

Third Week of **Lent**

PRAYER FOR A MEETING WITH CHRIST

Loving God,
let me meet you today
as the Samaritan woman met you at the well.
Surprise me in the middle of my work.
Ask me for water, food—any sort of help.
Talk to me, lead me to a new truth.

Keep me alert so that I can recognize you,
listen, question, and drink your living water.
Let me hear your voice today,
that voice with which you speak to me every day,
the one I keep missing.

Press me to make time for silence
so that I won't miss you this time.
Show yourself in the people and events of the day,
and give my heart wisdom,
so that I can act wisely and bring good.
I ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



FEBRUARY 24, 2008

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN—OPEN AND WILLING

In today's Gospel, John 4:5–42, the Samaritan woman comes to the well on an ordinary errand, expecting to draw ordinary water. She cannot know that instead she will find living water, that she will meet the Lord. Yet she is open, willing to engage in conversation with this bold, mysterious stranger. She asks questions; she probes his answers. Finally, she recognizes who he is and goes off to tell others what she has learned.

The Samaritan woman is a model for the elect preparing for Baptism this Easter; she is also a fine example for the baptized who are struggling to be disciples. We, too, might be going through our days doing our work, taking

our classes, living our lives, not paying attention to the presence of the Lord. Jesus wants to talk with us just as he did with this Samaritan woman. How can we be more alert to his presence? What can we learn from entering into this conversation—asking, listening, pondering? Read the Gospel slowly for yourself, or with your family or friends. What insights does it give you at this moment?

The next step is to go and tell others what you learned, as the Samaritan woman did. Think of something you could do for someone today that expresses, even without speaking, what you learned from listening to Christ today.

This Week at Home

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25 OPEN THE DOOR WIDER

In today's Gospel, Luke 4:24–30, Jesus teaches that prophets are often not recognized and heeded by their own people. He points to the great Hebrew prophets Elijah and Elisha, whom God had to send to people outside the Jewish community. Of course he is also referring to the way that his own neighbors do not recognize him as the Messiah. The people were so upset by what he said that they chased him from the building and tried to push him over a cliff! Do we sometimes reject Jesus' teaching and commandments because we think they might be too difficult to do? We can ask God to help us change.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 FORGIVE SOMEONE TODAY

Forgive another person seventy times seven times, Jesus teaches today, in Matthew 18:21–35. Never stop forgiving. Whom can you forgive today, at least in your heart? We can forgive in our heart even if the hurt still remains in our feelings. Ask Christ to help you name the person and to soften your heart. Slowly make the sign of the cross as a symbol that you will not “feed” those hurt feelings with negative thoughts.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27 TAKING STOCK

It is Wednesday of our third week of Lent. How are you doing with your almsgiving—with sharing your time and talent? Decide what actions of service you will do in the coming days and write them where you will see them. If you have kept your resolution well, thank God for that

grace. *God our Father, continue to help me share what I have with others, and strengthen me when I fail. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28 HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART

In today's First Reading, Jeremiah 7:23–28, God speaks through the prophet, Jeremiah, with great disappointment about how the people do not listen to their God and do not accept correction. God's voice is all around us, but we have to pay attention to recognize it. As you move through your day, listen well to all the voices you hear—voices of friends, coworkers, strangers on the street, newscasters. Then reflect: was God speaking through any of these voices? Perhaps Christ is asking us to speak for him in a letter to the editor. Perhaps through a news story God is asking us to soften our heart toward an evildoer and hate the evil deed instead. Hear his voice. Harden not your heart.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29 WHAT GOD CREATED

We hear in today's Gospel, Mark 12:28–34, “love your neighbor as yourself.” Most people find this commandment a challenge. We know that everyone is our neighbor, including the people we find disagreeable. The second part of the commandment can be especially hard if you really do not love yourself. At a family meal, let everyone tell each other something good about the other person. If you live alone, do this with a friend or go to a quiet spot and write what comes to mind when you ask Christ about the good qualities God gave you.



SATURDAY, MARCH 1 LET FAITH BLOSSOM

Plant a few seeds in indoor pots today or put a young plant on your table. Caring for plants reminds us that all living things, especially our faith, which we cannot see, need attention and care to grow and mature. *God, our Father, remind me to pay attention to the delicate plant of my faith and to water it with learning and with actions so it may blossom as you desire. I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*