

THIRD WEEK OF LENT

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| Sun Mar 8 | am: 93, 96 pm: 34 | Gen 44:1-17 | Rom 8:1-10 | John 5:25-29 |
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LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: The third Sunday of Lent sits midway between Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday, serving as a bridge between the initial penitential tone of the season and the impending passion narrative. It reminds all Christians that conversion is an ongoing, communal process, not merely a private act. By integrating the Scrutinies into the public worship of the day, the Church visibly demonstrates that the journey to baptism is both personal and ecclesial. This week deepens the formation of the Elect—candidates preparing for baptism—through the three-week series of Scrutinies, which are intense periods of prayer, reflection, and discernment. The third Sunday of Lent offers a rich tapestry of liturgical actions—scrutinies, kneeling, and silent prayer—that together deepen the Elect’s preparation for baptism while inviting the entire community to renew its own commitment to repentance and love of God. This day thus embodies the heart of Lent: a collective turning toward Christ, marked by honest self-examination and hopeful anticipation of the resurrection.

BIBLICAL MEDITATION OF THE DAY: The Apostle Paul begins his letter to the Romans with a powerful declaration: “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” From this single sentence, he draws a striking picture of two opposing forces that shape every believer’s life. On one side stands the “law of sin and death,” the inherited condition that drags humanity into selfishness, brokenness, and ultimately physical death. On the other side shines the liberating work of the Holy Spirit, who, through Christ, has broken those chains and offers a new life that bears fruit for God’s kingdom. Paul reminds us that, because the Spirit dwells within us, our minds can be governed by life rather than by flesh. Yet he does not pretend the struggle disappears; the flesh still wages war against the Spirit, tempting us to act contrary to what we know is right. The assurance of “no condemnation” becomes the firm ground from which we can confidently pursue holiness, while the lingering pull of sin calls us to stay vigilant. During Lent, this tension invites us to rest in grace, recognize the whisper of the old law, and deliberately walk in step with the Spirit—cultivating love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the Holy Ghost. In this way, the third Sunday of Lent points us toward a deeper conversion: not merely a passive acceptance of forgiveness, but an active, Spirit-guided journey toward the righteousness that Christ has already secured for us.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Lord, thank you for the freedom we have in Christ, for the promise that no condemnation holds us back. Help us to recognize the lingering pull of the “law of sin and death,” and grant us the Spirit’s strength to choose life each moment. May this Lent be a time when our hearts are continually turned toward you, producing fruit that glorifies your kingdom. **Amen**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: *“To repent is not to look downwards at my own shortcomings, but upwards at God’s Love. It is not to look backwards with self-reproach but forward with trustfulness. It is to see not what I have failed to be, but what by the Grace of Christ I might yet become.”-Saint John Climacus.*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – To embrace that call to renewal in the Spirit, where we can celebrate that there is no condemnation in Christ, and embrace the idea of self-examination like those seeking baptism today are doing through the scrutines. Use the very scrutinies from the liturgy today as a discipline to get to a deeper place of renewal. Go to <https://www.catholicnh.org/assets/Documents/Worship/Our-Faith/RCIA/ThirdScrutiny.pdf>

SONG OF THE HEART, SONG OF THE SEASON – No Condemnation by Hosanna Music

https://youtu.be/G7e6lfRLLiE?si=njapWYSvTLS_E5VS

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| Mon Mar 9 | am: 80 pm: 77, 79 | Gen 44:18-34 | 1 Cor 7:25-31 | Mark 5:21-43 |
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FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF LENT – Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, 394

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: Today, we remember Gregory of Nyssa, who, with his brother Basil the Great, and Basil's best friend Gregory of Nazianzus, are known collectively as the Cappadocian Fathers. They were a major force in the triumph of the Athanasian position at the Council of Constantinople in 381. A professor of rhetoric, he was persuaded to devote his learning and efforts to the Church. By then married, Gregory went on to study for the priesthood and become ordained (this at a time when celibacy was not a matter of law for priests). He was elected Bishop of Nyssa (in Lower Armenia) in 372, a period of great tension over the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ. Briefly arrested after being falsely accused of embezzling Church funds, Gregory was restored to his see in 378, an act met with great joy by his people. He wrote with great effectiveness against Arianism and other questionable doctrines, gaining a reputation as a defender of orthodoxy. He was sent on missions to counter other heresies and held a position of prominence at the Council of Constantinople.

BIBLICAL MEDITATION OF THE DAY: Consider these words from Psalm 80 appointed for this morning " Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved...." give us life, and we will call on your name." It is worthy of our reflection in Lent especially because it reminds us that God is always ready to "return" to his people, but his people must also "return" to him in fidelity. If we turn away from sin, the Lord will be moved: this is the Psalmist's conviction and one that should find some resonance in our own hearts as we make our Lenten Journey. Known as the Psalm of the corrupt vine, this is a metaphor of Israel as a vine that is referred to by Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isaiah 5:1-2, Jeremiah 2:21), which is a helpful background that no doubt was the spiritual framework for Jesus declaration in John 15:1. In this case, the corrupt vine had brought forth a sufficient crop of "wild grapes" that were deviant. The key idea for Israel and for us is that God will turn to Israel when Israel turns to God. The great change so desperately needed is not in the attitude of God, but in that of the degenerate vine with its wild grapes, and no less is true of us!

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Almighty God, who has revealed to your Church your eternal Being of glorious majesty and perfect love as one God in Trinity of Persons: Give us grace that, like your bishop Gregory of Nyssa, we may continue steadfast in the confession of this faith, and constant in our worship of you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: "If we truly think of Christ as our source of holiness, we shall refrain from anything wicked or impure in thought or act and thus show ourselves to be

worthy bearers of his name. For the quality of holiness is shown not by what we say but by what we do in life.” — Gregory of Nyssa

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Seek out a lunch or coffee today with a person from a different Christian tradition and ask to pray together for unity. Ask them about the core values of the faith and find links to yours.

SONG OF THE HEART, SONG OF THE SEASON – Holiness by Sarah Hart
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lu-TFOASbds>

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| TUE Mar 10 | am: 78:1-39 pm: 78:40-72 | Gen 45:1-15 | 1 Cor 7:32-40 | Mark 6:1-13 |
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TUESDAY OF LENT III – *Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, 320*

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: The martyrdom of the Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste is a powerful lesson in Christian faith, perseverance, sacrifice, and friendship. 40 soldiers of the Roman army possessed sincere faith in Jesus Christ. When it was realized that they would not deny their belief in the Lord, they were brought to trial before their commander, who threatened to have them discharged from the military dishonorably. One of the soldiers responded: "Do not take only our military status, but also our bodies; nothing is dearer or of greater honor to us than Christ our God."

BIBLICAL MEDITATION OF THE DAY: Psalm 78 is a song of remembrance. It retells the mighty deeds of the Lord—how He split the sea, drew water from a rock, sent streams down cliffs, and guided Israel through a barren wilderness. Each miracle was a sign of the covenant God made with His people, a tangible reminder of His steadfast love and faithfulness. Psalm 78 recounts how Israel repeatedly turned away, yet God remained patient, delivering them again and again. In Lent, we are called to confront our own wanderings; to own the times we have ignored God’s voice, and to trust that His mercy is ever-present. The covenant is active, not static. The Israelites were not merely reminded of past miracles; they were urged to obey the Law that flowed from the covenant. Likewise, Lent asks us to translate gratitude into action—through acts of charity, honest confession, and a renewed commitment to live out the Gospel. As we walk the remaining weeks of Lent toward the Great Vigil of Easter, this ancient psalm invites us to pause and see the Lenten journey reflected in those same acts of divine rescue.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Almighty God, who in wondrous deeds has shown Your steadfast love—splitting the sea, drawing water from the rock, and guiding Your people through the desert—grant us, this Lenten season, the eyes to perceive Your providential care and the hearts to respond in faithful obedience. May the memory of Your mighty works stir within us a deeper trust in the covenant of grace, that we might turn from our wandering ways, drink deeply of the living water You provide, and walk forward toward the glorious hope of the Resurrection. Through Christ our Lord, who fulfills all promises, we pray. **Amen**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: “Take not only our military insignia, but also our lives, since nothing is more precious to us than Christ God.”- *The Martyrs of Sebaste*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE: As you meditate on Psalm 78 today, let the ancient story of God’s covenant awaken a fresh awareness of His presence in your own desert. Ask yourself:

- What “rock” am I leaning on today, and how can I trust God to bring forth fresh water?
- Which “streams” of grace have I allowed to flow into my life, and where have I built walls that block them?
- How can I respond to God’s enduring love with concrete acts of repentance and service?

SONG OF THE HEART, SONG OF THE SEASON – Stand in Faith by Danny Gokey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIREaGBN4Jw>

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| WED Mar 11 | am: 119:105-128 pm: 91, 93 | Gen 45:16-28 | 1 Cor 8:1-13 | Mark 6:13-29 |
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WEDNESDAY OF LENT III— *St. Constantine of Scotland, Martyr, 576,*

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: Today, we remember St. Constantine, born in 520, and in 537 St. Constantine of Scotland was a 6th-century British king—likely of Dumnonia (Cornwall) or Strathclyde—who abdicated his throne to become a monk, missionary to the Picts, and abbot in Govan. Regarded as Scotland's first martyr, he was slain by pirates in Kintyre while preaching.

BIBLICAL MEDITATION OF THE DAY: The closing chapter of Joseph’s story (Genesis 45) offers a vivid portrait of God’s faithful provision. When Joseph finally reveals himself to his brothers, he does not attribute the reunion to his own cleverness or to the circumstances of famine; he declares, “It was God who sent me ahead of you to preserve life”. In our own fast-paced culture, where instant gratification is the norm, waiting on God the way Joseph and his brothers did is counter-cultural. We are tempted to equate “getting what we want now” with merit, forgetting that every blessing is ultimately a gift of grace. The feast of St. Constantine reminds us of this truth. Like Joseph, Constantine endured years of trial before receiving the vision that led him to embrace the faith. His patient waiting became the conduit for God’s greater work. When we learn to wait on the Lord with humble expectation—just as St. Constantine did—we open ourselves to the fuller measure of God’s provision, discovering that every blessing is not earned by merit but freely given by grace.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: God of grace, rouse up within your people fear of the Lord, and call us to remember this holy season, knowing that you will come in the clouds in great power and majesty to judge the living and the dead. May we respond to God's claim on us with due fear and love so that, as often as God disturbs the sky, yet spares us still, we should implore God's

mercy, examine the innermost recesses of our hearts, and purge our sins all for the love of you. **Amen** -

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" — Psalm 116:15

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Identify a strained relationship or unresolved guilt. Reach out with a brief, sincere apology or a note of appreciation. Pray with them for God’s healing in the background.

SONG OF THE HEART, SONG OF THE SEASON – O God of Truth Whose Living Word

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_5t2K6T2PQ

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|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Thu Mar 12 | am: 42, 43 pm: 85, 86 | Gen 46:1-7, 28-34 | 1 Cor 9:1-15 | Mark 6:30-46 |
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THIRD THURSDAY OF LENT - Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, 604

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: Gregory the Great’s influence on the forms of public worship throughout Western Europe was enormous. He founded a school for the training of church musicians, and Gregorian chant (plainchant) is named for him. The schedule of Scripture readings for the various Sundays of the year, and the accompanying prayers (many of them written by him), in use throughout most of Western Christendom for the next thirteen centuries is largely due to his passion for organization. His treatise, *On Pastoral Care*, while not a work of creative imagination, shows a dedication to duty and an understanding of what is required of a minister in charge of a Christian congregation. His sermons are still readable today, and it is not without reason that he is accounted (along with Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine of Hippo) as one of the Four Latin Doctors (Teachers) of the ancient Church.

BIBLICAL MEDITATION OF THE DAY: In today’s Gospel from Mark, Jesus invites his weary disciples to “come away by yourselves to a solitary place.” Their fatigue mirrors our own Lenten weariness—long hours of prayer, fasting, and self-examination can leave us longing for rest. Yet, instead of granting a quiet retreat, Jesus sends them out to feed the crowd, showing that true renewal comes not from withdrawing alone but from compassionate service.

When the disciples launch the boat, a storm rises. The disciples panic, but Jesus walks on the water, calming the wind and waves. In Lent we, too, encounter inner storms—doubt, temptation, the weight of our own sin. Christ’s presence on the turbulent sea reminds us that He meets us in the midst of our struggles, offering peace that surpasses circumstance. Finally, after feeding the five-thousand, Jesus withdraws again to pray alone. Even the Son of God models the rhythm of service and solitude, demonstrating that our Lenten journey is a balance: **serve the hungry, trust the Savior in the storm, and return to prayerful communion with Him.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Almighty and merciful God, who raised Gregory of Rome to be a servant of the servants of God, and inspired him to send missionaries to preach the Gospel to the English people: Preserve in your Church the catholic and apostolic faith, they taught, that your people, being fruitful in every good work, may Receive the crown of glory that never fades away; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Meditate on God’s word through the use of Gregorian chant. Let the music and the words wash over your soul.

SONG OF THE HEART, SONG OF THE SEASON – Hail O Head So Bruised

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QV8bCIQ9c_g

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|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| FRI Mar 13 | am: 88 pm: 91, 92 | Gen 47:1-26 | 1 Cor 9:16-27 | Mark 6:47-56 |
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FRIDAY OF LENT III: *St. Gerald, Bishop of Mayo, 731*

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: St. Gerald Bishop of Mayo was an English monk who died on this day in who came to Ireland after the Synod of Whitby and settled in Innisboffin, in 668. Gerald’s circumstances remind us of today’s church as dissensions arose, after a time, between the Irish and the English monks, and St. Colman the Abbot decided to found a separate monastery for the thirty English monks so that they may have safe practice of the faith, given the difference between the Celtic and Saxon expressions of the faith. St. Gerald of Mayo was an abbot renowned for three hallmarks of his monastic life:

1. Hospitality – the monastery of Mayo was a refuge for travelers, the poor, and the sick.
2. Simplicity & Manual Labor – monks worked the fields, tended livestock, and lived with only what they needed.
3. Contemplative Prayer – Gerald emphasized the “office of the heart,” encouraging constant awareness of God’s presence.

BIBLICAL MEDITATION OF THE DAY: The text of today’s Gospel presents three different dynamics in Jesus ministry: a) Jesus goes to the mountain alone to pray, b) he walks on the water, goes toward the disciples who are struggling against the waves of the sea, c) the people look for Jesus so that he can cure their sick. This may be an excellent passage to consider on Friday in Lent for all of us in ministry.

The fruits of ministry are often inextricably linked to the demands of ministry. If one takes prayer seriously and intently, you will find yourself under the banner of God’s Grace, and as a result, people will seek your prayers and or your participation in the changes, chances, and hurts of this life. While we marvel at Jesus in this story, he is simply being the person for others,

which is what we are all called to be based on a prayerful life balanced by the gifts we have been given. Does my Lent reference that at this point in the journey?

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Father, may our Lenten journey in this third week prepare us to embrace the paschal mystery and to proclaim your salvation with contrite and joyful hearts. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: “To pray, I think, does not mean to think about God in contrast to thinking about other things, or to spend time with God instead of spending time with other people. Rather, it means to think and live in the presence of God. – *Henri Nouwen*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE: On this Friday of Lent, abstain from one luxury item (e.g., coffee, dessert, streaming, social media) and replace it with **one act of service** and then record in your journal how the sacrifice sharpened your awareness of dependence on God and others.

SONG OF THE HEART, SONG OF THE SEASON – Lord I Need You by Matt Maher
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skAdCyew2B8>

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Sat Mar 14 | am: 87, 90 pm: 136 | Gen 47:27-48:7 | 1 Cor 10:1-13 | Mark 7:1-23 |
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THIRD SATURDAY OF LENT - St Theognostus, Metropolitan of Kyiv,1353

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: The Churches of the Eastern Rites remember today St Theognostus, Metropolitan of Kiev. He was born in Greece and succeeded St Peter of Kyiv as Metropolitan of that city. Some of his enemies among his own flock denounced him to the Mongol ruler because of his dedication and inability to be swayed by politics. They said he had paid no tribute to obtain his position, as was often done by the clergy. Summoned before the Mongol prince and asked about this, he answered '*Christ our God bought His Church from the unbelievers with His precious Blood. For what do we pay tribute to unbelievers?*' Returning home unharmed, he gave devout pastoral oversight to the Church for twenty-five more years and passed on this day in 1353

BIBLICAL MEDITATION OF THE DAY: The apostle Paul looks back at Israel’s journey through the wilderness, reminding the Corinthian believers that “all these things happened to them as examples.” Their triumphs—crossing the sea, eating the manna, drinking the wine—were followed by repeated warnings, idolatry, sexual immorality, and ultimately, judgment. Yet Paul concludes with a striking promise: “*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*” (10:13). In this passage the Apostle Paul calls

us to recognize **our temptations as the** “common” nature of temptation reminds us that our struggles are not unique; they are part of the human story. This should compel us to seek God’s grace in prayer, fasting, and sacramental confession, especially when the desert feels overwhelming.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Lord, as we walk this desert road, help us see your past mercies, admit our present temptations, and rely on the way of escape you provide. Strengthen our resolve that we may emerge from this season renewed in the hope of resurrection.”Amen.

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Forgive one who has betrayed you and ask forgiveness from one you have betrayed.

SONG OF THE HEART, SONG OF THE SEASON – You Belong by Wendall Kimbrough
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1SvJ48LQ6g>