

Sunday, Mar 08, 2026

Shower us with the water of life

Today, catechumens experience the First Scrutiny, a ritual in which the whole church prays for them as they face squarely the power of evil and open themselves to Christ's saving power. "Grant that these catechumens, who like the woman of Samaria, thirst for living water, may turn to the Lord as they hear his word and acknowledge the sins and weaknesses that weigh them down." We who are already baptized should feel ourselves in the catechumens' shoes and allow ourselves to be prayed for: "Protect them from vain reliance on self, and defend them from the power of Satan. Free them from the spirit of deceit, so that, admitting the wrong they have done, they may attain purity of heart and advance on the way to salvation."

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT; FIRST SCRUTINY OF THE ELECT

Exodus 17:3-7; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42 (28). *"If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

Monday, Mar 09, 2026

Tune out the noise

Often the people around us try to undermine our resolve to get physically and spiritually healthy. As we try to avoid addictive substances, find time for quiet contemplation, volunteer one night a week, or whatever we've committed to, others try to thwart us. Some loved ones may be worried that the measures we're taking are too extreme; others may be suffering from the misery-loves-company syndrome—they choose not to get healthy and don't want to be on that path alone. Whatever the reason, we feel unappreciated and betrayed. But don't let that distract you. Jesus knew that no prophet is accepted in his hometown, but that didn't stop him from preaching in Nazareth.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

2 Kings 5:1-15ab; Luke 4:24-30 (237). *"No prophet is accepted in his own native place."*

Tuesday, Mar 10, 2026

Reach deep for compassion

In a women's concentration camp in Nazi Germany, a prayer was found scrawled on a piece of wrapping paper. The anonymous writer commends to God "not only the men and women of good will, but also those of ill will. But do not remember all the suffering they have inflicted on us. Remember the fruits borne of this suffering: the loyalty, the humility, the courage, the generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of this. And when they come to judgment, let all the fruits which we have borne be their forgiveness." May we cultivate such deep pockets of compassion for those who injure us.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Daniel 3:25, 34-43; Matthew 18:21-35 (238). *"How often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?"*

Wednesday, Mar 11, 2026

Put your relationships in order

Think of all the relationships in your life: family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and others. They don't always go smoothly, but without them life would be pretty empty. Then think about God. God is a relationship, too: the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The whole story of scripture, the whole story of the church, tells of God calling creation, especially people, into community and communion with one another and with God. "Love God, serve

God; everything is in that," says Saint Clare of Assisi. Put your relationship with God first, and all the others will fall into place.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Matthew 5:17-19 (239). *"Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."*

Thursday, Mar 12, 2026

Check your freedom

Sometimes we don't know what hit us. Power comes into our lives and takes our breath away. Was this mighty attraction we just felt a good thing or a bad thing? Was that charismatic speaker who cast a spell over us an evil genius or a saint? It all depends on which direction the demons are headed, according to Jesus. The spirit of holiness is a liberating power, and the spirit of darkness one that constricts us. The freer you are to open your arms in love, the closer you are to God's Holy Spirit. Take time to do a freedom check.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Jeremiah 7:23-28; Luke 11:14-23 (240). *"If it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you."*

Friday, Mar 13, 2026

Be a good neighbor

When Jesus is asked by a scribe to name the single most important Commandment, he answers by citing not one, but two Commandments: to love God and to love neighbor. The scribe agrees with the answer. All this might seem a bit odd to us—wasn't Jesus supposed to pick just one Commandment? Perhaps the message here is that we can't really separate these two Commandments from one another—they come as a unit. It is impossible to "love God with all your heart" if you do not "love your neighbor as yourself;" and vice versa. God is in our neighbor—yes, even in the noisy one who plays loud music late at night. Do your best to live up to the greatest Commandment. Love God with all your heart—it's the neighborly thing to do.

LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Hosea 14:2-10; Mark 12:28-34 (241). *"There is no other commandment greater than these."*

Saturday, Mar 14, 2026

A worthy practice

Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque is best known for introducing the observance of nine First Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But she also had some wise words about how to put humility into practice: "Be humble towards God and gentle with your neighbor. Judge and accuse no one but yourself, and ever excuse others. Speak of God always to praise and glorify him, speak of your neighbor only with respect—do not speak of yourself at all, either well or ill." Her advice makes for a worthy Lenten practice: praise for God, respect for the neighbor, and keep blessedly silent about yourself!

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Hosea 6:1-6; Luke 18:9-14 (242). *"The one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

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



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