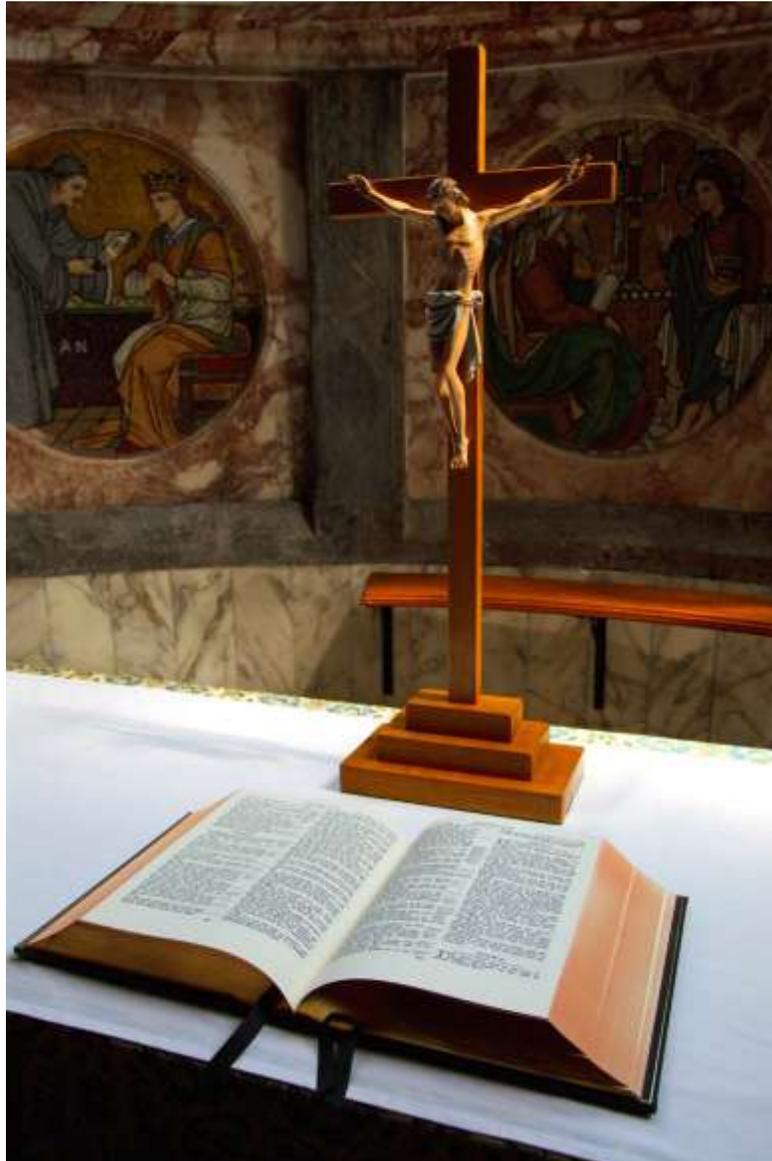


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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 2026



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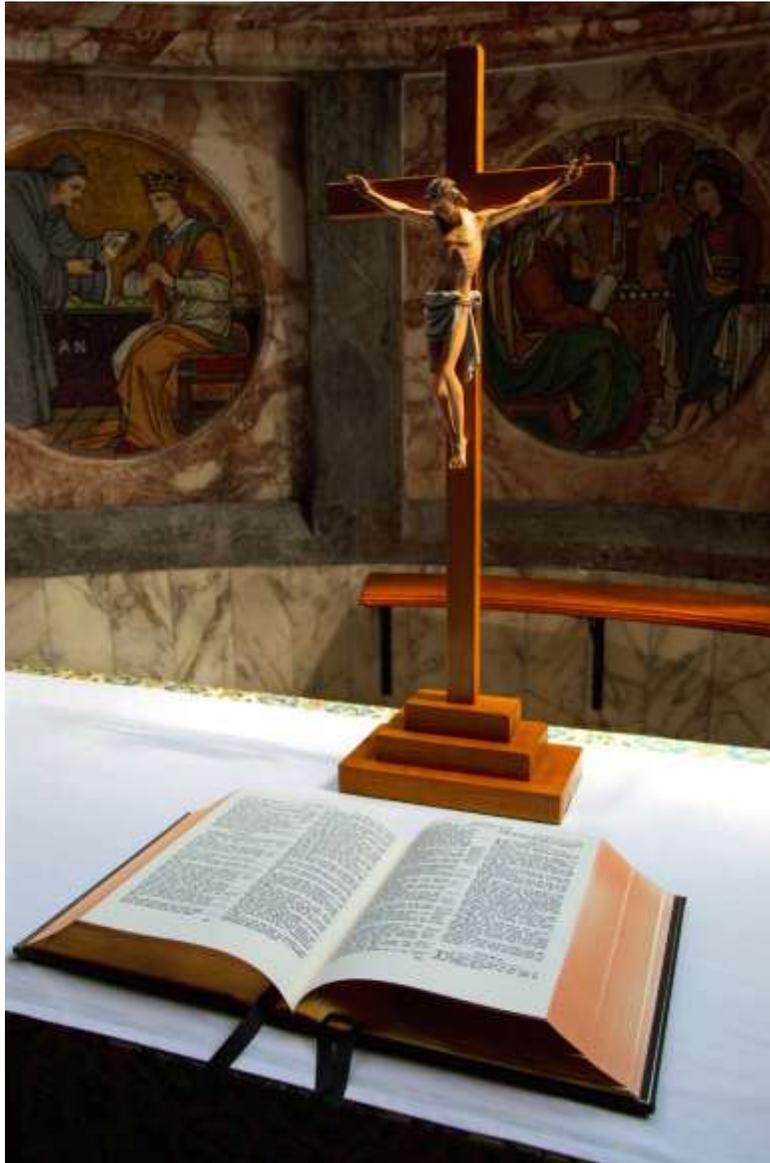
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March 1, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Sunday, March 1st, 2026

### Reading 1, Genesis 12:1-4

1 Yahweh said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house for a country which I shall show you;

2 and I shall make you a great nation, I shall bless you and make your name famous; you are to be a blessing!

3 I shall bless those who bless you, and shall curse those who curse you, and all clans on earth will bless themselves by you.'

4 So Abram went as Yahweh told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

4 The word of Yahweh is straightforward, all he does springs from his constancy.

5 He loves uprightness and justice; the faithful love of Yahweh fills the earth.

18 But see how Yahweh watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his faithful love,

19 to rescue them from death and keep them alive in famine.

20 We are waiting for Yahweh; he is our help and our shield,

22 Yahweh, let your faithful love rest on us, as our hope has rested in you.

### Reading 2, Second Timothy 1:8-10

8 So you are never to be ashamed of witnessing to our Lord, or ashamed of me for being his prisoner; but share in my hardships for the sake of the gospel, relying on the power of God

9 who has saved us and called us to be holy -- not because of anything we ourselves had done but for his own purpose and by his own grace. This grace had already been granted to us, in Christ Jesus, before the beginning of time,



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10 but it has been revealed only by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus. He has abolished death, and he has brought to light immortality and life through the gospel,

## **Gospel, Matthew 17:1-9**

1 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

2 There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as dazzling as light.

3 And suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him.

4 Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said, 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you want me to, I will make three shelters here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.'

5 He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and suddenly from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.'

6 When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear.

7 But Jesus came up and touched them, saying, 'Stand up, do not be afraid.'

8 And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but Jesus.

9 As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, 'Tell no one about this vision until the Son of man has risen from the dead.'



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## Questions for Reflection for March 1, 2026

1. The Patriarch Abraham is mentioned in the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews 11. He is a part of the parade of faith. The examples held up to all of us to emulate and imitate in our own journey of faith. He is also mentioned in the Canon of the Holy Mass. Look at how he responded to the Lord...at 75 years old! He was 75 years young!

Particularly in the Western world, we have bought this notion of retirement which has no biblical foundation, nor does it fit the living witness of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament of Christians, or the New Testament. Age is not an impediment to heroic faith. In fact, it should be the case that when we grow older, we are finally emptied enough of our own self love, and filled with Gods love...that we can finally surrender all and truly be used by the Lord.

Hopefully, we have also gained the wisdom that life is meant to teach us. After all, life is a classroom for the disciple of the Lord and, it opens to eternity.

For anyone listening or watching who, like me, is in their sixties, we need a new Abraham and Sarah generation! Now is the time to say Yes to the Lord and serve Him.

2. In our second reading, the Apostle Paul's second letter to Timothy, a young man whom he disciplined and ordained and place in leadership over the Church at Ephesus, we also see that youth is no impediment to heroic and fully surrendered leadership in the Lord. No matter whether we are young, or old, or anywhere in between, every one of us who bears the name Christian are called to place Jesus Christ and His Church at the Center of our lives and give ourselves completely to Him, no matter what our state in life, vocation, or career. We are first, last and all in between, Disciples.
3. Every year I am asked a variation of this question:" Why, on the second Sunday of Lent does the Church offer us an account of the Transfiguration?"

The inclusion of this account is an ancient liturgical practice. We also hear the account proclaimed on the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. Whether during Lent or on its own Feast, the Gospel account is meant to focus us on the "end" of the Christian life and our own vocation. "End", as used in the philosophical and theological sense means purpose or goal.

We will all be transfigured, as the Lord Himself was transfigured, when our redemption is complete in the Resurrection of the Body. Then, we will live, in the new heaven and new earth, in the fullness of the Communion of Love. This reality is meant to affect the way we live our lives - beginning right now. It also helps us understand one of the purposes of undertaking our ascetical practices during these forty days.

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In the Eastern Christian Churches, Orthodox and Catholic, the First Week of the Great Lent is called Clean Week. The focus of the week is to enter fully into the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving with fervor. It is setting the pace for the forty days by running the first lap with vigorous effort. Strict fasting is encouraged, along with frequent prayer and almsgiving. The intensity of the first week is intended to cultivate the proper disposition needed to achieve the desired end of the forty days of Lent, ongoing conversion of life reflected in a new way of living. Our freedom was fractured by sin. The way it can be healed is through the application of the Splint of the Cross. However, that cross must be embraced.

The call goes out to clean house, to be rid of all sin and entanglements which hold us back from reclaiming the freedom the Lord desires for each one of us. In fact, in many Orthodox and Eastern Catholic communities the actual houses of believers are cleaned and stripped of excess, a symbol of the interior dynamic of the week and the very essence of Lent.

During the forty days of Lent we called to enter into a holy struggle against our disordered passions and weaknesses so that we can become more fitting vessels for the life and light of God to dwell within, making us new.

The struggle we engage is about turning away from sin. But it is also about turning toward the total transformation of the integrated human person. It will only be complete in the Resurrection of our Bodies. However, it begins now. It is not accidental that the Gospel of the First Sunday of Lent was the Temptation of Jesus in the Desert (Lk. 4:1-13) and the Gospel of the Second is the Transfiguration on the mountain. They are connected.

An ancient homily reminds us "Just as the body of the Lord was glorified on the mountain when it was transfigured in the glory of God and in infinite light, so the bodies of the saints will be glorified and shine like lightning. "The glory which you have given me I have given to them" (John 17:22). As countless candles are lighted from a single flame, so the bodies of all Christ's members will be what Christ is. Our human nature is transformed into the fullness of God; it becomes wholly fire and light" (Pseudo-Macarius, 15th homily).



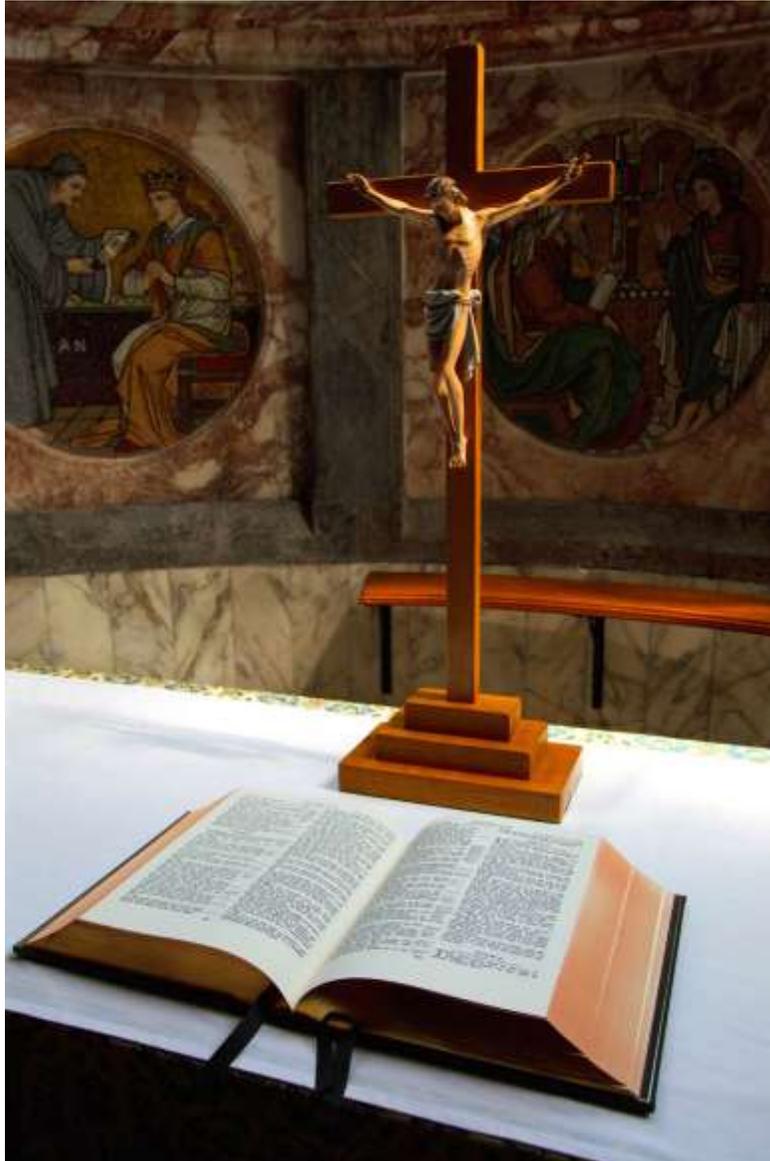
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 2, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Monday, March 2nd, 2026

### Reading 1, Daniel 9:4-10

4 I pleaded with Yahweh my God and made this confession: 'O my Lord, God great and to be feared, you keep the covenant and show faithful love towards those who love you and who observe your commandments:

5 we have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly, we have betrayed your commandments and rulings and turned away from them.

6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our chief men, our ancestors and all people of the country.

7 Saving justice, Lord, is yours; we have only the look of shame we wear today, we, the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the whole of Israel, near and far away, in every country to which you have dispersed us because of the treachery we have committed against you.

8 To us, our kings, our chief men and our ancestors, belongs the look of shame, O Yahweh, since we have sinned against you.

9 And it is for the Lord our God to have mercy and to pardon, since we have betrayed him,

10 and have not listened to the voice of Yahweh our God nor followed the laws he has given us through his servants the prophets.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 79:8, 9, 11, 13

8 Do not count against us the guilt of former generations, in your tenderness come quickly to meet us, for we are utterly weakened;

9 help us, God our Saviour, for the glory of your name; Yahweh, wipe away our sins, rescue us for the sake of your name.

11 May the groans of the captive reach you, by your great strength save those who are condemned to death!

13 And we, your people, the flock that you pasture, will thank you for ever, will recite your praises from age to age.

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## Gospel, Luke 6:36-38

36 'Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate.

37 Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.

38 Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap; because the standard you use will be the standard used for you.'



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## Questions for Reflection for March 2, 2026

1. Today, in our first reading, Daniel is pleading for God's people, the Jewish people, who are facing terrible persecution.

In his honest, heartfelt prayer to God, on behalf of Israel, we witness how the leader of God's people should pray.

He is so identified with his people, Gods people, that he prays on their behalf "We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our chief men, our ancestors and all people of the country."

Notice the language and the posture, confessing the sin and seeking Gods merciful forgiveness and intervention for the people. He does not blame them; he identifies with them. He intercedes for them.

This is how Moses acted as well. This is the character of a godly, Biblical leader.

How desperately we need such leadership in the Church today. From our Bishops in particular.

Have you prayed for your Bishop today?

2. David the Psalmist demonstrates the same kind of godly leadership. Taking personal responsibility for sin and interceding on behalf of the people. During this Season of Lent, we are asked by holy Mother Church to reflect on our own personal responsibility for our personal sins. But, to also understand that sin wounds the whole Body of the Church.

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church we read:

"Sin is a personal act. Moreover, we have a responsibility for the sins committed by others when we cooperate in them:

- by participating directly and voluntarily in them;
- by ordering, advising, praising, or approving them;
- by not disclosing or not hindering them when we have an obligation to do so;
- by protecting evil-doers."

(CCC #1868)

Have we chosen to repent for our sins? Have we made a good confession recently? Have we considered ways in which we cooperate in the sins of others, and repented?

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3. This short excerpt from the teaching of Jesus recorded by the Apostle Luke follows after Jesus, having spent the night in prayer, chooses the twelve whom He would use to continue his ministry after His ascension to the Father. It is the end of what is sometimes called his "sermon on the plain" where he teaches them about the Blessed or happy life of a faithful disciple.

We are to be "compassionate as the Father is compassionate." He tells us. Sometimes the word Merciful is used. Both reveal the character of Jesus which is supposed to be cultivated in every one of His followers, including you and me.

The Greek word means to enter into the suffering of another. Not to point the finger but, in a sense, to offer yourself in their stead.

This is biblical compassion, biblical mercy.

It helps to remember the etymology of the word. At its root it means to suffer with; to enter into the suffering of another out of love. Clearly, this is the Way of Jesus Christ. We are his disciples. Is it becoming our way?

Pope St Leo wrote of Jesus:

"He took the nature of a servant without stain of sin, enlarging our humanity without diminishing his divinity. He emptied himself; though invisible he made himself visible, though Creator and Lord of all things he chose to be one of us mortal men. Yet this was the condescension of compassion, not the loss of omnipotence. So he, who in the nature of God had created man, became in the nature of a servant, man himself."

How do we treat others?

Would people call us "compassionate" or "merciful"?

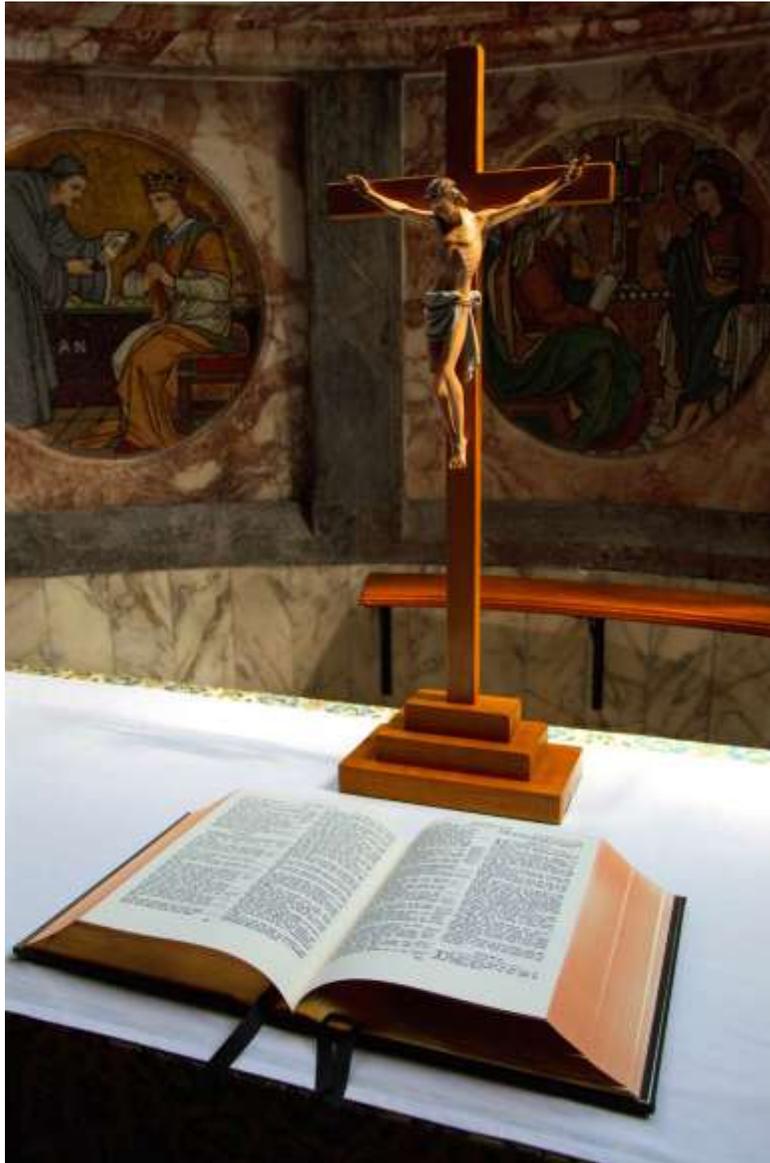


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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 3, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026

### Reading 1, Isaiah 1:10, 16-20

10 Hear what Yahweh says, you rulers of Sodom; listen to what our God teaches, you people of Gomorrah.

16 wash, make yourselves clean. Take your wrong-doing out of my sight. Cease doing evil.

17 Learn to do good, search for justice, discipline the violent, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow.

18 'Come, let us talk this over,' says Yahweh. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

19 If you are willing to obey, you shall eat the good things of the earth.

20 But if you refuse and rebel, the sword shall eat you instead -- for Yahweh's mouth has spoken.'

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 50:8-9, 16-17, 21, 23

8 'It is not with your sacrifices that I find fault, those burnt offerings constantly before me;

9 I will not accept any bull from your homes, nor a single goat from your folds.

16 But to the wicked, God says: 'What right have you to recite my statutes, to take my covenant on your lips,

17 when you detest my teaching, and thrust my words behind you?

21 You do this, and am I to say nothing? Do you think that I am really like you? I charge you, indict you to your face.

23 Honour to me is a sacrifice of thanksgiving; to the upright I will show God's salvation.'

### Gospel, Matthew 23:1-12

1 Then addressing the crowds and his disciples Jesus said,

2 'The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses.

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3 You must therefore do and observe what they tell you; but do not be guided by what they do, since they do not practise what they preach.

4 They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on people's shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they!

5 Everything they do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader headbands and longer tassels,

6 like wanting to take the place of honour at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues,

7 being greeted respectfully in the market squares and having people call them Rabbi.

8 'You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers.

9 You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven.

10 Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ.

11 The greatest among you must be your servant.

12 Anyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be raised up.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 3, 2026

1. In our first reading for today's Holy Mass, the Lord makes an absolutely wonderful promise to the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities which were utterly corrupted by sin. He uses the great Messianic Hebrew Prophet Isaiah to make this promise:

"Cease doing evil. Learn to do good, search for justice, discipline the violent, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow.

'Come, let us talk this over,' says Yahweh. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing to obey, you shall eat the good things of the earth. But if you refuse and rebel, the sword shall eat you instead -- for Yahweh's mouth has spoken.'

Yet, turning away from sin requires genuine repentance and change. It requires voluntarily humbling ourselves and acknowledging our sins and faults.

Lent is the season when the Church, as mother and teacher, invites us all to do just that. And, we are given tremendous resources to assist us in this task. One of them is the great Sacrament of Penance, also called confession and reconciliation. Have we accepted the invitation? Now is the time.

2. The Responsorial Psalm continues the message, the call to genuine conversion passes through repentance and conversion, and it requires action. The Lord again speaks, this time through David, and reminds us that our deeds must demonstrate our sincerity in reciting his commandments. We must "walk the talk". We are in the Second Week of Lent, a season of housecleaning for the soul. How are we doing?
3. In the Gospel appointed for today's Mass for this second week of Lent, we hear Jesus denouncing the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. They are an example of taking the talk, but not walking the walk. The word Hypocrite is derived from a Greek word which was sued to refer to a stage actor. Someone playing a role. Acting in a manner which did not depict their true personality. In fact, actors often wore masks.

Humility invites us to examine our lives during this season of conversion. Where are we acting or pretending to be holy? Where are we wearing a mask? The Lord wants us to live our lives in honesty and integrity. He wants to free us from the bondage which comes from pretending. The admonition against calling people Father is part of this message. It directs us to put the Lord first. He is our first teacher. He is our Father. How are we doing?



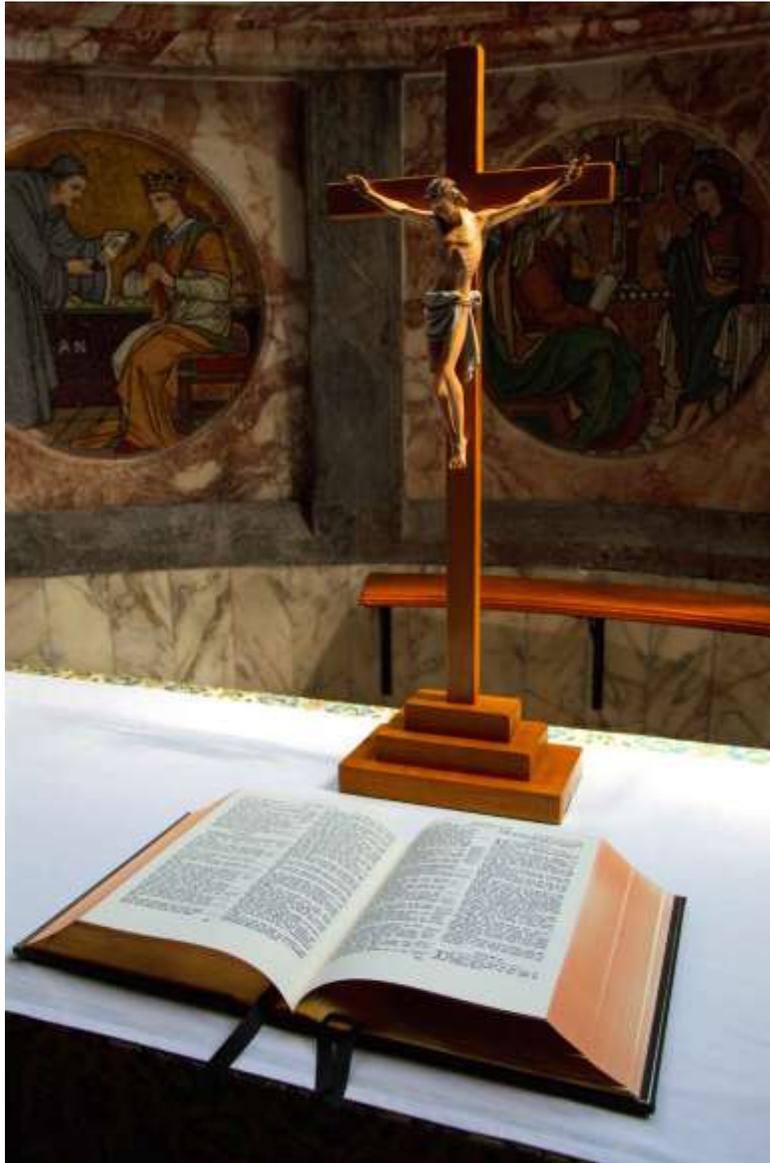
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 4, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Wednesday, March 4th, 2026

### Reading 1, Jeremiah 18:18-20

18 'Come on,' they said, 'let us concoct a plot against Jeremiah, for the Law will not perish for lack of priests, nor advice for lack of wise men, nor the word for lack of prophets. Come on, let us slander him and pay no attention to anything he says.'

19 Pay attention to me, Yahweh, hear what my adversaries are saying.

20 Should evil be returned for good? Now they are digging a pit for me. Remember how I pleaded before you and spoke good of them, to turn your retribution away from them.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 31:5-6, 14, 15-16

5 to your hands I commit my spirit, by you have I been redeemed. God of truth,

6 you hate those who serve useless idols; but my trust is in Yahweh:

14 But my trust is in you, Yahweh; I say, 'You are my God,'

15 every moment of my life is in your hands, rescue me from the clutches of my foes who pursue me;

16 let your face shine on your servant, save me in your faithful love.

### Gospel, Matthew 20:17-28

17 Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, and on the road he took the Twelve aside by themselves and said to them,

18 'Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man is about to be handed over to the chief priests and scribes. They will condemn him to death

19 and will hand him over to the gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised up again.'

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came with her sons to make a request of him, and bowed low;



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21 and he said to her, 'What is it you want?' She said to him, 'Promise that these two sons of mine may sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your kingdom.'

22 Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?' They replied, 'We can.'

23 He said to them, 'Very well; you shall drink my cup, but as for seats at my right hand and my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted by my Father.'

24 When the other ten heard this they were indignant with the two brothers.

25 But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that among the gentiles the rulers lord it over them, and great men make their authority felt.

26 Among you this is not to happen. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant,

27 and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave,

28 just as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'



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## Questions for Reflection for March 4, 2026

1. The Hebrew prophet Jeremiah spoke the word of the Lord to Israel during a time of trial, during the siege, persecution and destruction undertaken by the Babylonians. Yet, the persecution this faithful prophet often bore came right from Israel itself, from Gods people.

He was ignored, often rejected and persecuted by those whom he sought to help and liberate.

This is often the case with those who stay faithful to the Lords words, in times when faithfulness is not the norm.

There is a lesson from Jeremiah which all of us can learn today. We need to expect persecution. Yes, from the increasingly hostile culture around us. In a sense, we are living in a new Babylon, as much of the world rejects God.

But also, from within the Church itself. The Church is the People of God. And, His people are in a crisis of truth, a crisis of faith and a crisis of morality. Now is NOT the time to shrink back from living and proclaiming the fullness of the Catholic Christian faith. Indeed, the Lord is asking all who bear the name Christian, and especially Catholic Christians, to speak out boldly and live faithfully. The Church belongs to Jesus Christ.

Are we willing to be ridiculed, rejected and, even persecuted?

2. The Psalmist David sings of being fully submitted, surrendered to the Will of God. He places his trust in the Lord. Notice in this song of petition, and that is what so many of the Psalms are, he also acknowledges that he is facing "enemies", opponents, who seek to entrap him and undermine his resolve to live a life totally surrendered to the Lord

In this, he flows right out of our first reading and invites us, to do what he did, surrender our whole lives to the Will of God. When we do, the Lord, as He did for David, will shine his light upon us and illuminate the way.

Have we told the Lord we trust him today?

3. In the Gospel passage appointed for today's Holy Mass, from St. Matthew's account, the disciples and their entourage are accompanying Jesus on the Way to Jerusalem. Jesus knew what was to come. he was sent to serve and to "give His life as a ransom for many".



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He is sharing with the disciples of his impending Passion and death.

But, at that time of seriousness, the mother of the sons of Zebedee seeks to position her sons in a place of honor in the coming kingdom.

Notice, the disciples "became indignant". Jesus did not. He continued to prepare the disciples, telling the mother and the sons, and all who would listen that they would "drink the same cup".

The cup he is referring to was - and still is - the cup of suffering. The cup of being poured out for others, of carrying His cross, and participating in His ongoing work of redemption.

They still did not understand.

We are His contemporary disciples. Do we understand?



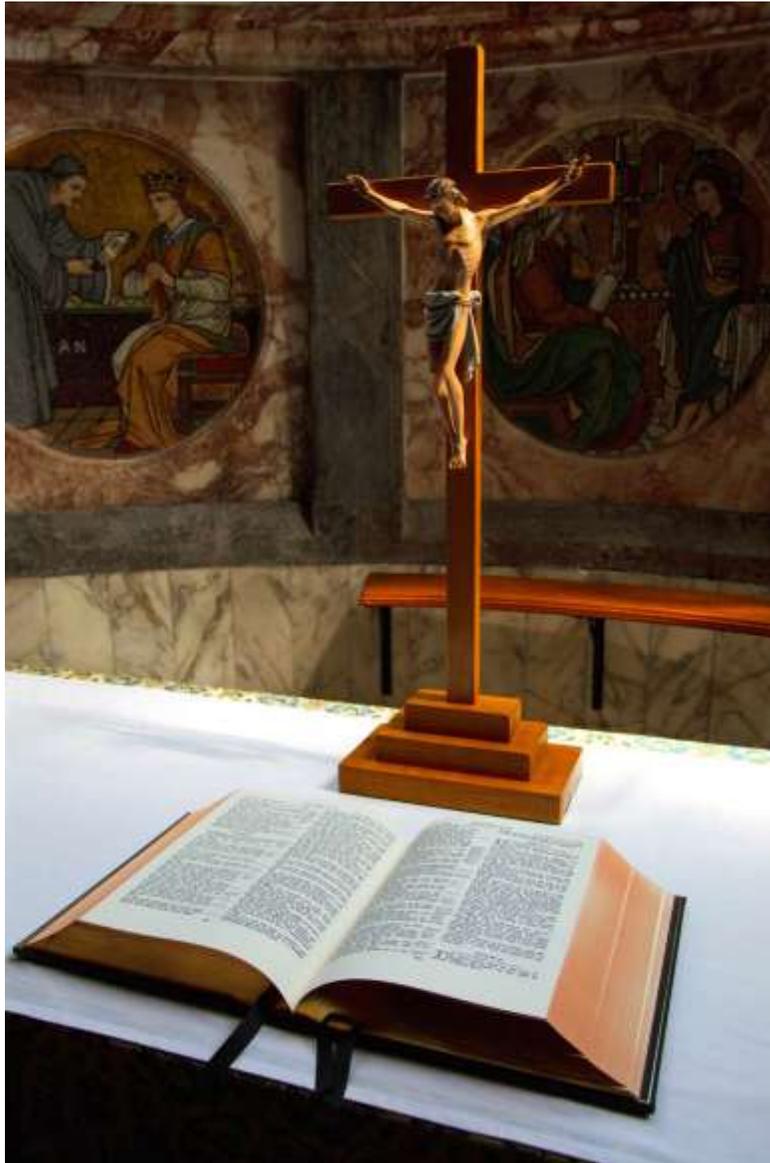
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 5, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Thursday, March 5th, 2026

### Reading 1, Jeremiah 17:5-10

5 Yahweh says this, 'Accursed be anyone who trusts in human beings, who relies on human strength and whose heart turns from Yahweh.

6 Such a person is like scrub in the wastelands: when good comes, it does not affect him since he lives in the parched places of the desert, uninhabited, salt land.

7 'Blessed is anyone who trusts in Yahweh, with Yahweh to rely on.

8 Such a person is like a tree by the waterside that thrusts its roots to the stream: when the heat comes it has nothing to fear, its foliage stays green; untroubled in a year of drought, it never stops bearing fruit.

9 'The heart is more devious than any other thing, and is depraved; who can pierce its secrets?

10 I, Yahweh, search the heart, test the motives, to give each person what his conduct and his actions deserve.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 1:1-2, 3, 4, 6

1 How blessed is anyone who rejects the advice of the wicked and does not take a stand in the path that sinners tread, nor a seat in company with cynics,

2 but who delights in the law of Yahweh and murmurs his law day and night.

3 Such a one is like a tree planted near streams; it bears fruit in season and its leaves never wither, and every project succeeds.

4 How different the wicked, how different! Just like chaff blown around by the wind

5 the wicked will not stand firm at the Judgement nor sinners in the gathering of the upright.

6 For Yahweh watches over the path of the upright, but the path of the wicked is doomed.

### Gospel, Luke 16:19-31

19 'There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day.

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20 And at his gate there used to lie a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores,

21 who longed to fill himself with what fell from the rich man's table. Even dogs came and licked his sores.

22 Now it happened that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels into Abraham's embrace. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 'In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his embrace.

24 So he cried out, "Father Abraham, pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames."

25 Abraham said, "My son, remember that during your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony.

26 But that is not all: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to prevent those who want to cross from our side to yours or from your side to ours."

27 'So he said, "Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house,

28 since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not come to this place of torment too."

29 Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them."

30 The rich man replied, "Ah no, father Abraham, but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent."

31 Then Abraham said to him, "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead."



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## Questions for Reflection for March 5, 2026

1. The Lord speaks through the Prophet Jeremiah to the people of Israel in the first reading appointed for today's Holy Mass. Again, a familiar theme emerges for each one of us as we continue on our Lenten Journey.

Where have we placed our trust?

One of the popular dictionary definitions of trust is a "firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something."

It is in this context that the warning the Lord speaks through his prophet invites us to an examination of conscience. Do we trust in human beings? Or, do we trust in the Lord?

The Lord makes it very clear that those who trust in Him will be like a solidly planted, firm and fruitful tree. Would that analogy reflect our own lives? Where have we placed our trust.

It is a matter of the "heart". And, the heart in the biblical and theological sense refers to that center of the human person where we make our fundamental choices about life. The Catholic Catechism refers to the "heart" as "the seat of the moral personality". (CCC #2517)

The Lord knows our heart. He searches it and invites us to choose Him.

Have we done so today?

2. The Psalmist David gives us great advice on how we can keep our hearts pure and our focused on the Lord. By choosing the right company and by rooting ourselves in the Word of God.

Once again, both of these require our choice. And yesterday's choice is not sufficient for today.

This is why cultivating what can be called habits of holiness, such as daily prayer, reinforced throughout the day through ongoing conversation with God, daily attendance, when possible, at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Daily Bible reading, Daily rosary, daily praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, are great gifts in our journey of faith.

So too are the ascetical practices the Church invites us to, especially during this Lenten season.

How are we doing?

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3. In today's Gospel we encounter a rich man who embraces a wrong relationship with the goods of the earth. Instead of offering these goods back to the Lord who is their Source and using them to serve others - his disordered appetites entrap and blind him. His sin is that he failed to see the need of his brother.

The Lord said nothing about the rich man's possessions. It was his wrongful use of them he addressed. The Rich Man failed to recognize the need of others. St Augustine proclaimed in a homily on this Gospel passage: "Lazarus was received into heaven because of his humility and not because of his poverty. Wealth itself was not what kept the rich man from eternal bliss. His punishment was for selfishness and disloyalty"

Having goods is not sin. It is whether they have us. In this parable, goods have the man.

In an age of bumper stickers such as "Whoever dies with the most toys wins" and "I am spending my retirement spending my children's inheritance", Christians are called to a different approach to the goods of the earth. We are invited to embrace simplicity of life. Simplicity is not about the quantity of the goods of the earth we possess. It is about our relationship to them. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21).

Where is our treasure?



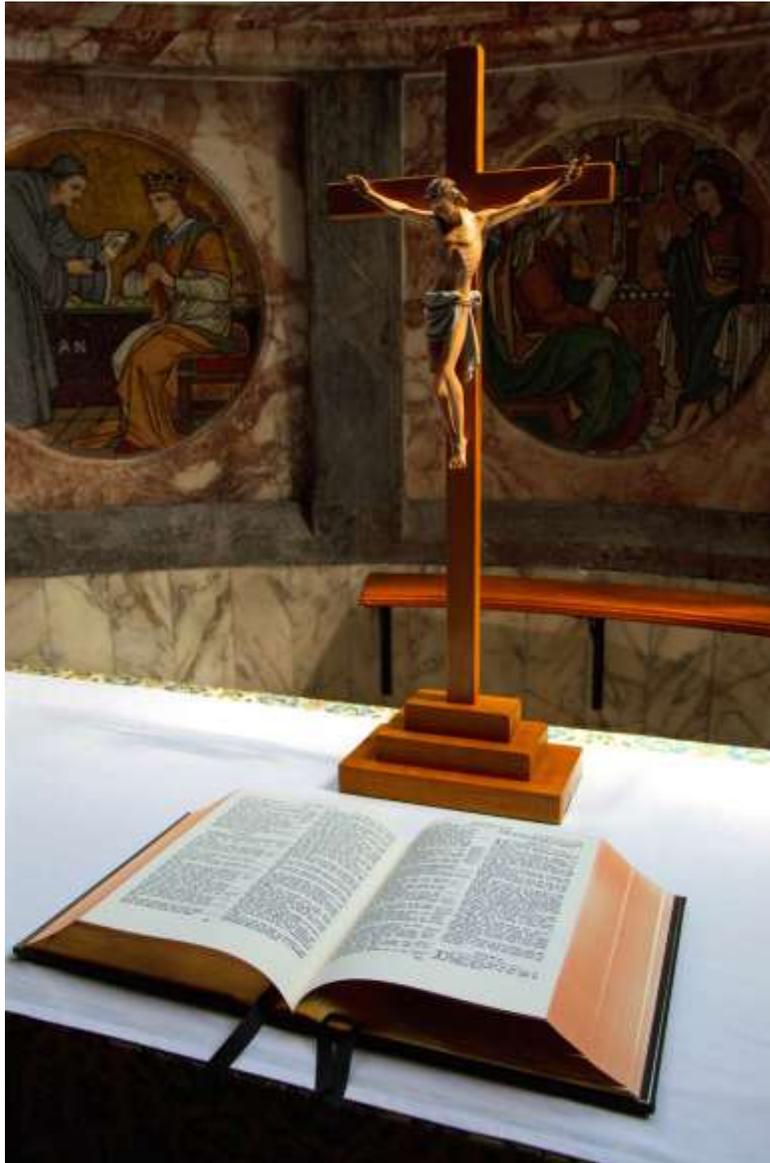
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 6, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Friday, March 6th, 2026

### Reading 1, Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-18

3 Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other sons, for he was the son of his old age, and he had a decorated tunic made for him.

4 But his brothers, seeing how much more his father loved him than all his other sons, came to hate him so much that they could not say a civil word to him.

12 His brothers went to pasture their father's flock at Shechem.

13 Then Israel said to Joseph, 'Your brothers are with the flock at Shechem, aren't they? Come, I am going to send you to them.' 'I am ready,' he replied.

17 The man answered, 'They have moved on from here; indeed I heard them say, "Let us go to Dothan." ' So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

18 They saw him in the distance, and before he reached them they made a plot to kill him.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 105:16-17, 18-19, 20-21

16 He called down famine on the land, he took away their food supply;

17 he sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, sold as a slave.

18 So his feet were weighed down with shackles, his neck was put in irons.

19 In due time his prophecy was fulfilled, the word of Yahweh proved him true.

20 The king sent orders to release him, the ruler of nations set him free;

21 he put him in charge of his household, the ruler of all he possessed,



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## **Gospel, Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46**

33 'Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad.

34 When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce.

35 But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third.

36 Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way.

37 Finally he sent his son to them thinking, "They will respect my son."

38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his inheritance."

39 So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?'

41 They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him at the proper time.'

42 Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this is the Lord's doing and we marvel at it?'

43 'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

45 When they heard his parables, the chief priests and the scribes realised he was speaking about them,

46 but though they would have liked to arrest him they were afraid of the crowds, who looked on him as a prophet.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 6, 2026

1. The story of Joseph in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament is an example to us of how the Lord can use one good man or woman, totally dedicated to Him and staying faithful even in the face of horrible treatment and adversity, to accomplish His plan.

Betrayed by his brothers because they were jealous of him. They intended to kill him. Instead, they sold him into slavery, and concocted a story that he had been killed by a wild beast, Joseph ended up in Egypt. But, as the account continues, he did not give up. He did not surrender his faith, give into a "victim" mentality. Instead, Joseph learned how to live in a difficult situation and, relying on the God of Israel, prospered ... even eventually rising to power in Egypt.

We all have experiences of being betrayed. We are sometimes tempted to give up, perhaps to succumb to seeing ourselves as "victims". The story of Joseph invites us to reject victimhood, and to true conversion of heart, mind and lifestyle.

The season of Lent is a great opportunity to ponder our own life, our reaction to adversity, and the true strength of our faith in the Lord.

Are we carrying out such an examination of conscience during these forty days?

2. In our Responsorial Psalm appointed for today's Mass, we hear David singing of the example of Joseph, "feet were weighed down with shackles, his neck was put in irons. In due time his prophecy was fulfilled, the word of Yahweh proved him true."

Joseph was a man in a deep relationship with the Lord. He had the spiritual gift of discernment and was often used by the Lord to interpret dreams. Joseph ended up interpreting a significant dream of Pharaoh, the Ruler of Egypt. That leads to a relationship of trust between Pharaoh, the oppressor of Israel, and Joseph, the Hebrew slave.

Joseph ends up actually being appointed by Pharaoh to be a ruler in Egypt. His wisdom leads him to encourage the storage of excess grain in that Nation to protect against any future famine. And, it was during his leadership that a famine did arise. Joseph ended up assisting the entire Nation to survive this calamity.

How do we react to difficult circumstances in our own lives?

Do we turn to God first and ask for His assistance?

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3. Jesus used parables to communicate deep truths - in a framework which his listeners would understand. This parable of the vineyard owner is a great example. The Vineyard is the world and all who live in it. God the Father, the Creator, is the Vineyard owner. Israel, and by analogy, all of us, are the servants sent into the vineyard and called to be good stewards.

The behavior of those left in charge is caused by their sin. They rejected God's law, His prophets and His call to stewardship over creation, and over the crown of creation, men and women created in the Image of God.

But then the parable continues, the Vineyard owner sent His Son, and they rejected Him, killed Him in fact.

Here, the prophetic nature of the parable of the Vineyard is revealed. Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, the Word through whom the entire universe was created, is the Son, sent by the Vineyard owner. they do not recognize Him.

The religious leaders who heard this parable knew they were the ones he was speaking of. Jesus tells them with powerful, prophetic clarity:

'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

And, we are among those to whom that Vineyard has now been entrusted. Through His Passion, death and Resurrection, we have been grafted into the Vine and made His people.

The question for us during these 40 Days is clear.

How are we doing with all that has now been entrusted to us? Do we recognize Jesus?

Are we being good and faithful stewards of the Vineyard of the Lord?



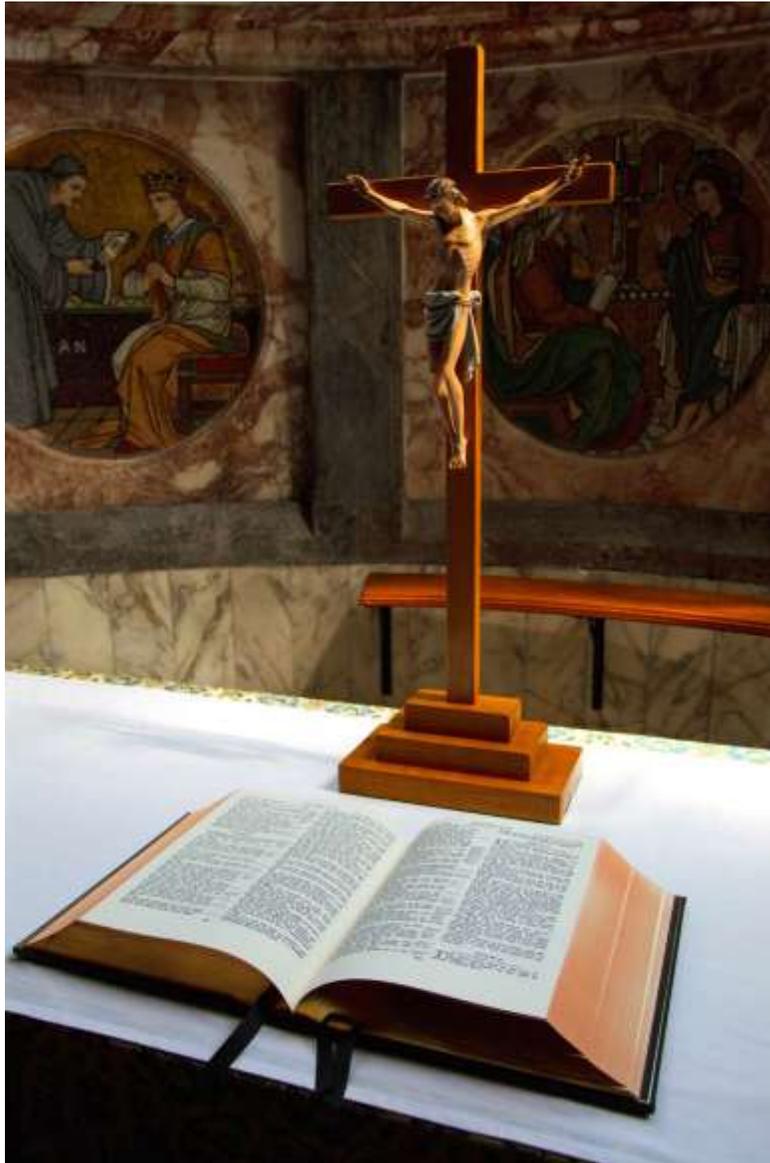
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 7, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Saturday, March 7th, 2026

### Reading 1, Micah 7:14-15, 18-20

14 With shepherd's crook lead your people to pasture, the flock that is your heritage, living confined in a forest with meadow land all round. Let them graze in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old!

15 As in the days when you came out of Egypt, grant us to see wonders!

18 What god can compare with you for pardoning guilt and for overlooking crime? He does not harbour anger for ever, since he delights in showing faithful love.

19 Once more have pity on us, tread down our faults; throw all our sins to the bottom of the sea.

20 Grant Jacob your faithfulness, and Abraham your faithful love, as you swore to our ancestors from the days of long ago.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12

1 [Of David] Bless Yahweh, my soul, from the depths of my being, his holy name;

2 bless Yahweh, my soul, never forget all his acts of kindness.

3 He forgives all your offences, cures all your diseases,

4 he redeems your life from the abyss, crowns you with faithful love and tenderness;

9 his indignation does not last for ever, nor his resentment remain for all time;

10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve, nor repay us as befits our offences.

11 As the height of heaven above earth, so strong is his faithful love for those who fear him.

12 As the distance of east from west, so far from us does he put our faults.

### Gospel, Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

1 The tax collectors and sinners, however, were all crowding round to listen to him,

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2 and the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

3 So he told them this parable:

11 Then he said, 'There was a man who had two sons.

12 The younger one said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that will come to me." So the father divided the property between them.

13 A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

14 'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch;

15 so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs.

16 And he would willingly have filled himself with the husks the pigs were eating but no one would let him have them.

17 Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's hired men have all the food they want and more, and here am I dying of hunger!

18 I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you;

19 I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired men."

20 So he left the place and went back to his father. 'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him.

21 Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son."

22 But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

23 Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we will celebrate by having a feast,

24 because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.



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25 'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing.

26 Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about.

27 The servant told him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the calf we had been fattening because he has got him back safe and sound."

28 He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out and began to urge him to come in;

29 but he retorted to his father, "All these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed any orders of yours, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends.

30 But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property -- he and his loose women -- you kill the calf we had been fattening."

31 'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours.

32 But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found." '



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## Questions for Reflection for March 7, 2026

1. One of the earliest and most dangerous heresies which began to spread in the early Second Century church, was named after its greatest proponent, a man named Marcion. This was the time before the official canon (from a Greek word meaning measuring stick) was still being discerned by the early Church leaders, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Marcion argued a dualism which divided the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures, and what was to become the New Testament, the compiled Gospels, letters and accounts which would later be confirmed as wholly true and reliable.

The core of his error was his claim that the God revealed in the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scripture, the God revealed to Israel, was a tyrant, a wrathful unforgiving "deity". That wrathful deity, according to Marcion, was not the same as the Merciful God revealed in Jesus Christ. Marcion was a false teacher, he led many astray and was "excommunicated", put outside of the communion of the Church.

Our first reading, taken from the name of the author of the beautiful book of the Minor Prophet Micah, is an example of that Mercy. The God of Israel is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he is rich in mercy. Remnants of this kind of errant teaching reoccur when people, even well intended ones, contrast the justice of God and the Mercy of God in the wrong way.

When someone is choosing against God and His loving ways, when they sin, the most merciful thing the Lord does for them is to call them to repentance and conversion. To call them, as we heard at the beginning of Lent, to "repent and believe the Gospel"

How are we doing in responding to that call?

2. David the Psalmist sings along with the beautiful message we heard through Micah in the Psalm, which is given to us for our response today, calling us to praise God precisely because

"He forgives all your offences, cures all your diseases,  
he redeems your life from the abyss, crowns you with faithful love and tenderness;  
his indignation does not last for ever, nor his resentment remain for all time;  
he does not treat us as our sins deserve, nor repay us as befits our offences.

As the height of heaven above earth, so strong is his faithful love for those who fear him.  
As the distance of east from west, so far from us does he put our faults."

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Do we act that way toward those who have sinned against us? That is part of what it means to reveal the Image and Likeness of God to others.

3. The Gospel passage for today's Holy Mass is excerpted from Luke's account of the Prodigal Son parable. It drives this theme of Justice and Mercy home with one of the most beautiful stories in the New Testament.

Notice, the Father waits for the Son to turn away from his wrong choice. That is what sin is, a wrong choice, a wrong exercise of our human freedom.

Part Three of the Catechism, a section devoted specifically to a discussion of Moral theology, is entitled Life in Christ. The Section treats the vocation of man to beatitude, or happiness. It articulates a clear Moral theology of choice by considering the morality of human acts, the role of the passions, proper formation of the conscience and the cultivation of the virtues, all accompanied by the rejection of sin.

In its explanation of the morality of human acts, The Catechism offers a sobering insight concerning a wrong exercise of freedom: "Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back. However, although we can judge that an act is in itself a grave offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justice and mercy of God." (CCC #1861)

It properly insists that authentic Human Freedom cannot be realized in decisions made against God and against what is good because it is "patterned on God's freedom." While the wayward son chose to repent and return to the house of the Father, it was the Father who showed us the Face of mercy. The Father is the one in the parable who reveals, as the Apostle Paul writes, "the God of love who is rich in mercy". (Eph 2:4)

The parable tells us "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him (the word can also be interpreted Mercy); he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." (Luke 15:21) Wow! Repentance walks, and even stumbles...but MERCY RUNS!

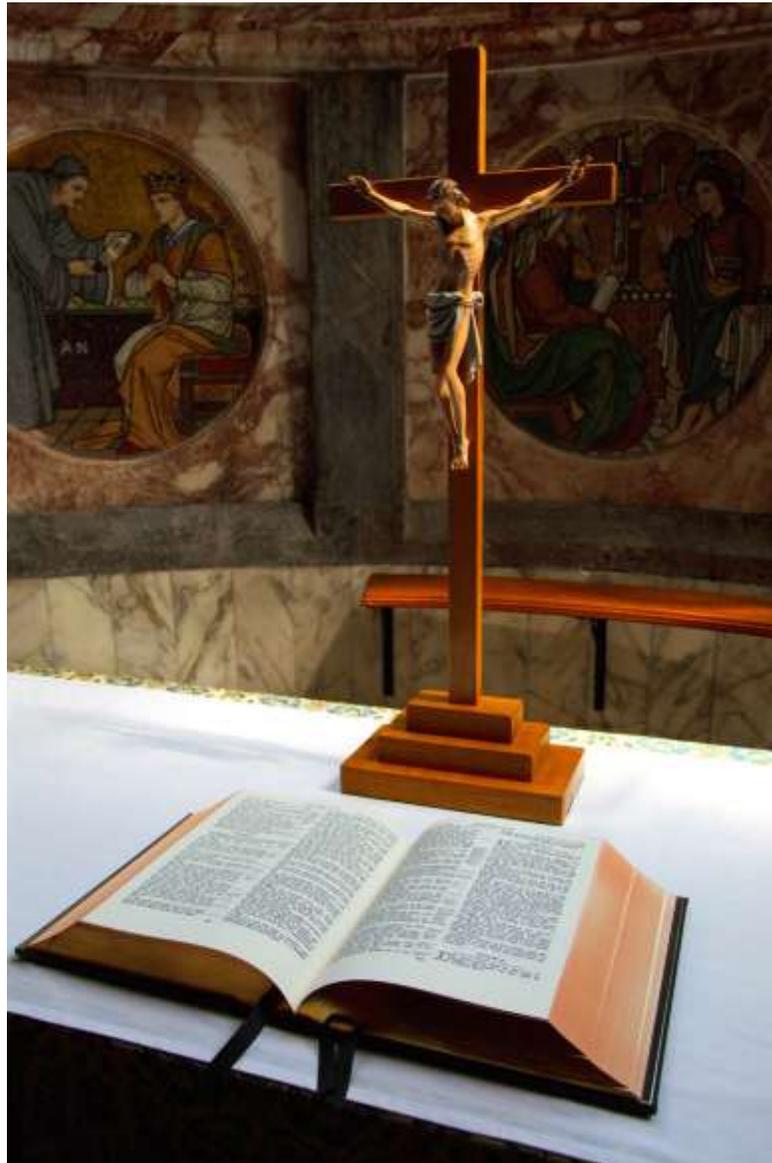
Jesus tells us "Blessed are the merciful". (Matt 5:7) May His Face of Mercy be revealed through us to a world waiting to be born again and welcomed home. Are we just and merciful?

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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 8, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Sunday, March 8th, 2026

### Reading 1, Exodus 17:3-7

3 But tormented by thirst, the people complained to Moses. 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt,' they said, 'only to make us, our children and our livestock, die of thirst?'

4 Moses appealed to Yahweh for help. 'How am I to deal with this people?' he said. 'Any moment now they will stone me!'

5 Yahweh then said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, taking some of the elders of Israel with you; in your hand take the staff with which you struck the River, and go.

6 I shall be waiting for you there on the rock (at Horeb). Strike the rock, and water will come out for the people to drink.' This was what Moses did, with the elders of Israel looking on.

7 He gave the place the names Massah and Meribah because of the Israelites' contentiousness and because they put Yahweh to the test by saying, 'Is Yahweh with us, or not?'

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

1 Come, let us cry out with joy to Yahweh, acclaim the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving, acclaim him with music.

6 Come, let us bow low and do reverence; kneel before Yahweh who made us!

7 For he is our God, and we the people of his sheepfold, the flock of his hand. If only you would listen to him today!

8 Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as at the time of Massah in the desert,

9 when your ancestors challenged me, put me to the test, and saw what I could do!

### Reading 2, Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

1 So then, now that we have been justified by faith, we are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;



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2 it is through him, by faith, that we have been admitted into God's favour in which we are living, and look forward exultantly to God's glory.

5 and a hope which will not let us down, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

6 When we were still helpless, at the appointed time, Christ died for the godless.

7 You could hardly find anyone ready to die even for someone upright; though it is just possible that, for a really good person, someone might undertake to die.

8 So it is proof of God's own love for us, that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

## **Gospel, John 4:5-42**

5 On the way he came to the Samaritan town called Sychar near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Jacob's well was there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me something to drink.'

8 His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew. How is it that you ask me, a Samaritan, for something to drink?' -- Jews, of course, do not associate with Samaritans.

10 Jesus replied to her: If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me something to drink,' you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.

11 'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered, 'and the well is deep: how do you get this living water?'

12 Are you a greater man than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?'

13 Jesus replied: Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again;

14 but no one who drinks the water that I shall give will ever be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will become a spring of water within, welling up for eternal life.



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15 'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me some of that water, so that I may never be thirsty or come here again to draw water.'

16 'Go and call your husband,' said Jesus to her, 'and come back here.'

17 The woman answered, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right to say, "I have no husband";

18 for although you have had five, the one you now have is not your husband. You spoke the truth there.'

19 'I see you are a prophet, sir,' said the woman.

20 'Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, though you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.'

21 Jesus said: Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know; for salvation comes from the Jews.

23 But the hour is coming -- indeed is already here -- when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father seeks.

24 God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.

25 The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah -- that is, Christ -- is coming; and when he comes he will explain everything.'

26 Jesus said, 'That is who I am, I who speak to you.'

27 At this point his disciples returned and were surprised to find him speaking to a woman, though none of them asked, 'What do you want from her?' or, 'What are you talking to her about?'

28 The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to the town to tell the people,

29 'Come and see a man who has told me everything I have done; could this be the Christ?'

30 This brought people out of the town and they made their way towards him.

31 Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, do have something to eat';

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32 but he said, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.'

33 So the disciples said to one another, 'Has someone brought him food?'

34 But Jesus said: My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete his work.

35 Do you not have a saying: Four months and then the harvest? Well, I tell you, look around you, look at the fields; already they are white, ready for harvest!

36 Already the reaper is being paid his wages, already he is bringing in the grain for eternal life, so that sower and reaper can rejoice together.

37 For here the proverb holds true: one sows, another reaps;

38 I sent you to reap a harvest you have not laboured for. Others have laboured for it; and you have come into the rewards of their labour.

39 Many Samaritans of that town believed in him on the strength of the woman's words of testimony, 'He told me everything I have done.'

40 So, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and

41 many more came to believe on the strength of the words he spoke to them;

42 and they said to the woman, 'Now we believe no longer because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he is indeed the Saviour of the world.'



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## Questions for Reflection for March 8, 2026

1. Our first reading for today's Holy Mass follows shortly after the miracles the people of Israel had experienced in the desert. The Lord provided water for them. Then, he rained down manna from heaven. But, not that long after these heavenly interventions, having moved on in their journey, they thirsted again. And, sadly they sinned again. They complained to Moses "'Why did you bring us out of Egypt ...only to make us, our children, and our livestock, die of thirst?'

How fickle we can become when our own life seems to run into dry patches. Even if we have seen the miracles of the Lord in times past, we too can turn away from the Lord. As we continue through this penitential season of Lent, this is a good time to assess our own attitude.

The Psalmist David, in our response from Psalm 95 gives us a way to stay focused on the Lord and maintain our gratitude and the living faith which engenders. That way is to continually praise Him. To express our gratitude. To worship and adore him. Notice he refers back to our first reading and warns against "hardness of heart". Let us examine our own hearts before the Lord.

2. The Apostle Paul writes this letter of instruction to the early Christians in Rome to help them understand the deeper meaning of their Salvation in Jesus Christ. Remember, these early followers of Jesus were men and women just like us. In the chapter before the one from which our text is taken, he had reminded them of Abraham as an example of genuine faith. Now, he instructs them that the Lord Jesus died for us while we were sinners, and in Jesus Christ, we are now justified by faith.

The Catholic Catechism explains: "Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life. Grace is a participation in the life of God."

We are also justified by faith, and by cooperating with the grace we receive from the Lord, through prayer, through His word and through the Sacraments, we are called to grow in holiness. Lent is a time to reflect on how we are doing.

3. The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well is one of the most powerful of the many encounters recorded in the Gospel narratives. Jesus had come, first, to the Jewish people of Israel. Of course, the Lord's plan was always for all of the Nations to return to Him.



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But it was to happen through His revealing it to his chosen people Israel. The Samaritans and the Jews were enemies.

But Jesus, the Incarnate Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Savior sent from the Father, was sent for all the Nations. He not only travels into Samaritan territory, he speaks to and, drinks the water offered, by a Samaritan Woman.

And, he reads her heart. He knew her past. He made that clear.

Sir,' said the woman, 'give me some of that water, so that I may never be thirsty or come here again to draw water.' 'Go and call your husband,' said Jesus to her, 'and come back here.' The woman answered, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right to say, "I have no husband"; for although you have had five, the one you now have is not your husband. You spoke the truth there.' 'I see you are a prophet, sir,' said the woman.

He speaks to her of the Living Waters of Salvation and reveals Himself to her as the Messiah. And, she encounters the Lord and is saved. Not only that, but she tells the people of the Village. The Samaritans welcome the Lord and come to believe in Him.

The Lord knows our hearts as well. And, He offers us the Living Waters of Salvation. How are we responding?



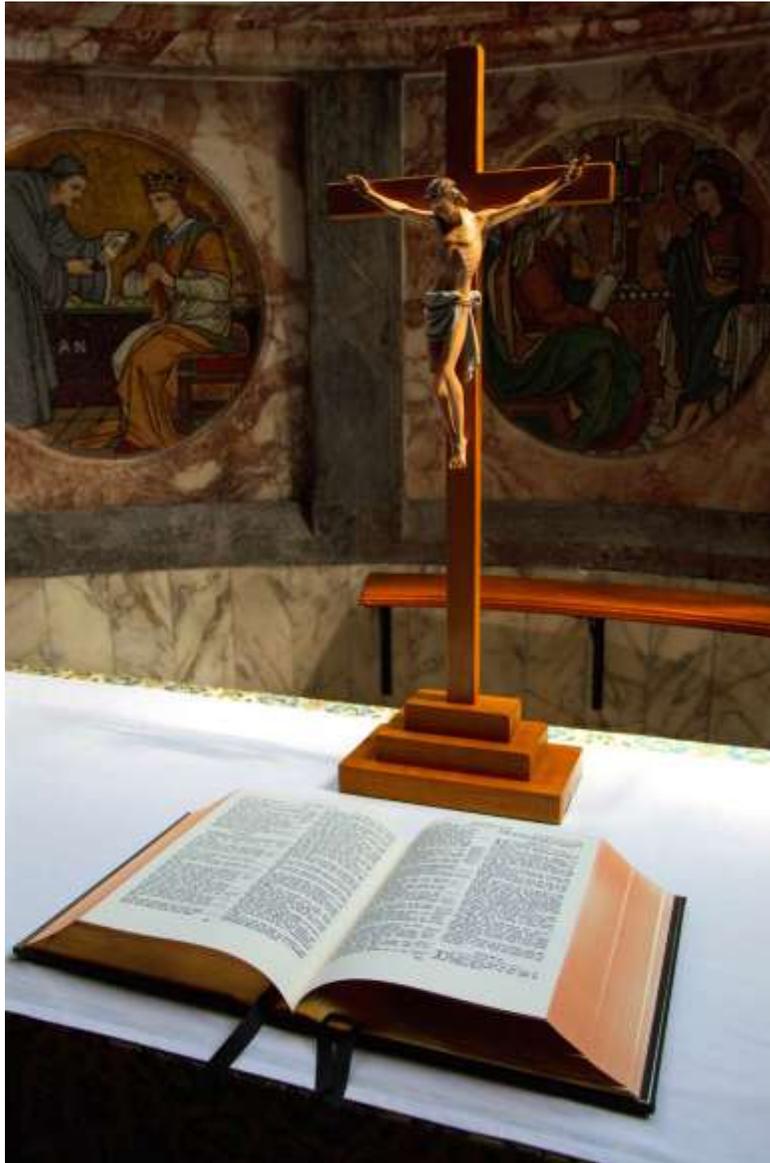
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 9, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Monday, March 9th, 2026

### Reading 1, Second Kings 5:1-15

1 Naaman, army commander to the king of Aram, was a man who enjoyed his master's respect and favour, since through him Yahweh had granted victory to the Aramaeans.

2 But the man suffered from a virulent skin-disease. Now, on one of their raids into Israelite territory, the Aramaeans had carried off a little girl, who became a servant of Naaman's wife.

3 She said to her mistress, 'If only my master would approach the prophet of Samaria! He would cure him of his skin-disease.'

4 Naaman went and told his master. 'This and this', he reported, 'is what the girl from Israel has said.'

5 'Go by all means,' said the king of Aram, 'I shall send a letter to the king of Israel.' So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten festal robes.

6 He presented the letter to the king of Israel. It read, 'With this letter, I am sending my servant Naaman to you for you to cure him of his skin-disease.'

7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes. 'Am I a god to give death and life,' he said, 'for him to send a man to me and ask me to cure him of his skin-disease? Listen to this and take note of it and see how he intends to pick a quarrel with me.'

8 When Elisha heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent word to the king, 'Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, and he will find there is a prophet in Israel.'

9 So Naaman came with his team and chariot and drew up at the door of Elisha's house.

10 And Elisha sent him a messenger to say, 'Go and bathe seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will become clean once more.'

11 But Naaman was indignant and went off, saying, 'Here was I, thinking he would be sure to come out to me, and stand there, and call on the name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hand over the spot and cure the part that was diseased.'

12 Surely, Abana and Parpar, the rivers of Damascus, are better than any water in Israel? Could I not bathe in them and become clean?' And he turned round and went off in a rage.



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13 But his servants approached him and said, 'Father, if the prophet had asked you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? All the more reason, then, when he says to you, "Bathe, and you will become clean." '

14 So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, as Elisha had told him to do. And his flesh became clean once more like the flesh of a little child.

15 Returning to Elisha with his whole escort, he went in and, presenting himself, said, 'Now I know that there is no God anywhere on earth except in Israel. Now, please, accept a present from your servant.'

## **Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4**

2 I thirst for God, the living God; when shall I go to see the face of God?

3 I have no food but tears day and night, as all day long I am taunted, 'Where is your God?'

3 Send out your light and your truth; they shall be my guide, to lead me to your holy mountain to the place where you dwell.

4 Then I shall go to the altar of God, to the God of my joy. I will rejoice and praise you on the harp, O God, my God.

## **Gospel, Luke 4:24-30**

24 And he went on, 'In truth I tell you, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.

25 'There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah's day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land,

26 but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a town in Sidonia.

27 And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many suffering from virulent skin-diseases in Israel, but none of these was cured -- only Naaman the Syrian.'

28 When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged.

29 They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him off the cliff,

30 but he passed straight through the crowd and walked away.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 9, 2026

1. Having received the prophetic mantle of Elijah, the prophet Elisha is a man of miracles, a prophet in a deep relationship with the God of Israel. And, in our first reading, Naaman, a servant of the King of Syria, a leper, is sent by the King to the King of Israel to seek a miraculous cure. The King of Israel knows he does not have the power to work miracles and thinks the Syrian King is picking a quarrel.

But, Elisha the prophet catches wind of the consternation of the King of Israel and tells the King "Let him come now to me, that he may know there is a prophet in Israel". He instructs the leper Naaman to bathe seven times on the Jordan in order to be healed. That arouses the pride of the Syrian "Are not the rivers of Damascus better than the waters of Israel". Ah...human pride.

Following the advice of his servants, even though he was about to leave and not follow the direction of Elisha, he overcomes his pride and bathes in the Jordan seven times, as the Prophet directed. And, he is healed.

This event not only shows that from the very beginning, the Lord intended that all Nations experience His plan of Salvation, through Israel. It also gives all of us a spiritual lesson for our lives. It calls us to overcome one of the great obstacles to growth in the Christian life, the sin of pride. The early fathers of the Church often called sin a sort of spiritual leprosy. We are all, subject to its ravages. The way to be healed of it is through repentance, turning away from pride, and turning to the Lord. How are we doing this Lent?

2. In our beautiful Psalm response, the Psalmist David speaks of thirsting for God, the living God. In the midst of being taunted by those who say there is no God, he stands firm. He finds his joy at the altar of the Lord. Do we? We live in a godless age, and those of us who seek to follow the true God and the true Church, often suffer taunts and derision. Like David, we need to thirst for God and satisfy that spiritual thirst at the Altar.
3. In the Gospel text from St. Luke appointed for today's Holy Mass, Jesus had just returned from the desert where he overcame the temptations and taunts of the devil. He begins his teaching and preaching ministry at Nazareth, his hometown, and is rejected by the people after, in the synagogue he quotes the Messianic Hebrew Prophet Isaiah and reads what is found in Isaiah 61 about the Messiah. He says this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing".



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When the people reject him, he points back to the rejection of both the Prophet Elijah and the Prophet Elisha. The townspeople literally seek to kill Him by throwing Him off a cliff. But He walks right through their midst.

The Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, is meant to continue His Messianic and Prophetic mission. When the Church is faithful, and does not compromise with the age, it often faces hostility.

Jesus told His followers they would be treated as He was and to not be surprised. So, it will be with you and I ...if we stay faithful to the Lord in this age - an age that has all but rejected God, seeking to, in a sense, throw Him off a cliff by denying His very existence. Are we facing opposition because of our Catholic faith? If not, maybe we are not really living it.



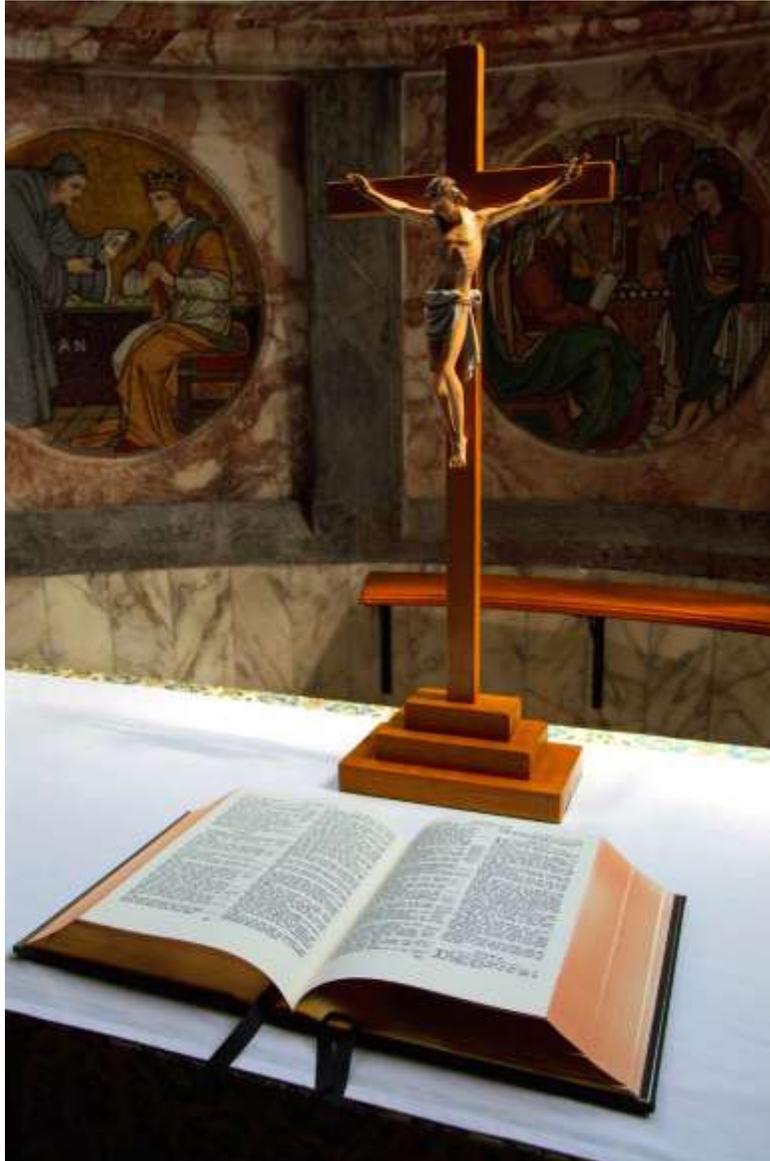
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 10, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Tuesday, March 10th, 2026

### Reading 1, Daniel 3:25, 34-43

25 Azariah stood in the heart of the fire, praying aloud thus:

34 Do not abandon us for ever, for the sake of your name; do not repudiate your covenant,

35 do not withdraw your favour from us, for the sake of Abraham, your friend, of Isaac, your servant, and of Israel, your holy one,

36 to whom you promised to make their descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the grains of sand on the seashore.

37 Lord, we have become the least of all nations, we are put to shame today throughout the world, because of our sins.

38 We now have no leader, no prophet, no prince, no burnt offering, no sacrifice, no oblation, no incense, no place where we can make offerings to you

39 and win your favour. But may the contrite soul, the humbled spirit, be as acceptable to you

40 as burnt offerings of rams and bullocks, as thousands of fat lambs: such let our sacrifice be to you today, and may it please you that we follow you whole-heartedly, since those who trust in you will not be shamed.

41 And now we put our whole heart into following you, into fearing you and seeking your face once more.

42 Do not abandon us to shame but treat us in accordance with your gentleness, in accordance with the greatness of your mercy.

43 Rescue us in accordance with your wonderful deeds and win fresh glory for your name, O Lord.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

4 DIRECT me in your ways, Yahweh, and teach me your paths.

5 ENCOURAGE me to walk in your truth and teach me since you are the God who saves me. FOR my hope is in you all day long -- such is your generosity, Yahweh.

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6 GOODNESS and faithful love have been yours for ever, Yahweh, do not forget them.

7 HOLD not my youthful sins against me, but remember me as your faithful love dictates.

8 INTEGRITY and generosity are marks of Yahweh for he brings sinners back to the path.

9 JUDICIOUSLY he guides the humble, instructing the poor in his way.

## **Gospel, Matthew 18:21-35**

21 Then Peter went up to him and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?'

22 Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.

23 'And so the kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants.

24 When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents;

25 he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt.

26 At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet, with the words, "Be patient with me and I will pay the whole sum."

27 And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt.

28 Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow-servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him, saying, "Pay what you owe me."

29 His fellow-servant fell at his feet and appealed to him, saying, "Be patient with me and I will pay you."

30 But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt.

31 His fellow-servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him.

32 Then the master sent for the man and said to him, "You wicked servant, I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me.

33 Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow-servant just as I had pity on you?"

34 And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt.

35 And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.'



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## Questions for Reflection for March 10, 2026

1. Our first reading requires a bit of context for us to give it application in our own lives during our Lenten journey of conversion.

Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, has besieged the City of Jerusalem. Four young Israelite men have been chosen to be educated in his court and later stand before this pagan king, after three years of study and servitude. Azariah, of the tribe of Judah, was one of them. The others were Daniel, Hannaniah and Michael. Their names are changed.

In the account in the furnace, from which we receive the prayer, Azariah has been renamed Abednego.

This pagan king had a dream which he was troubled by and he sought the seers of his pagan empire to interpret. They could not do so. So, Daniel, known for his ability to do so, was asked by the King to give him the interpretation. The King was pleased.

But, in a wrong response to the interpretation, this pagan king built an idol out of gold and asked three of Daniels companions to worship it. They refused to do so.

The rest of our reading is the prayer of Azariah. How are we responding to the invitation?

Azariah, now known as Abednego, standing in the midst of a fire intended to consume him, pouring out his heart to the true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel.

God answered the prayer revealing His glory, not only to the young men, but to the three Hebrew men who refused to bow to idols.

The content of the prayer reflects the disposition of a saint, a man or woman who is well aware of their own sin and weakness - BUT even more aware of the goodness and Mercy of God. Willing to face unjust persecution rather than deny God or His truths.

How do we respond to the even mild persecution we receive because we are Christians? What "false idols" of this new pagan age are we being asked to worship?

2. The Psalmist continues, in his beautiful song, which is our response, to invite us to reflect on our own standing before God.

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As we prepare to soon come forward and receive the Most Holy Eucharist. How are we responding to the invitation to stay faithful to the Lord as we continue on the Way of the Christian life?

We need to continually repent and seek the help of the Lord. We need to be directed by Him in His Ways. We need His grace, His divine life. That grace is made available to us through so many channels. In His word: Do we read it?

In the sacraments: Do we frequent them?

In a disciplined life of prayer: Do we have one?

Now is the time to begin.

3. In response to this blunt question posed by Peter, Jesus gives the disciples a critical instruction. One which we, his contemporary disciples, desperately need to hear.

Remember, numbers have a vital role to play in biblical language. Here seventy times seven means there is no limit to how many times we are to forgive. Primarily because we are to love as God loves. He always forgives.

The magnitude of this teaching to the early Jewish followers of Jesus cannot be overemphasized. As explained by a priest I greatly respect, Fr James Faraglia, and I quote:

"It was Rabbinic teaching that a person was required to forgive only three times. This teaching was based upon the Book of the Prophet Amos. It was deduced that God forgives the sinner three times and punishes the fourth offense. No one can be more generous than God, so it was held that forgiveness was limited to three offenses.

Peter thought that he was being more than generous by asking if one should forgive seven times. Jesus' answer must have surprised him when he said, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven." Biblically, the figure of seventy times seven is equivalent to always.

Jesus proceeds with a parable. The points of the parable are very clear. The parable illustrates the contrast between one person's calculating approach to forgiveness and God's infinite mercy. The parable also shows us that nothing that people do to us can compare with what we have done to God.

If God can forgive us for all of our sins, then we must also forgive each person for the wrongs that they have committed against us. Finally, in order to obtain God's forgiveness, we must forgive."

God is never far away. In fact, He is always present to us. But He invites the response of our freedom, our saying Yes to living in communion with Him. In our response, we become more and more like Him.

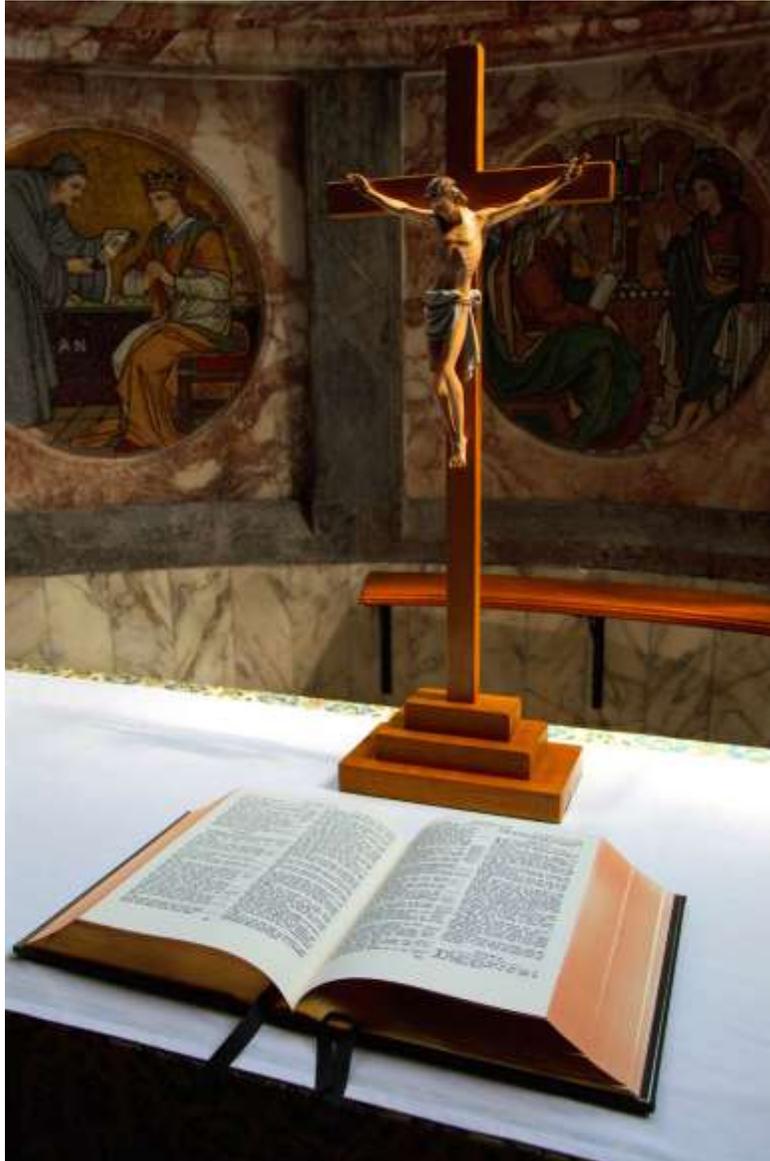
How often do we forgive?

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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 11, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Wednesday, March 11th, 2026

### Reading 1, Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

1 'And now, Israel, listen to the laws and customs which I am teaching you today, so that, by observing them, you may survive to enter and take possession of the country which Yahweh, God of your ancestors, is giving you.

5 Look: as Yahweh my God commanded me, I have taught you laws and customs, for you to observe in the country of which you are going to take possession.

6 Keep them, put them into practice, and other peoples will admire your wisdom and prudence. Once they know what all these laws are, they will exclaim, "No other people is as wise and prudent as this great nation!"

7 And indeed, what great nation has its gods as near as Yahweh our God is to us whenever we call to him?

8 And what great nation has laws and customs as upright as the entirety of this Law which I am laying down for you today?

9 'But take care, as you value your lives! Do not forget the things which you yourselves have seen, or let them slip from your heart as long as you live; teach them, rather, to your children and to your children's children.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20

12 Praise Yahweh, Jerusalem, Zion, praise your God.

13 For he gives strength to the bars of your gates, he blesses your children within you,

15 He sends his word to the earth, his command runs quickly,

16 he spreads the snow like flax, strews hoarfrost like ashes,

19 He reveals his word to Jacob, his statutes and judgements to Israel.

20 For no other nation has he done this, no other has known his judgements.



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## **Gospel, Matthew 5:17-19**

17 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them.

18 In truth I tell you, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, is to disappear from the Law until all its purpose is achieved.

19 Therefore, anyone who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of Heaven; but the person who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of Heaven.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 11, 2026

1. The words Moses speaks to the people of Israel are spoken with the authority of God Himself. He was God's messenger. So close was Moses to the Lord that we read in the Book of Exodus "Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." (Ex 33:11)

It is these commands, and the willingness of the people to obey them, meditate upon them, and hand them on to the children, which made Israel unique among the Nations. She was chosen by the Lord to be his instrument, through which His loving plan for every Nation was to be revealed.

The Church is, in a sense, a New Israel. Christians are grafted into the Vine through Jesus Christ. All of the promises made to Israel and through her prophets are fulfilled in Jesus.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, citing Jesus' own words, as recorded in Matthew 5:17-19, explains it this way:

"At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus issued a solemn warning in which he presented God's law, given on Sinai during the first covenant, in light of the grace of the New Covenant:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets: I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law, until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

The Catechism continues:

"Jesus, Israel's Messiah and therefore the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, was to fulfill the Law by keeping it in its all-embracing detail - according to his own words, down to "the least of these commandments".

He is in fact the only one who could keep it perfectly. On their own admission the Jews were never able to observe the Law in its entirety without violating the least of its precepts. This is why every year on the Day of Atonement the children of Israel ask God's forgiveness for their transgressions of the Law. The Law indeed makes up one inseparable whole, and St. James recalls, "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it."



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How do we view the ten commandments and the Law revealed through Moses?

2. The Psalmist sings of the special role which Israel was given in the plan of God. He calls the Jewish people, the people of the Covenant, to praise Him for having chosen them to have this special relationship. This is why the Psalms were such an integral part of the life of the Jewish people. And, this is why Christians, grafted into the promises to Israel and inheritors of the promises to Abraham our Father in faith, have also given them such a prominence in our own daily prayer and worship.

With that in mind. How do we view the responsorial Psalm at Mass?

Do we listen to the words? Do we sing or chant or even say the response?

Do we see ourselves in the relationship David sings of with such affection?

Do we regularly read the Psalms?

3. In the Gospel appointed for this Lenten weekday, the vital role which the law of Moses still plays in the plan of God manifested in the Church is emphasized by the proclamation of these strong words from Jesus to the Disciples:

"Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. In truth I tell you, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, is to disappear from the Law until all its purpose is achieved.

"Therefore, anyone who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of Heaven; but the person who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of Heaven."

We are His contemporary disciples. Are we listening?

The Catholic Catechism, citing several New Testament passages, also helps us understand this vital teaching:

"Jesus did not abolish the Law of Sinai, but rather fulfilled it (cf. Mt 5:17-19) with such perfection (cf. Jn 8:46) that he revealed its ultimate meaning (cf.: Mt 5:33) and redeemed the transgressions against it (cf. Heb 9:15). (CCC #592)



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How often do we read the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures in the Bible? How often do we use them as food for our own prayer life? Do we take the time to study them? Can we recite the ten commandments?

If not, Lent is a good time change.



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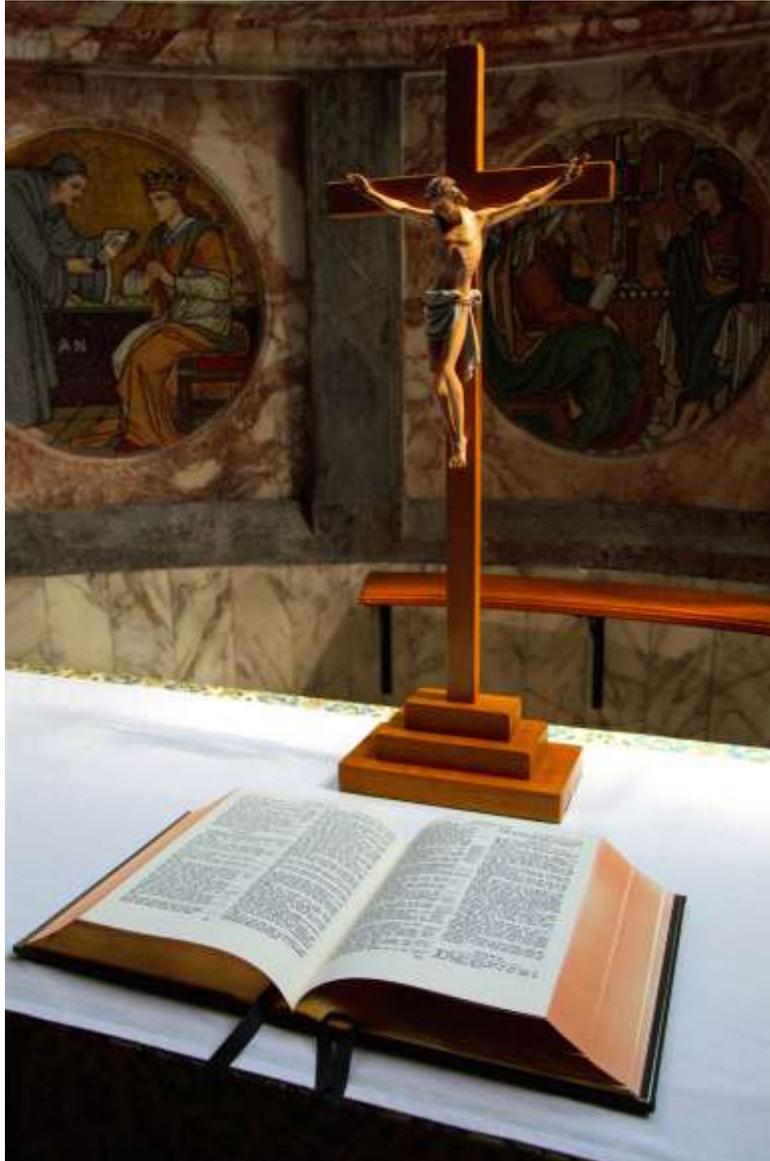
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 12, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Thursday, March 12th, 2026

### Reading 1, Jeremiah 7:23-28

23 My one command to them was this: Listen to my voice, then I will be your God and you shall be my people. In everything, follow the way that I mark out for you, and you shall prosper.

24 But they did not listen, they did not pay attention; they followed their own devices, their own stubborn and wicked inclinations, and got worse rather than better.

25 From the day your ancestors left Egypt until today, I have sent you all my servants the prophets, persistently sending them day after day.

26 But they have not listened to me, have not paid attention; they have deliberately resisted, behaving worse than their ancestors.

27 So you will tell them all this, but they will not listen to you; you will call them, but they will not answer you."

28 Then you are to say to them, "This is the nation that will neither listen to the voice of Yahweh its God nor take correction. Sincerity is no more, it has vanished from their mouths.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

1 Come, let us cry out with joy to Yahweh, acclaim the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving, acclaim him with music.

6 Come, let us bow low and do reverence; kneel before Yahweh who made us!

7 For he is our God, and we the people of his sheepfold, the flock of his hand. If only you would listen to him today!

8 Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as at the time of Massah in the desert,

9 when your ancestors challenged me, put me to the test, and saw what I could do!

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## Gospel, Luke 11:14-23

14 He was driving out a devil and it was dumb; and it happened that when the devil had gone out the dumb man spoke, and the people were amazed.

15 But some of them said, 'It is through Beelzebul, the prince of devils, that he drives devils out.'

16 Others asked him, as a test, for a sign from heaven;

17 but, knowing what they were thinking, he said to them, 'Any kingdom which is divided against itself is heading for ruin, and house collapses against house.

18 So, too, with Satan: if he is divided against himself, how can his kingdom last? - since you claim that it is through Beelzebul that I drive devils out.

19 Now if it is through Beelzebul that I drive devils out, through whom do your own sons drive them out? They shall be your judges, then.

20 But if it is through the finger of God that I drive devils out, then the kingdom of God has indeed caught you unawares.

21 So long as a strong man fully armed guards his own home, his goods are undisturbed;

22 but when someone stronger than himself attacks and defeats him, the stronger man takes away all the weapons he relied on and shares out his spoil.

23 'Anyone who is not with me is against me; and anyone who does not gather in with me throws away.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 12, 2026

1. The Lord speaks to His people through the Prophet Jeremiah and we hear a portion of that dialogue in the first reading appointed for today's Mass. "...follow the way that I mark out for you and you shall prosper"

Sadly, they did not listen. That is obvious by their behavior. Following the Way of the Lord is about more than a verbal assent. It calls for a changed lifestyle.

The Lord reminds His people that he sent them the prophets, gave them the law... "but their stubborn and wicked inclinations got worse". The root of those inclinations is sin. Sin separates us from God, from one another and it separates us within ourselves.

The Good News is that, in the fullness of time, as the Apostle Paul tells the Galatians, God sent His Son. "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (Gal. 4:4-7)

Yet, we still have an inclination to sin, to making the wrong choice. The Catholic Catechism calls it concupiscence. And I quote from paragraph 405 of the Catechism concerning original sin:

"Although it is proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called concupiscence". Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle."

During Lent, we are invited to honestly examine ourselves and bring to light those areas where we need to repent and obtain grace, freely given, in a special way, through the Sacraments of the Church.

Are we doing this? It's not too late.

2. Psalm 95 recalls an event an incident at Massah where the Israelites argued with Moses over water. The word Massah means testing. The word Meribah means quarreling. David is warning Gods people not to test the Lord. Not to quarrel with Him and His loving ways.

Rather, David sings " let us bow low and do reverence;

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kneel before Yahweh who made us!

For he is our God, and we the people of his sheepfold, the flock of his hand."

How is our attitude toward following the Way of the Lord? Do we trust that His way is always the best way? Do we quarrel or, do we kneel?

3. In the powerful encounter we heard proclaimed in today's Gospel text from St. Luke's account, we encounter Jesus dramatically delivering this man from his impediment - and from the bondage which the devil himself had attached to it after all these years.

In a sermon he preached on this Gospel text, St John Chrysostom noted "this man was unable to present his request himself because he was dumb; he was unable to ask others to do it either, because the devil had tied his tongue, and together with his tongue he had bound up his soul"

So, the Lord, out of His passionate desire for our freedom, delivered this man and set him free!

What should have been a cause for rejoicing and worship, is anything but.

In fact, the onlookers we encounter in this reading have so hardened their hearts that they attribute the working of the Holy Spirit to the activity of the devil. Very close to, if not an example of, the unforgiveable sin, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

The Catholic Catechism, citing chapter twelve of Matthews Gospel, recounts Jesus' warning about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and I quote:

"Therefore, I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven."<sup>136</sup> There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit.<sup>137</sup> Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss. (CCC # 1864)

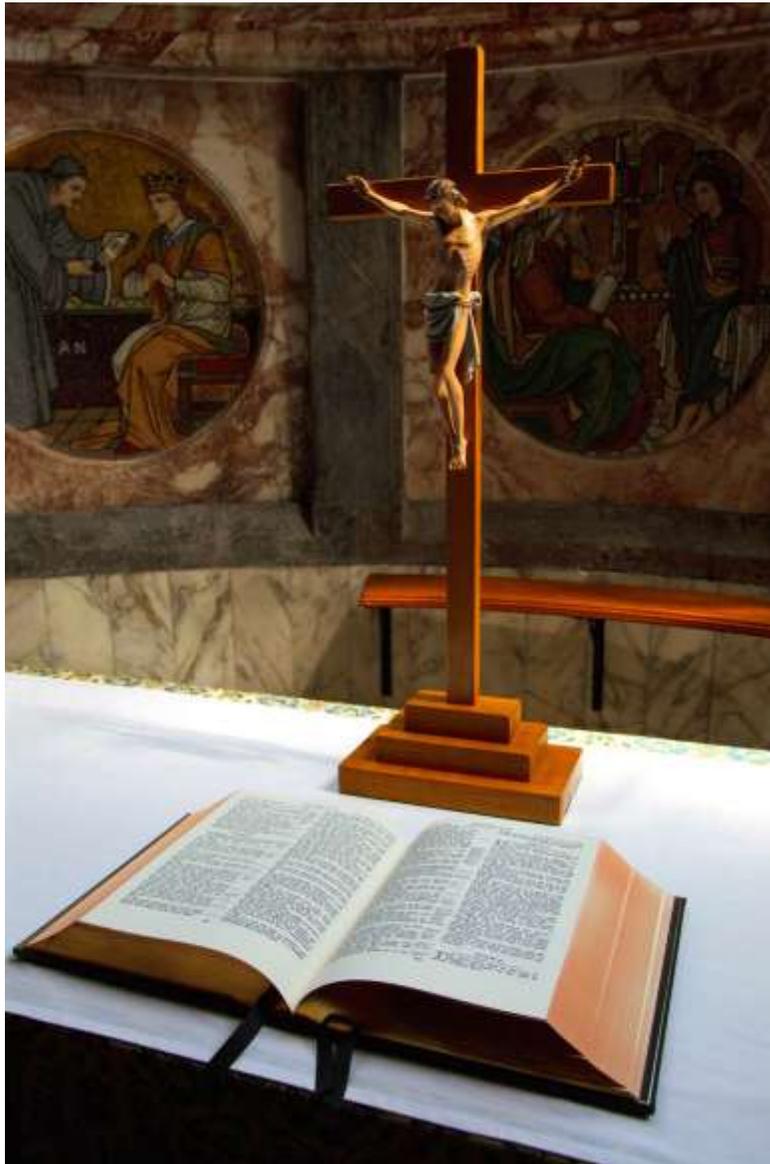
A sobering warning indeed. Sin is never excused, it is forgiven. But that requires sincere repentance.

Do we regularly examine our own lives and repent of sin?

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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection March 13, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Friday, March 13th, 2026

### Reading 1, Hosea 14:2-10

2 Israel, come back to Yahweh your God your guilt was the cause of your downfall.

3 Provide yourself with words and come back to Yahweh. Say to him, 'Take all guilt away and give us what is good, instead of bulls we will dedicate to you our lips.'

4 Assyria cannot save us, we will not ride horses any more, or say, "Our God!" to our own handiwork, for you are the one in whom orphans find compassion.'

5 I shall cure them of their disloyalty, I shall love them with all my heart, for my anger has turned away from them.

6 I shall fall like dew on Israel, he will bloom like the lily and thrust out roots like the cedar of Lebanon;

7 he will put out new shoots, he will have the beauty of the olive tree and the fragrance of Lebanon.

8 They will come back to live in my shade; they will grow wheat again, they will make the vine flourish, their wine will be as famous as Lebanon's.

9 What has Ephraim to do with idols any more when I hear him and watch over him? I am like an evergreen cypress, you owe your fruitfulness to me.

10 Let the wise understand these words, let the intelligent grasp their meaning, for Yahweh's ways are straight and the upright will walk in them, but sinners will stumble.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 81:6-8, 8-9, 10-11, 14, 17

6 'I freed his shoulder from the burden, his hands were able to lay aside the labourer's basket.

7 You cried out in your distress, so I rescued you. 'Hidden in the storm, I answered you, I tested you at the waters of Meribah.

8 Listen, my people, while I give you warning; Israel, if only you would listen to me!

9 'You shall have no strange gods, shall worship no alien god.



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10 I, Yahweh, am your God, who brought you here from Egypt, you have only to open your mouth for me to fill it.

11 'My people would not listen to me, Israel would have none of me.

14 at one stroke I would subdue their enemies, turn my hand against their opponents.

## **Gospel, Mark 12:28-34**

28 One of the scribes who had listened to them debating appreciated that Jesus had given a good answer and put a further question to him, 'Which is the first of all the commandments?'

29 Jesus replied, 'This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is the one, only Lord,

30 and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.

31 The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'

32 The scribe said to him, 'Well spoken, Master; what you have said is true, that he is one and there is no other.

33 To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself, this is far more important than any burnt offering or sacrifice.'

34 Jesus, seeing how wisely he had spoken, said, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' And after that no one dared to question him any more.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 13, 2026

1. Throughout the Sacred Scripture, Old and New Testaments, we read of God's love for His people. And, through our Baptism, we are now members of the People of God. The prophet Hosea, in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament, is one of the most tender in his presentation of that truth.

Our first reading is an example of this faithful Love of God, even when His people have been unfaithful. The Lord even instructs Israel on how to pray. He invites their repentance because He always wants to forgive them and set them free.

In the last verse of today's reading, the Lord speaks through the Prophet words which we need to hear and claim as our own in this third week of the Lenten season:

"Let the wise understand these words, let the intelligent grasp their meaning, for Yahweh's ways are straight and the upright will walk in them, but sinners will stumble."

Do we believe them? If so, are we responding?

2. The Psalmist David knew, deeply within him, of the truth concerning these words spoken by the Lord through the Prophet Hosea. In this excerpt from Psalm 81, he draws our attention to the ongoing struggle Israel faced, and we all face, the struggle to resist idolatry, in all of its forms.

We may hear the word and think of figures of false gods made out of metal, much like the ones we read of in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament.

Listen to these words from the Catholic Catechism, from paragraphs 2113 and 2114:

"Idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith. Idolatry consists in divinizing what is not God. Man commits idolatry whenever he honors and reveres a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons (for example, satanism), power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc. Jesus says, "You cannot serve God and mammon."

"Many martyrs died for not adoring "the Beast" refusing even to simulate such worship. Idolatry rejects the unique Lordship of God; it is therefore incompatible with communion with God.<sup>46</sup>



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"Human life finds its unity in the adoration of the one God. The commandment to worship the Lord alone integrates man and saves him from an endless disintegration. Idolatry is a perversion of man's innate religious sense. An idolater is someone who "transfers his indestructible notion of God to anything other than God."

What are the idols in our own lives?

3. Jesus is in a dialogue with a religious leader in the Gospel text we heard proclaimed today from the account of St. Mark. He affirms the great Shema of Israel from Deuteronomy chapter 6. But notice, Jesus says "You are not far from the Kingdom of God".

So, what else is need?

The word kingdom can also be translated Reign of God. Once again, we are called by the Holy Spirit, through the sacred text, to examine ourselves. Not only our words, but our actions. Are we allowing God to reign over every area of our lives? Are we morally coherent?

Have we separated out our "business life" or "our political participation" from coming under the reign of God?

How about our approach to leisure or entertainment?

Lent is a good time to ask such probing questions. We don't want to be "not far" from the Kingdom of God, do we?



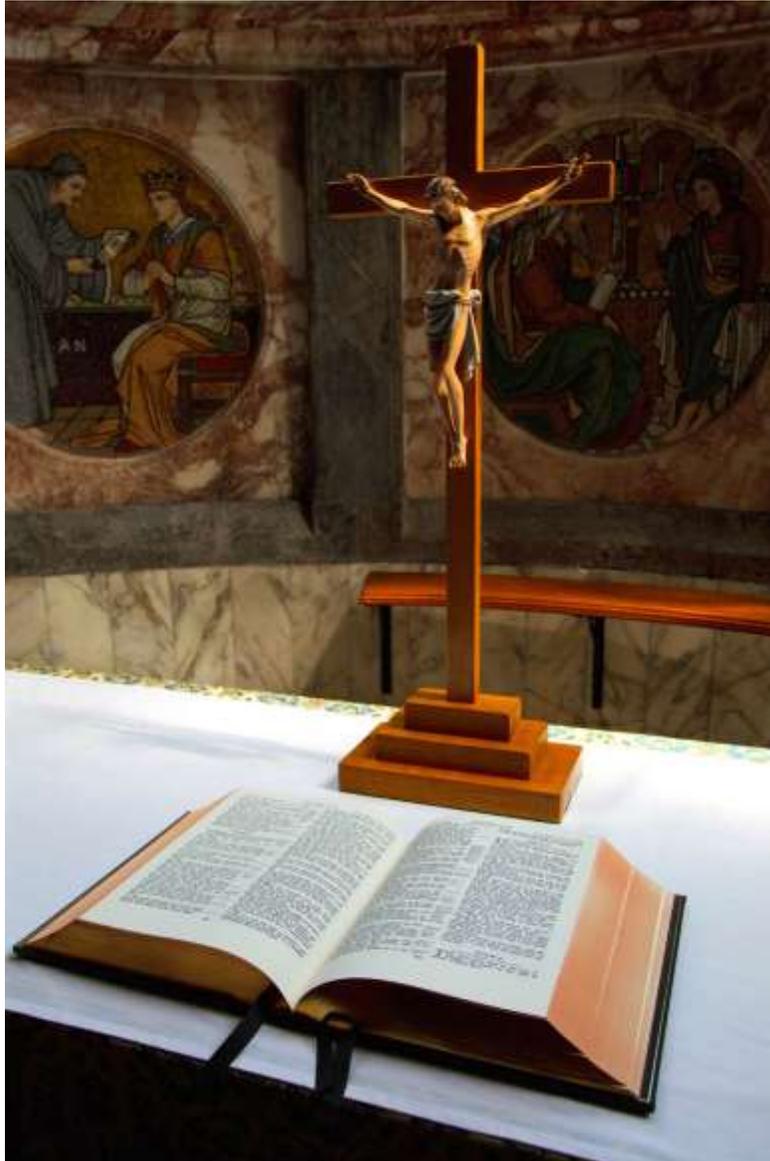
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 14, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Saturday, March 14th, 2026

### Reading 1, Hosea 6:1-6

1 Come, let us return to Yahweh. He has rent us and he will heal us; he has struck us and he will bind up our wounds;

2 after two days he will revive us, on the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his presence.

3 Let us know, let us strive to know Yahweh; that he will come is as certain as the dawn. He will come to us like a shower, like the rain of springtime to the earth.

4 What am I to do with you, Ephraim? What am I to do with you, Judah? For your love is like morning mist, like the dew that quickly disappears.

5 This is why I have hacked them to pieces by means of the prophets, why I have killed them with words from my mouth, why my sentence will blaze forth like the dawn-

6 for faithful love is what pleases me, not sacrifice; knowledge of God, not burnt offerings.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 51:3-4, 18-19, 20-21

3 For I am well aware of my offences, my sin is constantly in mind.

4 Against you, you alone, I have sinned, I have done what you see to be wrong, that you may show your saving justice when you pass sentence, and your victory may appear when you give judgement,

18 In your graciousness do good to Zion, rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then you will delight in upright sacrifices,-burnt offerings and whole oblations -- and young bulls will be offered on your altar.

### Gospel, Luke 18:9-14

9 He spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being upright and despised everyone else,

10 'Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector.



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11 The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, "I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like everyone else, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here.

12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get."

13 The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

14 This man, I tell you, went home again justified; the other did not. For everyone who raises himself up will be humbled, but anyone who humbles himself will be raised up.'



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## Questions for Reflection for March 14, 2026

1. The tenderness of the love of God, expressed in the words of the Hebrew Prophet Hosea, cries out for a fitting response from us.

God corrects out of love. I have a priest friend who regularly reminds people whom he is preparing for the first encounter with the Sacrament of Penance, "God is not mad at you. He wants you free from the bondage of sin so you can follow Him and encounter the true happiness of heaven, even on this earth."

Hear this call from our first reading:

"Come, let us return to Yahweh. He has rent us and he will heal us;  
he has struck us and he will bind up our wounds;  
after two days he will revive us, on the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his presence.

Let us know, let us strive to know Yahweh;  
that he will come is as certain as the dawn. He will come to us like a shower, like the rain of springtime to the earth."

Let us respond accordingly.

2. David the Psalmist shows us how to deal with sin. Not deny it. Not make excuses for it. But, own it and repent. Take responsibility. Confess it and experience the freedom that comes from experiencing the fullness of grace which accompanies such a sincere repentance. One of the Sacraments the Church calls us back to during Lent is the Sacrament of confession, also called penance and reconciliation.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that "Through the sacraments of Christian initiation, man receives the new life of Christ. Now we carry this life "in earthen vessels," and it remains "hidden with Christ in God." We are still in our "earthly tent," subject to suffering, illness, and death. This new life as a child of God can be weakened and even lost by sin".

"The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of



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the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick." (CCC #1420, 1421)

The sections which follow provide instruction on the origins, purpose, efficacy and gift of this Sacrament, replete with references to the Bible, the Tradition of the Church and pastoral insights. Penance is a Sacrament of healing because it sets us free from the wounds of sin and makes us new, fresh. It is the continual invitation to begin again. Have we made a good confession this Lent?

3. Which person are we in this story of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector recounted in today's Gospel? Perhaps a bit of both?

I have a priest friend who once reminded me that not ALL the Pharisees were blinded by their self-righteousness. Not all of them failed to recognize that the One whom they so often sought to correct was God Incarnate.

And, my friend was correct. The Pharisees were a part of a genuine religious reform movement which sought to bring faithful Jews back to living the fullness of the Law of Moses, precisely so that they could witness to the truth of God's loving plan to others.

In using this parable, the Lord wanted to communicate a danger which can afflict all of us, the temptation of succumbing to self-righteousness and pride. The Pharisee stands as a warning to anyone of us who can so easily succumb to that temptation. It is a daily struggle. They prided themselves on their strict adherence to the Law - and believed they were being devout.

Yet, instead, they became incapable of seeing the Source and Fulfillment of the Law, even as He walked and taught in their midst. We can become such men and women, even without knowing it. People do not decide to be a Pharisee voluntarily. It subtly happens. The greatest defense we have is to stay in a fresh and ongoing intimate communion with the Lord. This is a particularly dangerous temptation for those who consider themselves to be devout. It is an easy trap to fall into. And, fall is the operative word. The problem is, we may not know it is even happening to us before we find ourselves awakened to its corrosive effects through the bad fruit it bears, within and around us.

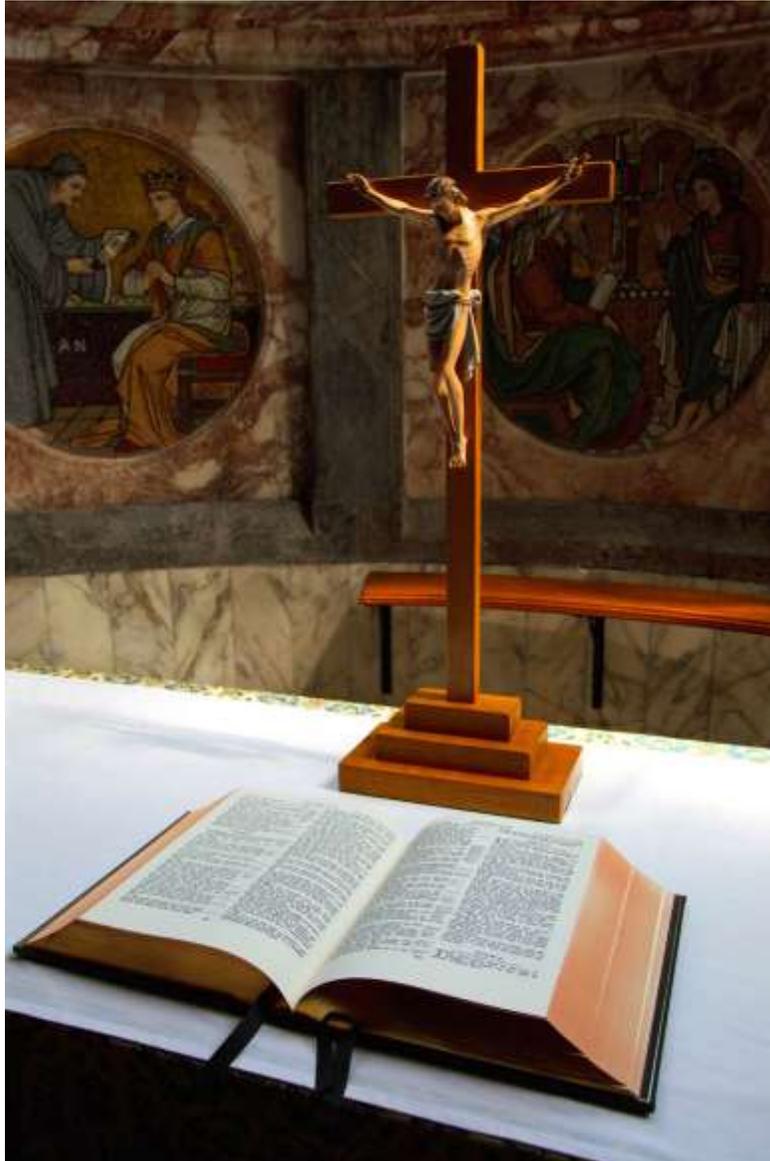
We are often called to deal with our own inner Pharisee. When we do, the world begins to look different. We see Jesus with the eyes of living faith, and we are changed by the encounter. We are called by Him to be emptied out of ourselves so that we can be filled with His divine life and be used by Him for others.

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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 15, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Sunday, March 15th, 2026

### Reading 1, First Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

1 Yahweh said to Samuel, 'How much longer do you mean to go on mourning over Saul, now that I myself have rejected him as ruler of Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have found myself a king from among his sons.'

6 When they arrived, he looked at Eliab and thought, 'This must be Yahweh's anointed now before him,'

7 but Yahweh said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him; God does not see as human beings see; they look at appearances, but Yahweh looks at the heart.'

10 Jesse thus presented seven of his sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'Yahweh has not chosen these.'

11 He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' Jesse replied, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is looking after the sheep.' Samuel then said to Jesse, 'Send for him, for we shall not sit down to eat until he arrives.'

12 Jesse had him sent for; he had ruddy cheeks, with fine eyes and an attractive appearance. Yahweh said, 'Get up and anoint him: he is the one!'

13 At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him, surrounded by his brothers; and the spirit of Yahweh seized on David from that day onwards. Samuel, for his part, set off and went to Ramah.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

1 [Psalm Of David] Yahweh is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 In grassy meadows he lets me lie. By tranquil streams he leads me

3 to restore my spirit. He guides me in paths of saving justice as befits his name.

4 Even were I to walk in a ravine as dark as death I should fear no danger, for you are at my side. Your staff and your crook are there to soothe me.

5 You prepare a table for me under the eyes of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup brims over.



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6 Kindness and faithful love pursue me every day of my life. I make my home in the house of Yahweh for all time to come.

## **Reading 2, Ephesians 5:8-14**

8 You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; behave as children of light,

9 for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and uprightness and truth.

10 Try to discover what the Lord wants of you,

11 take no part in the futile works of darkness but, on the contrary, show them up for what they are.

12 The things which are done in secret are shameful even to speak of;

13 but anything shown up by the light will be illuminated

14 and anything illuminated is itself a light. That is why it is said: Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

## **Gospel, John 9:1-41**

1 As he went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.

2 His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should have been born blind?'

3 'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered, 'he was born blind so that the works of God might be revealed in him.

4 'As long as day lasts, we must carry out the work of the one who sent me; the night will soon be here when no one can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.'

6 Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man,

7 and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (the name means 'one who has been sent'). So he went off and washed and came back able to see.

8 His neighbours and the people who used to see him before (for he was a beggar) said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?'



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9 Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, but he looks just like him.' The man himself said, 'Yes, I am the one.'

10 So they said to him, 'Then how is it that your eyes were opened?'

11 He answered, 'The man called Jesus made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go off and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I gained my sight.'

12 They asked, 'Where is he?' He answered, 'I don't know.'

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind.

14 It had been a Sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes,

15 so when the Pharisees asked him how he had gained his sight, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.'

16 Then some of the Pharisees said, 'That man cannot be from God: he does not keep the Sabbath.' Others said, 'How can a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was division among them.

17 So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' The man answered, 'He is a prophet.'

18 However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind without first sending for the parents of the man who had gained his sight and

19 asking them, 'Is this man really the son of yours who you say was born blind? If so, how is it that he is now able to see?'

20 His parents answered, 'We know he is our son and we know he was born blind,

21 but how he can see, we don't know, nor who opened his eyes. Ask him. He is old enough: let him speak for himself.'

22 His parents spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to ban from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ.

23 This was why his parents said, 'He is old enough; ask him.'

24 So the Jews sent for the man again and said to him, 'Give glory to God! We are satisfied that this man is a sinner.'



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25 The man answered, 'Whether he is a sinner I don't know; all I know is that I was blind and now I can see.'

26 They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?'

27 He replied, 'I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples yourselves?'

28 At this they hurled abuse at him, 'It is you who are his disciple, we are disciples of Moses:

29 we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't know where he comes from.'

30 The man replied, 'That is just what is so amazing! You don't know where he comes from and he has opened my eyes!

31 We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to people who are devout and do his will.

32 Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of someone born blind;

33 if this man were not from God, he wouldn't have been able to do anything.'

34 They retorted, 'Are you trying to teach us, and you a sinner through and through ever since you were born!' And they ejected him.

35 Jesus heard they had ejected him, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of man?'

36 'Sir,' the man replied, 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.'

37 Jesus said, 'You have seen him; he is speaking to you.'

38 The man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and worshipped him.

39 Jesus said: It is for judgement that I have come into this world, so that those without sight may see and those with sight may become blind.

40 Hearing this, some Pharisees who were present said to him, 'So we are blind, are we?'

41 Jesus replied: If you were blind, you would not be guilty, but since you say, 'We can see,' your guilt remains.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 15, 2026

1. In our first reading we have the wonderful account of the selection of David to succeed King Saul. That choice was made by the Lord. But He sent Samuel the prophet to the house of Jesse to select the man from among seven of Jesse's sons. Jesse brought all of his sons, except David, to meet the Prophet. None of them were the one the Lord had chosen.

The Lord tells Samuel "God does not see as human beings see; they look at appearances, but Yahweh looks at the heart."

Jesse had not brought his youngest son David. He was the one who was to be anointed with Oil by the Prophet and become the King of Israel.

This is the David throughout all of our readings on this the Fourth Sunday of Lent. This is our theme. We need our spiritual eyes opened in order to "see as the Lord sees". As we approach the Triduum, the Holy three days, and as the elect prepare to receive the Easter Sacraments, the Church, as mother and teacher, wants to call each one of us to conversion. The Holy Spirit can open our eyes to see as the Lord sees. But, for that to happen, we need to ask. We need to pray.

2. In his beautiful letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul, in our second reading, is calling the early Christians to reject their former pagan way of life and live in the light of Jesus Christ. He exhorts them...and he exhorts all of us "behave as children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and uprightness and truth."

To be a Christian is to live an entirely new life now, in Jesus Christ and by His grace. We are to reject the deeds of darkness and to be "illuminated". In fact, the early church spoke of Baptism as the Sacrament of enlightenment and illumination.

In its treatment of the Sacrament of Baptism, the Catholic Catechism, citing four powerful Bible verses - Jn 1:9; 1 Thess 5:5; Heb 10:32; Eph 5:8.- explains

"This bath is called enlightenment, because those who receive this [catechetical] instruction are enlightened in their understanding . . . ."Having received in Baptism the Word, "the true light that enlightens every man," the person baptized has been "enlightened," he becomes a "son of light," indeed, he becomes "light" himself:

Every Easter Vigil is an invitation to each one of us to renew our Baptismal promises and choose to walk in the Light of Christ.

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3. In the Gospel appointed for today's Holy Mass we hear of the wonderful healing of the man who was blind from birth. We witness his progressive conversion and acknowledgement of Jesus Christ. We see the rejection of this miracle, this sign of the kingdom by deluded "religious leaders", who, in their own spiritual blindness fail to recognize who Jesus is.

In the Christian tradition we read of the concept of spiritual senses which, in an analogous way, respond to our spiritual progress like the physical senses help us in the material world. One of those is our spiritual vision. We are all blind, in need of the touch of the Lord to open our eyes. No matter what has happened in our past, Jesus walks with us today! He has been raised from the dead. He enters the dusty streets of our daily lives. We need the eyes of living faith to see Him there.



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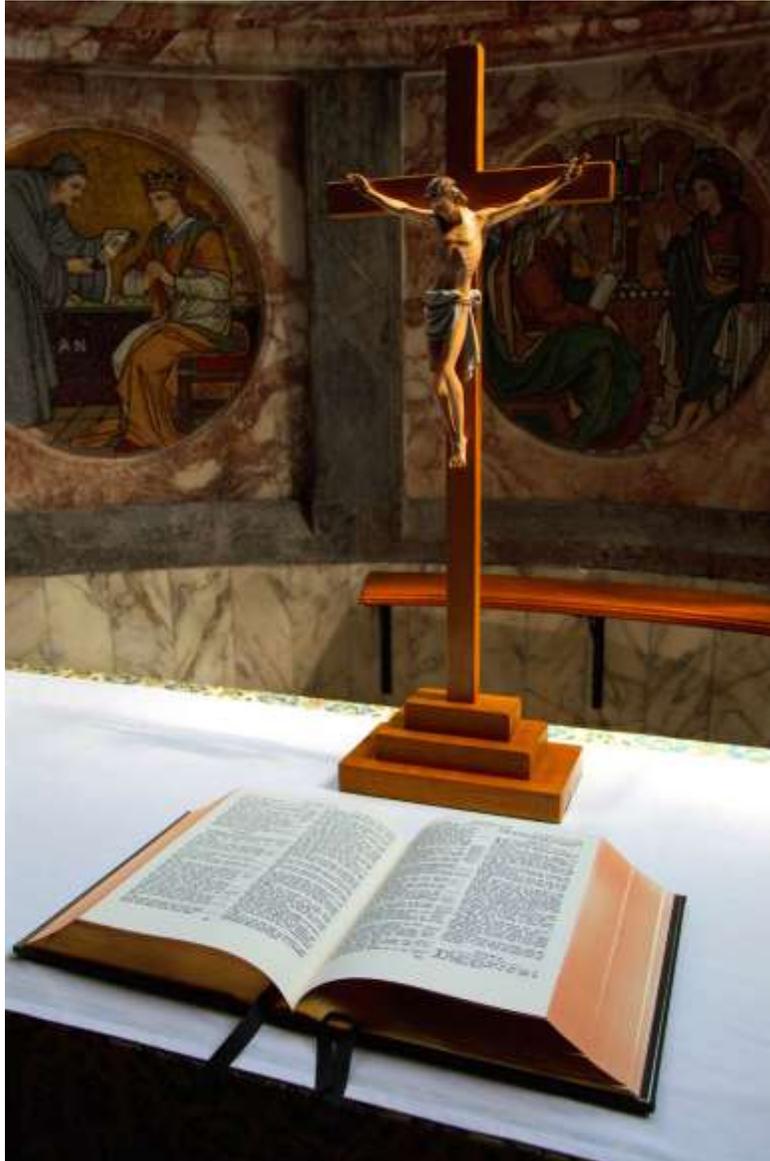
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 16, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Monday, March 16th, 2026

### Reading 1, Isaiah 65:17-21

17 For look, I am going to create new heavens and a new earth, and the past will not be remembered and will come no more to mind.

18 Rather be joyful, be glad for ever at what I am creating, for look, I am creating Jerusalem to be 'Joy' and my people to be 'Gladness'.

19 I shall be joyful in Jerusalem and I shall rejoice in my people. No more will the sound of weeping be heard there, nor the sound of a shriek;

20 never again will there be an infant there who lives only a few days, nor an old man who does not run his full course; for the youngest will die at a hundred, and at a hundred the sinner will be accursed.

21 They will build houses and live in them, they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-13

2 Yahweh, my God, I cried to you for help and you healed me.

4 Make music for Yahweh, all you who are faithful to him, praise his unforgettable holiness.

5 His anger lasts but a moment, his favour through life; In the evening come tears, but with dawn cries of joy.

6 Carefree, I used to think, 'Nothing can ever shake me!'

11 You have turned my mourning into dancing, you have stripped off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

12 So my heart will sing to you unceasingly, Yahweh, my God, I shall praise you for ever.

### Gospel, John 4:43-54

43 When the two days were over Jesus left for Galilee.

44 He himself had declared that a prophet is not honoured in his own home town.

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45 On his arrival the Galileans received him well, having seen all that he had done at Jerusalem during the festival which they too had attended.

46 He went again to Cana in Galilee, where he had changed the water into wine. And there was a royal official whose son was ill at Capernaum;

47 hearing that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judaea, he went and asked him to come and cure his son, as he was at the point of death.

48 Jesus said to him, 'Unless you see signs and portents you will not believe!'

49 'Sir,' answered the official, 'come down before my child dies.'

50 'Go home,' said Jesus, 'your son will live.' The man believed what Jesus had said and went on his way home;

51 and while he was still on the way his servants met him with the news that his boy was alive.

52 He asked them when the boy had begun to recover. They replied, 'The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour.'

53 The father realised that this was exactly the time when Jesus had said, 'Your son will live'; and he and all his household believed.

54 This new sign, the second, Jesus performed on his return from Judaea to Galilee.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 16, 2026

1. An excerpt from the Messianic Hebrew prophet Isaiah begins our readings at today's Holy Mass, as we begin this fourth week of Lent. The theme is one which occurs throughout this powerful book, JOY. HAPPINESS Isaiah always connects the coming of the promised Messiah with Joy, deliverance and freedom.

The Lord, speaking through the Prophet, also promises He is going to create a new heaven and a new earth - where Joy will replace weeping and mourning.

That Joy was always seen to be a part of the coming Messiahs reign, and the People of Israel longed for His coming and for the promised joy.

They had suffered immense persecution under domination by unjust rulers. They had wandered in the Desert and faced ordeal after ordeal. They longed for joy, often in the midst of that sorrow, and equated the arrival of the promised Messiah - with Joy and rejoicing.

In fact, the Lord reminded the people he has created Israel as a source of Joy for the whole world. His plan was always a universal plan. By choosing a particular people, Israel, He was going to reveal His plan for the whole world. He was going to make His love visible and tangible, through Israel, so all the Nations would come back to Him.

As Christians, we know that that promise was fulfilled in the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ, in whom the fullness of God is revealed, and the founding of the Church, His Body, into which all men and women can be incorporated by Baptism. In Jesus, we enter into the fullness of the joy promised through the Prophet Isaiah.

Have we experienced the joy of the Lord in our own lives?

Do we find happiness in the practice of our faith?

2. The Psalmist David continues the theme for us today as he sings these words, and invites our response:

Make music for Yahweh, all you who are faithful to him, praise his unforgettable holiness. "His anger lasts but a moment, his favour through life;  
In the evening come tears, but with dawn cries of joy."

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What is the source of this happiness about which the Psalmist sings? It is his ever deepening relationship with the Lord.

So, it should be with us. In its glossary, the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines "HAPPINESS" as "Joy and beatitude over receiving the fulfillment of our vocation as creatures: a sharing in the divine nature and the vision of God."

Are we happy?

3. In the Gospel appointed for today, taken from St. John's account, Jesus had just encountered the Samaritan Woman at the Well. He revealed that He was the Messiah to a Samaritan Woman. This was astounding to the Jews. They did not interact with Samaritans.

But, Jesus most certainly did. He called her to turn away from Sin, and to turn to Him and find the living waters which her soul thirsted for. This is in keeping with the promise revealed through Isaiah the Hebrew Prophet. Jesus, who was sent first to the Jewish people, reveals the universality of Salvation. Joy comes through repentance and conversion, and is available to all men and women, through Him.

He comes back to Cana, where he had performed His first miracle, turning the water into wine. The Apostle John reveals these miracles are signs of the Kingdom of God, breaking in through the ministry of Jesus, the Promised Messiah.

He heals the son of the Official. That healing led the man and his whole household to believe. The purpose of such miracles, such signs, is to lead men and women to believe and to turn toward the Lord.

In the last chapter of his Gospel account, St. John writes: "there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

Imagine the joy in the heart and the home of that official on hearing the Good News. In each of our lives, the Lord is also at work. Jesus is not dead, He is Risen. He is alive. He is still healing, delivering and restoring, men and women who come to Him.

Do we believe this?



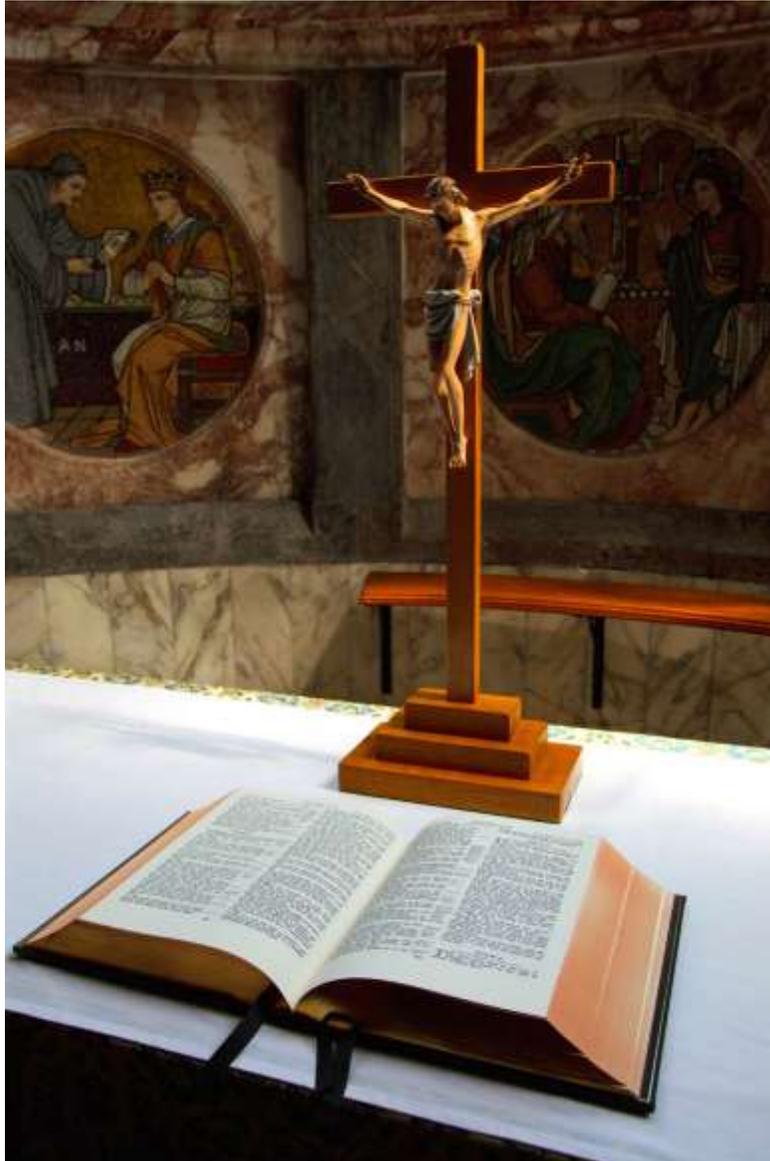
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 17, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Saturday, March 17th, 2026

### Reading 1, Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

1 He brought me back to the entrance of the Temple, where a stream flowed eastwards from under the Temple threshold, for the Temple faced east. The water flowed from under the right side of the Temple, south of the altar.

2 He took me out by the north gate and led me right round outside as far as the outer east gate where the water flowed out on the right-hand side.

3 The man went off to the east holding his measuring line and measured off a thousand cubits; he then made me wade across the stream; the water reached my ankles.

4 He measured off another thousand and made me wade across the stream again; the water reached my knees. He measured off another thousand and made me wade across the stream again; the water reached my waist.

5 He measured off another thousand; it was now a river which I could not cross; the stream had swollen and was now deep water, a river impossible to cross.

6 He then said, 'Do you see, son of man?' He then took me and brought me back to the bank on the river.

7 Now, when I reached it, I saw an enormous number of trees on each bank of the river.

8 He said, 'This water flows east down to the Arabah and to the sea; and flowing into the sea it makes its waters wholesome.

9 Wherever the river flows, all living creatures teeming in it will live. Fish will be very plentiful, for wherever the water goes it brings health, and life teems wherever the river flows.

12 Along the river, on either bank, will grow every kind of fruit tree with leaves that never wither and fruit that never fails; they will bear new fruit every month, because this water comes from the sanctuary. And their fruit will be good to eat and the leaves medicinal.'



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## **Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9**

2 so we shall not be afraid though the earth be in turmoil, though mountains tumble into the depths of the sea,

3 and its waters roar and seethe, and the mountains totter as it heaves. (Yahweh Sabaoth is with us, our citadel, the God of Jacob.)

5 God is in the city, it cannot fall; at break of day God comes to its rescue.

6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms are tumbling, when he raises his voice the earth crumbles away.

8 Come, consider the wonders of Yahweh, the astounding deeds he has done on the earth;

9 he puts an end to wars over the whole wide world, he breaks the bow, he snaps the spear, shields he burns in the fire.

## **Gospel, John 5:1-3, 5-16**

1 After this there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now in Jerusalem next to the Sheep Pool there is a pool called Bethesda in Hebrew, which has five porticos;

3 and under these were crowds of sick people, blind, lame, paralysed.

5 One man there had an illness which had lasted thirty-eight years,

6 and when Jesus saw him lying there and knew he had been in that condition for a long time, he said, 'Do you want to be well again?'

7 'Sir,' replied the sick man, 'I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed; and while I am still on the way, someone else gets down there before me.'

8 Jesus said, 'Get up, pick up your sleeping-mat and walk around.'

9 The man was cured at once, and he picked up his mat and started to walk around. Now that day happened to be the Sabbath,



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10 so the Jews said to the man who had been cured, 'It is the Sabbath; you are not allowed to carry your sleeping-mat.'

11 He replied, 'But the man who cured me told me, "Pick up your sleeping-mat and walk around." '

12 They asked, 'Who is the man who said to you, "Pick up your sleeping-mat and walk around"?' '

13 The man had no idea who it was, since Jesus had disappeared, as the place was crowded.

14 After a while Jesus met him in the Temple and said, 'Now you are well again, do not sin any more, or something worse may happen to you.'

15 The man went back and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had cured him.

16 It was because he did things like this on the Sabbath that the Jews began to harass Jesus.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 17, 2026

1. In the Book of Ezekiel, we encounter the Lord speaking through a priest named Ezekiel who was a faithful watchman. His was a tough task at a tough time. Judah has been exiled to Babylon and he was one of the survivors. Gods people were disheartened, and many were falling away. His name in Hebrew means the one whom God makes strong.

The thrust of his message is one which we need to hear in our own day, when the Church is besieged from within and without, God is always faithful, even in the midst of trials, and He will never abandon His Chosen people.

The passage appointed for our first reading occurs toward the end of the Book of Ezekiel, and the image of the temple is a poignant and profound one for Israel. It symbolizes the presence of God. The water symbolizes the Holy Spirit. Notice the progressive nature of the water filling the temple. It is the increasing presence of the Holy Spirit which will bring fruitfulness and stability to Gods people. And so, it is today.

Do we ask the Lord to pour out a fuller measure of the Holy Spirit on the Church of His Son every day? We should.

Do we ask the Lord to pour out a fuller measure of the Holy Spirit on ourselves and our families? We should.

Come Holy Spirit...

2. The theme continues in the responsorial Psalm appointed for Holy Mass today. David sings of the presence of God, even when the Nations totter and the kingdoms tumble. He reminds us that we have nothing to fear.

There is no doubt, we are experiencing a great shaking, in both the Church, which is the Body of Jesus Christ, and the world into which she has been sent to continue the redemptive mission of her head, Jesus Christ.

Perhaps you are experiencing shaking in your own personal life, even now, as you listen to this Deacon.

But hear the message of God's word, "God is in the city, it cannot fall; at break of day God comes to its rescue. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms are tumbling, when he raises his voice the earth crumbles away."

Do you believe this?



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3. The Healing of the Paralytic at Bethsaida is one of the most powerfully symbolic of the signs of the Gospel of St. John. Yes, it is a physical healing, a manifestation of the Kingdom of God breaking through in the ministry of the promised Messiah, Jesus the Christ.

But it is also packed with insights which can help each of us as we continue in our Lenten Journey and the pilgrimage which is our life on this earth.

Let me touch upon just one of the many nuggets of gold we can mine from this powerful encounter.

This man has been ill for 38 years! He has not given up. He shows up at the waters, daily, hoping someone will place him in the flow and, perhaps he will be healed. His dialogue with Jesus is the nugget of gold for us to mine.

What does Jesus ask him? "Do you want to be healed"? Or, in this translation "Do you want to be well again"?

This shows us that prayer is relational, and the life of faith involves both Gods free gift of grace....and our cooperation. God invites our response. His goodness and grace always exceed anything we could ask for. But it requires our response, our desire to get out of the situation we are in, whatever it may be, which is keeping us from the current of grace, the waters of healing.

AS we continue our Lenten pilgrimage, our call to a deeper conversion, what are the defects in our own life? What is keeping us from experiencing the freedom which the Lord wants us to experience? Are we actively pursuing the healing power and deliverance offered by the Lord?

Jesus says to each one of us... "Do you want to be healed?" Do you want to be well again?"



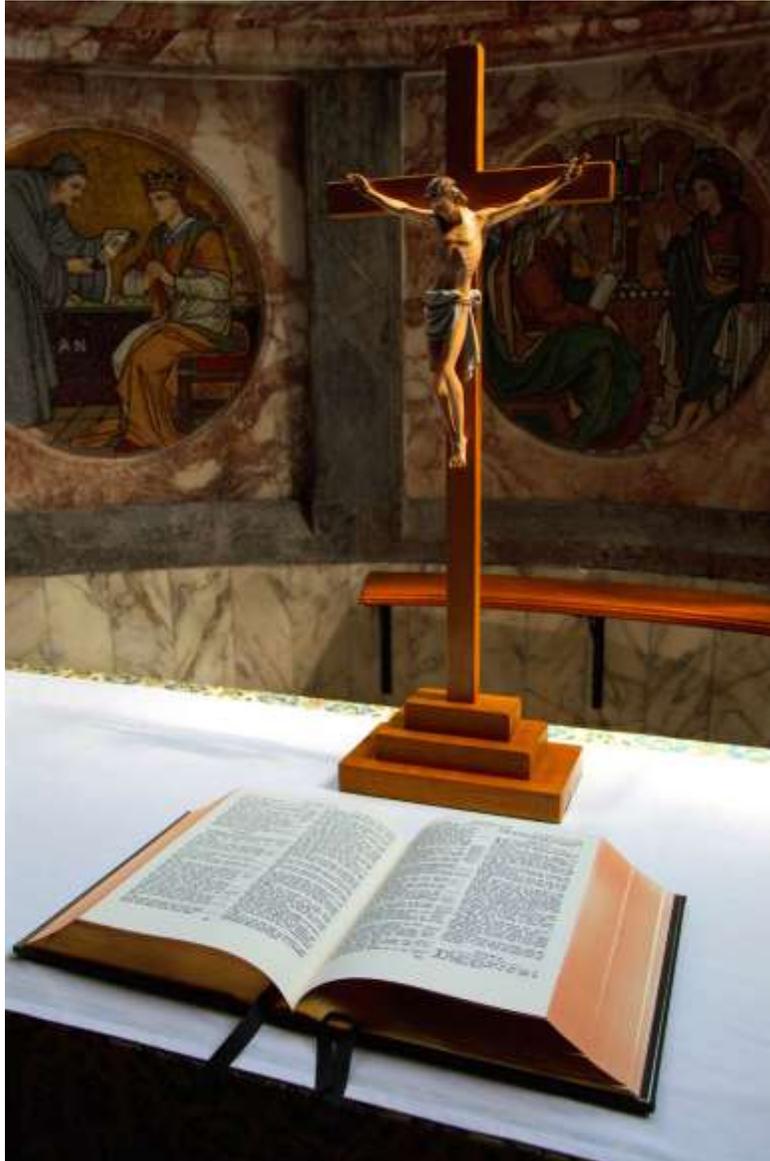
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 18, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Wednesday, March 18th, 2026

### Reading 1, Isaiah 49:8-15

8 Thus says Yahweh: At the time of my favour I have answered you, on the day of salvation I have helped you. I have formed you and have appointed you to be the covenant for a people, to restore the land, to return ravaged properties,

9 to say to prisoners, 'Come out,' to those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' Along the roadway they will graze, and any bare height will be their pasture.

10 They will never hunger or thirst, scorching wind and sun will never plague them; for he who pities them will lead them, will guide them to springs of water.

11 I shall turn all my mountains into a road and my highways will be raised aloft.

12 Look! Here they come from far away, look, these from the north and the west, those from the land of Sinim.

13 Shout for joy, you heavens; earth, exult! Mountains, break into joyful cries! For Yahweh has consoled his people, is taking pity on his afflicted ones.

14 Zion was saying, 'Yahweh has abandoned me, the Lord has forgotten me.'

15 Can a woman forget her baby at the breast, feel no pity for the child she has borne? Even if these were to forget, I shall not forget you.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 145:8-9, 13-14, 17-18

8 Yahweh is tenderness and pity, slow to anger, full of faithful love.

9 Yahweh is generous to all, his tenderness embraces all his creatures.

13 Your kingship is a kingship for ever, your reign lasts from age to age. Yahweh is trustworthy in all his words, and upright in all his deeds.

14 Yahweh supports all who stumble, lifts up those who are bowed down.

17 Upright in all that he does, Yahweh acts only in faithful love.

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18 He is close to all who call upon him, all who call on him from the heart.

## **Gospel, John 5:17-30**

17 His answer to them was, 'My Father still goes on working, and I am at work, too.'

18 But that only made the Jews even more intent on killing him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he spoke of God as his own Father and so made himself God's equal.

19 To this Jesus replied: In all truth I tell you, by himself the Son can do nothing; he can do only what he sees the Father doing: and whatever the Father does the Son does too.

20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he himself does, and he will show him even greater things than these, works that will astonish you.

21 Thus, as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to anyone he chooses;

22 for the Father judges no one; he has entrusted all judgement to the Son,

23 so that all may honour the Son as they honour the Father. Whoever refuses honour to the Son refuses honour to the Father who sent him.

24 In all truth I tell you, whoever listens to my words, and believes in the one who sent me, has eternal life; without being brought to judgement such a person has passed from death to life.

25 In all truth I tell you, the hour is coming -- indeed it is already here -- when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear it will live.

26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself;

27 and, because he is the Son of man, has granted him power to give judgement.

28 Do not be surprised at this, for the hour is coming when the dead will leave their graves at the sound of his voice:

29 those who did good will come forth to life; and those who did evil will come forth to judgement.

30 By myself I can do nothing; I can judge only as I am told to judge, and my judging is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 18, 2026

1. Notice that when the Lord speaks to Israel through the Prophet Isaiah, He so often reminds them of their role in His mission, His plan of salvation, for all men and women. "I have formed you and have appointed you to be the covenant for a people, to restore the land, to return ravaged properties, to say to prisoners, 'Come out,' to those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.'

Israel was chosen, not just for herself, but for the Nations. God loves all men and women. He wants all men and women to come back to Him. To be freed from the sin which has separated them from Him, and from one another. This is the tender love of God.

Notice the beautiful imagery used by the Lord, speaking through the prophet, of His tenderness:

"Shout for joy, you heavens; earth, exult! Mountains break into joyful cries! For Yahweh has consoled his people, is taking pity on his afflicted ones.

Zion was saying, 'Yahweh has abandoned me, the Lord has forgotten me.' Can a woman forget her baby at the breast, feel no pity for the child she has borne?

Even if these were to forget, I shall not forget you."

God will never, ever, ever forget His people. We are members of His people now, through our Baptism, we have become members of the very Body of His Son, Jesus Christ, the Church. God will never, ever, ever forget us. He loves each one of us with a tender affection.

Do we believe this?

2. The Psalmist David understood the tender love of God. He also knew his unworthiness. That's what makes it all so wonderful. In the response appointed for today's Holy Mass David sings "Yahweh is tenderness and pity, slow to anger, full of faithful love. Yahweh is generous to all, his tenderness embraces all his creatures."

"Upright in all that he does, Yahweh acts only in faithful love.

He is close to all who call upon him, all who call on him from the heart."

We are coming toward the end of Lent and will soon enter into the Holy Week. Have we taken full advantage of all that the Church, as a good mother and teacher, has made available to us in our Lenten observances? It is not too late.

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Have we made a good confession? If not, now is the time.

3. In the Gospel account appointed for today's Mass we pick up where we left off yesterday. Jesus has just miraculously healed the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years! The Kingdom of God has broken through.

This broken man chose to be healed, to begin again, and, in a manifestation of the tenderness of the Father's Love, Jesus, the Son of the Father, the promised Messiah and King, the Word Incarnate, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, come as a man, bringing heaven to earth, has manifested the power of God!

But, in the words from the Gospel text just preceding this little portion we read:

"14 Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you.' 15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. 16 And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did this on the sabbath."

Blinded by their own misunderstanding of what it means to honor the Sabbath, these purportedly religious leaders fail to recognize that the very Lord of the Sabbath is in their midst.

So, Jesus explains his relationship to the Father in a profound discourse. Did they understand? Apparently, many did not. Do we?



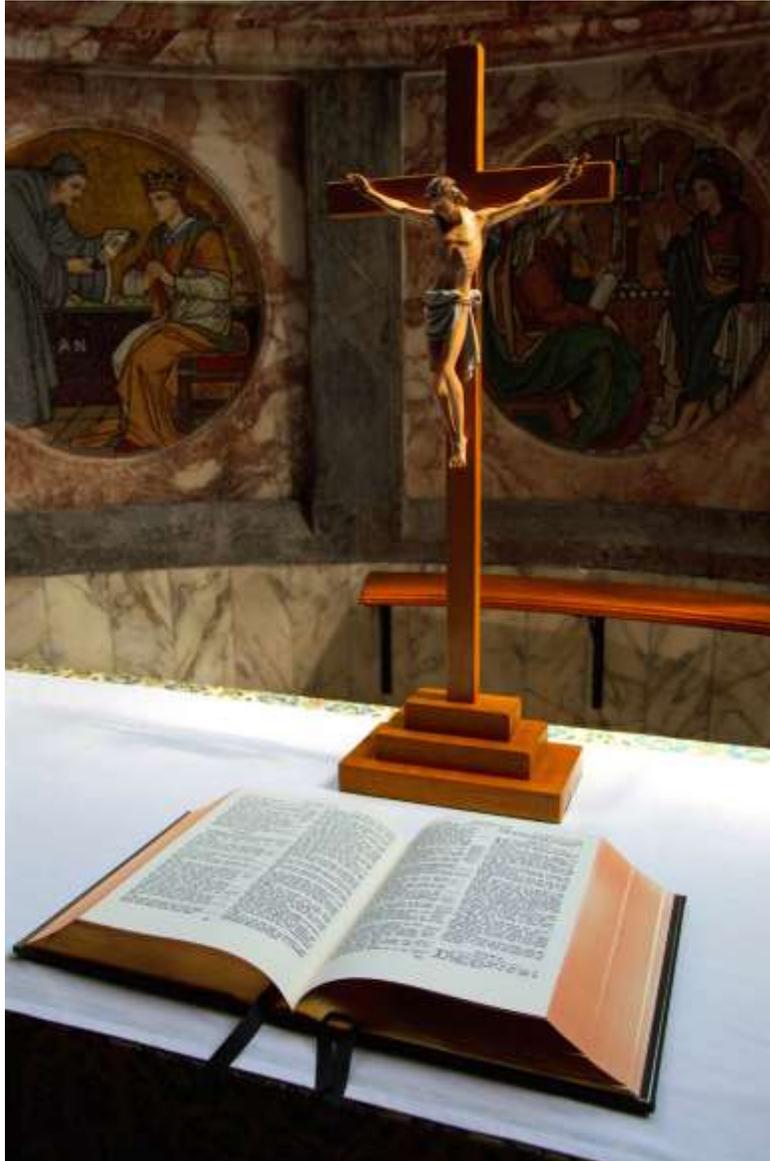
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 19, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Thursday, March 19th, 2026

### Reading 1, Second Samuel 7:4-5, 12-14, 16

4 But that very night, the word of Yahweh came to Nathan:

5 'Go and tell my servant David, "Yahweh says this: Are you to build me a temple for me to live in?

12 And when your days are over and you fall asleep with your ancestors, I shall appoint your heir, your own son to succeed you (and I shall make his sovereignty secure.

13 He will build a temple for my name) and I shall make his royal throne secure for ever.

14 I shall be a father to him and he a son to me; if he does wrong, I shall punish him with a rod such as men use, with blows such as mankind gives.

16 Your dynasty and your sovereignty will ever stand firm before me and your throne be for ever secure." '

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29

2 for you have said: love is built to last for ever, you have fixed your constancy firm in the heavens.

3 'I have made a covenant with my Chosen One, sworn an oath to my servant David:

4 I have made your dynasty firm for ever, built your throne stable age after age.

5 The heavens praise your wonders, Yahweh, your constancy in the gathering of your faithful.

27 So I shall make him my first-born, the highest of earthly kings.

29 I have established his dynasty for ever, his throne to be as lasting as the heavens.

### Reading 2, Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22

13 For the promise to Abraham and his descendants that he should inherit the world was not through the Law, but through the uprightness of faith.



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16 That is why the promise is to faith, so that it comes as a free gift and is secure for all the descendants, not only those who rely on the Law but all those others who rely on the faith of Abraham, the ancestor of us all

17 (as scripture says: I have made you the father of many nations). Abraham is our father in the eyes of God, in whom he put his faith, and who brings the dead to life and calls into existence what does not yet exist.

18 Though there seemed no hope, he hoped and believed that he was to become father of many nations in fulfilment of the promise: Just so will your descendants be.

22 This is the faith that was reckoned to him as uprightness.

## **Gospel, Luke 2:41-51**

41 Every year his parents used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover.

42 When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual.

43 When the days of the feast were over and they set off home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it.

44 They assumed he was somewhere in the party, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances.

45 When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

46 It happened that, three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions;

47 and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies.

48 They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.'

49 He replied, 'Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?'

50 But they did not understand what he meant.

51 He went down with them then and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart

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## Questions for Reflection for March 19, 2026

1. In our first reading, Nathan the Prophet speaks to David, the King of Israel, and reminds him of the Lord's promises to him - to establish his throne forever. And, in the Psalm appointed for this day, David the Psalmist sings of that same promise.

In the Roman Catholic Liturgical calendar, today is the Feast of St Joseph, the Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and foster father of Jesus, the One through whom the promises to Abraham, David and all the Old Testament prophets is fulfilled.

In the genealogy offered in the Gospel of St. Matthew, (Matt. 1:16-24) we see that this promise is partly fulfilled with the choice of Joseph as the foster father of Jesus, "Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary; of whom Jesus was born, he who is called Christ."

On this Feast, we should reflect on Joseph as a model for all Christian men. Indeed, for all Christian believers. Though little is said about Joseph in the New Testament, even the lack of writing reveals his greatest lesson to all of us. Because, for Joseph, it was never about him. It was about Jesus and his mother.

Is that true of us?

2. In our second reading, the Apostle Paul reminds the Romans - and all of us - of the kind of faith Abraham had in these words:

"Abraham is our father in the eyes of God, in whom he put his faith, and who brings the dead to life and calls into existence what does not yet exist. Though there seemed no hope, he hoped and believed that he was to become father of many nations in fulfilment of the promise: Just so will your descendants be. This is the faith that was reckoned to him as uprightness"

Abraham is our father in the faith. That Catholic Catechism explains:

"Abraham thus fulfills the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen": "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Because he was "strong in his faith", Abraham became the "father of all who believe".

How strong, how real, how alive, is our faith?

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3. In the Gospel appointed for this Feast of St Joseph we read St. Luke's account of the finding of the Child Jesus in the temple after the family visit on the Passover. Notice the words of concern which come from Mary, the Mother of the Lord, to the child Jesus: 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.'

Jesus replied "'Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he meant."

After this, they returned to Nazareth where Jesus was raised by Mary and Joseph. Joseph had a vital role in those years. He was, as St. John Paul called him in a marvelous letter he wrote on Joseph, the "Guardian of the Redeemer".

The Scriptures say little about Joseph, but even that absence speaks volumes about the character of the man. He loved Mary above himself. He was prepared to "do the right thing" when she was found to be with child. Through his response of faith, He received the gift His fathers longed to see.

Joseph was a humble man, a model to men who choose to walk the way of the cross. Joseph accepted his unique vocation as a guardian of the Redeemer. The child Jesus was given to Joseph. A Carpenter, he taught this child how to work with wood.

This same Jesus who learned to work with wood from Joseph, during his 33rd year saved the world through the wood of the Cross. In an age given over to the selfish pursuit of illusory pleasure, Joseph should be lifted as a model.

Over two millennia, the mission of Jesus has continued through His Body on earth, His Church. He has entrusted the work of that mission to all men and women who accept the invitation to empty themselves to be filled with the love of God and be used in His redemptive mission for the world.

God is looking for a few good men like Joseph who will work in the workshop of the world that he created to recreate it anew in His Son.

We need to turn to Joseph and follow his example by courageously, humbly and faithfully loving Jesus Christ. To give our Yes to God. Joseph is our teacher and shows us the way, teaching us that actions speak louder than words.

Have we reflected on St Joseph lately?

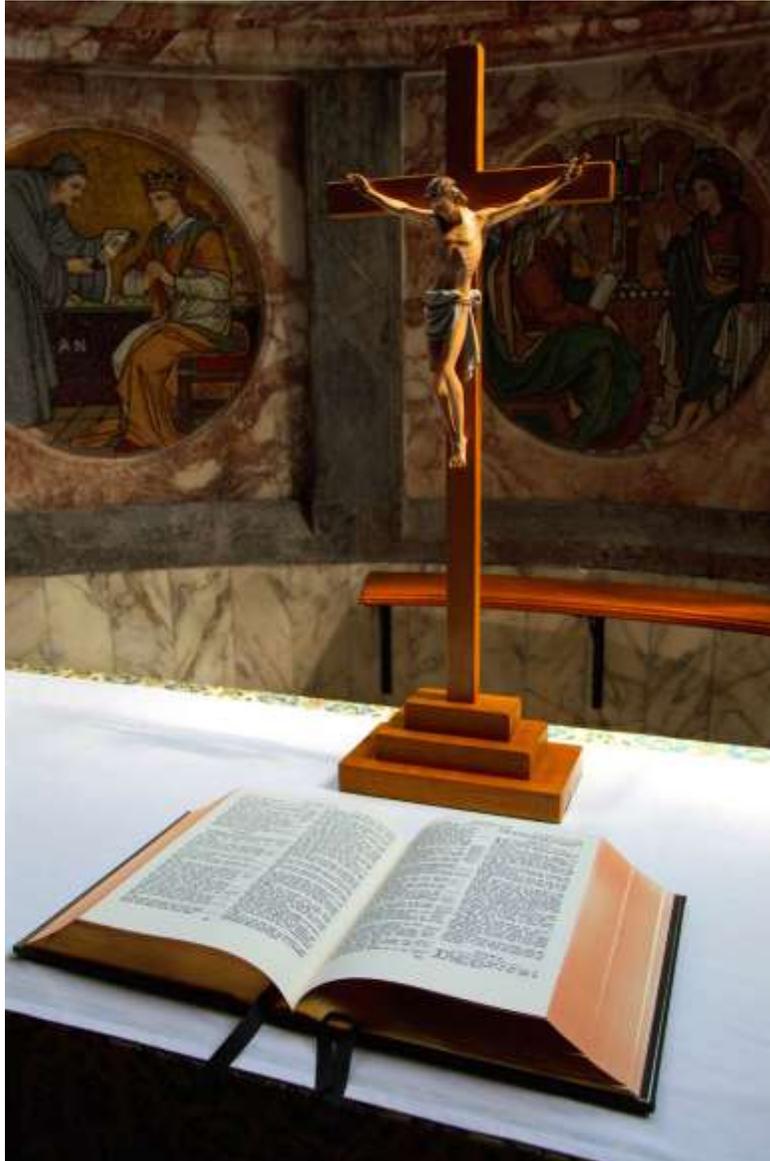
Let us do so today.

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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 20, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Friday, March 20th, 2026

### Reading 1, Wisdom 2:1, 12-22

1 And this is the false argument they use, 'Our life is short and dreary, there is no remedy when our end comes, no one is known to have come back from Hades.

12 Let us lay traps for the upright man, since he annoys us and opposes our way of life, reproaches us for our sins against the Law, and accuses us of sins against our upbringing.

13 He claims to have knowledge of God, and calls himself a child of the Lord.

14 We see him as a reproof to our way of thinking, the very sight of him weighs our spirits down;

15 for his kind of life is not like other people's, and his ways are quite different.

16 In his opinion we are counterfeit; he avoids our ways as he would filth; he proclaims the final end of the upright as blessed and boasts of having God for his father.

17 Let us see if what he says is true, and test him to see what sort of end he will have.

18 For if the upright man is God's son, God will help him and rescue him from the clutches of his enemies.

19 Let us test him with cruelty and with torture, and thus explore this gentleness of his and put his patience to the test.

20 Let us condemn him to a shameful death since God will rescue him -- or so he claims.'

21 This is the way they reason, but they are misled, since their malice makes them blind.

22 They do not know the hidden things of God, they do not hope for the reward of holiness, they do not believe in a reward for blameless souls.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 34:17-18, 19-20, 21, 23

17 They cry in anguish and Yahweh hears, and rescues them from all their troubles.

18 Yahweh is near to the broken-hearted, he helps those whose spirit is crushed.

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19 Though hardships without number beset the upright, Yahweh brings rescue from them all.

20 Yahweh takes care of all their bones, not one of them will be broken.

21 But to the wicked evil brings death, those who hate the upright will pay the penalty.

## **Gospel, John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30**

1 After this Jesus travelled round Galilee; he could not travel round Judaea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him.

2 As the Jewish feast of Shelters drew near,

10 However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went up as well, not publicly but secretly.

25 Meanwhile some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'Isn't this the man they want to kill?

26 And here he is, speaking openly, and they have nothing to say to him! Can it be true the authorities have recognised that he is the Christ?

27 Yet we all know where he comes from, but when the Christ appears no one will know where he comes from.'

28 Then, as Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he cried out: You know me and you know where I came from. Yet I have not come of my own accord: but he who sent me is true; You do not know him,

29 but I know him because I have my being from him and it was he who sent me.

30 They wanted to arrest him then, but because his hour had not yet come no one laid a hand on him.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 20, 2026

1. Theologians use a word, HERMENEUTIC. Understanding what it means can help us in our reflection on our first reading at today's Holy Mass, taken from the Book of Wisdom. A hermeneutic is a sort of lens through which things are best viewed and interpreted. A principle of interpretation.

For the Christian, there is a hermeneutic which we should use when we read the Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures. It is to view them through the lens of the Paschal Mystery. That term refers to Christ's work of redemption, accomplished through His saving life, Passion, death, Resurrection and glorious Ascension.

So, when we read, for example, from the Book of Wisdom, which we heard proclaimed for today's Mass, we come to recognize that these words pointed to Jesus Christ! He is God's Son and, indeed, he was put to death! And, through that willing sacrifice, He delivered us from death!

Seeds of the New Testament are present in the Old! Because God is timeless and His loving plan was being set forth from the beginning.

This principle of interpretation runs throughout the writings of the early Church Fathers and is clearly the framework for the Gospels and the New Testament Canon.

Sometimes, people mistakenly think the Old Testament is somehow "less important" now that Jesus has come. That is not true. They find their fulfillment in Him. And, when we read the Old Testament Scriptures, listening with that in mind, the Holy Spirit will open them up for us.

In the fifth chapter of St John's Gospel Jesus says to the Pharisees: "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me" (John 5:39)

Do we pray over the readings before we go to Mass and ask the Holy Spirit to open them up for us? Do we receive the gift of the Old Testament, with living faith, and listen attentively?

2. And, this principle of interpretation applies to our Responsorial Psalm as well. "Not one of His bones will be broken..." the Psalmist sang concerning the "Upright one". He was the Passover Lamb sent from the Father. In the Passover Seder, not one of the bones of the Lamb were to be broken (Exodus 12:46) and this Psalm was well known to faithful Jews.



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Jesus fulfilled every promise pointing to the Messiah in the Old Testament. In fact, raised in a Jewish home, he recited the Psalms regularly.

Do we use this principle of interpretation when we listen to, read, or recite the Psalms?

3. In the Gospel appointed for today's Holy Mass, St. John presents us with Jesus, the Righteous One, the Messiah, who lived under the constant threat of being killed, passing right through their schemes. Little did his adversaries know, His Death was a part of a loving plan of the Father.

Rather than having his Life taken from him, He would willingly offer it on the Cross for all men and women - That means for you and Me!

In a beautiful, ancient liturgical prayer of the early Church, still sung during the Holy Week and Easter season we hear these powerful words sung or proclaimed:

Christ is risen from the dead,  
Trampling down death by death,  
And upon those in the tombs  
Bestowing life!

The last line of the Gospel appointed for today tells us: "They wanted to arrest him then, but because his hour had not yet come no one laid a hand on him."

His hour will come, and he will suffer for us, and die for us, and be raised for us! As we continue the pilgrimage of Lent, let us ask the Holy Spirit to deepen within us an understanding of the full meaning of all of this.



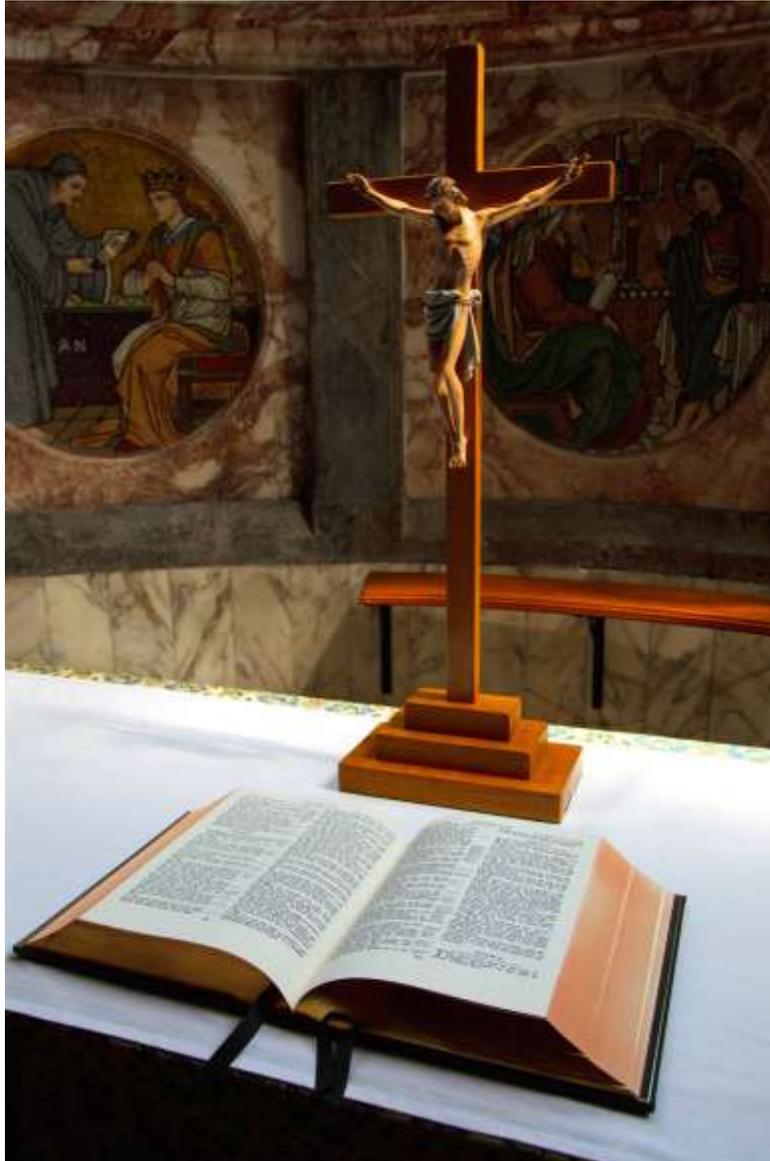
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 21, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Saturday, March 21st, 2026

### Reading 1, Jeremiah 11:18-20

18 Yahweh informed me and I knew it; you then revealed their scheming to me.

19 I for my part was like a trustful lamb being led to the slaughterhouse, not knowing the schemes they were plotting against me, 'Let us destroy the tree in its strength, let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name may no longer be remembered!'

20 Yahweh Sabaoth, whose judgement is upright, tester of motives and thoughts, I shall see your vengeance on them, for I have revealed my cause to you.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 7:2-3, 9-10, 11-12

2 or he will savage me like a lion, carry me off with no one to rescue me.

3 Yahweh my God, if I have done this: if injustice has stained my hands,

9 Put an end to the malice of the wicked, make the upright stand firm, you who discern hearts and minds, God the upright.

10 God is a shield that protects me, saving the honest of heart.

11 God is an upright judge, slow to anger, but a God at all times threatening

12 for those who will not repent. Let the enemy whet his sword, draw his bow and make ready;

### Gospel, John 7:40-53

40 Some of the crowd who had been listening said, 'He is indeed the prophet,'

41 and some said, 'He is the Christ,' but others said, 'Would the Christ come from Galilee?'

42 Does not scripture say that the Christ must be descended from David and come from Bethlehem, the village where David was?'

43 So the people could not agree about him.

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44 Some wanted to arrest him, but no one actually laid a hand on him.

45 The guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees who said to them, 'Why haven't you brought him?'

46 The guards replied, 'No one has ever spoken like this man.'

47 'So,' the Pharisees answered, 'you, too, have been led astray?'

48 Have any of the authorities come to believe in him? Any of the Pharisees?

49 This rabble knows nothing about the Law -- they are damned.'

50 One of them, Nicodemus -- the same man who had come to Jesus earlier -- said to them,

51 'But surely our Law does not allow us to pass judgement on anyone without first giving him a hearing and discovering what he is doing?'

52 To this they answered, 'Are you a Galilean too? Go into the matter, and see for yourself: prophets do not arise in Galilee.'

53 They all went home,



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## Questions for Reflection for March 21, 2026

1. Given the principle of interpretation we spoke of yesterday, viewing the Old Testament Scriptures through the lens of the Paschal Mystery, we see that the words spoken through the Hebrew Prophet Jeremiah were Messianic. They would ultimately be fulfilled, many, many years later, in the saving life, death and resurrection of the Son of God, Jesus the Christ.

He is that Lamb who would be led to the slaughter. In the words of the Prophet:

"I for my part was like a trustful lamb being led to the slaughterhouse, not knowing the schemes they were plotting against me, 'Let us destroy the tree in its strength, let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name may no longer be remembered!'"

This same imagery is found in another of the Messianic Prophets of the Old Testament, Isaiah, in Chapter 53 we read of a "suffering servant of Yahweh". In verse 7 we find this powerful prophetic image of the One whom we know, as Christians, was Jesus Christ:

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb,  
so he opened not his mouth." (Isaiah 53:7)

Now that we know this principle of interpretation, do we read these Old Testament Books differently? We should.

2. The Psalmist David leads us in a song crying out for God to save us from difficulties. This Psalm is a plea for help in times of persecution. The first verse, which is not a part of this excerpt which forms our response says:

"LORD my God, in you I trusted;  
save me; rescue me from all who pursue me..."

Persecution is a part of following the Lord in the midst of an age which has all but rejected Him. It was promised. by Jesus Himself. He told us:

"If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you. Remember the word I spoke to you, 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. (John 15:18-20)



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If we are not suffering some kind of persecution and opposition, we are not living our faith.

There is no doubt; we are living in an age of growing persecution against Christians. In these times, the Lord is searching for men and women who believe in his promises - all of them - and are willing to be used by Him to reveal His plan. Let us become those men and women. Let us live ready for what lies ahead.

3. Notice the response of the crowd to Jesus in the Gospel text presented to us for today's Mass, taken from the account of St. John.

Some thought he was "the prophet". Some thought He was the promised Messiah. Others, failed to recognize Him at all, and, indeed rejected Him. Others wanted to arrest Him.

Finally, we read "they all went home" How sad. They missed the moment! They failed to recognize who Jesus was, and, as a result, they lost their way

We read of the following encounter between Jesus and the Disciples in the Gospel of St. Matthew:

"Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi and he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

"Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so, I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mt. 16:13-20)

The same question is asked of each one of us - WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM? It is not just asked once - but continually. It is meant to inform the response of our entire life.

How we answer that question determines who we will become and how we will live. It is a question which cannot be answered indirectly, or halfheartedly. It is not enough to rely on what - some say.

The question is profoundly personal as well as public. Who is Jesus Christ to ME?

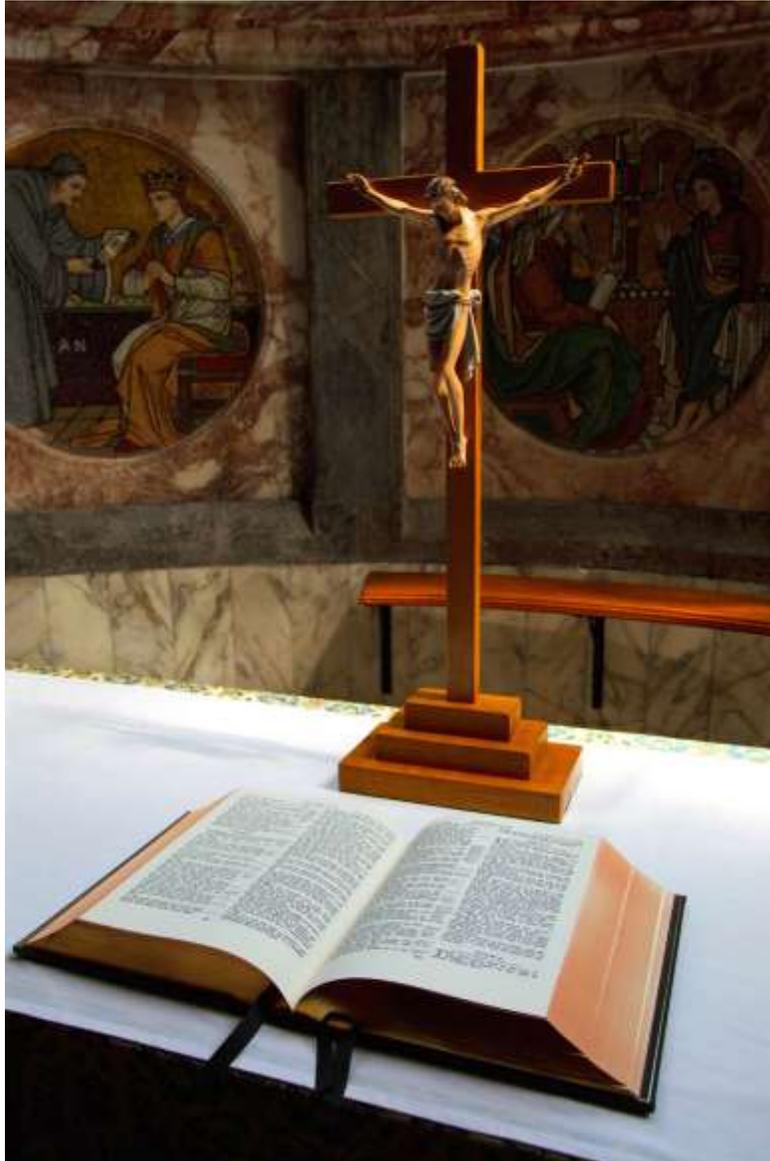
And how does my answer affect the way I live.

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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 22, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Sunday, March 22nd, 2026

### Reading 1, Ezekiel 37:12-14

12 So, prophesy. Say to them, "The Lord Yahweh says this: I am now going to open your graves; I shall raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel.

13 And you will know that I am Yahweh, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people,

14 and put my spirit in you, and you revive, and I resettle you on your own soil. Then you will know that I, Yahweh, have spoken and done this -- declares the Lord Yahweh." '

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

1 [Song of Ascents] From the depths I call to you, Yahweh:

2 Lord, hear my cry. Listen attentively to the sound of my pleading!

3 If you kept a record of our sins, Lord, who could stand their ground?

4 But with you is forgiveness, that you may be revered.

5 I rely, my whole being relies, Yahweh, on your promise.

6 My whole being hopes in the Lord, more than watchmen for daybreak; more than watchmen for daybreak

7 let Israel hope in Yahweh. For with Yahweh is faithful love, with him generous ransom;

8 and he will ransom Israel from all its sins.

### Reading 2, Romans 8:8-11

8 and those who live by their natural inclinations can never be pleasing to God.

9 You, however, live not by your natural inclinations, but by the Spirit, since the Spirit of God has made a home in you. Indeed, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

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10 But when Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin but the spirit is alive because you have been justified;

11 and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead has made his home in you, then he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

## **Gospel, John 11:1-45**

1 There was a man named Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister, Martha, and he was ill.

2 It was the same Mary, the sister of the sick man Lazarus, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair.

3 The sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.'

4 On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will not end in death, but it is for God's glory so that through it the Son of God may be glorified.'

5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus,

6 yet when he heard that he was ill he stayed where he was for two more days

7 before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go back to Judaea.'

8 The disciples said, 'Rabbi, it is not long since the Jews were trying to stone you; are you going back there again?'

9 Jesus replied: Are there not twelve hours in the day? No one who walks in the daytime stumbles, having the light of this world to see by;

10 anyone who walks around at night stumbles, having no light as a guide.

11 He said that and then added, 'Our friend Lazarus is at rest; I am going to wake him.'

12 The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he is at rest he will be saved.'

13 Jesus was speaking of the death of Lazarus, but they thought that by 'rest' he meant 'sleep';

14 so Jesus put it plainly, 'Lazarus is dead;

15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there because now you will believe. But let us go to him.'



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16 Then Thomas -- known as the Twin -- said to the other disciples, 'Let us also go to die with him.'

17 On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already.

18 Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem,

19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.

20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house.

21 Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died,

22 but even now I know that God will grant whatever you ask of him.'

23 Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'

24 Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.'

25 Jesus said: I am the resurrection. Anyone who believes in me, even though that person dies, will live,

26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?

27 'Yes, Lord,' she said, 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in a low voice, 'The Master is here and wants to see you.'

29 Hearing this, Mary got up quickly and went to him.

30 Jesus had not yet come into the village; he was still at the place where Martha had met him.

31 When the Jews who were in the house comforting Mary saw her get up so quickly and go out, they followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

32 Mary went to Jesus, and as soon as she saw him she threw herself at his feet, saying, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

33 At the sight of her tears, and those of the Jews who had come with her, Jesus was greatly distressed, and with a profound sigh he said,



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34 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.'

35 Jesus wept;

36 and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!'

37 But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man. Could he not have prevented this man's death?'

38 Sighing again, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening.

39 Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day since he died.'

40 Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?'

41 So they took the stone away. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said: Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.

42 I myself knew that you hear me always, but I speak for the sake of all these who are standing around me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.

43 When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'

44 The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with strips of material, and a cloth over his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

45 Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what he did, believed in him,



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## Questions for Reflection for March 22, 2026

1. On this fifth and final Sunday of Lent, our biblical passages offered for our reflection point us toward the promise of the Resurrection. They all speak to us of being freed from death, by the power of God.

Our first passage, taken from the Hebrew Prophet Ezekiel, is a short excerpt from the powerful chapter when the Prophet is given a vision of the Valley of Dry bones and told, by the Lord, to prophecy to the bones.

I encourage all of those watching and listening, take time to read the entire chapter 37 on the Book of Ezekiel.

In this passage the Lord promises he will open the graves of his people. Of course, as Christians, we know that He fulfilled that promise in His Son, Jesus Christ.

In the fullness of time, He will return and all who belong to Him, will experience the fullness of Redemption and be bodily raised from the dead!

2. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, reminds them that they no longer need to live by what this translation calls their "natural inclinations" because the Spirit of God lives in them. Other translations of this Greek text use the phrase "the flesh". The flesh (in Greek, sarx) that the scripture warns of is not our body but our tendency to sin. Our disordered appetites and disordered passions.

Because we have been set free from the Law of Sin and death, and set free for holiness, the Holy Spirit empowers us to live differently, beginning now. We all too often live the Christian life as though our bodies and the created order are somehow bad or less spiritual. We profess in our ancient Creed that we believe that we will live in resurrected bodies on a new heaven and a new earth for all eternity. Yet we sometimes live as though the physical is divorced from the spiritual. It is not.

On this last Sunday of Lent, now is the time to decide to live differently by yielding to the Holy Spirit and not the flesh.

3. The Gospel appointed for today is one of the most powerful accounts in the New Testament, the raising of a dear friend of the Lord, Lazarus. Jesus was a man like us in all things but sin, the author of the New Testament letter to the Hebrews reminds us. Mary, Martha and Lazarus were his dear friends. he wept when he heard that his friend had died.



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This wonderful resurrection of Lazarus is not only a powerful miracle, a sign of the Kingdom, Lazarus WAS RAISED BODILY FROM the DEAD. But, Remember, this is not the final resurrection. Lazarus would later die and will experience the final Resurrection when Christ returns to raise the Living and the dead.

This powerful account of the power of Jesus Christ over death is also a symbol for us of what Jesus has done and can do for each one of us. Where are we "dead", not alive in Christ? Where are we still given over to sin and disordered affections? Where are the dry bones in our own life.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO MOVE IN OUR LIVES.



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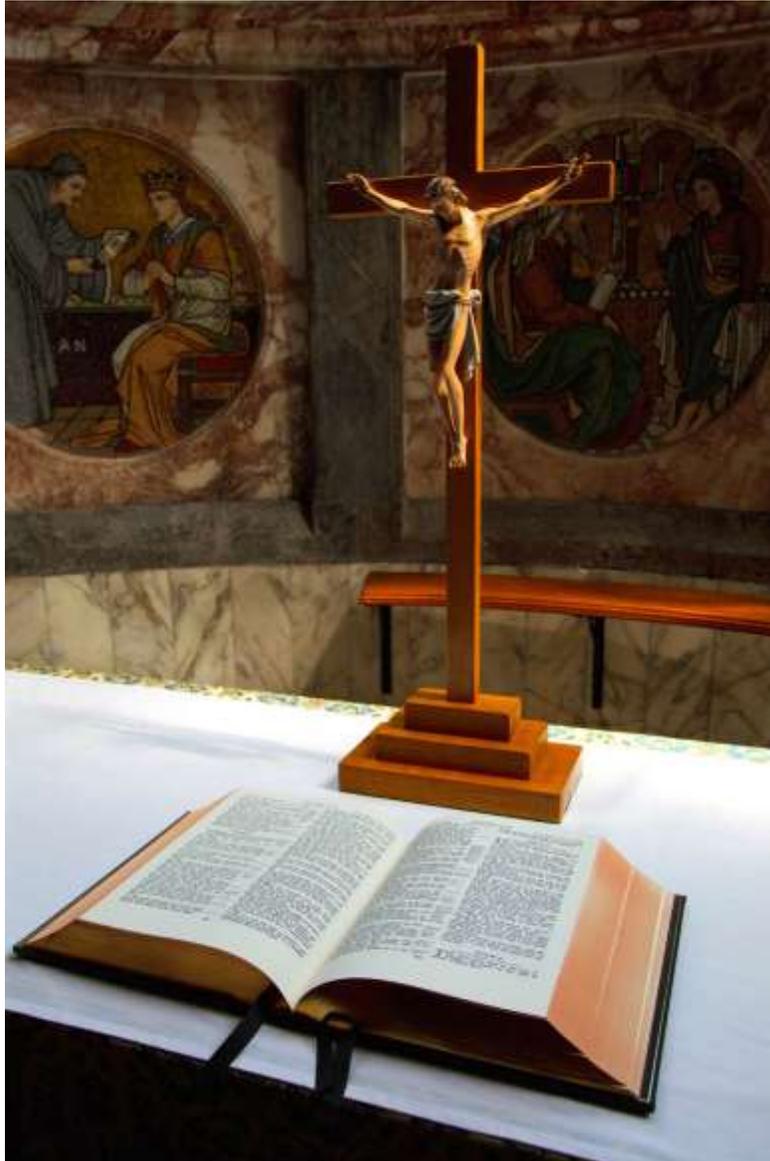
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 23, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Monday, March 23rd, 2026

### Reading 1, Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62

1 In Babylon there lived a man named Joakim.

2 He was married to a woman called Susanna daughter of Hilkiah, a woman of great beauty; and she was God-fearing, for

3 her parents were worthy people and had instructed their daughter in the Law of Moses.

4 Joakim was a very rich man and had a garden by his house; he used to be visited by a considerable number of the Jews, since he was held in greater respect than any other man.

5 Two elderly men had been selected from the people, that year, to act as judges. Of such the Lord had said, 'Wickedness has come to Babylon through the elders and judges posing as guides to the people.'

6 These men were often at Joakim's house, and all who were engaged in litigation used to come to them.

7 At midday, when the people had gone away, Susanna would take a walk in her husband's garden.

8 The two elders, who used to watch her every day as she came in to take her walk, gradually began to desire her.

9 They threw reason aside, making no effort to turn their eyes to Heaven, and forgetting the demands of virtue.

15 So they waited for a favourable moment; and one day Susanna came as usual, accompanied only by two young maidservants. The day was hot and she wanted to bathe in the garden.

16 There was no one about except the two elders, spying on her from their hiding place.

17 She said to the servants, 'Bring me some oil and balsam and shut the garden door while I bathe.'

19 Hardly were the maids gone than the two elders sprang up and rushed upon her.

20 'Look,' they said, 'the garden door is shut, no one can see us. We want to have you, so give in and let us!



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21 Refuse, and we shall both give evidence that a young man was with you and that this was why you sent your maids away.'

22 Susanna sighed. 'I am trapped,' she said, 'whatever I do. If I agree, it means death for me; if I resist, I cannot get away from you.'

23 But I prefer to fall innocent into your power than to sin in the eyes of the Lord.'

24 She then cried out as loud as she could. The two elders began shouting too, putting the blame on her,

25 and one of them ran to open the garden door.

26 The household, hearing the shouting in the garden, rushed out by the side entrance to see what had happened to her.

27 Once the elders had told their story, the servants were thoroughly taken aback, since nothing of this sort had ever been said of Susanna.

28 Next day a meeting was held at the house of her husband Joakim. The two elders arrived, full of their wicked plea against Susanna, to have her put to death.

29 They addressed the company, 'Summon Susanna daughter of Hilkiah and wife of Joakim.' She was sent for,

30 and came accompanied by her parents, her children and all her relations.

33 All her own people were weeping, and so were all the others who saw her.

34 The two elders stood up, with all the people round them, and laid their hands on her head.

35 Tearfully she turned her eyes to Heaven, her heart confident in God.

36 The elders then spoke, 'While we were walking by ourselves in the garden, this woman arrived with two maids. She shut the garden door and then dismissed the servants.

37 A young man, who had been hiding, went over to her and they lay together.

38 From the end of the garden where we were, we saw this crime taking place and hurried towards them.

39 Though we saw them together, we were unable to catch the man: he was too strong for us; he opened the door and took to his heels.



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40 We did, however, catch this woman and ask her who the young man was.

41 She refused to tell us. That is our evidence.' Since they were elders of the people and judges, the assembly accepted their word: Susanna was condemned to death.

42 She cried out as loud as she could, 'Eternal God, you know all secrets and everything before it happens;

43 you know that they have given false evidence against me. And now I must die, innocent as I am of everything their malice has invented against me!'

44 The Lord heard her cry

45 and, as she was being led away to die, he roused the holy spirit residing in a young boy called Daniel

46 who began to shout, 'I am innocent of this woman's death!'

47 At this all the people turned to him and asked, 'What do you mean by that?'

48 Standing in the middle of the crowd, he replied, 'Are you so stupid, children of Israel, as to condemn a daughter of Israel unheard, and without troubling to find out the truth?

49 Go back to the scene of the trial: these men have given false evidence against her.'

50 All the people hurried back, and the elders said to Daniel, 'Come and sit with us and tell us what you mean, since God has given you the gifts that elders have.'

51 Daniel said, 'Keep the men well apart from each other, for I want to question them.'

52 When the men had been separated, Daniel had one of them brought to him. 'You have grown old in wickedness,' he said, 'and now the sins of your earlier days have overtaken you,

53 you with your unjust judgements, your condemnation of the innocent, your acquittal of the guilty, although the Lord has said, "You must not put the innocent and upright to death."

54 Now then, since you saw her so clearly, tell me what sort of tree you saw them lying under.' He replied, 'Under an acacia tree.'

55 Daniel said, 'Indeed! Your lie recoils on your own head: the angel of God has already received from him your sentence and will cut you in half.'



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56 He dismissed the man, ordered the other to be brought and said to him, 'Son of Canaan, not of Judah, beauty has seduced you, lust has led your heart astray!

57 This is how you have been behaving with the daughters of Israel, and they have been too frightened to resist; but here is a daughter of Judah who could not stomach your wickedness!

58 Now then, tell me what sort of tree you surprised them under.' He replied, 'Under an aspen tree.'

59 Daniel said, 'Indeed! Your lie recoils on your own head: the angel of God is waiting with a sword to rend you in half, and destroy the pair of you.'

60 Then the whole assembly shouted, blessing God, the Saviour of those who trust in him.

61 And they turned on the two elders whom Daniel had convicted of false evidence out of their own mouths.

62 As the Law of Moses prescribes, they were given the same punishment as they had schemed to inflict on their neighbour. They were put to death. And thus, that day, an innocent life was saved.

## **Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6**

1 [Psalm Of David] Yahweh is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 In grassy meadows he lets me lie. By tranquil streams he leads me

3 to restore my spirit. He guides me in paths of saving justice as befits his name.

4 Even were I to walk in a ravine as dark as death I should fear no danger, for you are at my side. Your staff and your crook are there to soothe me.

5 You prepare a table for me under the eyes of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup brims over.

6 Kindness and faithful love pursue me every day of my life. I make my home in the house of Yahweh for all time to come.

## **Gospel, John 8:1-11**

1 and Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.



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2 At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

3 The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in the middle

4 they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery,

5 and in the Law Moses has ordered us to stone women of this kind. What have you got to say?'

6 They asked him this as a test, looking for an accusation to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger.

7 As they persisted with their question, he straightened up and said, 'Let the one among you who is guiltless be the first to throw a stone at her.'

8 Then he bent down and continued writing on the ground.

9 When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until the last one had gone and Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained in the middle.

10 Jesus again straightened up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'

11 'No one, sir,' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus. 'Go away, and from this moment sin no more.'



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## Questions for Reflection for March 23, 2026

1. In our first reading for today's Holy Mass, we hear of the courage of Susanna, the beautiful wife of Joakim, who is accosted by two Jewish elders who lusted after her. We read this line in the Book of Daniel "here is a daughter of Judah who could not stomach your wickedness!" when the elders and their lies are finally exposed through the excellent "cross examination" by Daniel exposing that they had fabricated their story.

But, today, we should consider the heroic virtue and living faith of Susanna. She, a Jewish woman, knew that the punishment for adultery was stoning. But she knew in her heart, that she had not sinned and she trusted in the Lord. Listen to her prayer "'Eternal God, you know all secrets and everything before it happens; you know that they have given false evidence against me. And now I must die, innocent as I am of everything their malice has invented against me!' ... And it continues "The Lord heard her cry."

The Lord hears our cries. During these final days of the 40-day pilgrimage called Lent, let us make a point of going to confession and opening our entire lives to the Light of the Holy Spirit. We can trust the Lord. He wants us free and He will protect us.

2. The Faith of David the Psalmist is such a model for every believer. He knew that the Lord was His Shepherd. Do we? Do we really know that even if we walk through 'the valley of death" He walks with us? He does. As we prepare for the Great High Holy Days of the Easter Triduum, let us reaffirm our own faith and reach out to the Lord. Let us "make OUR home in the house of Yahweh for all time to come."
3. In the Gospel appointed for this Mass, we find another heroic woman. But this woman actually committed the sin of adultery. Jesus comes into the scene just before the Religious leaders were to apply the law against her and execute her by stoning. We see right away that their hearts were not pure. They seek to entrap the Lord in this dialogue. Of course, they fail. He turns the tables and reminds them of their own sinfulness.

Jesus then forgives the woman, offering the MERCY of God to her. But notice, he sends her away with these words 'Go away, and from this moment sin no more.'

When we began our Lenten pilgrimage, we were signed with ashes and told "Repent (or turn away from sin) and Believe the Gospel (or Good News)". Every Sin merits punishment. But, God in His Mercy, sent us a Savior who paid the penalty for our sin and made it possible for us to turn away from sin and grow in holiness. But we, like the woman must heed that admonition. We must choose to cooperate with grace and follow Jesus in a life of ongoing conversion.



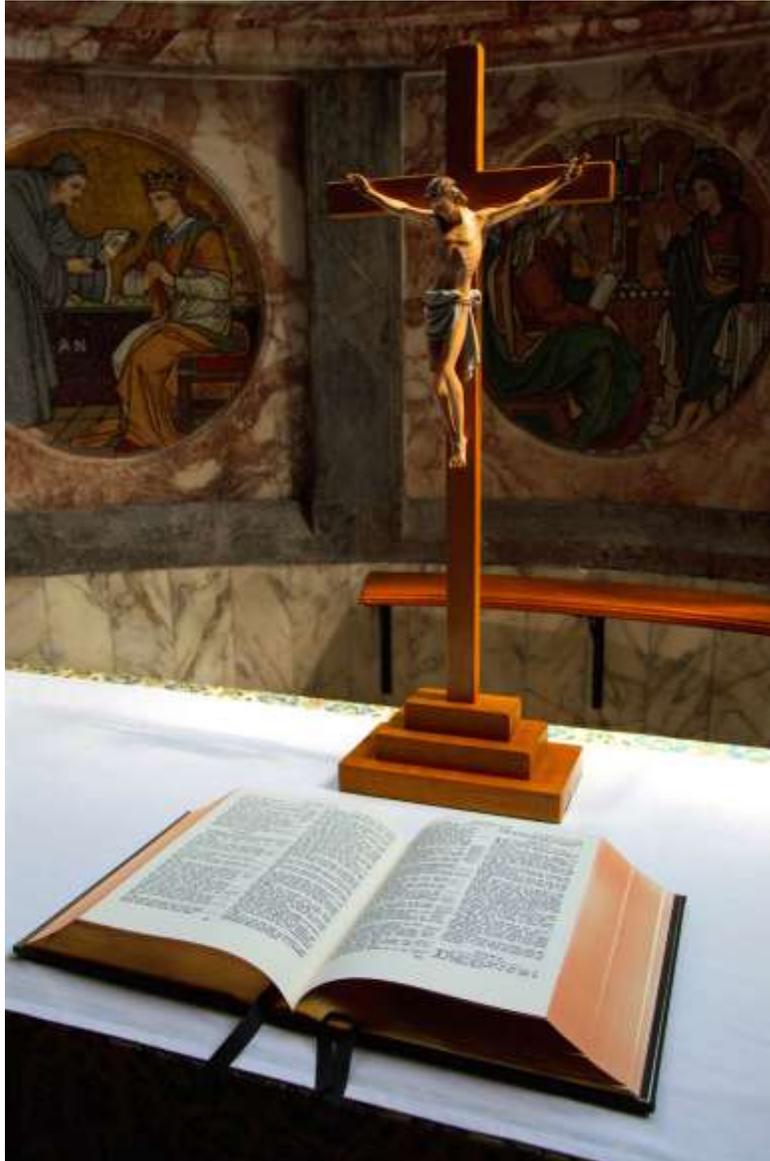
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 24, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Tuesday, March 24th, 2026

### Reading 1, Numbers 21:4-9

4 They left Mount Hor by the road to the Sea of Suph, to skirt round Edom. On the way the people lost patience.

5 They spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the desert? For there is neither food nor water here; we are sick of this meagre diet.'

6 At this, God sent fiery serpents among the people; their bite brought death to many in Israel.

7 The people came and said to Moses, 'We have sinned by speaking against Yahweh and against you. Intercede for us with Yahweh to save us from these serpents.' Moses interceded for the people,

8 and Yahweh replied, 'Make a fiery serpent and raise it as a standard. Anyone who is bitten and looks at it will survive.'

9 Moses then made a serpent out of bronze and raised it as a standard, and anyone who was bitten by a serpent and looked at the bronze serpent survived.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 102:2-3, 16-18, 19-21

2 Do not turn away your face from me when I am in trouble; bend down and listen to me, when I call, be quick to answer me!

3 For my days are vanishing like smoke, my bones burning like an oven;

16 when Yahweh builds Zion anew, he will be seen in his glory;

17 he will turn to hear the prayer of the destitute, and will not treat their prayer with scorn.

18 This shall be put on record for a future generation, and a people yet to be born shall praise God:

19 Yahweh has leaned down from the heights of his sanctuary, has looked down from heaven to earth,

20 to listen to the sighing of the captive, and set free those condemned to death,

21 to proclaim the name of Yahweh in Zion, his praise in Jerusalem;



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## **Gospel, John 8:21-30**

21 Again he said to them: I am going away; you will look for me and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.

22 So the Jews said to one another, 'Is he going to kill himself, that he says, "Where I am going, you cannot come?" '

23 Jesus went on: You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I have told you already: You will die in your sins. Yes, if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.

25 So they said to him, 'Who are you?' Jesus answered: What I have told you from the outset.

26 About you I have much to say and much to judge; but the one who sent me is true, and what I declare to the world I have learnt from him.

27 They did not recognise that he was talking to them about the Father.

28 So Jesus said: When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am He and that I do nothing of my own accord. What I say is what the Father has taught me;

29 he who sent me is with me, and has not left me to myself, for I always do what pleases him.

30 As he was saying this, many came to believe in him.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 24, 2026

1. Our first reading presents us with the people of Israel murmuring against God and Moses. The Lord had delivered them from the Egyptians. When they were hungry, the Lord provided manna and quail in the desert. But now, they are complaining! This is sin. Complaining against the very gift and provision of God. And, it has consequences

As punishment for their complaining, the Lord sent fiery serpents, and many died from their bite! And, the people repent, beseeching Moses to intervene on their behalf.

Again, Moses the man of God, intercedes with the Lord on behalf of the people and God gives them a remedy. They are to mount a bronze serpent on a pole and lift it up. And, all who looked upon it would live.

When the Lord first gave them "manna" and quail (See Exodus 16) they were grateful and rejoiced. Yet, His loving provision had now become a source of their complaining, and their sin.

Has Gods provision in our own life become a source of our complaint. It can happen, when we lose our first love and begin to worship ourselves. lent has been a continual invitation to turn away from sin and turn toward the Lord.

How have we done in our Lenten resolves?

2. The Psalmist David takes the opposite approach and sings about it in the Response appointed for today's Holy Mass. He cries out "days are vanishing like smoke, my bones burning like an oven", yet he does not complain.

Instead, he extols and exalts the goodness of the Lord.

He affirms his belief that "when Yahweh builds Zion anew, he will be seen in his glory; he will turn to hear the prayer of the destitute and will not treat their prayer with scorn."

How do we approach difficulties and struggles in our own lives?

Do we complain and murmur, or do we praise and worship the Lord and focus on His promises? the choice is ours.



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3. Our first reading from the Old Testament is both a narrative of what occurred in the desert to the people of Israel - as well as a type and image of what was to come later, in and through Jesus the Lord and His Saving, redemptive work.

Jesus is alluding to His saving passion and death in these words from the Gospel of today's Mass. "When you have lifted up the Son of Man", you will know that I am He"

In an earlier passage in John's Gospel, in a discourse with Nicodemus (John 3:14,15) Jesus says:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.?"

Sin is like the serpents in the Desert, when it strikes, it poisons, and kills supernatural life. Jesus, the Sinless One, will soon take the sins of the whole world upon Himself and be lifted up on the Cross of Calvary, dealing a final and fatal blow to the devil and to death itself!

During this last full week of lent, we need to openly acknowledge the serpents of sin in our own lives - selfishness, sinful sensuality, doctrinal errors, laziness, envy, slander....The supernatural grace we received at Baptism, and continue to receive in all the Sacraments and, especially in the Holy Eucharist, is threatened by these serpents.

We must continue to look at Jesus, raised above the earth on the Cross, and repent.

Do we look at the Crucifix regularly and turn to God? Do we have a crucifix in our home?



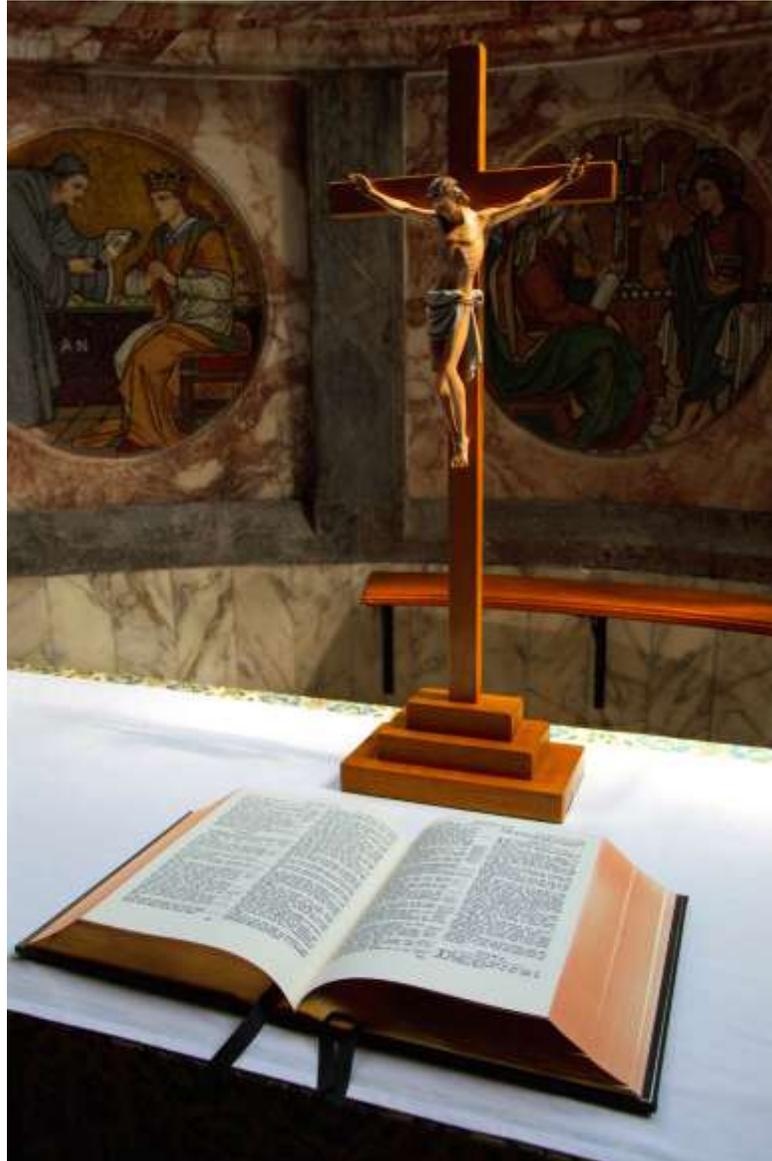
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 25, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Wednesday, March 25th, 2026

### Reading 1, Isaiah 7:10-14

10 Yahweh spoke to Ahaz again and said:

11 Ask Yahweh your God for a sign, either in the depths of Sheol or in the heights above.

12 But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask. I will not put Yahweh to the test.'

13 He then said: Listen now, House of David: are you not satisfied with trying human patience that you should try my God's patience too?

14 The Lord will give you a sign in any case: It is this: the young woman is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 40:7-8, 8-9, 10, 11

7 then I said, 'Here I am, I am coming.' In the scroll of the book it is written of me,

8 my delight is to do your will; your law, my God, is deep in my heart.

9 I proclaimed the saving justice of Yahweh in the great assembly. See, I will not hold my tongue, as you well know.

10 I have not kept your saving justice locked in the depths of my heart, but have spoken of your constancy and saving help. I have made no secret of your faithful and steadfast love, in the great assembly.

11 You, Yahweh, have not withheld your tenderness from me; your faithful and steadfast love will always guard me.

### Reading 2, Hebrews 10:4-10

4 Bulls' blood and goats' blood are incapable of taking away sins,

5 and that is why he said, on coming into the world: You wanted no sacrifice or cereal offering, but you gave me a body.



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6 You took no pleasure in burnt offering or sacrifice for sin;

7 then I said, 'Here I am, I am coming,' in the scroll of the book it is written of me, to do your will, God.

8 He says first You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the cereal offerings, the burnt offerings and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them;

9 and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to do your will. He is abolishing the first sort to establish the second.

10 And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ made once and for all.

## **Gospel, Luke 1:26-38**

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,

27 to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour! The Lord is with you.'

29 She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean,

30 but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour.

31 Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus.

32 He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David;

33 he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.'

34 Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?'

35 The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God.

36 And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month,



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37 for nothing is impossible to God.'

38 Mary said, 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.' And the angel left her.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 25, 2026

1. March 25 is the date when the Solemnity of the Feast of the Annunciation is celebrated in the Liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church. The mystery and full meaning of Mary's cooperation in God's plan has inspired some of the most profound reflection in the Christian tradition. As well it should.

She freely chose to say YES. Our first reading at Mass today is taken from the messianic Prophet Isaiah places the event within the fulfillment of God's plan and the answer to His promise to Israel. "Therefore, the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us!" (Isaiah 7).

That young woman with child, that Virgin, promised to Israel, is Miriam, the Hebrew name for Mary. Mary's "Yes" is called the Fiat in Latin, "Let it be done." Mary's Fiat was spoken from a heart filled with total dedication and love for God. In a Biblical context, "heart" is a word that means much more than the fleshy organ at the center of our chest cavity. It refers to our center, the core of each of us, the place where our deepest identity is rooted, and from which our fundamental choices about life are made. The little Virgin of Nazareth teaches us how to live our Christian life. When the Angel of the Lord appeared, bearing the message and calling her to a special mission, she said "YES." We must say "Yes" as well and believe that "nothing is impossible with God."

Let's consider her response to the message: "I am the handmaiden of the Lord; let it be to me according to your Word." It is in these words that we can discover the heart of every Christian vocation.

Gregory of Nyssa once wrote: "What came about in bodily form in Mary, the fullness of the godhead shining through Christ in the Blessed Virgin, takes place in a similar way in every soul that has been made pure. The Lord does not come in bodily form, for 'we no longer know Christ according to the flesh', but He dwells in us spiritually and the Father takes up His abode with Him, the Gospel tells us. In this way the child Jesus is born in each of us."

Have we given our YES to the Lord today?

2. Our second reading is ripe with beautiful theological and spiritual insights, as is the entire Letter to the Hebrews. The excerpt chosen for today's Feast of the Annunciation follows through on the theme which the Church, as mother and teacher, invites us to reflect upon, the deeper mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.



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"You gave me a body"... The wonder of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity! In the womb of a Holy Virgin, the Word became flesh. And, in Him, through the offering of His Body on the Second Tree on Golgotha Hill, the New Covenant will be instituted for all men and women.

Let me touch upon only ONE the insights that this reading touches upon.

From the very moment Jesus became Incarnate, His saving mission of redeeming and re-creating began. The Incarnation is the very heart of the Mystery of the entire Christian Faith. The God, who made the whole universe and created man out of the dust of the earth, took on our humanity. He lived in the first home of every human person, His mother's womb.

There was a Redeemer in the womb of Mary! The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word of the Father, was an embryonic human person, a fetus, a child in the womb. Of course, that Person, from the moment of conception, as the Ancient Christian Creeds affirm, was - and is - True God and True Man.

In the light of this mystery every human pregnancy, every womb, every child in the womb, was forever elevated beyond the dignity it already possessed. Also, the extreme evil of abortion is made even more obvious and profane. This Redeemer in the womb, Jesus, began His saving work "in utero" and He identifies with every child in the womb. Jesus was an "embryonic person" and is forever identified with all embryonic persons.

Are we passionately Pro-Life? We should be!

3. The encounter between Mary and the Angel recounted in the Gospel for today's Holy Mass and Feast of the Annunciation also opens up the meaning of our own lives, by shedding light on our call to participate in God's loving plan.

In the midst of all of the challenges we face as Catholic Christians in a Culture which has forgotten God, we are invited to celebrate God's loving plan - and to remember the great liberating promise of the Gospel is intended for all men and women. We are the bearers of Good News in an age of bad news.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, "What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ. (CCC#487)" Years ago I wrote a reflective book entitled The Prayer of Mary: Living the Surrendered Life.

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Its intended audience were Christians of other communities who, in the sad aftermath of the hundreds of years of divisions in Western Christianity, have often lost the great treasure of the witness of Mary - as mother, model of the faith and symbol of the Church. The Catholic Catechism summarizes this mystery in these words:

"At once virgin and mother, Mary is the symbol and the most perfect realization of the Church: "the Church indeed. . . by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By preaching and Baptism she brings forth sons, who are conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life. She herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the faith she pledged to her spouse." (CCC#507)

Mary teaches us to stay afloat in the ocean of life, with all of its undertows. Mary's way is to become an ark within, where the same God who became incarnate within her takes up His residence in us. He comes to dwell in all men and women who say "Yes" to Him. Mary invites us to participate in the ongoing incarnation of God's Love, for the sake of world which He still loves.

It is an invitation to live our own lives for the Lord. To say yes to His continual invitations. The ongoing re-creative and redemptive work of God's love in Jesus Christ continues through us. We are members of His Body. As learn how to become arks, or dwelling places, through which Incarnate Love comes alive for all those around us, we participate in the loving plan of God for others.

We enter into Christ's continuing Incarnation and participate in his ongoing redemptive mission as we respond in the same way Mary did to His invitation: "Behold the servant of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to Thy word."

Mary, in her selflessness, was open to the angel's visit. She recognized who was speaking. She listened, received and responded. In so doing, she shows us the way to respond to the Lord's call in our own lives.

God initiates a relationship with each one of us - and we respond in surrendering freely to Him. This dynamic, this heavenly road, leads to a dialogue, a conversation, a way of life. By saying Yes, through our own Fiat, we are Consecrated and enlisted in the ongoing mission of the Lord. Mary shows us that way.

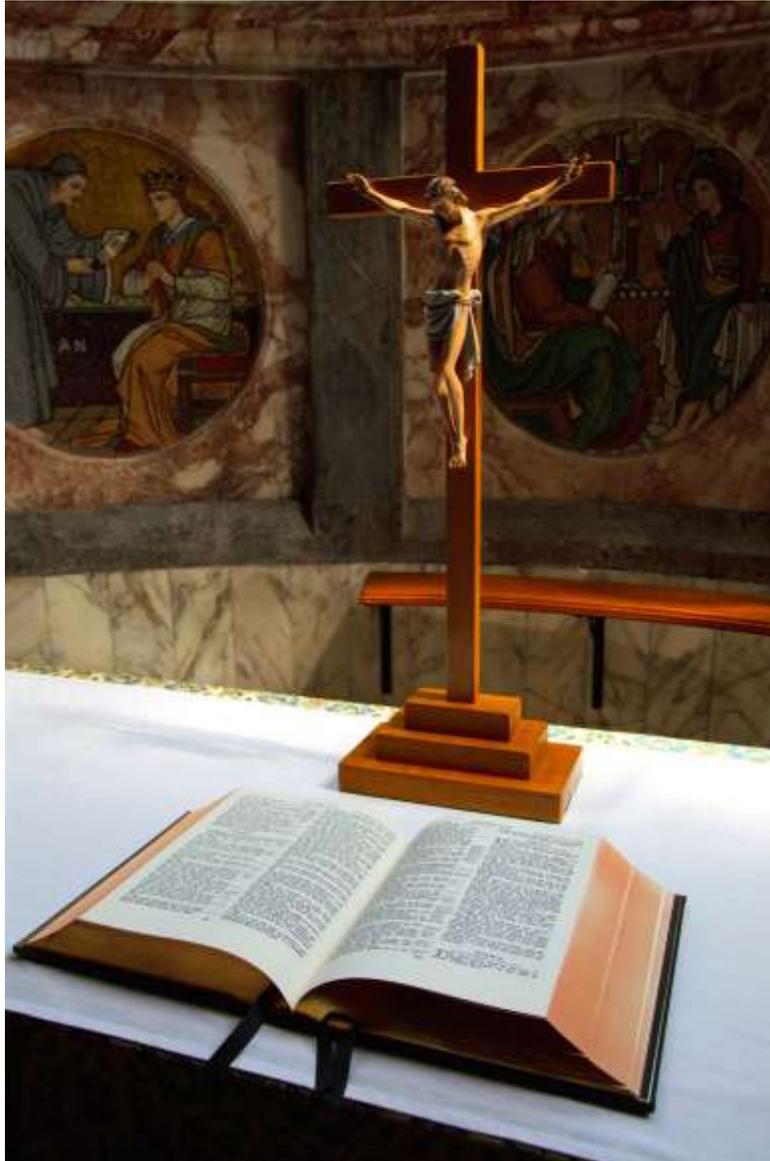
How are we doing?

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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 26, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Thursday, March 26th, 2026

### Reading 1, Genesis 17:3-9

3 And Abram bowed to the ground. God spoke to him as follows,

4 'For my part, this is my covenant with you: you will become the father of many nations.

5 And you are no longer to be called Abram; your name is to be Abraham, for I am making you father of many nations.

6 I shall make you exceedingly fertile. I shall make you into nations, and your issue will be kings.

7 And I shall maintain my covenant between myself and you, and your descendants after you, generation after generation, as a covenant in perpetuity, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

8 And to you and to your descendants after you, I shall give the country where you are now immigrants, the entire land of Canaan, to own in perpetuity. And I shall be their God.'

9 God further said to Abraham, 'You for your part must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you, generation after generation.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 105:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

4 Seek Yahweh and his strength, tirelessly seek his presence!

5 Remember the marvels he has done, his wonders, the judgements he has spoken.

6 Stock of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob whom he chose!

7 He is Yahweh our God, his judgements touch the whole world.

8 He remembers his covenant for ever, the promise he laid down for a thousand generations,

9 which he concluded with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac.



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## Gospel, John 8:51-59

51 In all truth I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.

52 The Jews said, 'Now we know that you are possessed. Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead, and yet you say, "Whoever keeps my word will never know the taste of death."

53 Are you greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? The prophets are dead too. Who are you claiming to be?'

54 Jesus answered: If I were to seek my own glory my glory would be worth nothing; in fact, my glory is conferred by the Father, by the one of whom you say, 'He is our God,'

55 although you do not know him. But I know him, and if I were to say, 'I do not know him,' I should be a liar, as you yourselves are. But I do know him, and I keep his word.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to think that he would see my Day; he saw it and was glad.

57 The Jews then said, 'You are not fifty yet, and you have seen Abraham!'

58 Jesus replied: In all truth I tell you, before Abraham ever was, I am.

59 At this they picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself and left the Temple.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 26, 2026

1. Our first reading for today's Holy Mass recounts the Covenant God made with Abraham. His name was Abram. After the encounter, the Lord changed it to Abrahah (Gen. 17:5) which means "Father of Many".

In the Glossary section, at the back of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we find this short summary of the importance of Abraham in the history of Salvation and the significance of this Covenant: "ABRAHAM: The man of faith and patriarch of Israel with whom God made a covenant which promised him land in which to live and many descendants, a great people for whom the Lord would be their God. Through Abraham God formed the people to whom he would later give the law by revelation to Moses. With the advent of Christ, the people of Israel would serve as the root to which the Gentiles would be grafted by their coming to believe (59, 72, 145, 705, 762, 2570)."

The paragraphs cited are sections of the Catechism which delve deeply in the nature and continuing significance of this Covenant. In fact, one of the best ways to utilize the Catechism and grow in understanding our Catholic faith is by looking up the paragraphs cited in sections like this in the Glossary. Look up Paragraphs 59, 72, 145, 705, 762, and 2570. Read the bible passages cited in each of those sections.

As Christians, we are sound of Abraham. In fact, right within the Liturgy, he is referred to as our father in faith in the Eucharistic prayer. Because he was the first to believe in the promises God made to him. In the Third chapter of his letter to the Galatians in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul explains this in depth. I encourage you, prayerfully read it. He ends that chapter with these words:

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise." Do you understand that you are a part of the fulfillment of Gods covenant with Abraham?

2. In the light of this insight, the words we sing, chant or hear in today's Responsorial Psalm take on a new meaning. When David addresses the "stock of Abraham", that includes you and me! Listen to these words:

"Stock of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob whom he chose!  
He is Yahweh our God, his judgements touch the whole world.

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He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he laid down for a thousand generations, which he concluded with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac."

As we draw closer to Holy Week, remember, we stand in the Covenant God made with Abraham. And, it is perfected in the New Covenant, sealed in the blood of Jesus Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to open up the implications of all of this in your own life.

3. In the portion of St. John's Gospel appointed for today's Mass, Jesus is in another confrontation with some of the Pharisees. Thinking themselves to be the "children of Abraham" and inheritors of the promises made to Abraham has not borne within them the holiness and conversion it should have. Instead, they have spiritually blinded by a false pride.

They fail to see who it is they are challenging. The Very Messiah Abraham longed for!

Jesus says:

Your father Abraham rejoiced to think that he would see my Day;  
he saw it and was glad.

The Jews then said, 'You are not fifty yet, and you have seen Abraham!'

JESUS SAID - "In all truth I tell you, before Abraham ever was, I am."

The passage continues: "At this they picked up stones to throw at him;  
but Jesus hid himself and left the Temple."

WOW. Recall, Moses asked the Lord to tell him his name so that he could tell the people. (See, Exodus 3:14). He said "I AM" ----Jesus is making clear that He is the Lord!

Do we believe this? If so, how are we living our own lives in response to this truth?



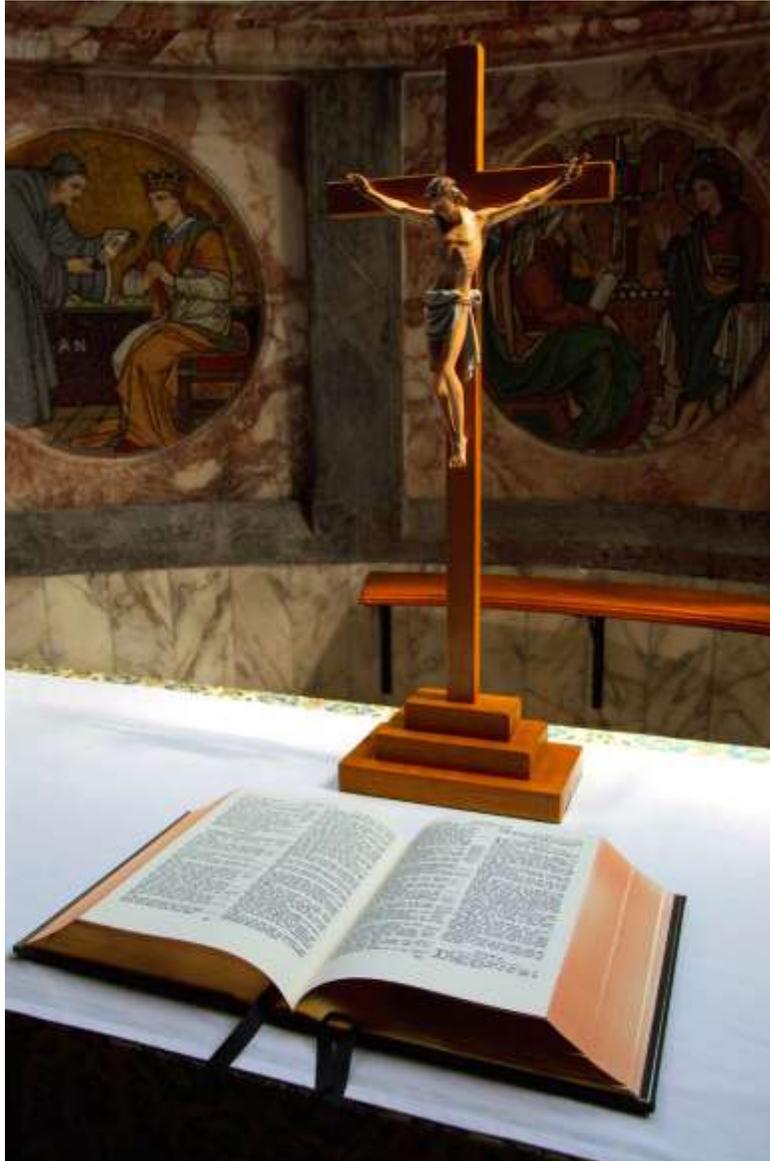
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 27, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Friday, March 27th, 2026

### Reading 1, Jeremiah 20:10-13

10 I heard so many disparaging me, 'Terror on every side! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!' All those who were on good terms with me watched for my downfall, 'Perhaps he will be seduced into error. Then we shall get the better of him and take our revenge!'

11 But Yahweh is at my side like a mighty hero; my opponents will stumble, vanquished, confounded by their failure; everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be theirs.

12 Yahweh Sabaoth, you who test the upright, observer of motives and thoughts, I shall see your vengeance on them, for I have revealed my cause to you.

13 Sing to Yahweh, praise Yahweh, for he has delivered the soul of one in need from the clutches of evil doers.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 18:2-3, 3-4, 5-6, 7

2 Yahweh is my rock and my fortress, my deliverer is my God. I take refuge in him, my rock, my shield, my saving strength, my stronghold, my place of refuge.

3 I call to Yahweh who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my foes.

4 With Death's breakers closing in on me, Belial's torrents ready to swallow me,

5 Sheol's snares every side of me, Death's traps lying ahead of me,

6 I called to Yahweh in my anguish, I cried for help to my God; from his Temple he heard my voice, my cry came to his ears.

7 Then the earth quaked and rocked, the mountains' foundations shuddered, they quaked at his blazing anger.

### Gospel, John 10:31-42

31 The Jews fetched stones to stone him,



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32 so Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many good works from my Father; for which of these are you stoning me?'

33 The Jews answered him, 'We are stoning you, not for doing a good work, but for blasphemy; though you are only a man, you claim to be God.'

34 Jesus answered: Is it not written in your Law: I said, you are gods?

35 So it uses the word 'gods' of those people to whom the word of God was addressed -- and scripture cannot be set aside.

36 Yet to someone whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world you say, 'You are blaspheming' because I said, 'I am Son of God.'

37 If I am not doing my Father's work, there is no need to believe me;

38 but if I am doing it, then even if you refuse to believe in me, at least believe in the work I do; then you will know for certain that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

39 They again wanted to arrest him then, but he eluded their clutches.

40 He went back again to the far side of the Jordan to the district where John had been baptising at first and he stayed there.

41 Many people who came to him said, 'John gave no signs, but all he said about this man was true';

42 and many of them believed in him.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 27, 2026

1. As we move toward the week that is called "Holy Week," our first reading, taken from the Old Testament Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, presents us with an account of this great Hebrew prophet being persecuted. Yet, as is so often the case in the Hebrew Scriptures, when the verses are considered through the lens of the New Testament, through the Paschal Mystery, the saving Life, suffering, passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we also see a type, a symbol, of the persecution which Jesus will undergo, when His time has fully come.

Deception, suffering, sadness have all brought the Prophet to a place of deep anguish. Even eliciting words of utter despair spoken to the Lord. In the verses which precede our passage appointed for today's Mass, Jeremiah says to the Lord "You duped me, and I let myself be duped". Yet, this great Hebrew prophet remains faithful to the Lord, to his mission and confident in Gods deliverance.

How do we handle disappointment in our own lives?

As we seek to live our catholic Christian faith in an increasingly hostile culture, we will face a form of persecution. Are we ready for it? Do we stay confident in the Lord?

2. David, the Psalmist, exhibits the same confidence in God "With Death's breakers closing in on me, Belial's torrents ready to swallow me, Sheol's snares every side of me, Death's traps lying ahead of me"

How? Through persevering prayer. Listen to his words, "I called to Yahweh in my anguish, I cried for help to my God; from his Temple he heard my voice, my cry came to his ears."

How do we deal with serious struggles in our own lives? Do we fall prey to the lies of the devil and "blame God". Or, do we cry out to Him? When we choose the way of what can be called persevering prayer, we find the way.

When I was a young man, I had a wonderful Franciscan priest who taught me much about persevering prayer. Newly married, I thought I had the worries of the world flooding upon me. When I did not see quick answers to my prayer; I grew confused as to whether I should even continue asking. He told me, with such practical wisdom, "Pray until what you seek is given, or the Lord changes your mind about what you are asking".

Still good advice, all these years later

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3. In our Gospel, we find Jesus facing the growing hostility of the crowds whose hearts were hardened against the Truth He came to proclaim. They seek to stone Him again. Literally, these purportedly religious people want to throw Rocks at God Incarnate!

They have become blinded by their own self idolatry. This account of hostility follows the discourse on the Good Shepherd on the Feast of the dedication at Jerusalem. He had just given them the response to the question they had asked him "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly"

He said, "I and the Father are One".

This hostility was mild compared to what he would face as his hour drew near. he eluded them because that hour had not yet come. He had come to voluntarily give His life for all men and women. Not to have it taken by them.

Jesus persevered in prayer. In His Sacred humanity in that Garden called Gethsemane, we witness the greatest example of perseverance. We also witness the perfect fruit of surrendered love which embraces the Father's Will out of loving trust. In the Letter to the Hebrews we read that he offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears. (Hebrews 5:7)

Sometimes we do not ask for the things which we really need. But God, the loving Father which he is, loves to hear from his sons and daughters. He welcomes all our requests. However, He gives us what we truly need to flourish and find our way home. The best prayer transforms our desire into His desire. We move from our will to His Will. As we learn to turn our human freedom toward His Loving Will, we find it fulfilled and perfected.

We are all called to persevering prayer, no matter what our state in life or vocation. Preparing ourselves for such prayer means learning to silence the clamor of the age, stop the ever-accelerating pace of the futile quests that so often occupy our hearts, and live in the eternal now by surrendering ourselves - and even our best aspirations- to the One who created us -and now re-creates us- in His Son Jesus Christ.

It is there, in the emptied place, in the stillness of the eternal now, where we prepare a room for the King of all hearts. And, in that encounter, we will find the longing of our heart fulfilled. Do we persevere in prayer?



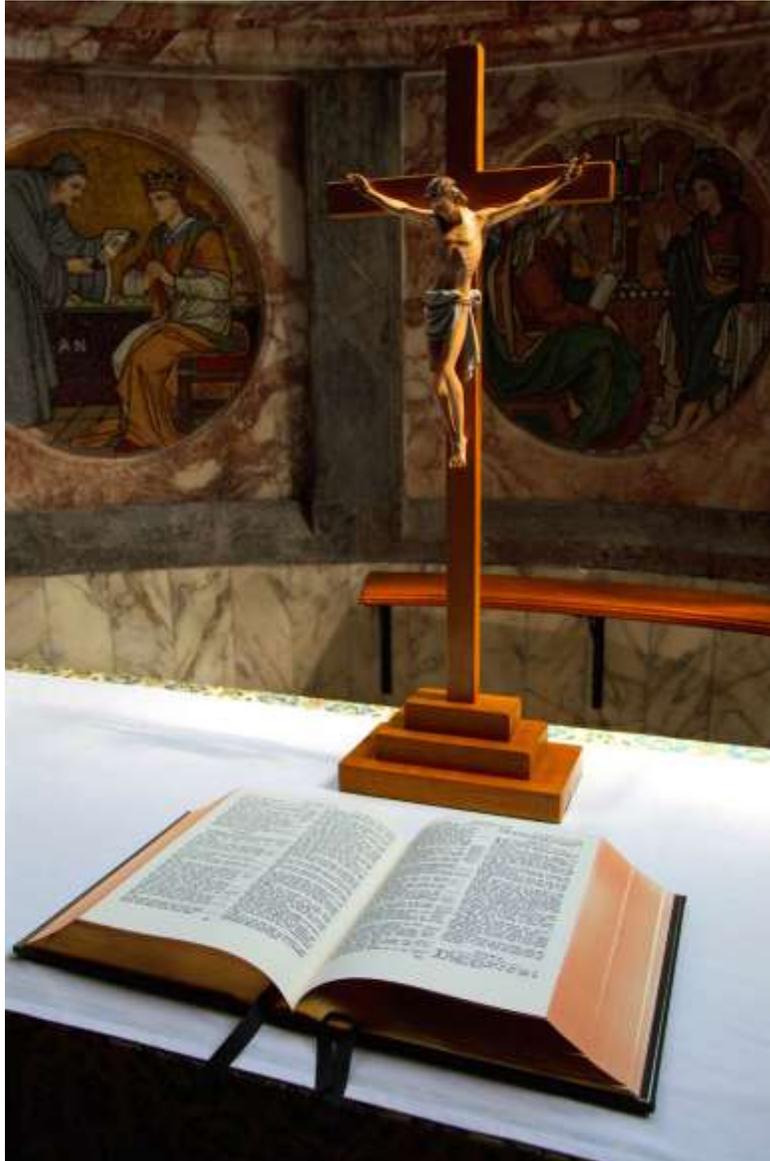
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 28, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Saturday, March 28th, 2026

### Reading 1, Ezekiel 37:21-28

21 say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: I shall take the Israelites from the nations where they have gone. I shall gather them together from everywhere and bring them home to their own soil.

22 I shall make them into one nation in the country, on the mountains of Israel, and one king is to be king of them all; they will no longer form two nations, nor be two separate kingdoms.

23 They will no longer defile themselves with their foul idols, their horrors and any of their crimes. I shall save them from the acts of infidelity which they have committed and shall cleanse them; they will be my people and I shall be their God.

24 My servant David will reign over them, one shepherd for all; they will follow my judgements, respect my laws and practise them.

25 They will live in the country which I gave to my servant Jacob, the country in which your ancestors lived. They will live in it, they, their children, their children's children, for ever. David my servant is to be their prince for ever.

26 I shall make a covenant of peace with them, an eternal covenant with them. I shall resettle them and make them grow; I shall set my sanctuary among them for ever.

27 I shall make my home above them; I shall be their God, and they will be my people.

28 And the nations will know that I am Yahweh the sanctifier of Israel, when my sanctuary is with them for ever." '

### Responsorial Psalm, Jeremiah 31:10, 11-12, 13

10 Listen, nations, to the word of Yahweh. On the farthest coasts and islands proclaim it, say, 'He who scattered Israel is gathering him, will guard him as a shepherd guarding his flock.'

11 For Yahweh has ransomed Jacob, rescued him from a hand stronger than his own.

12 They will come, shouting for joy on the heights of Zion, thronging towards Yahweh's lavish gifts, for wheat, new wine and oil, sheep and cattle; they will be like a well-watered garden, they will sorrow no more.

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13 The young girl will then take pleasure in the dance, and young men and old alike; I shall change their mourning into gladness, comfort them, give them joy after their troubles;

## **Gospel, John 11:45-57**

45 Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what he did, believed in him,

46 but some of them went to the Pharisees to tell them what Jesus had done.

47 Then the chief priests and Pharisees called a meeting. 'Here is this man working all these signs,' they said, 'and what action are we taking?

48 If we let him go on in this way everybody will believe in him, and the Romans will come and suppress the Holy Place and our nation.'

49 One of them, Caiaphas, the high priest that year, said, 'You do not seem to have grasped the situation at all;

50 you fail to see that it is to your advantage that one man should die for the people, rather than that the whole nation should perish.'

51 He did not speak in his own person, but as high priest of that year he was prophesying that Jesus was to die for the nation-

52 and not for the nation only, but also to gather together into one the scattered children of God.

53 From that day onwards they were determined to kill him.

54 So Jesus no longer went about openly among the Jews, but left the district for a town called Ephraim, in the country bordering on the desert, and stayed there with his disciples.

55 The Jewish Passover was drawing near, and many of the country people who had gone up to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves

56 were looking out for Jesus, saying to one another as they stood about in the Temple, 'What do you think? Will he come to the festival or not?'

57 The chief priests and Pharisees had by now given their orders: anyone who knew where he was must inform them so that they could arrest him.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 28, 2026

1. We are at the close of the last full week of Lent. Tomorrow is Passion or Palm Sunday.

In our first reading, the Lord speaks through the Prophet Ezekiel and promises to gather his chosen people, Israel, together. To deliver them from their oppressors and free them from their bondage to idols. He promises to place them under the leadership of David and reveal Himself, through them, to the Nations.

This whole chapter is messianic, pointing to the One who will come and bring about this wonderful event. This passage follows the powerful image of the valley of dry bones, also foretelling the restoration of Israel.

God chose Israel to be a sign of His loving plan for all the Nations. Though our first parents had sinned and rejected His Lordship, God in His love and mercy never rejected us. The entirety of the old Testament is an account of His loving effort to bring us back.

As Christians, we see all of these prophetic passages through the lens of the Paschal Mystery which we are about to enter into in the Holy Week. Jesus, of the House of David, is the promised Messiah and through His saving conception, life, suffering, passion, sacrificial death, resurrection and ascension, every promise to Israel will be fulfilled and all of the Nations, the "Gentiles" will be grafted in. The Universal plan of salvation will continue through the Church.

As we enter into the commemoration of these Holy Events, have we made a good confession?

Now is the time.

2. The Responsorial Psalm continues the theme for us and prepares us for the Gospel of today's Mass. David sings of the joy and celebration that will come when the Lord delivers His People and brings them back to Himself. Joy should be a part of our own lived experience as Christians. The kind of joy that cannot be taken away even in difficulties. That is the true Joy in the Lord

Difficulties, stress, and painful experiences which, at first glance, can cause us to respond with anything but joy, can be transformed in the life of a believer when we have living faith. They can become its very source through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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They can contribute to Gospel Joy. That is, if we invite the Holy Spirit to enlighten us in the midst of them, opening our eyes to find their purpose and lesson. Yes, also pray for them to either be removed or, if they are not, trust that the Lord Jesus Christ will accompany us through them.

Remember, the word translated Gospel in English literally means Good News. Are we living in a way which gives testimony to the fact that following Jesus Christ brings joy and happiness?

3. The Gospel text appointed for today's Holy Mass, follows the account of raising of Lazarus from the dead. Certainly, one of the signs that the Kingdom had indeed broken into human history through the ministry of Jesus Christ. And, many who had come to visit Mary when hearing of the death of her brother Lazarus did indeed come to believe in Jesus.

But, notice the reaction of the chief priests and Pharisees. They called a meeting, suspicious of Jesus. perhaps threatened by Him. Blind to the miracle.

'Here is this man working all these signs,' they said, 'and what action are we taking? If we let him go on in this way everybody will believe in him, and the Romans will come and suppress the Holy Place and our nation.'

The text continues

"One of them, Caiaphas, the high priest that year, said, 'You do not seem to have grasped the situation at all; you fail to see that it is to your advantage that one man should die for the people, rather than that the whole nation should perish.'

He did not speak in his own person, but as high priest of that year he was prophesying that Jesus was to die for the nation- and not for the nation only, but also to gather together into one the scattered children of God.

From that day onwards they were determined to kill him."

Jesus knew He was to die. Yet, His life would not be taken from Him. He would give it voluntarily. And, the words of Caiphas were indeed prophetic.

Are we ready? This week offers us all an opportunity to choose the Lord again. Now we begin... the journey.



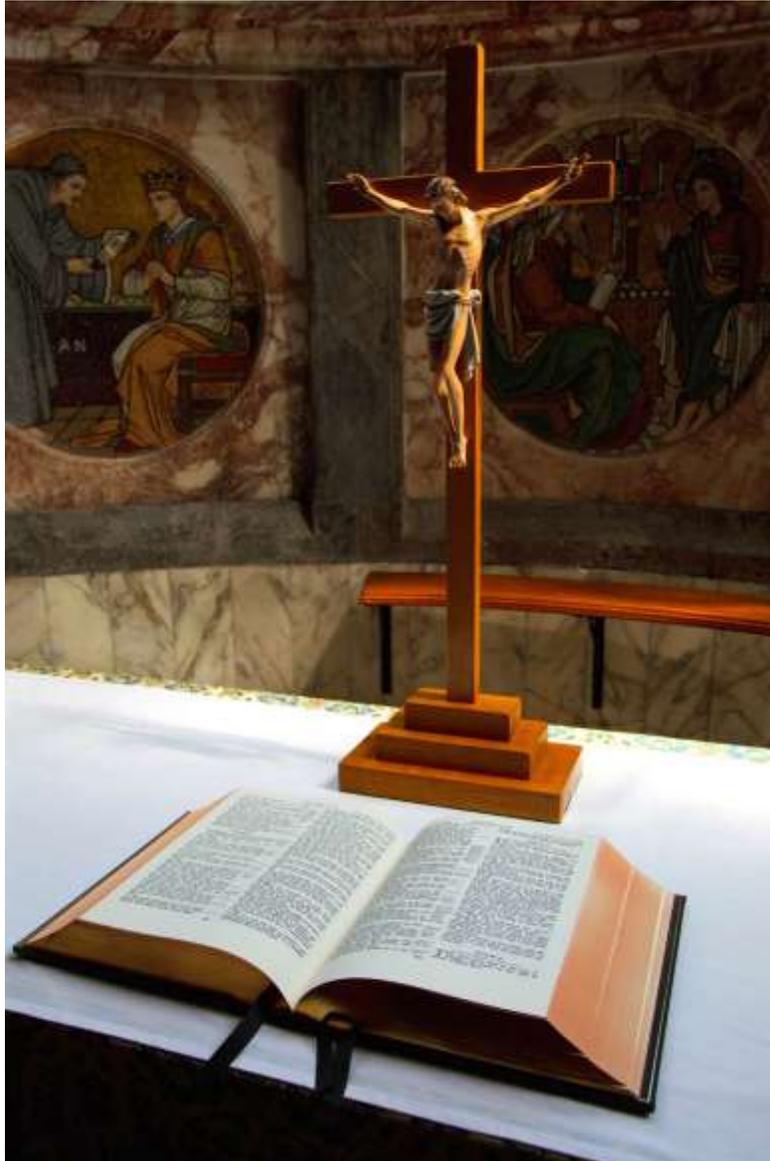
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 29, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Sunday, March 29th, 2026

### Reading 1, Isaiah 50:4-7

4 Lord Yahweh has given me a disciple's tongue, for me to know how to give a word of comfort to the weary. Morning by morning he makes my ear alert to listen like a disciple.

5 Lord Yahweh has opened my ear and I have not resisted, I have not turned away.

6 I have offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; I have not turned my face away from insult and spitting.

7 Lord Yahweh comes to my help, this is why insult has not touched me, this is why I have set my face like flint and know that I shall not be put to shame.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

8 'He trusted himself to Yahweh, let Yahweh set him free! Let him deliver him, as he took such delight in him.'

9 It was you who drew me from the womb and soothed me on my mother's breast.

17 I can count every one of my bones, while they look on and gloat;

18 they divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

19 Yahweh, do not hold aloof! My strength, come quickly to my help,

20 rescue my soul from the sword, the one life I have from the grasp of the dog!

23 'You who fear Yahweh, praise him! All the race of Jacob, honour him! Revere him, all the race of Israel!'

24 For he has not despised nor disregarded the poverty of the poor, has not turned away his face, but has listened to the cry for help.

### Reading 2, Philippians 2:6-11

6 Who, being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped.

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7 But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being,

8 he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.

9 And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names;

10 so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus

11 and that every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## **Gospel, Matthew 26:14--27:66**

14 Then one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests

15 and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They paid him thirty silver pieces,

16 and from then onwards he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

17 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?'

18 He said, 'Go to a certain man in the city and say to him, "The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my disciples." '

19 The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover.

20 When evening came he was at table with the Twelve.

21 And while they were eating he said, 'In truth I tell you, one of you is about to betray me.'

22 They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn, 'Not me, Lord, surely?'

23 He answered, 'Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me will betray me.'

24 The Son of man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!'



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25 Judas, who was to betray him, asked in his turn, 'Not me, Rabbi, surely?' Jesus answered, 'It is you who say it.'

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take it and eat,' he said, 'this is my body.'

27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he handed it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you,

28 for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

29 From now on, I tell you, I shall never again drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.'

30 After the psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives.

31 Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away from me tonight, for the scripture says: I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered,

32 but after my resurrection I shall go ahead of you to Galilee.'

33 At this, Peter said to him, 'Even if all fall away from you, I will never fall away.'

34 Jesus answered him, 'In truth I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times.'

35 Peter said to him, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the disciples said the same.

36 Then Jesus came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Stay here while I go over there to pray.'

37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And he began to feel sadness and anguish.

38 Then he said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and stay awake with me.'

39 And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. 'My Father,' he said, 'if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.'

40 He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, 'So you had not the strength to stay awake with me for one hour?'



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41 Stay awake, and pray not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak.'

42 Again, a second time, he went away and prayed: 'My Father,' he said, 'if this cup cannot pass by, but I must drink it, your will be done!'

43 And he came back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy.

44 Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words.

45 Then he came back to the disciples and said to them, 'You can sleep on now and have your rest. Look, the hour has come when the Son of man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Get up! Let us go! Look, my betrayer is not far away.'

47 And suddenly while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared, and with him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now the traitor had arranged a sign with them saying, 'The one I kiss, he is the man. Arrest him.'

49 So he went up to Jesus at once and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi,' and kissed him.

50 Jesus said to him, 'My friend, do what you are here for.' Then they came forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

51 And suddenly, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he struck the high priest's servant and cut off his ear.

52 Jesus then said, 'Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

53 Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, who would promptly send more than twelve legions of angels to my defence?

54 But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this is the way it must be?'

55 It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds, 'Am I a bandit, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid a hand on me.'

56 Now all this happened to fulfil the prophecies in scripture. Then all the disciples deserted him and ran away.



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57 The men who had arrested Jesus led him off to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58 Peter followed him at a distance right to the high priest's palace, and he went in and sat down with the attendants to see what the end would be.

59 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, however false, on which they might have him executed.

60 But they could not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward. Eventually two came forward

61 and made a statement, 'This man said, "I have power to destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up." '

62 The high priest then rose and said to him, 'Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?'

63 But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him, 'I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.'

64 Jesus answered him, 'It is you who say it. But, I tell you that from this time onward you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.'

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'He has blasphemed. What need of witnesses have we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy.

66 What is your opinion?' They answered, 'He deserves to die.'

67 Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they struck him,

68 'Prophecy to us, Christ! Who hit you then?'

69 Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him saying, 'You, too, were with Jesus the Galilean.'

70 But he denied it in front of them all. 'I do not know what you are talking about,' he said.

71 When he went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there, 'This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.'

72 And again, with an oath, he denied it, 'I do not know the man.'

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73 A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, 'You are certainly one of them too! Why, your accent gives you away.'

74 Then he started cursing and swearing, 'I do not know the man.' And at once the cock crowed,

75 and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, 'Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly.

1 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met in council to bring about the death of Jesus.

2 They had him bound and led him away to hand him over to Pilate, the governor.

3 When he found that Jesus had been condemned, then Judas, his betrayer, was filled with remorse and took the thirty silver pieces back to the chief priests and elders

4 saying, 'I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood.' They replied, 'What is that to us? That is your concern.'

5 And flinging down the silver pieces in the sanctuary he made off, and went and hanged himself.

6 The chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said, 'It is against the Law to put this into the treasury; it is blood-money.'

7 So they discussed the matter and with it bought the potter's field as a graveyard for foreigners,

8 and this is why the field is still called the Field of Blood.

9 The word spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was then fulfilled: And they took the thirty silver pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced by the children of Israel,

10 and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me.

11 Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say it.'

12 But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all.

13 Pilate then said to him, 'Do you not hear how many charges they have made against you?'

14 But to the governor's amazement, he offered not a word in answer to any of the charges.



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15 At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose.

16 Now there was then a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas.

17 So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?'

18 For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.

19 Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message, 'Have nothing to do with that upright man; I have been extremely upset today by a dream that I had about him.'

20 The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus.

21 So when the governor spoke and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they said, 'Barabbas.'

22 Pilate said to them, 'But in that case, what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!'

23 He asked, 'But what harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!'

24 Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.'

25 And the people, every one of them, shouted back, 'Let his blood be on us and on our children!'

26 Then he released Barabbas for them. After having Jesus scourged he handed him over to be crucified.

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him.

28 And they stripped him and put a scarlet cloak round him,

29 and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!'

30 And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it.



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31 And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucifixion.

32 On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, called Simon, and enlisted him to carry his cross.

33 When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull,

34 they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink.

35 When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots,

36 and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him.

37 Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'

38 Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

39 The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads

40 and said, 'So you would destroy the Temple and in three days rebuild it! Then save yourself if you are God's son and come down from the cross!'

41 The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way,

42 with the words, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him.

43 He has put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, "I am God's son."

44 Even the bandits who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

45 From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

47 When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah,'



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48 and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he filled with vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink.

49 But the rest of them said, 'Wait! And see if Elijah will come to save him.'

50 But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

51 And suddenly, the veil of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth quaked, the rocks were split,

52 the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy people rose from the dead,

53 and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the holy city and appeared to a number of people.

54 The centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this man was son of God.'

55 And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him.

56 Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

57 When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus.

58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be handed over.

59 So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud

60 and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away.

61 Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

62 Next day, that is, when Preparation Day was over, the chief priests and the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate

63 and said to him, 'Your Excellency, we recall that this impostor said, while he was still alive, "After three days I shall rise again."



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64 Therefore give the order to have the sepulchre kept secure until the third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people, "He has risen from the dead." This last piece of fraud would be worse than what went before.'

65 Pilate said to them, 'You may have your guard; go and make all as secure as you know how.'

66 So they went and made the sepulchre secure, putting seals on the stone and mounting a guard.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 29, 2026

1. Today is Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord. We begin the Holy Week. The Liturgy begins with the commemoration of the triumphal procession of the Lord into Jerusalem, accompanied by the waving of Palm branches by the cheering crowd.

But, as we hear in our first reading from the great Messianic Hebrew Prophet Isaiah, what will soon unfold is the Passion, the voluntary suffering and sacrifice of the Life of Jesus Christ, on our behalf.

These words, uttered through the Hebrew prophet centuries before, will be fulfilled as Jesus Christ offers his back to those who struck Him. And, as the prophet also tells us later in the same Book, by His stripes, we - you and I - are healed. The punishment for the sins of the whole world is laid upon the back of the sinless One. The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the whole world. The promises given to the Chosen People in the Hebrew Scriptures fulfilled by Jesus, the promised Messiah. And we are all the beneficiaries now, Jew and Gentile.

This fulfillment of prophecy is evident as well in the Responsorial Psalm for today's Holy Mass. David, speaking prophetically, foretells the scene of the crucifixion where the soldiers divided His garments. All of this was part of a Loving Plan of a loving God. It still is. God so loved the world, as the Gospel of St John reminds us, that He sent His Only Son. Jesus knew why He was sent. And, He fulfilled His Mission. Dying so that death would be defeated.

The Apostle Paul's beautiful words to the Philippians in our epistle reading proclaim the "kenosis" of Jesus Christ. A Greek word which means pouring or emptying out. JESUS emptied Himself out for us - and accepted death on a Cross. For you. For me. For the whole world. The Sinless one took the penalty our sins deserved and paid it in full. He redeemed us. He ransomed us. Now, we are called to empty ourselves for Him, so that He can continue His redemptive mission through us, as a part of His Mystical Body, the Church - and the whole world may come to know His Redemption, turning to Him as Lord and Savior.

2. During this powerful liturgical experience called Passion or Palm Sunday, two Gospels are read. One precedes the procession into the Church where, joining the throngs who gathered to welcome Jesus into the Holy City, we will wave palm branches and exalt Him.

The week we call Holy begins for me with proclaiming those contrasting Gospel readings during the Liturgy of Palm or Passion Sunday. Before we enter the Church in a Procession waving Palm branches, we listen to the Gospel narrative and are invited to identify with the jubilant crowds welcoming the Master into Jerusalem.

Once inside the sanctuary, the Liturgy of the Word begins. Before long, some of those same people shouted, "Let Him be Crucified!" as the Passion Gospel is proclaimed.



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As I grow older the connection between the two gospel accounts, my participation in that rejection of God's love and the frailties of life have become clearer to me.

Holy Week invites us all to let go of self-love and embrace the Lord anew through saying Yes to the invitation to continuing conversion. How desperately we all need to hear the Good news that we can begin again! We can choose to enter more fully into the celebrations of Holy Week. When we do, we change. Or, we can approach them as empty ritual and miss the marvelous moment of grace.

Holy times presuppose a people who hunger to be made holy.

The question is not whether we will mark time but how we will do so? For the Christian time is not meant to be a tyrant ruling over us with impunity. Rather, it is a teacher, inviting and instructing us to choose to enter more fully into our relationship with the Lord and in Him to make progress on the Path of Life.

3. Only by grace can I make progress in the path that leads to eternal life passes through time. It winds through the real stuff of our daily lives. What those contrasting Gospel accounts reveal draws me into this week called Holy and its numerous times of prayer and reflection. It draws me to an honest admission of my weakness, an acknowledgement and confession of my sin, and an ever-deepening appreciation of the "Amazing Grace" given in Jesus Christ.

The Passion narrative is filled with biblical characters with whom we can all identify. Many a great Saint in the Christian tradition has advised the faithful to enter into the characters in these inspired accounts. Identify with them. Place yourself in the narrative. Let the Holy Spirit use the encounter to deepen your experience of who Jesus is, and who you are called to become in Him. Make this a truly Holy Week, by entering into the Word of God.



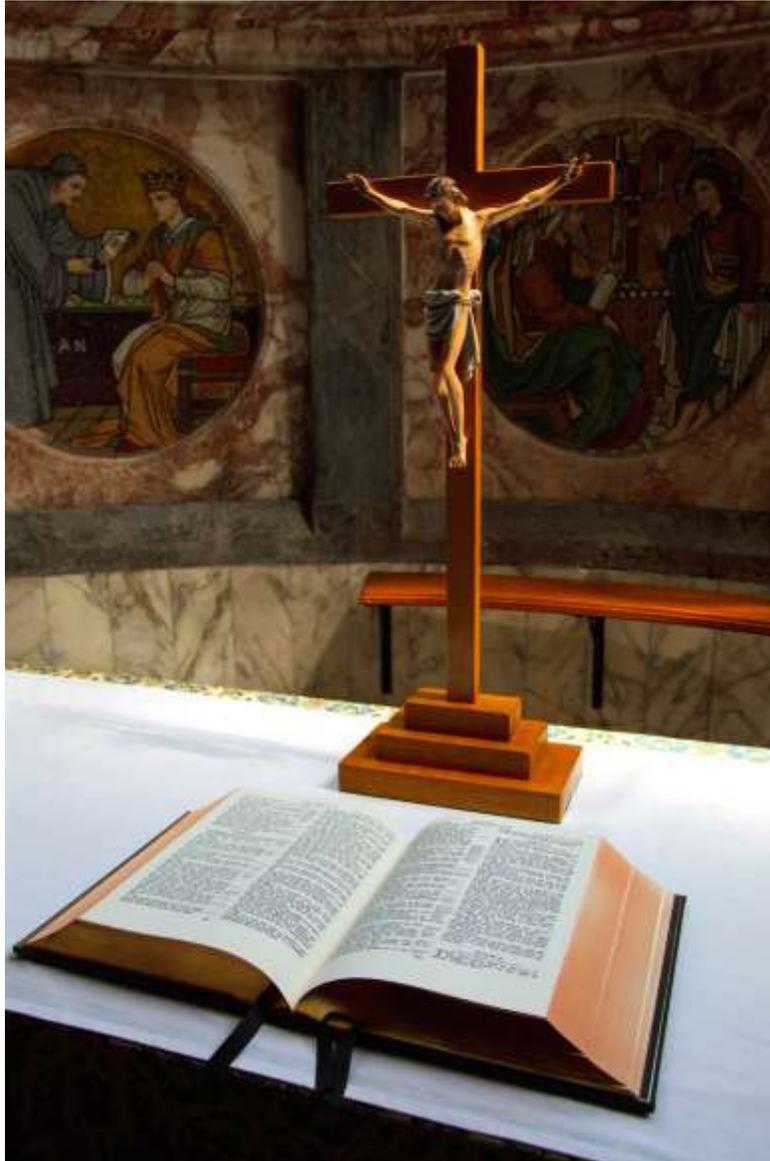
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 30, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Monday, March 30th, 2026

### Reading 1, Isaiah 42:1-7

1 Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have sent my spirit upon him, he will bring fair judgement to the nations.

2 He does not cry out or raise his voice, his voice is not heard in the street;

3 he does not break the crushed reed or snuff the faltering wick. Faithfully he presents fair judgement;

4 he will not grow faint, he will not be crushed until he has established fair judgement on earth, and the coasts and islands are waiting for his instruction.

5 Thus says God, Yahweh, who created the heavens and spread them out, who hammered into shape the earth and what comes from it, who gave breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it:

6 I, Yahweh, have called you in saving justice, I have grasped you by the hand and shaped you; I have made you a covenant of the people and light to the nations,

7 to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 27:1, 2, 3, 13-14

1 [Of David] Yahweh is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear? Yahweh is the fortress of my life, whom should I dread?

2 When the wicked advance against me to eat me up, they, my opponents, my enemies, are the ones who stumble and fall.

3 Though an army pitch camp against me, my heart will not fear, though war break out against me, my trust will never be shaken.

13 This I believe: I shall see the goodness of Yahweh, in the land of the living.

14 Put your hope in Yahweh, be strong, let your heart be bold, put your hope in Yahweh.



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## Gospel, John 12:1-11

1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had raised from the dead.

2 They gave a dinner for him there; Martha waited on them and Lazarus was among those at table.

3 Mary brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair; the house was filled with the scent of the ointment.

4 Then Judas Iscariot -- one of his disciples, the man who was to betray him--said,

5 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?'

6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he was in charge of the common fund and used to help himself to the contents.

7 So Jesus said, 'Leave her alone; let her keep it for the day of my burial.

8 You have the poor with you always, you will not always have me.'

9 Meanwhile a large number of Jews heard that he was there and came not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead.

10 Then the chief priests decided to kill Lazarus as well,

11 since it was on his account that many of the Jews were leaving them and believing in Jesus.



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## Questions for Reflection for March 30, 2026

1. Many of the chosen people, the Jewish people to whom Jesus was first sent, were indeed watching for a Messiah, a Savior, the One who would deliver them from the bondage of their oppressors and usher in the Kingdom. Yet, the Holy Spirit speaks of a different kind of deliverance through the Hebrew prophet Isaiah, a Suffering Servant.

And, as we know, the Kingdom which Jesus came to establish was not characterized by physical ejection of those who oppressed Israel with physical force, but the defeat of Satan and the very forces of Hell itself.

This Holy Week, we are invited to enter more deeply into our own understanding of what has been established by the Passion and death - and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and incorporate the great mysteries of faith we remember into our own daily lives.

Pope St Leo wrote/ of Jesus: "He took the nature of a servant without stain of sin, enlarging our humanity without diminishing his divinity. He emptied himself; though invisible he made himself visible, though Creator and Lord of all things he chose to be one of us mortal men. Yet this was the condescension of compassion, not the loss of omnipotence. So, he, who in the nature of God had created man, became in the nature of a servant, man himself."

The Lord still speaks through these words of the Prophet Isaiah: "I have made you a covenant of the people and light to the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon."

Are we listening?

2. In his song, the psalmist reminds us that we need not fear, that we can put our hope in the Lord, and learn to overcome fear. But we must make a choice to do so, and regularly be reminded of that choice.

Have you had the experience of awakening from a dream, paralyzed with fear, unable to speak or perhaps even move? Most people have. Some tell us such dreams can be the result of stress or worry over circumstances in our lives. Knowing that may assist us in understanding our overreaction, but I am not sure it helps alleviate the effects of fear.

Let's face it; life can throw us its share of challenges, difficulties, and struggles that can be frightening and cause us to respond like we do in those terrible dreams.

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Though we may be able to physically move in real life, we live as though fear has the upper hand. Unable to overcome fear, we are overcome by it. Though we may develop coping mechanisms over time or learn to hide the interior reactions caused by fear, inside, it can paralyze us and impede us from living our lives to the full.

The Sacred Scriptures are filled with admonitions against this kind of fear. Just like our Psalm response.

Yet, the admonitions alone will not help us to overcome it. Only something stronger than fear - with the capacity to change us inside - can liberate us from its chains. That something is some One; the one who understands all of our fears and has opened the way to overcoming them through and in the embrace of His Redemptive Love.

That someone is Jesus Christ who became like us in all things but sin - so that we can become like Him. He understands our fears because in His sacred humanity He experienced them. He also enables us to overcome them. He removes the root and source of fear for those who choose to trust in Him.

Do we turn to Him when we are afraid?

3. The Gospel appointed for this Monday of Holy Week presents us with two people, both of whom had been called to follow Jesus, Mary and Judas. Yet, the choices they made resulted in very different outcomes for their own lives. Choices matter.

In its explanation of the morality of human acts, the Catechism offers a sobering insight concerning a wrong exercise of freedom: "Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself." (CCC #1861)

Mary, when she encounters the Lord, immediately begins to worship, and adore Him. Washing His Feet with Holy Ointment, a prophetic sign of His impending voluntary death and a rich symbol of pure worship. The entire house was filled with the beautiful odor, reminiscent of Incense in the Sanctuary.

Then, there was Judas, whose own wrong choices had already clouded his spiritual vision and begun his downward spiral. The Gospel tells us:

"Then Judas Iscariot -- one of his disciples, the man who was to betray him-said, 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he was in charge of the common fund and used to help himself to the contents."

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What we choose can help to determine who we become. Choosing what is good changes the chooser, empowering him or her to proceed along the pathways of virtue and develop the habitus - or habits - which promote Christian character. The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses human choice, action and freedom with these words: "The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to "the slavery of sin". (Cf. Rom 6:17) (CCC#1733)

During Lent, we were invited to turn away from wrong choices and cooperate with God's grace. In the days ahead, we should choose the Way of Mary and pour out our worship on Jesus, the Christ, as we walk with Him on the Way of the Cross.



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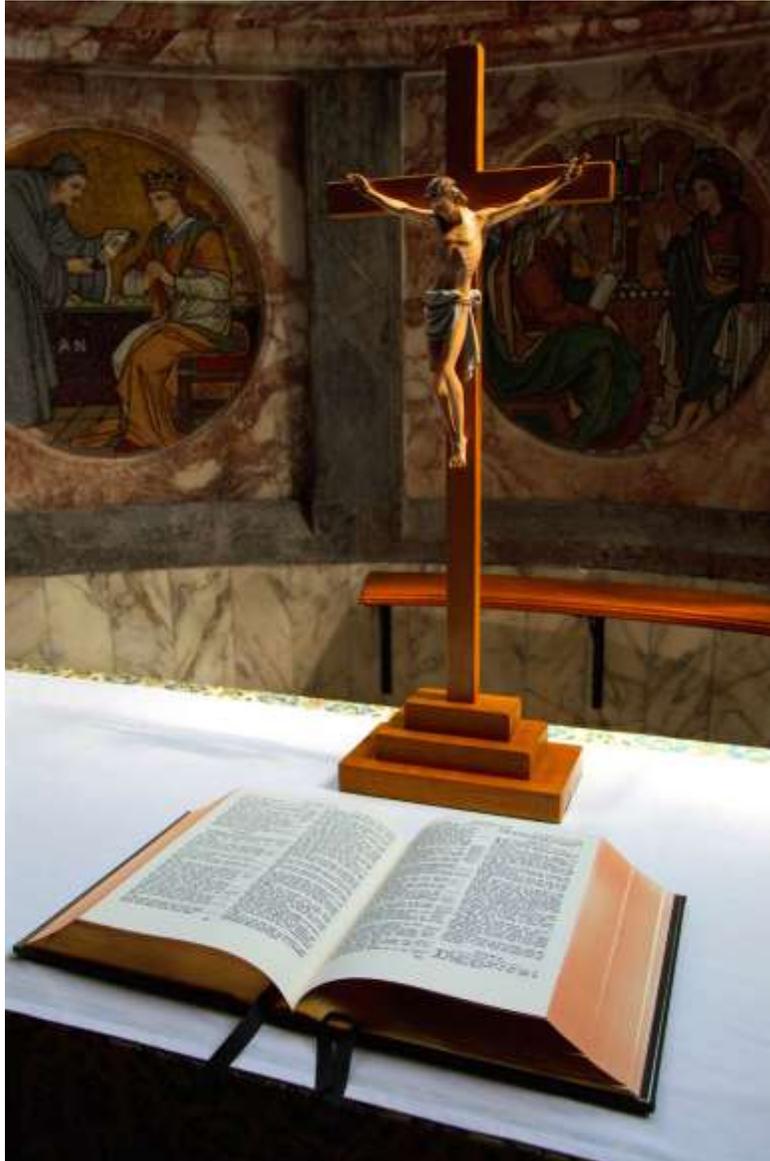
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## Daily Reading and Questions for Reflection

March 31, 2026



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## Daily Reading for Tuesday, March 31st, 2026

### Reading 1, Isaiah 49:1-6

1 Coasts and islands, listen to me, pay attention, distant peoples. Yahweh called me when I was in the womb, before my birth he had pronounced my name.

2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword, he hid me in the shadow of his hand. He made me into a sharpened arrow and concealed me in his quiver.

3 He said to me, 'Israel, you are my servant, through whom I shall manifest my glory.'

4 But I said, 'My toil has been futile, I have exhausted myself for nothing, to no purpose.' Yet all the while my cause was with Yahweh and my reward with my God.

5 And now Yahweh has spoken, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him and to re-unite Israel to him;-I shall be honoured in Yahweh's eyes, and my God has been my strength.-

6 He said, 'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I shall make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach the remotest parts of earth.'

### Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15, 17

1 In you, Yahweh, I take refuge, I shall never be put to shame.

2 In your saving justice rescue me, deliver me, listen to me and save me.

3 Be a sheltering rock for me, always accessible; you have determined to save me, for you are my rock, my fortress.

4 My God, rescue me from the clutches of the wicked, from the grasp of the rogue and the ruthless.

5 For you are my hope, Lord, my trust, Yahweh, since boyhood.

6 On you I have relied since my birth, since my mother's womb you have been my portion, the constant theme of my praise.

15 My lips shall proclaim your saving justice, your saving power all day long.



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17 God, you have taught me from boyhood, and I am still proclaiming your marvels.

## **Gospel, John 13:21-33, 36-38**

21 Having said this, Jesus was deeply disturbed and declared, 'In all truth I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.'

22 The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he meant.

23 The disciple Jesus loved was reclining next to Jesus;

24 Simon Peter signed to him and said, 'Ask who it is he means,'

25 so leaning back close to Jesus' chest he said, 'Who is it, Lord?'

26 Jesus answered, 'It is the one to whom I give the piece of bread that I dip in the dish.' And when he had dipped the piece of bread he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot.

27 At that instant, after Judas had taken the bread, Satan entered him. Jesus then said, 'What you are going to do, do quickly.'

28 None of the others at table understood why he said this.

29 Since Judas had charge of the common fund, some of them thought Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the festival,' or telling him to give something to the poor.

30 As soon as Judas had taken the piece of bread he went out. It was night.

31 When he had gone, Jesus said: Now has the Son of man been glorified, and in him God has been glorified.

32 If God has been glorified in him, God will in turn glorify him in himself, and will glorify him very soon.

33 Little children, I shall be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and, as I told the Jews, where I am going, you cannot come.

36 Simon Peter said, 'Lord, where are you going?' Jesus replied, 'Now you cannot follow me where I am going, but later you shall follow me.'

37 Peter said to him, 'Why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.'

38 'Lay down your life for me?' answered Jesus. 'In all truth I tell you, before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times.'



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## Questions for Reflection for March 31, 2026

1. In our first reading from the great Hebrew Prophet Isaiah, we heard this powerful affirmation "Yahweh called me when I was in the womb, before my birth he had pronounced my name." In this context the Prophet is not only referring to his own vocation to be the messenger of the Lord, he was, as the whole book which bears his name, pointing to the Messiah who is to come, Jesus the Christ, whose Passion, death and Resurrection we will soon commemorate.

He continues, "And now Yahweh has spoken, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him and to re-unite Israel to him; I shall be honored in Yahweh's eyes, and my God has been my strength. He said, 'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I shall make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach the remotest parts of earth.'

But the message also underscores the unbroken and unchangeable teaching of the Scriptures and the Christian Church that life begins at conception. ALL of us were formed by the Lord in our mother's wombs and created in His image, with an inherent and undeniable dignity and Right to Life.

That Right to Life is the foundation for every human right. The language often used in the political discussion surrounding legalized abortion reveals an Orwellian newspeak which is polluting our public discourse. We should never use phrases such as "Abortion rights". They must be completely rejected. Abortions do not have rights; only human persons have rights.

Every procured abortion is the taking of innocent human life and is always and everywhere intrinsically immoral. Without the right to life there are no other rights and the infrastructure of rights is thrown into jeopardy. Human rights are goods of human persons. When there is no human person to exercise them, all the rhetoric extolling them is nothing but empty air and sloganeering.

Do we defend the fundamental Right to Life as believing, baptized Catholic Christians? We Must. Children in the womb have no voice to be heard except our own.

2. The Psalmist picks up the theme in the 71st Psalm, David prays, "On you I have relied since my birth, since my mother's womb you have been my portion, the constant theme of my praise." Medical science confirms what the Natural Law and the unbroken teaching of the Sacred Scripture and Christian tradition affirms, the Child in the womb must be respected, protected and welcomed.



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Of course, for the Christian, the profound truth of this is most perfectly and wonderfully revealed in Jesus Christ. From the very moment Jesus became Incarnate, His saving mission of redeeming and re-creating began. The Incarnation is the very heart of the Mystery of the Christian Faith. The God who made the whole universe and created man out of the dust of the earth, took on our humanity. He lived in the first home of every human person, His mother's womb.

There was a Redeemer in the womb of Mary! The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word of the Father, was an embryonic human person, a fetus, a child in the womb. Of course, that Person, from the moment of conception, as the Ancient Christian Creeds affirm, was - and is - True God and True Man.

In the light of this mystery every human pregnancy, every womb, every child in the womb, was forever elevated beyond the dignity he or she already possessed. Also, the extreme evil of every procured abortion is made even more obvious and profane. This Redeemer in the womb, Jesus, began His saving work "in utero" and He identifies with every child in the womb. During Holy Week, when we remember his voluntary gift of His own life for the salvation of the world, let us remember, it all began in the womb. Do we know that we were formed by the Lord in our mother's womb? Do we do all we can to protect our youngest neighbors in the womb?

3. In this sobering, disturbing account of the denial and betrayal of the Lord in the Gospel passage from St. John appointed for this Tuesday of Holy Week, we are presented with the account of Judas, and we read "...after Judas had taken the bread, Satan entered him."

We also know the devastation which resulted. Judas made the ultimate wrong choice in denying and betraying the Lord and he ended up taking his own life (See Matt. 25:7) But we also hear of another denial in this passage, that of Peter. After Jesus tells his beloved disciples "I shall be with you only a little longer", Peter says..."I will lay down my life for you.' But, alas, Jesus knew that Peter would deny him and predicts the same.

So, what is so different about Judas and Peter? Notice their response. As the week progresses, we will hear the Passion narratives. After Peter hears that cock crow he is moved to repentance. And, He is forgiven and restored. In fact, he is established by the Lord as the Rock upon which the Church would be established! Two men. Two different choices. Two different responses. Remember these words of the Catholic Catechism "Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself."

How will we exercise our freedom? Which way will we choose? The way of Judas, or the way of Peter?



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