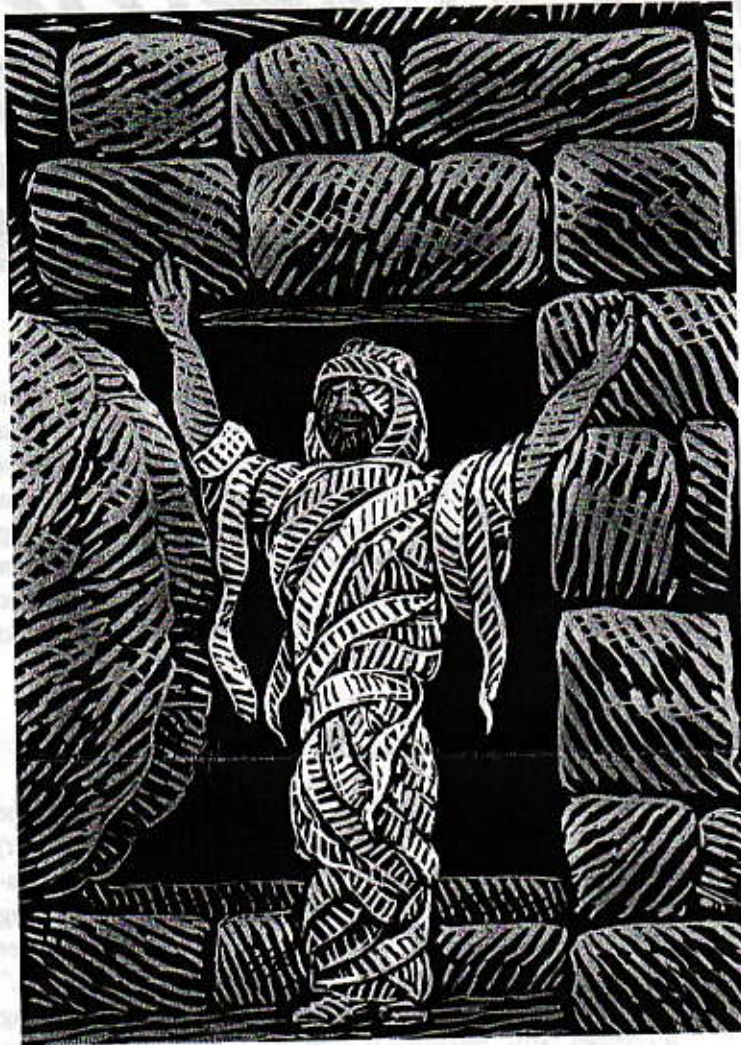


Fifth Sunday of Lent



Giving Thanks for the Son

Heavenly Father,
we stand before you, humbled and awestruck
at the love which made your Son walk
among us
and sacrifice himself for our redemption.

His life showed us the path to you.
His Passion and death freed us from the
power of sin
and the snares of the evil one.

May he be our light in dark times,
our constant hope in the midst of despair,
our peace in the whirlwind of war,
our joy in the center of sadness,
and our song of praise, when all around us
are silent.

And in the end, may he help us
to become one with you
through the working of the Holy Spirit.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ,
our Lord. Amen.

March 21, 2010 Praying for God's Healing

In communities of faith where individuals are preparing for Baptism, the third scrutiny is celebrated on this Sunday. We invite the elect to pray for God's grace to enter deeply into their hearts and heal any brokenness and sin that may be in them. The Scrutinies are usually held on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent, and the entire community joins in prayer along with the elect as the priest lays his hands on them and helps bring them one step closer to the sacraments of initiation. The Gospel readings that accompany the Scrutinies are drawn from John: the woman at the well (John 4:5-42), the man born blind (John 9:1-41), and the

raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-45), which is our reading this Sunday. The accompanying prayers identify Jesus as the source of life and ask that the elect may have his living water, his light to see, and the hope of eternal life. For the assembly, walking with the elect is a privilege, reminding us of our Baptism. We sometimes take our faith for granted, not realizing the thirst and desire with which others seek God. The Scrutinies remind us that God alone can fill our need and heal us at the very core of our being. As we pray the prayers for the elect, ask God that we might see with their eyes and be renewed in our desire for holiness.

This Week at Home



Monday, March 22

Prayer Time

As we approach Holy Week, try to find more time for prayer. Pray in whatever way is best for you: with psalms or the scripture of the day (see the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Web site, <http://www.usccb.org/nab/>), or prayers from Lenten prayer books. Or you might pray through a period of deep silence, through journaling, listening to sacred music, gazing at icons, or walking in nature. Find what is best for you and pray!

Tuesday, March 23

Saint Toribio

Toribio de Mogrovejo (1538–1606) was born and educated in Spain and became Bishop of Lima, Peru, in 1581. A tireless worker, he traveled across his diocese (some 18,000 square miles) several times on foot, baptizing hundreds of thousands and building schools, churches, and hospitals. Among those he baptized and confirmed were Saint Martin de Porres and Saint Rose of Lima.

Wednesday, March 24

Truth Makes Us Free

One of Jesus' more memorable sayings comes from today's reading (John 8:31–42): ". . . and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free." Jesus was talking about the truth of his word and his identity, but the message also speaks to anyone who has been tempted to lie. Once we tell a lie, we are bound to that lie and must hold it in our hearts until the truth comes out. Jesus offers us another option. Speak the truth at all times and be free in your mind and heart. Know Jesus as God's truth, follow him, and live in freedom as God's sons and daughters.

Thursday, March 25

Solemnity of the Annunciation of Mary

A wonderful children's version of the nativity story, done entirely in pictures, shows the angel Gabriel drinking coffee at the kitchen table with Mary, obviously trying to explain what God has in mind. The Gospel story gives us only the miraculous words and Mary's unflinching assent and glorious song, but there were undoubtedly moments when she wondered what this meant for her, for Joseph, and for the world. The next time you are at your kitchen table, offer a prayer of thanks for Gabriel's message, Mary's yes, and Jesus' presence.

Friday, March 26

Forthright Prayer

Because people did not always appreciate his preaching, the prophet Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern (water reservoir) and put into the stocks. His prayers express both his frustrations and his closeness to God. The prayer in today's reading (Jeremiah 20:10–13) actually begins a few verses earlier with "O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed. . . ." Jeremiah felt that God had, in a way, tricked him into being a prophet. Still, Jeremiah is sure that God hears his prayer. It is good to know that we can pray forthrightly; we can reveal our true feelings and trust that God will love us.

Saturday, March 27

We Are God's People

As we get closer to Holy Week, today's reading from Ezekiel (37:21–28) reminds us that God promised unity among his people, and that a descendant of David would rule over them. Ezekiel's prophecy is filled with images of healing and peace, and the promise that God will make his dwelling among the people. Twice during the reading we hear the formula that marks God's covenant with the people: "they shall be my people and I will be their God." It is as God's people that we make the journey into Holy Week.



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 *Keeping the Seasons*
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