

SUNDAY MASS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning: exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

FIRST READING: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 137.

RESPONSE:

O let my tongue cleave to my palate if I remember you not.

1. By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat and wept,
remembering Sion;
on the poplars that grew there
we hung up our harps. **R**
2. For it was there that they asked us,
our captors, for songs,
our oppressors, for joy
'sing to us,' they said,
'one of Sion's songs'. **R**
3. O how could we sing
the song of the Lord on foreign soil?
If I forget you, Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither! **R**
4. O let my tongue cleave to my palate
if I remember you not,
if I prize not Jerusalem
as the first of my joys! **R**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 2:4-10.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should have eternal life. Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL: John 3:14-21.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one together. It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to praise the name of the Lord.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Live the Word

Mon 15 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Isaiah 65:17-21; Psalm 30; John 4:43-54

Allow yourself to become vulnerable to the healing that you may need. Sometimes it comes from unlikely sources. Lord Jesus, teach us to trust in the healing resources you have placed in our lives.

Tue 16 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Ezekiel 47:1-9,12; Psalm 46; John 5:1-16

Bethesda, in Hebrew, means 'house of mercy'. Unable to enter the pool, the sick man entered the house of mercy through Jesus' compassion. In times of weakness and loneliness, hear Jesus' words spoken to you.

Wed 17 Mar (St Patrick, B)

Isaiah 49:8-15; Psalm 145; John 5:17-30

There are two great mysteries of our existence: Where does life come from? And where does it go to in death? For Christians, they are not riddles waiting to be solved, but great truths waiting to be received.

Thu 18 Mar (St Cyril of Jerusalem, BD)

Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 106; John 5:31-47

Recognition from others is often the driving force for doing good – or if we don't receive it, we start to wonder whether our efforts matter. The only praise that matters emanates from God at the centre of our lives.

Fri 19 Mar ST JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY

2 Samuel 7:4-5,12-14,16; Psalm 89; Luke 2:41-51

Children, especially teenagers, often astonish us, distress us, and cause us anxiety. We don't always understand the things they say and do, but if our concern is really rooted in love, our families will grow in holiness.

Sat 20 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Jeremiah 11:18-20; Psalm 7; John 7:40-53

How do words become flesh in our lives? How do we get the words off the page and into our hearts? How do we know the presence of God in our lives? Ponder these questions during your time of quiet and prayer.

Sun 21 Mar 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51; John 12:20-33

Today's psalm encourages us to clean out our own hearts from hoarded resentments, judgmental score-keeping and self-righteous negativity. Open your heart to this cleaning and make way for Easter joy.

(KEY: **SOLEMNITY**; **FEAST**; **Memorial**; (Optional Memorial)
(B=Bishop; D=Doctor)

Catholic Link

LITURGY AND LENT

4th Sunday of Lent • Year B
Divine Office: Week IV • 14 March 2021

Forgiveness and Blessed Hope

One of the most beautiful blessing prayers of forgiveness in the Liturgy follows the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

Contrary to what some assume to be the case, this prayer is not just a convenient "filler" for the Catholic exclusion of the words "for Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever", which most of our separated brothers and sisters say at the end of the Our Father. While those words are not in the original Greek scripts of the gospels, Catholics do in fact pray them, but only after these words:

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and grant us peace in our day.
In your mercy keep us free from sin and save us from all distress as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Prayers for deliverance from evil are found throughout the Bible. Think of Psalm 91:3 and its assurance that, after calling on God, we know that we will be delivered from "the snare of the fowler who seeks to destroy us". St Peter in 1 Peter 5:8 warns us that our "enemy" is like a roaring lion on the prowl looking for someone to eat. Graphic imagery aside, the power of evil is real. We cannot confront it without God on our side, and so in the prayer above, we echo and endorse the final words of the Lord's Prayer ("but deliver us from evil") with the words "deliver us Lord, from every evil..."

The same sentence goes on to say, "and grant us peace in our day...". There can be

no peace as long as we are in the grip of evil. We don't need to be "possessed" to feel the forces of evil within and without. When the



Forgiveness: Photo by Diana de Weert from Pixabay

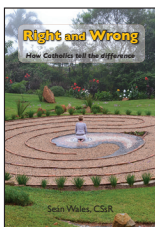
Church's catechism speaks of "demonic" oppression and obsession people experience, it simply means that these human impediments can take on "demonic proportions" – they are just too much for us. Deliverance is needed, which boils down to acknowledging that need, praying for it, and opening ourselves to God's peace.

All of this is possible and true thanks to the mercy of God. "In your mercy keep us free" from the power of sin and evil. That does not mean we will not be tempted; that we will not experience the dynamics of evil in our lives. But it does mean that we need to trust in a greater power to do for us what we cannot achieve without divine grace. The operative word is "free". Freedom from sin is to live in the joy and dignity of a child of God, safe from all distress because we are embraced by divine Love. Mercy, forgiveness, freedom, safety and peace are all the same in God. They belong together.

The prayer ends with a confession of hope: "...as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour". The words come straight from the Letter of Titus 2:13, "while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." We are forgiven in Christ, we are redeemed, we are saved and healed by him. This is the foundation of our hope and the bedrock of the gift of peace.

This book addresses the gnawing questions we all have about morality. What is morality in the first place? How do we tell the difference between right and wrong? Are there any reliable guides to help us in our moral perplexity? Where does the Church come in? What about conscience?

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