

Sunday, Mar 18, 2018

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT; THIRD SCRUTINY OF THE ELECT

Yes, we can!

Maybe it feels like something's holding you back: lack of education or funds, past decisions or old wounds, complicated relationships or too many responsibilities. But in the big picture, only two things impede our liberty: sin and death. If we could get beyond those two, we walk into perfect freedom. The good news is, we can! In today's Scrutiny, we celebrate how the "death-dealing" power of evil gives way to the "life-giving sacraments" that make it possible for us to walk free of every episode of death. What binds you? Jesus is calling you to freedom.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 37:12-14; Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45 (34). "O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them."

Monday, Mar 19, 2018

SOLEMNITY OF JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY

Seek some fatherly advice

Jesus taught his disciples to pray "Our Father . . ." We are blessed in the name of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Saint Joseph, the husband of Mary, was a generous and strong father who always put the well-being of Mary and Jesus first. He stands as an inspiration for parents, and he points to the kind of parental love God has for us. He is also a powerful intercessor. Catholics call Saint Joseph the patron saint of the entire church. Pray to Joseph today in your own words for the wisdom and courage to care for the people and responsibilities in your charge.

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). "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Tuesday, Mar 20, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Integrity is the best calling card

There are countless guides on how to write the perfect résumé. Nearly all suggest that you include lots of credentials and personal referrals of influential people. After all, it's who you know and what qualifications you bring to the table that matter, right? On the other hand, what would a prophet's *curriculum vitae* look like? Here we are seeing a different kind of *vita*, where personal integrity carries the day. In the gospel the Pharisees want to see a traditional résumé of Jesus, but many people believed in Jesus based on the power of his witness. Listen carefully to what Jesus is saying and do your best to honor it in your own life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 21:4-9; John 8:21-30 (252). "Because he spoke this way, many came to believe in him."

Wednesday, Mar 21, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

God's got nothing to prove

W. C. Fields used to exclaim in his films, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego!" No doubt Fields enjoyed using these exotic biblical names as an expression, but behind them are three actual characters from Hebrew scripture. The Babylonian king had commanded them to worship the statue of a god or face immediate execution. Their response was an interesting one. Of course they wouldn't bow down, and if God saved them, so be it. But if not, they *still* wouldn't deny their God. Now that's faith—both the willingness to give up their lives but also their affirmation

that God did not have to prove anything to deserve their trust. Faith does not begin with what God will do for you if you believe. It starts with believing because God *is* God.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; John 8:31-42 (253).

"Jesus then said to those . . . who believed in him, 'If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples.'"

Thursday, Mar 22, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

How well do you know God?

"How well do you know me?" quizzes—with questions like, "What's my favorite band/movie/song/video game? Where would I most like to be? Who are my heroes?"—have long been lighthearted ways to test or strengthen friendships. With Lent particularly set aside for repentance and renewal, it's a good time to take a "how well do you know God" quiz. Ask yourself: Based on scripture and tradition, what do I know to be God's likes and dislikes? Who are the people with whom God has found favor? Where am I likely to find God? Your search for answers will no doubt test and, let's hope, strengthen your friendship with God.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 17:3-9; John 8:51-59 (254). "Jesus answered, ' . . . You do not know him, but I know him.'"

Friday, Mar 23, 2018

MEMORIAL OF TURIBIUS OF MOGROVEJO, BISHOP; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Timely advice

"Turibius the Tireless" could be the nickname of today's saint. As a Spanish missionary and later bishop in 16th-century colonial Peru, he traversed a 176,000-square-mile diocese—three times—to attend to those in his charge. His favorite saying is one we do well to keep in mind: "Time is not our own, and we must give a strict account of it." Keep a simple time log for a week, and you'll learn something about your priorities. You might be surprised by how much time is frittered away. Not that downtime is all bad, mind you—relaxing and recreating are also part of God's plan. But keep in mind that time is a nonrenewable resource. How will you spend your precious allotment?

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 20:10-13; John 10:31-42 (255). "Many there began to believe in him."

Saturday, Mar 24, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Be the voice of the voiceless

Each year, on March 24, the International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims is observed. This annual observance pays tribute to the memory of Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero, who was martyred on this date in 1980. Archbishop Romero was actively engaged in denouncing violations of the human rights of the most vulnerable individuals in El Salvador. "Each one of you has to be God's microphone. Each one of you has to be a messenger, a prophet." These fateful words of Romero speak of what it means to be a person of faith. Faith must be lived out. Romero preached the gospel by how he lived. His life broadcast the Good News, calling others to lives of holiness and humility. Your life can speak volumes, too; it's simply a matter of letting God make of you a microphone.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 37:21-28; John 11:45-56 (256). "He prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation."

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



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