does not understand that Jesus still faces the hardest part of his mission. Peter also is yet to realize his mission and cross.

In our Second Reading, we hear that God's grace has been manifest and our salvation brought to light. Nevertheless, the way forward may often be unclear. We may fear what lies ahead. Lent is a time to share those fears with God and to draw strength from the season's disciplines and from the witness of others so that we will "bear our share of hardship" and keep moving forward.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 9 God's Standard

The prayer in the First Reading confesses the failure of God's people to stay faithful to him. When they behaved no better than other nations, God let his people be scattered among those nations. God demands that his people live by a higher standard, as we hear in the Gospel passage. God, whose mercy overflows, expects us to treat others with that same remarkable compassion. In what specific way can you share God's compassion today? *Today's Readings: Daniel 9:4b–10; Psalm 79:8, 9, 11 and 13; Luke 6:36–38.*

Tuesday, March 10 Reversals

Isaiah's warning is vivid: God will allow his people to be struck down if they do not repent of their wrongdoing, leaving them as blood-red as their sins. Jesus also speaks about reversals: true disciples serve others rather than seek honor and privileges for themselves. Make a list of people who radically changed their lives for Christ. What do their stories teach you? *Today's Readings: Isaiah 1:10, 16–20; Psalm 50:8–9, 16b–17, 21 and 23; Matthew 23:1–12.*

Wednesday, March 11 Misunderstood

Jesus and Jeremiah both spoke for God and suffered greatly for it. Jeremiah laments that his enemies are waiting for him to speak one wrong word so that they can declare him a false prophet and get rid of him. Jesus tells how he, too, will be rejected by his people. Jesus' words seem lost on his disciples, who want the very honor and glory that he warns them against seeking. Perhaps they simply did not like what Jesus was telling them. What is Jesus saying to you that you find hard to accept? *Today's Readings: Jeremiah 18:18–20; Psalm 31:5–6, 14, 15–16; Matthew 20:17–28.*

Thursday, March 12 What Is in Our Hearts?

God knows what is in our hearts far better than we do. God knows who is growing in holiness and who is dying "in a lava waste." The rich man never bothered to probe his heart, much less open it in love to Lazarus. Even in death, the rich man puts himself before the beggar, for he asks Abraham to send Lazarus for water, as if Lazarus were a servant. Open your heart to God. Ask God to show you the people you fail to love and what you can do to serve them. *Today's Readings: Jeremiah 17:5–10; Psalm 1:1–2, 3, 4 and 6; Luke 16:19–31.*

Friday, March 13 The End of Rejection

Despite the terrible action his brothers take, Joseph eventually forgives them and even saves them during a famine. The religious leaders who try to arrest Jesus might also have envied him because the crowds were surrounding Jesus instead of them. Finally, these leaders get rid of Jesus, only to hear that he rose from the dead. It was not too late for them to be forgiven and to share in the new life God offered in his Son. Pray for or talk with someone who needs to hear that God loves and forgives them. *Today's Readings: Genesis 37:3–4, 12–13a, 17b–28a; Psalm 105:16–17, 18–19, 20–21; Matthew 21:33–43, 45–46.*

Saturday, March 14 Prodigal Love

Our God who delights in clemency is like the father who watches for his younger son's return. The father's love is extravagant. First, he pours love out on the son who took from him and left, and then he pours his love upon the son who speaks of him with resentment and contempt. We are far stingier with our love, preferring to love only those who seem to deserve it. Take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and rejoice that God shows his love abundantly. *Today's Readings: Micah 7:14–15, 18–20; Psalm 103:1–2, 3–4, 9–10, 11–12; Luke 15:1–3, 11–32.*

