



From the cloud came a voice:
"This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."

MARK 9:7



SECOND
SUNDAY OF
LENT

FEBRUARY 28, 2021

Feast of Faith

The Opening Prayer

At the conclusion of the Introductory Rites of the Mass, the presider says or chants the words “Let us pray,” followed by the Opening Prayer. This prayer is also called a “collect” because it gathers or “collects” the prayers of the entire assembly into one. The Roman collects that we pray in our liturgy—noted for the brevity, clarity, and conciseness of the Latin originals—date from a variety of periods. Some are quite new; others reach back more than a thousand years. They are truly treasures of our tradition. The Opening Prayer can be divided into four main parts: 1) the invitation, or “Let us pray”; 2) the silence that follows, during which each member of the assembly lifts up before God his or her own prayers; 3) the collect itself, spoken or sung by the priest; 4) and finally the Amen, by which the assembly says, “yes,” “may it be so,” making the prayer their own.

The collect itself almost always follows the same pattern. It begins with an invocation to God. A petition follows, usually very general. We ask for health, strength, wisdom, grace, forgiveness, faith, awareness. Every collect concludes by offering the prayer to God through Jesus Christ. With the Amen of the assembly, the Introductory Rites of the Mass come to an end.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

The art of listening

If you want God to listen to you when you pray, shouldn't you listen to God when God speaks to you?

—Anonymous

History of Salvation

The first reading today continues the “history of salvation” narrative that we hear throughout Lent this year. Today's story was among the best-loved in the Jewish tradition (surely Joseph told the story to young Jesus as he formed him in the ways of their faith); the early fathers of the Church were very fond of it as a means of explaining the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The overall tone of the first reading, psalm, and second reading seems a little incongruous with the dazzling Gospel, until we remember that the Transfiguration was placed as the Gospel for this Sunday precisely to remind us of the glory that awaits those who live faithfully and obediently to the will of God. In the life of Jesus, it is a preview of the glory of his resurrection; for us it is a glimpse of the destiny of those who continue, as we heard in last week's Gospel, to repent and believe in the Good News.

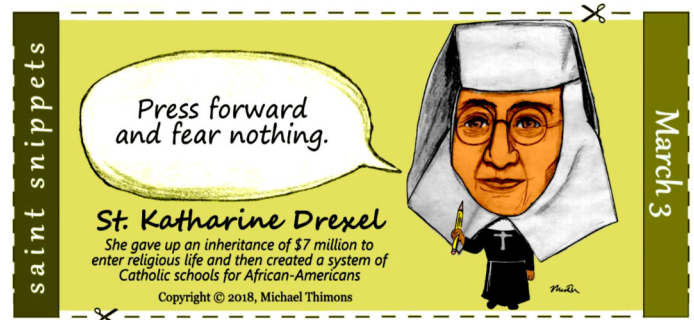
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Readings for the Week

Monday:	Dn 9:4b-10; Ps 79:8, 9, 11, 13; Lk 6:36-38
Tuesday:	Is 1:10, 16-20; Ps 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23; Mt 23:1-12
Wednesday:	Jer 18:18-20; Ps 31:5-6, 14-16; Mt 20:17-28
Thursday:	Jer 17:5-10; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Lk 16:19-31
Friday:	Gn 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Ps 105:16-21; Mt 21:33-43, 45-46
Saturday:	Mi 7:14-15, 18-20; Ps 103:1-4, 9-12; Lk 15:1-3, 11-32
Sunday:	Ex 20:1-17 [1-3, 7-8, 12-17]; Ps 19:8-11; 1 Cor 1:22-25; Jn 2:13-25 Alternate readings (Year A): Ex 17:3-7; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; Rom 5:1-2, 5-8; Jn 4:5-42 [5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42]

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Second Sunday of Lent; Penitential Rite for Candidates for Full Communion
Wednesday:	St. Katharine Drexel
Thursday:	St. Casimir
Friday:	First Friday; World Day of Prayer; Abstinence
Saturday:	First Saturday



Today's Readings

First Reading — The sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith (Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18).

Psalm — I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living (Psalm 116).

Second Reading — If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31b-34).

Gospel — Jesus was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white (Mark 9:2-10).

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Second Sunday of Lent February 28, 2021

**If God is for us, who can be against us?
—Romans 8:31b**

Treasures From Our Tradition

The basis of Abraham's test in the first reading is the fact that his neighbors followed a religious system that demanded human sacrifice. In offering Isaac's life on an altar of sacrifice, he is following long-accustomed religious practice. Ancient people accepted this because they thought that life was an ever-renewing circle: what had been lost would be restored in time. But here, God springs this trap and gives Abraham, Isaac, and you and me, a future. From now on, God will provide the sacrifice. From this point on, our lives have a direction, a purpose, a goal.

The faithful following of Lent and its consoling, challenging scriptures strengthens and prepares us to remember the Lord's passion and resurrection. Today, many parishes welcome home the elect, men and women chosen on the First Sunday of Lent for the Easter sacraments, from a celebration with the bishop. The scriptures today are chosen with them in mind, to steady their steps, to clear their vision, to strengthen their resolve: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Second Sunday of Lent This is a Test

I used to wonder how God could lie to Abraham about sacrificing his son Isaac. But the story begins by telling us God put Abraham to the test. Abraham himself seems to know it's a test--in verses left out or our reading, he tells the servants that he and Isaac will return after the sacrifice; he also tells Isaac that God will provide the offering. Apparently, I'm the only one fooled by God.

I don't know if I would have passed the test. I would have at least argued with God about it, begging him to spare my son. Yet in our second reading, St. Paul reminds us that God did not spare his own son. (Rom 8:32) He passed his own test. Jesus was sacrificed so that God could show us how much he loved us: By dying, Jesus showed us the promise of resurrection, which shows us that we can also have new life by the forgiveness of our sins. If God loves us so much that he gives his Son to die for us, why would he not forgive us? Or as Paul says, if He is on our side, who can hurt us?

What does that tell us about life? You may have noticed that things don't always go your way. We sometimes suffer for no apparent reason. We may lose someone we love through death. We may be tempted to lose faith when we see wars, killer tornados, terrorist attacks--if "God is for us," why does he allow these things? Because he is still testing us. And not necessarily testing the victims of these troubles. If I get angry at God because I hear about someone's death, I haven't passed the test.

Does that mean those tragedies are our fault? No, God gives everyone free will and some people choose to do wrong. And some accidents are just accidental; no one is necessarily at fault. God intervenes sometimes and lives are saved. Other times, God intervenes by saving us after death with our resurrection. But as long as people doubt God's love, there will be tests. That's why it is so important to proclaim the Kingdom: so that someday all people will know God's love and not need to be tested.

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From the cloud
came a voice:
“This is my beloved Son.
Listen to him.”

MARK 9:7



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Today’s first reading, known as “the Binding of Isaac,” refers to the way Isaac is bound and laid upon the wood of the altar of sacrifice. God directs Abraham to offer his son in sacrifice, killing the beloved son that had been a special gift to him and Sarah in their old age. How could God ask Abraham to do such a thing? Abraham offers no resistance, but in preparing for the sacrifice, Abraham may have agreed with the psalmist that he was “greatly afflicted.” Saint Paul’s letter to the Romans refers to Jesus as God’s beloved Son, which is also how God identifies Jesus to Peter, James, and John at the Transfiguration. Afterward, Jesus tells those disciples not to mention the event to anyone until after his resurrection from the dead. The event, together with Jesus’ comments, leaves the disciples thoroughly confused.

HOW COULD GOD ASK ABRAHAM TO DO THAT?

Through the centuries, Christians and Jews alike have found the Binding of Isaac one of the most difficult passages in the Bible. Even though God intervenes to save Isaac, the whole episode strikes some readers as cruel. However, Abraham, the ultimate man of faith, raises no objection, offers no resistance as he simply goes about preparing for the trip and the sacrifice. Today’s other readings might help us see that text differently. In Mark’s description of the Transfiguration, Jesus’ clothes become white and shining, and Moses and Elijah appear with him. Moses was the great liberator and lawgiver who led the Jews out of bondage in Egypt and into the wilderness, forming them into the people of Israel by giving them the Law he received from God. Elijah was among Israel’s greatest prophets, so close to God that, at the end of his life, he was taken up into heaven by a fiery chariot. Together, Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets, the ultimate authority for the Jews in the conduct of their daily lives.

LOVE AND GENEROSITY

The Law, the Prophets—and Jesus. For Paul, Jesus is someone quite different from the other two. The reading from his letter to the Romans is short, but rich in meaning. When Paul declares that God “did not spare his own Son,” and when God praises Abraham “who did not withhold from me your own beloved son,” it is the same Greek word for “spare” and “withhold.” God’s voice at the Transfiguration identifies Jesus as his “beloved Son”—the same way God refers to Isaac as Abraham’s beloved son. Ultimately, God spares Isaac but not his own Son, whom he “handed over for us.” Even if we are disturbed that God tested Abraham like this, Paul says we should be overwhelmingly grateful that God did for us what, in the end, he did not require of Abraham. Jesus, God’s Son “handed over to us” in love and generosity, is already a sacrificial gift, signifying that God wants to give us “everything else along with him.”

Today’s Readings: Gn 22:1–2, 9a, 10–13, 15–18; Ps 116:10, 15, 16–17, 18–19; Rom 8:31b–34; Mk 9:2–10

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SECOND LENT
SUNDAY OF
FEBRUARY 28, 2021

Prayer of the Faithful

Let us pray to our loving God whose only Son was not spared, and who gives us everything else along with him.

**For those in the Church enduring persecution,
that they will be inspired and heartened by
the Lord's transfiguration,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For leaders of nations to be restrained from
Sacrificing the lives and welfare of their people
in endless violence and aggression,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For children who are so often the sacrificial victims of
the world's political maneuvering,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For those preparing for the Easter sacraments as
they listen for God's voice upholding them and supporting them,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For our community of faith as we offer our sacrifice
of thanksgiving and strive this Lent to know our loving
God more deeply,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all those who are sick, for all who suffer from
COVID-19, and for all who have died,
especially N., N., and N.,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all the prayers that we hold in the silence
of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**Glorious God,
graciously hear these our prayers,
which we make through the intercession of your Son,
who sits at your right hand in glory for ever and ever.**

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Letters from Heaven



Start with the letter in the shaded square. Draw a path from letter to letter to complete the Biblical statement. Move one square at a time, up, down, right, left and diagonally until all letters are used once. Ignore any black squares.

A leper came to him [Jesus] begged him and said, "If you wish, you ..."

L	C	M	
A	E	E	E
N	M	A	K
	N	A	C

C _____ ”

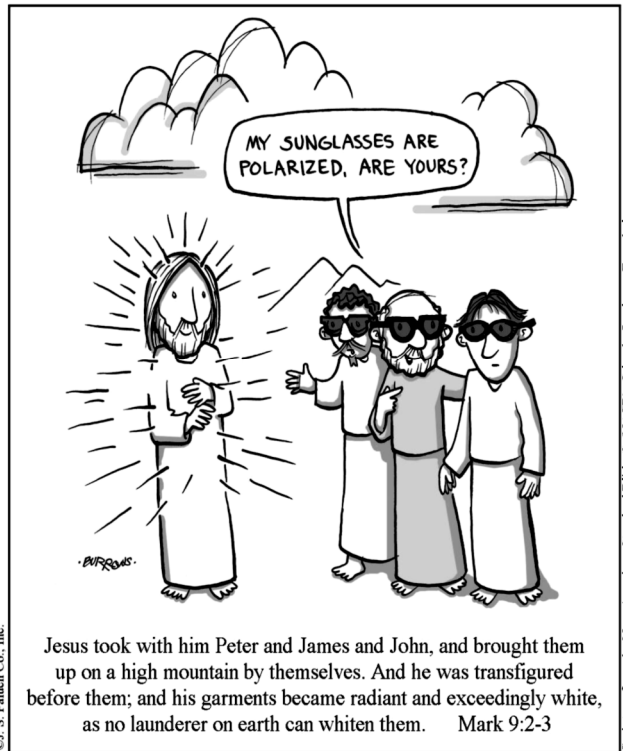
Answer: *can make me clean*

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The Little Ones

Jim Burrows



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God's Word for Children

Think about how much God loves us. Even God's own Son was not spared for love of us. Have someone read this big banner to you. Then fold it as directed to make a small one. It will tell you something that you should always remember.

God is

always ready to listen to you!

(Fold Up↑)

God's word is full of true promises.

(Fold Down↓)

for us!

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Second Sunday of Lent

Abraham obeyed God's commands. Because of this God promised to bless him. God also promised something to Abraham's family. Find out what they would become by underlining the words written above numbers between 500 and 1000. Then read the underlined words in order. If you need help, you can read Genesis 22:17 in your Bible.

as 792	farmers 324	rich 1002	countless 996	happy 476
as 583	the 618	very 441	because 212	stars 999
of 512	the 836	wealthy 138	sky 722	and 843
popular 1506	the 932	smart 300	clever 1052	sands 955
of 652	friendly 93	the 701	seashore 550	not 408

Second Sunday of Lent February 28, 2021

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

— Romans 8:31b



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