

SUNDAY MASS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

FIRST READING: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 51.

RESPONSE:

Have mercy, O Lord, for we have sinned.

1. Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your merciful love;
according to your great compassion,
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me completely from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin. R
2. My transgressions, truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done. R
3. Create a pure heart for me, O God;
renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence;
take not your holy spirit from me. R
4. Restore in me the joy of your salvation;
sustain in me a willing spirit.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. R

SECOND READING: Romans 5:12-19.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Live the Word

Mon 27 Feb (St Gregory of Narek, AbD)

Leviticus 19:1-2.11-18; Psalm 19; Matthew 25:31-46

"Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves... What is it that stands between us and God? Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life?" – Catherine De Hueck Doherty

Tue 28 Feb Liturgy of the Day

Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 34; Matthew 6:7-15

"The goal of fasting is inner unity. This means hearing, but not with the ear; hearing, but not with the understanding; it is hearing with the spirit, with your whole being." – Thomas Merton

Wed 1 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Jonah 3:1-10; Psalm 51; Luke 11:29-32

"Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy, if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others." – St Peter Chrysologus

Thu 2 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Esther 14:1.3-4.11.13-14; Psalm 138; Matthew 7:7-12

"Lent stimulates us to let the Word of God penetrate our life and in this way to know the fundamental truth: Who we are, where we come from, where we must go, what path we must take in life." – Pope Benedict XVI

Fri 3 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Ezekiel 18:21-28; Psalm 130; Matthew 5:20-26

"Lent and Ash Wednesday are not just about putting away the bad things. It is more about creating good things and helping the poor and the needy, being kind to people, and much more." – Jacob Winters

Sat 4 Mar (St Casimir)

Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Psalm 119; Matthew 5:43-48

"You could say that prayer without fasting is like boxing with one hand tied behind your back, and that fasting without prayer is, well, dieting." – Matt Fradd

Sun 5 Mar 2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

Genesis 12:1-4; Psalm 33; Matthew 17:1-9

"Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence... and kindles the true light of chastity." – St Augustine

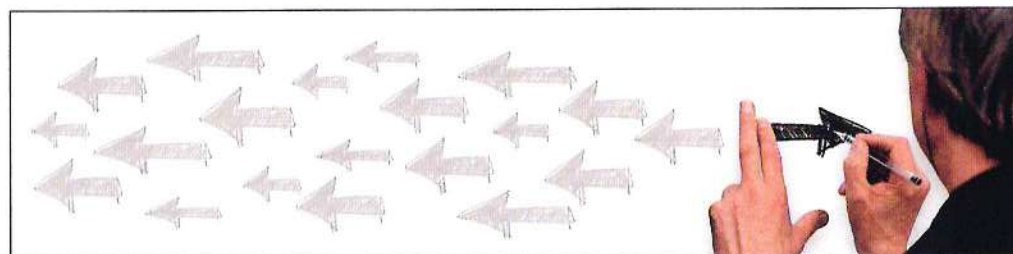
(KEY: SOLEMNITY; FEAST; Memorial; (Optional Memorial)
Ab=Abbot; D=Doctor

Catholic Link

AREAS OF CONVERSION

1st Sunday of Lent • Year A
Divine Office: Week I • 26 February 2023

Religious Conversion



Last year, Catholic Link ran a Lenten series on models of conversion, learning from the examples of people like St Augustine, St John Henry Newman, St Thérèse and Dorothy Day. This year we want to explore the different categories of conversion to which we are all called. Mostly we think of conversion in only one area of our life: moral. We know we are sinners, and we know we are to repent and be forgiven. But there are other areas for conversion that need to be named and reflected upon: religious, intellectual, emotional, social and environmental.

Some readers may remember the series we ran in 2020, written by our most senior Redemptorist in SA, now aged 99, in which he showed how even our concept of God needs conversion and growth. This would fall into the category of religious conversion, our topic today.

The late Brian Gaybba was considered by many to have been South Africa's most sharp-minded Catholic theologian in recent times. In the final years of his life he once said, "I got it all wrong. For years I often lamented the fact that despite all my academic qualifications, my books written on the Trinity and the Holy Spirit, and hours in the lecture room talking about God, I could never say that I had an immediate experience of God. But I was wrong to worry about that. Now I know that all I can say is that I am a sinner yet forgiven. And being forgiven, perhaps I can become love."

Not learn to love, or try to love, or

understand love, but "become love". Brian's final written testament, read at his funeral, was his beautiful reflection on 1 John 4:8, "God is love". As for us poor mortals, he said, all we can do is fall in love, that is, fall into the love which is God. This is true religious conversion – falling in love with God.

St Gregory the Great (540-604) said: "Love itself is a form of knowledge." Authentic religious conversion is a conversion of love, grounded in all that is truly good and true and beautiful. It draws us out of self-interest into a process of becoming capable of authentic love. The "original sin" of humanity is the desire to be God, to replace God with ourselves. Religious conversion goes beyond the self through self-transcendence. To fall in love with God is to fall out of love with the ego, the selfish self. It is complete and humble submission to the God of Love. There is a new beginning which is not our initiative but God's. God takes over. As Saint Paul teaches, God's love floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us (Romans 5:5).

So, religious conversion is more than just a conversion of our concept of God. Besides, God will always be the "beyond", the Ultimate Mystery, outside our intellectual grasp. God's deepest language is the language of the heart, "falling-in-love" language. This Lent, with increasing secularisation of society, with overt alienation and rejection of religion and faith, we can do no better than stop and ask the questions: Who is God in my life? Am I in love with God?

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