

**Sunday, Feb 15, 2026**

### **Choose the right route**

*Breaking Bad*, the highly acclaimed television series (2008-13) in which a desperate and dying chemistry teacher decides to become a producer of methamphetamine to make sure his family is cared for, is a modern morality tale that illustrates the destruction and death that are the consequences of making wrong choices, or “breaking bad,” as it were. With each ill-conceived decision it becomes easier to make the next until you become so turned around that you completely lose your moral compass. Take the time to map out your choices to see where they will lead—and then choose the path of righteousness.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Sirach 15:15-20; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37 (76).

*“Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.”*

**Monday, Feb 16, 2026**

### **A sure sign**

Generations still seek a sign. But often we look for signs in the wrong place and remain oblivious to the divine inklings all around us. “If there is anyone who is not enlightened by this sublime magnificence of created things,” says Saint Bonaventure, “he is blind. If there is anyone who, seeing all these works of God, does not praise Him, he is dumb; if there is anyone who, from so many signs, cannot perceive God, that man is foolish.” Open your eyes and look around. When the brokenhearted take heart and the hard-hearted show some mercy—those are signs that God has gotten through. Want to find other divine signs? Fix your gaze on love.

James 1:1-11; Mark 8:11-13 (335). *“Why does this generation seek a sign?”*

**Tuesday, Feb 17, 2026**

### **It’s hard to keep it simple**

Being “hard of heart” might be the biblical equivalent of having a thick skull. And most of the time the disciples, God bless them, are guilty as charged. At many points in the gospel accounts they misunderstand, misinterpret, or otherwise mismanage the Good News Jesus is trying to communicate to them. They are therefore the perfect role models for all who have followed Jesus since then. The simplicity and clarity of notions such as “love one another” and “do unto others” leaves us looking for an escape clause—it can’t be that simple, can it? Try to keep an open mind—and heart.

James 1:12-18; Mark 8:14-21 (336). *“Do you not yet understand or comprehend? Are your hearts hardened?”*

**Wednesday, Feb 18, 2026**

### **Spring cleaning for the soul**

It’s the beginning of a new season of Lent for those who believe. Lent traditionally takes on a penitential tone with somber purple color and the practice of fasting, prayer, and charitable giving. But we shouldn’t forget that Lent comes from the Old English word for “spring,” and in this sense it’s a sort of spiritual new year, a season of rebirth and renewal. “Lent is a time of grace, a time for conversion, a time to come home to God,” says Saint Maximilian Kolbe. During Lent we cultivate better habits for a healthy heart. What will you refrain from (fasting), how will you seek God

(prayer), and where will you share your love (almsgiving) these 40 days?

ASH WEDNESDAY; DAY OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE  
Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (219). *“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites.”*

**Thursday, Feb 19, 2026**

### **The pain is worth the gain**

When Jesus asks us to take up our cross daily and follow him, he’s not saying we need to seek out maximum pain. But he is saying that we can and should embrace suffering that is inescapable or for a higher good, rather than trying to avoid it at all costs. “Nothing great is ever achieved without much enduring,” Saint Catherine of Siena reminds us. To take up our cross means to give our lives over to walking in the loving ways of God—a love which, as every Eucharist reminds us, is willing to sacrifice and suffer for others. May you find yourself at cross purposes today.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 9:22-25 (220). *“If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily.”*

**Friday, Feb 20, 2026**

### **Not by bread alone**

Fasting and mercy go together, like meat and potatoes—or, because it’s the first Friday of Lent, coleslaw and deep-fried cod. “Mercy is to fasting as rain is to the Earth,” says Early Church Father Saint Peter Chrysologus. “However much you may cultivate your heart, clear the soil of your nature, root out vices, sow virtues, if you do not release the springs of mercy, your fasting will bear no fruit.” Who might benefit from your mercy during your Lenten fast? Perhaps someone who has wronged you. Or someone who comes to you with hand out. Keep this additional advice in mind from Saint Peter Chrysologus as you contemplate moments of mercy: “You will not be allowed to keep what you have refused to give to others.”

LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Isaiah 58:1-9a; Matthew 9:14-15 (221). *“This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly.”*

**Saturday, Feb 21, 2026**

### **Offer one another a sign of peace**

Adults try to help young people discern how to choose their friends wisely and be a good friend to others. We encourage them to associate with upstanding and trustworthy people. We pray that they will lead exemplary Christian lives, which—if they take Jesus’ words to heart—will mean that they’ll end up eating and drinking with sinners! But there’s a catch: Jesus neither joins in the sin nor judges the sinner. He merely extends an offer of peace to people who are leading sad and desperate lives. “Let the weakest, sinful soul have no fear to approach me,” says Jesus in a vision recorded by Saint Faustina, “for even if it had more sins than there are grains of sand in the world, all would be drowned in the unmeasurable depths of my mercy.” This boundless compassion is the very heart of Christian discipleship.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Isaiah 58:9b-14; Luke 5:27-32 (222). *“Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”*

*Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time*



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