

# *Fourth Week of* **Lent**

## **PRAYER TO THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

We are blessed, O God, and we thank you,  
that you have given us your Son  
as our Good Shepherd.  
He is the light of the world,  
walking beside us in dark valleys.  
He leads us to places of spiritual refreshment.

Beside the restful waters  
he stands ready to heal our blindness  
as he did for the man blind from birth  
who washed in the pool of Siloam.

Let us be healed!

Open our eyes so that we can learn to see  
as you see,  
beyond appearances and deep into hearts.

We ask this through our Good Shepherd  
and Healer,

Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.



**MARCH 2, 2008**  
**NOW I SEE**

Open your eyes. That theme is before us in the scripture passages for this Sunday (especially John 9:1–41, but also 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6–7, 10–13a). They urge us to learn how to see in a new way—not simply the outward features of people, but into their hearts. It is this sort of sight that allows us to recognize the Lord.

Today's Psalm (23) assures us that our Good Shepherd walks with us, even when we stumble. He will never leave us. He is there opening our eyes to all the signs of God's love on our path, and he is teaching us to give God thanks and praise for them. He is there opening our eyes to others on the path so that we can be connected with them, for

Christ wants us to be a community. Because of the Good Shepherd we can reach out and share our joys, our sorrows, our talents, and friendship with each other.

The blind man in the Gospel was healed immediately when he washed. But usually learning to see as God sees is the lifelong work of disciples. Each day we need to practice opening our eyes, not just to wake up from the night's sleep, but to see deeply how God is working in the world through all of God's beloved people. The Good Shepherd is walking with us. Who and what does he want us to see? What does he want us to do?

# This Week at Home

## MONDAY, MARCH 3 SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL

Katherine was born into a wealthy Philadelphia home in 1858, surrounded by prayer and generosity in her family. She was drawn to help those with the fewest rights and privileges. Katherine gave not only her wealth but also her life to help overcome racism. This was her goal in founding the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and many schools for African American and Native American students. *Loving Father, every person is a child of yours. Help me also to work against racism. I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

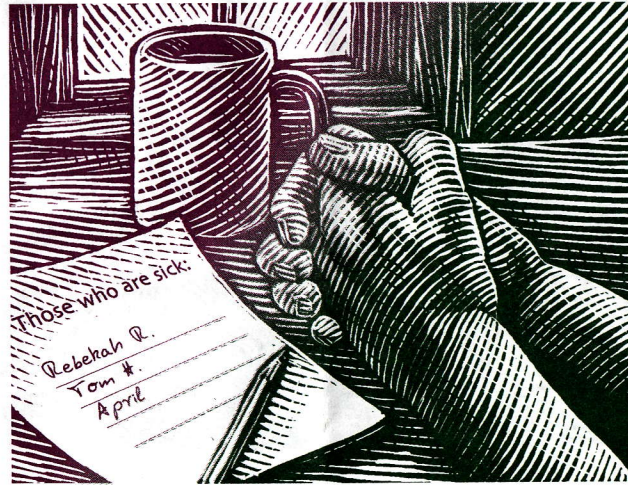
## TUESDAY, MARCH 4 SAINT CASIMIR

Saint Casimir, the patron saint of Poland and Lithuania, lived from 1458 to 1484. Though a son of the king and much involved in the politics of the kingdom, he was educated by a scholar-priest and lived a very devout life. His father pressured him to marry the emperor's daughter, but he discerned that it wasn't right for him and he refused. Talk with young people you know about what they consider to be their values and vocation. Encourage them to continue growing in virtue and discerning God's will for them.

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5 COMFORT AND MERCY

The Lord gives comfort to his people and shows mercy to the afflicted. This is the message of the reading from Isaiah today (49:8-15). We often need comforting. Life brings hurt, misunderstanding, and sadness. What a great consolation it is to know that the Lord is always there caring about

us. *O God of comfort and mercy, thank you for reminding us of your unending presence and care. Help us to trust in your loving care. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



## THURSDAY, MARCH 6 PRAY THE BIBLE

Along with rich teaching and beautiful prayers, the Bible contains the history of our family in faith. Each day, the Church gives us a bite of this banquet to help feed our spirit and also to help us learn and appreciate our heritage. The Lectionary readings from Mass are a wonderful way to begin or end the day. You can find the readings for the day on the Web site of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: <http://www.usccb.org/nab>.

## FRIDAY, MARCH 7 SAINT PERPETUA AND SAINT FELICITY

These young women were martyrs of the early Christian period. Perpetua had an infant and Felicity was pregnant when they were arrested for their faith. In prison, before being tortured and killed, their concern was for their babies. Felicity was able to stay alive until her child was born. Perpetua cared for her baby even in prison. What models of care and respect for life they were! Take some baby clothes to a center for unwed mothers this week. Bring gifts to a shelter where abused women and their children are cared for.

## SATURDAY, MARCH 8 SAINT JOHN OF GOD

John of God, born in Portugal in 1495, spent the early part of his life as a soldier. He saw a vision of the infant Jesus who gave him the name, John of God, and sent him to Granada. There, the preaching of John of Avila set him on a path of repentance for his violent youth. He began to care for the sick and dying, and set up a small hospital. Attracting many helpers, he founded an order devoted to the care of the sick. He died in 1550. Spend some time praying for the sick from your community who are listed in the parish bulletin.