

SUNDAY MASS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

FIRST READING: Exodus 20:1-17.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 19.

RESPONSE:

Lord, you have the words of eternal life.

1. The law of the Lord is perfect;
it revives the soul.
the decrees of the Lord are steadfast;
they give wisdom to the simple. **R**
2. The precepts of the Lord are right;
they gladden the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear;
it gives light to the eyes. **R**
3. The fear of the Lord is pure,
abiding forever.
The judgements of the Lord are true;
they are, all of them, just. **R**
4. They are more to be desired than gold,
than quantities of gold.
And sweeter are they than honey,
than honey flowing from the comb. **R**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:22-25.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

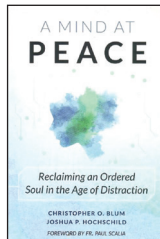
Glory and praise to you, O Christ. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son; that whoever believes in him should have eternal life. Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL: John 2:13-25.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

The sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for her young; by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, forever singing your praise.

Most of us are far less peaceful and more easily manipulated than in our younger years. We now live in the midst of a digital revolution that leaves us far more distracted and more deeply worried and all too often causes us to lose our mental and spiritual composure that threatens our relationships, our self-knowledge, our prayer, and our ability to make decisions. Dr Christopher Blum and Dr Joshua Hochschild offer this book as a practical guide for recovering interior peace through ordered activity.



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THE WEEK AHEAD

Live the Word

Mon 8 Mar (St John of God, R)

2 Kings 5:1-15; Psalm 42; Luke 4:24-30

Naaman is spectacularly underwhelmed by Elijah's no-big-deal-directions for a cure: "Wash and be clean." Lent reminds us that God's way is not flashy and instantaneous. Good things always happen in God's time.

Tue 9 Mar (St Frances of Rome, R)

Daniel 3:25,34-43; Psalm 25; Matthew 18:21-35

Forgiveness is one of the hardest challenges of the Christian life. It is the great equaliser. But forgiveness is also a reminder that all of us are much more than our mistakes, flaws and failings.

Wed 10 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Deuteronomy 4:1,5-9; Psalm 147; Matthew 5:17-19

Prayerfully and thoughtfully read through the whole of Psalm 147. It is a lovely poem of praise. Allow its message to soak into your being and spur you into action to take God's word of life to those around you.

Thu 11 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Jeremiah 7:23-28; Psalm 95; Luke 11:14-23

Today's psalm urges us to "sing joyfully to the Lord." Take time out today to find the 'joyful songs' in your life – the joy of being alive or healthy, the sparkle in the eyes of a small child, the peace that fills your heart.

Fri 12 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Hosea 14:2-10; Psalm 81; Mark 12:28-34

Even though we may feel estranged from God when we sin, God's love always remains available to us. God waits for us longingly to return, despite our sin. God takes us back because God is love.

Sat 13 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Hosea 6:1-6; Psalm 51; Luke 18:9-14

Do the things we give up for Lent really change or affect our lives in the long run, or do they disappear after Easter? Do they help us become better and more loving towards both God and neighbour?

Sun 14 Mar 4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23; Psalm 137; John 3:14-21

We meet the poor every day on our streets. If we are to truly live the gospel, then turning our back on them is not an option. Let us pray for the gift of discernment, that we can find ways of reaching out to them.

(KEY: **SOLEMNITY**; **FEAST**; **Memorial**; (Optional Memorial)
(R=Religious)

Catholic Link

LITURGY AND LENT

3rd Sunday of Lent • Year B
Divine Office: Week III • 7 March 2021

The Word of God Wipes Away our Sins

Guest column by Bishop Sylvester David OMI

After proclaiming the Gospel, the minister reading it venerates the book and says: "Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away". This is often done silently, which is a pity as the prayer has great meaning.

A primary function of God's word is to change our lives and to remove sinful attitudes. Isaiah 55:10-11 tells us that just as rain and snow water the earth and then return to God, so too will God's word not return until its mission is accomplished. In the parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-23 Jesus explains why the word sometimes does not produce the effects it was meant to produce. The problem is not with the word or its power – it is rather with a lack of proper disposition in the human heart which prevents the word from operating in our lives and producing fruit.

Matthew 13:1-23 is divided into three sections: 1 The actual parable (verses 1-9 at the top); 2 Explanation of the parable (verses 18-23 at the bottom); and 3, at the heart of the passage, verses 10-17. In these central verses Jesus is quoting from the prophet Isaiah who denounces stubbornness of heart. This denouncement explains why we often fail to embrace the message of the Bible. There might be too much at risk. We might have to change. There may be too much to lose. Pope Francis frequently quotes the Bible on how money has become an idol, a false god. Even some forms of religion have become money generating

machines. See what the tele-evangelical performers own and look at their glamorized lifestyles. The big tragedy is that they do all this in the name of someone who came into the world in a borrowed crib, left the world in a borrowed tomb, and in between did not even have "a stone on which to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20).

But let's not look only at them – it is more important to examine our own lifestyles. Let us employ the parable of the sower to do this. What happens to God's word when it reaches me? Jesus himself explains the meaning of the parable (Matthew 13:18-23) – but he does this only when he is alone with his disciples. The question for us is this: Do we make enough time

to spend alone with the Master so that the secrets of the kingdom could be revealed to us – or have we forgotten that silence is God's preferred way of communicating?

The Gospel itself testifies to God's word changing the lives of people. The blind man on the roadside heard the question of Jesus: "What do you want...?" (Luke 18:41). He answered and his life was changed. Zacchaeus heard the words of Jesus: "I must remain at your house" (Luke 19:5) and he changed from taking from others to giving to them. On the Cross, the "good thief" heard these words: "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43) ... and his sins were wiped away.

The prayer after the Gospel holds true: *By the words of the holy gospel may our sins be wiped away!*



Pope Francis presents the Book of the Gospels during Mass at St Peter's Basilica, Rome