

Sunday, Feb 14, 2021

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Staying the course

Quarantine is hard on relationships: both with the people you can't yet risk seeing in person, as well as those with whom you happen to be locked down. Families that have survived a long year of "acute togetherness" might congratulate each other on their success. Spouses, too, might reward each other for going the distance, without much distance, since last spring. On this World Marriage Day, take some time to reflect together on ways your vital relationships have been tested in a long period of crisis. Ask for forgiveness where necessary. Offer yours freely.

TODAY'S READINGS: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46; 1 Corinthians 10:31—11:1; Mark 1:40-45 (77). *"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."*

Monday, Feb 15, 2021

Lead by example

Presidents' Day—celebrated every February between Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays—is an occasion to remember all the presidents of the United States. Certainly some of them have been better than others. Our job is not to sit on the sidelines and criticize and complain. The church wisely instructs us on our duty as citizens "to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom." That goes for participation in any community—get involved and raise it up!

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 4:1-15, 25; Mark 8:11-13 (335). *"Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."*

Tuesday, Feb 16, 2021

Enjoy the feast before the fast

Today is Fat Tuesday. Whether you call it Mardi Gras, Carnival, or Shrove Tuesday, the popular practice of one last big, sumptuous feast—right before the asceticism of Lent—actually had a very practical motivation. In the days before refrigeration, people couldn't preserve certain foods (like eggs, cream, and butter) during the time of prolonged fasting. They had to use them up. Nowadays, that's not the case for most of us. So it's worth considering: What does the feasting of this day signify, in contrast to the great fast that's approaching? Perhaps it's gratitude—for God's generous abundance.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10; Mark 8:14-21 (336). *"Do you not remember, when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand?"*

Wednesday, Feb 17, 2021

ASH WEDNESDAY; DAY OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE

Invitation to love

We enter the Lenten journey with the intention to draw closer to God by means of prayer, generosity, and fasting. Talk to God and share what is on your mind, read the daily scripture, practice the prayer of meditation. Find ways to be generous with time or treasure: write a card, heal a broken relationship, bake bread to share, donate to a group that cares for the underserved. And admit that some fasting—whether from gaming, social media, or worrying—could improve your connection to God. This Lent is an

opportunity, not a burden. Embrace it with hope. Live it with love.

TODAY'S READINGS: Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (219). *"Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart."*

Thursday, Feb 18, 2021

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Choose life

Today's readings focus on the urgency of choosing life. Moses tells his people to choose life over death; Jesus says we save our life by losing it in him. Meanwhile, events nationwide and worldwide keep reminding us that black lives matter and, as Catholic bishops put it, "everyone belongs." The disproportionate death of people of color from poor healthcare, poverty, abortion, crime and violence, judicial bias, and more cries out for major reform. Support life in all its diversity by learning more about racial injustice as a prolife issue.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 9:22-25 (220). *"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."*

Friday, Feb 19, 2021

FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Make abstinence a healthy habit

The wisdom of making Lenten Fridays meatless has endured for centuries. We now understand that meat consumption at current levels is not only unhealthy, but unsustainable. Ever more Amazonian rain forests are cleared for grazing. Hundreds of activists have been gunned down trying to protect this biodiverse land and its poor settlers against the interests of powerful ranchers and loggers. Among the martyrs is Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN, whose death 15 years ago brought new attention to the plight of the farmers and the devastation of the Amazon for the sake of beef. Why not extend your meat abstinence beyond Lenten Fridays?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 58:1-9a; Matthew 9:14-15 (221). *"Would that today you might fast so as to make your voice heard on high!"*

Saturday, Feb 20, 2021

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Off to a good start?

This is only the fourth day of Lent, and already we had a day of fasting and abstinence on Wednesday and another day of abstinence yesterday. During Lent back in the Middle Ages, Catholics weren't supposed to eat anything before 3 p.m. In the monasteries, that was the hour the "Nones" prayers were recited. So no eating until after Nones. But the monks would move the Nones hour up to 12 o'clock so they could eat earlier. That's how the 12 o'clock hour got the name "noon." While we can eat at any hour today, every day is a good day to control our appetites. What hunger stands between you and a peaceful heart? Can you put it on pause at least for a day?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 58:9b-14; Luke 5:27-32 (222). *"I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."*

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



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