



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

SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2012

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Be-loved, and loving

One of the deepest human spiritual longings is to know ourselves as the beloved of God. Maya

Angelou, in her memoir *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now*, recalls being asked by her teacher to read a section from a book that ended with the words, "God loves me." He instructed her to say the passage again and again. Eventually it dawned on her there might be truth in those words. She writes: "I suddenly began to cry at the grandness of it all. I knew that if God loved me, then I could do wonderful things. I could try great things, learn anything, achieve anything." This Lent know that God loves you, and ask God to use you to help another know that he or she is beloved.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Romans 8:31b-34; Mark 9:2-10 (25)*

"If God is for us, who can be against us?"

MONDAY, MARCH 5 LENTEN WEEKDAY

Let's give it up for Lent

If you grew up Catholic, you probably heard the question (perhaps more often than you would have liked!): "What are you giving up for Lent?" Often enough it was about forgoing goodies such as chocolate or your favorite television show. Good enough as far as it goes, if it taught you something about healthy self-denial. But there is another, more interior way to give things up for Lent—things such as the judgmental comments that come from a secret sense of superiority or the condemning attitude that is nothing more than self-righteousness dressed up in sharp clothes. The real action in the spiritual life, we learn as we age, is interior. So: what will you give up this Lent?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 9:4b-10; Luke 6:36-38 (230)*

"The measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

TUESDAY, MARCH 6 LENTEN WEEKDAY

That's the reality of the situation

Every so often a Milwaukee mother of five teens was in the habit of having what she called a "reality check." She and her husband would get everyone together to make plain the rules of the house and their expectations of mutual family responsibility and respect. She joked about it with friends, but those frank and honest meetings succeeded in keeping the family healthy as the children all grew to become mature and happy adults with children of their own. It's a way of looking at Lent: Reality-therapy in which you stand back and assess how it is between you and God, not by your own standards but by God's.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Matthew 23:1-12 (231)*

"Cease doing evil; learn to do good."

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7 FEAST OF PERPETUA AND FELICITY, MARTYRS

Give it your all

The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas is an early Christian document that records the martyrdom of four catechumens—Perpetua, Felicitas, Saturninus, and Revocatus—and their catechist, Saturus, Perpetua's brother. Although Christians were heavily persecuted in the third century, these young people were so compelled by the life and message of Jesus that they were willing to face torture and death to be part of the Christian community. The process for most catechumens today is not as dangerous, yet still there remains a profound sense of giving one's life

to God and being willing to give one's life for others. Let us pray for catechumens who this Lenten season are being immersed in the mystery of our faith. May they and their catechists have the spirit, courage, and peace of these martyrs.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 18:18-20; Matthew 20:17-28 (232)*

"Can you drink the chalice that I am going to drink?"

THURSDAY, MARCH 8 FEAST OF JOHN OF GOD, RELIGIOUS

Do something spontaneous for God

Even before making a total commitment to serving the sick and the poor, it was clear that the 16th-century Portuguese Saint John of God was a compassionate person who wanted to serve others, even though his early life was a bit colorful—he left home at 9 to become a shepherd and then a soldier. After the army he went on a trip to Africa intending to ransom Christian hostages from Muslim captivity, came to the aid of a grieving family at the docks who had been exiled from Portugal, and became a traveling religious goods salesman so that more people could have access to spiritual books and images. Such an impetuous desire to help others could have come only from utter trust in God. It's an impulse you, too, can follow.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 17:5-10; Luke 16:19-31 (233)*

"Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord."

FRIDAY, MARCH 9 FEAST OF FRANCES OF ROME, RELIGIOUS;

DAY OF ABSTINENCE

How do you encourage others?

Recent studies of families suggest that parents have favorites among their children. It's hard not to take special delight in the accomplished daughter, the charming son, the child who's remarkably trouble-free to bring up. Yet good parents know that tucking these biases away is important because the struggling child needs encouragement and support even more than the darling. In a biblical story Jacob wasn't good at hiding his preference for Joseph, to the predictable outrage of his brothers. Today as we abstain from meat we might resolve to offer extra encouragement to those who need it—and "fast" from the impulse to favor or disfavor.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46 (234)*

[Joseph's brothers said], "Come on, let us kill him . . . We shall then see what comes of his dreams."

SATURDAY, MARCH 10 LENTEN WEEKDAY

Tolerate the truth

Today marks the feast of Saint John Ogilvie, a Jesuit priest executed for practicing Catholicism in Glasgow in 1560. John used scripture to preach tolerance. During Lent we not only prepare for the Resurrection of the Lord but also work on being more accepting and respectful toward each other. John believed that the Catholic Church embraced all people and that is why he preached the gospel, even though it got him killed. As we continue to grow this Lent, let us work on being more tolerant and, as John said, "Come to the knowledge of the truth."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Micah 7: 14-15; Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32 (235)*

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

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