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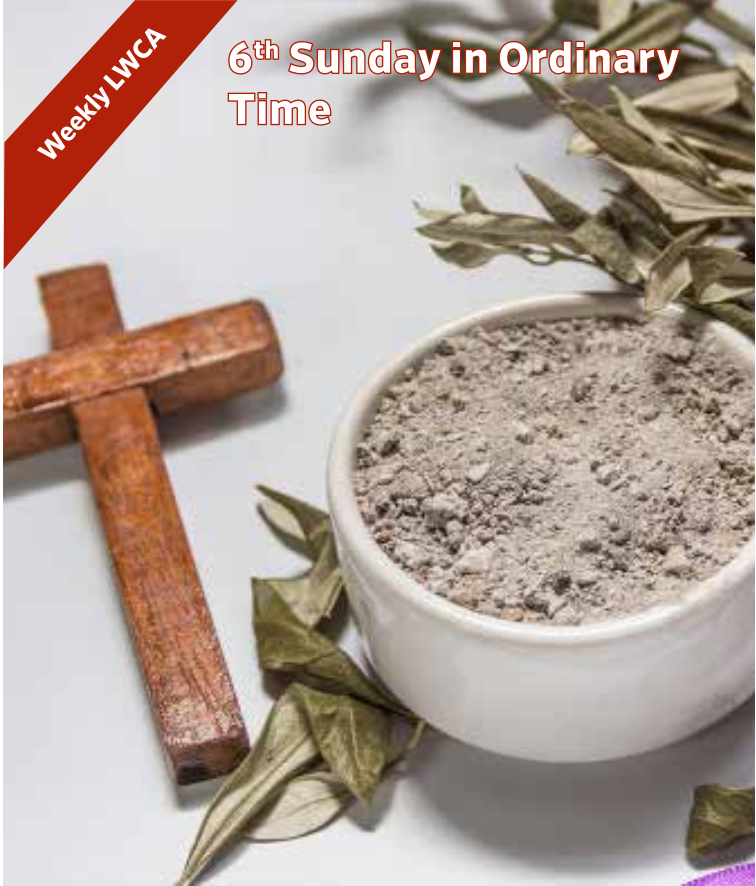
Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Liturgical texts:

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On our cover: Ashes placed on our foreheads symbolise humility and a recognition of our human mortality.

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Editorial

February 2024



Rev. Fr. Paluku Meso Jean-Marie, Kenya

Lent: A Season of Reflection, Repentance, and Renewal

This year, Ash Wednesday which marks the commencement of the Lenten season, falls on February 14th. On this solemn day, ashes are blessed and placed on foreheads of the faithful in the shape of a cross, accompanied by the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” or “Repent and believe in the Gospel.”

This symbolic act of receiving ashes signifies a call to humility and a recognition of our human mortality. It serves as a tangible reminder of the need for repentance and the mercy of God. Let us consider this season as a period of reflection, repentance, and preparation for Easter.

Throughout the 40-day Lenten season, we are encouraged to participate in three traditional practices: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. As we observe these practices, may this Lenten period ready us for a meaningful journey with Christ, fostering introspection, growth, and a strengthened commitment to living out Christ’s teachings in our daily lives.



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For the terminally ill: We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

Other papal intentions and videos can be found on: <http://apostleshipofprayer.org/>

The Duties of the Ordained Ministers During the Holy Mass

In this article I would like to focus on the duties of the ordained ministers during the Eucharistic celebration. It is important to know that the sacrament of Holy Orders includes the episcopate (bishop), the presbyterate (priest) and the diaconate (deacon). We will put an emphasis on what they all can do before focusing on what is reserved to each one of them.

Only ordained ministers venerate the Altar by kissing it at the beginning of the Holy Mass. Kissing the Altar is a very meaningful sign. The Altar symbolises Christ himself who convokes the Community. Therefore, they need to have to enter into a profound relationship with Him who is the first actor of every liturgical action. Therefore, the kissing of the Altar at the beginning of the holy Mass can be interpreted as a way of acknowledging the presence of Christ in the Community and declaring that nothing can be done without him. At the end of the Mass, the kissing of the Alter is like a thanksgiving

to Christ for all the graces that he has bestowed on the Community.

Ordained ministers are the only ones who recite the Apologies. Apologies are the prayers that the ministers recite quietly. For instance, during the offertory when the priest washes his hands, he recites the following apology quietly: ***Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*** Through the apologies, the ministers recognise their worthlessness before God and ask for a special grace so that they may carry out properly their ministry.

Let us now point out some specific liturgical roles that are linked to these three levels of ordination. It is important to know that a ministry does not suppress another. A bishop is still a priest and a deacon and a priest; a priest is still a deacon. Therefore, whatever a deacon can do in the Eucharistic celebration, a priest and a bishop can do it too.

To the bishop is reserved the ordinations: diaconal ordination, priestly ordination and episcopal ordination. In the case of the episcopal ordination, there is need for

three bishops: the presiding bishop is called *Consecrator* and the other two are *Co-consecrators*. Therefore, a catholic priest cannot ordain. He cannot even be delegated by the bishop. Moreover, ordinary minister of the Sacrament of confirmation is the bishop. But for this sacrament, he can delegate to a priest.

The priest is an ordinary minister of the Holy Eucharist. He celebrates an ordinary Mass. He celebrates all the sacraments except the Holy Orders. In the Eucharistic celebration, the deacon doesn't have anything that is reserved for him as far as the Holy orders are concerned. But when he is present at the celebration of the Eucharist, he has three major roles to play according to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal: a. He assists the priest and walks at his side, b. He ministers at the Altar, both as regards to the chalice and the book (Missal), c. He proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the priest celebrant, give the homily. Generally, at the end of the holy Mass, he is the one dismissing the assembly.

Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. Kombi,
Kinshasa, D.R. Congo



Sunday February 11

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Leviticus 13: 1-2. 44-46 / Psalm 32: 1-2. 5. 11 (7) / 1 Corinthians 10: 31 – 11: 1 / Mark 1: 40-45



“Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.” (Mark 1:45)



The Prayer That God Answers

The prayer of the leper in today's Gospel should serve as a model for our prayers. What are the features of this prayer?

First, the prayer was earnest and heartfelt. We read that the man came to Jesus begging. As the first reading expresses, a leper was treated as an outcast; one who was unclean. The leper was, therefore, a man in despair. But Jesus, in his compassion, touched and healed him. Jesus never lets down those who come to him heartily. Our sinfulness should be a reason to desperately run to Jesus. When we run to him in the sacrament of reconciliation; he touches us spiritually through the ministry of the priest and cleanses us. We should have this in mind as we approach the season of Lent. Second, the prayer of the leper was reverent. We were told that, in making his request, he knelt down before Jesus, an acknowledgment of the fact that the person to whom he was making the request is God himself. How reverent are we when we pray or receive the Eucharist? Third, the prayer of the Leper was submissive to God's will. "If You will..." That was how Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane:



Sunday February 11

I wish this cup would pass me by. But not my will but your will be done. The prayer that God answers is that which is submissive to His will. Fourth, the prayer of the leper was believing: “You can make me clean.” He expressed faith in Jesus’ ability to heal, acknowledging Jesus’ power. Likewise, our prayers should demonstrate unwavering faith in God’s capability to answer. Fifth, the prayer of the Leper was very specific. He clearly expressed what he wanted - healing. We should cultivate specificity in our prayers. And lastly, the leper’s prayer was concise, demonstrating that lengthy prayers are not necessary. God is not swayed by verbosity.

In essence, the leper’s prayer encapsulates earnestness, reverence, submission, faith, specificity, and brevity. It sets a model for sincere, impactful communication with God, guiding us to approach prayer with these attributes.

Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, Nigeria



Entrance Antiphon (*Cf Ps 30:3-4*)

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

Collect

O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Leviticus 13:1-2.44-46*)

A reading from the Book of Leviticus

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a leprous disease on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. “He is a leprous man, he is unclean; the priest must pronounce him unclean; his disease is on his head. The leper who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone in a habitation outside the camp.”

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Sunday February 11

Responsorial Psalm _____
(Psalm 32:1-2.5.11 (R. 7))

You are my ref - uge, Lord; with de -
liv - er - ance you sur - round me.

R. You are a hiding place for me; you surround me with cries of deliverance.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is remitted.

Blessed the man to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no guile. **R.**

To you I have acknowledged my sin; I my guilt I did not hide.

I said, "I will confess my transgression to the Lord."
And you have forgiven the guilt of my sin. **R.**



Rejoice in the Lord, exult you just!
Ring out your joy, all you upright of heart! R.

Second Reading (1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1) —————

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brethren: Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offence to Jews or to Greeks or to the Church of God, just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Acclamation (Luke 7:16)

Alleluia. Alleluia. A great prophet has arisen among us, and God has visited his people. **Alleluia.**

Gospel (Mark 1:40-45) —————

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At that time: A leper came to Jesus begging him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately



Sunday February 11

the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And he sternly charged him, and sent him away at once, and said to him, “See that you say nothing to any one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to the people.” But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.

℟. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the Church, communicating Jesus’ healing presence to the world, we pray to the Lord: ℟.

For world leaders, called to lead all nations in harmony, we pray to the Lord: ℟.

For the sick and those who minister to them, we pray to the Lord: ℟.



For us here today, united in faith and love, we pray to the Lord: R.

Prayer over the Offerings

May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon (*Cf Ps 77:29-30*)

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

Or: Jn3:16

God loved the world so much that he gave them his Only Begotten Son, that all who believe in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.

Prayer after Communion

Having fed upon these heavenly delights, we pray, O Lord, so that we may always long for that food by which we truly live. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Monday February 12

6th week in Ordinary Time

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf Ps 30:3-4) **Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.**

Collect

O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord **Amen.**

Reading

(James 1:1-11)
The beginning of the Letter of Saint James

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greeting. Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and



without reproaching, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord. Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like the flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm—
**(Psalm 119:67.68.71.72.
7576 (R. 77a))**

**R. Show me compassion,
Lord, that I may live.**

Before I was humbled,
I strayed, but now I keep
your word. R.

You are good, and you
do what is good; teach me
your statutes. R.

It was good for me to be
humbled, that I might learn
your statutes. R.

The law from your
mouth means more to me
than large quantities of
silver and gold. R.

O Lord, I know that
your decrees are right;
though I am humbled,
you are just. R.



Monday February 12

Let your merciful love console me by your promise to your servant. *R.*

Acclamation (*John*
14:6)

Alleluia. Alleluia. I am the way, and the truth, and the life, says the Lord; no one comes to the Father but by me. **Alleluia.**

Gospel —————
(Mark 8:11-13)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At that time: The Pharisees came and began to argue with Jesus, seeking from him a sign from heaven, to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given

to this generation.” And he left them, and getting into the boat again he departed to the other side.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(*Cf Ps 77:29-30*) **They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.**

Or: Jn3:16



God loved the world so much that he gave them his Only Begotten Son, that all who believe in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.

Prayer after Communion

Having fed upon these heavenly delights, we pray, O Lord, so that we may always long for that food by which we truly live. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We need no further signs

Commentary

The day to day events of our lives are means by which God sufficiently communicates that He is present with us. If we reflect on these ordinary activities, we will not require further signs of God's existence and power. That we have remained resilient during grave economically challenging times; that a couple who had been married for over a decade was eventually able receive a child etc. These enough signs through which God reassures us that He is intricately involved in the details of our existence.

Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, Nigeria



Tuesday February 13

6th week in Ordinary Time

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf Ps 30:3-4) **Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.**

Collect

O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(James 1:12-18)
A reading from the Letter of Saint James

Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one; but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to



sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm 94:12-13a. 14-15.18-19 (R. 12a))

R. Blessed the man whom you discipline, O Lord.

Blessed the man whom you discipline, O Lord, whom you train by means of your law; to whom you give peace in evil days. R.

The Lord will not abandon his people, nor forsake those who are his heritage; for judgement shall again be just, and all true hearts shall uphold it. R.

When I think, “I have lost my foothold,” your mercy, O Lord, holds me up. When cares increase in my heart, your consolation calms my soul. R.

Acclamation

(John 14:23)

Alleluia. Alleluia. If a man loves me, he will keep my word, says the Lord; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him.
Alleluia.

Gospel

(Mark 8:14-21)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At that time: The disciples had forgotten to bring bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And Jesus cautioned them, saying, “Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” And they discussed it with

one another, saying, “We have no bread.” And being aware of it, Jesus said to them, “Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to him, “Twelve.” “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven.” And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?” The Gospel

of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf Ps 77:29-30) **They ate and had their fill, and**

what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

Or: Jn3:16

God loved the world so much that he gave them his Only Begotten Son, that all who believe in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.

Prayer after Communion

Having fed upon these heavenly delights, we pray, O Lord, so that we may

always long for that food by which we truly live. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Avoiding the Yeasts of the Pharisees

Commentary

The Pharisees prioritized religious rituals over their spiritual significance; while Herod's favored worldly achievements through human efforts over the need for God. These are the yeasts that Jesus warns his followers against. As we begin the Season of Lent tomorrow, let us not fall into the danger of receiving ashes on our heads, fasting, going for the Stations of the Cross, etc, without seeking true conversion of heart and the need to be at peace with God and our neighbours.

Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, Nigeria



Wednesday February 14

6th week in Ordinary Time

Ash Wednesday

Begin Lenten preparation for the Easter Triduum

Entrance Antiphon

(Wis 11:24.25.27) **You are merciful to all, O Lord, and despise nothing that you have made. You overlook the sins of man, to bring him to repentance, for you are the Lord our God.**

Collect

Grant, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting this campaign of Christian service, so that as we take up battle against spiritual evils, we may be armed with weapons of self-restraint.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

First reading

(Joel 2:12-18)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel

“Even now,” says the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and tear your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger,

and abounding in mercy, and repents of evil. Who knows whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, a cereal offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they

say among the peoples, "Where is their God?" Then the Lord became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm 51:3-4.5-6ab.12-13.14 and 17 (R. cf. 3a))***

R. Have mercy, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your merciful love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me completely from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. R.

My transgressions, truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you

alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. *R.*

Create a pure heart for me, O God; renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence; take not your holy spirit from me. *R.*

Restore in me the joy of your salvation; sustain in me a willing spirit. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. *R.*

Second reading —————
(2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2)

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brethren: We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal

through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, “At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation.” Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Acclamation (*Cf. Psalm 95:7d.8a*)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Today, harden not your hearts, but listen to the voice of the Lord.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel _____
(Matthew 6:1-6.16-18)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. “Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you; as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your

left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their

reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

As we solemnly offer the annual sacrifice for the beginning of Lent, we entreat you, O Lord, that through works of penance and charity, we may turn away from harmful pleasures and, cleansed from our sins, may become

worthy to celebrate devoutly the Passion of your Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 1:2-3) **He who ponders the law of the Lord day and night yields fruit in due season.**

Prayer after Communion

May the Sacrament we have received sustain us, O Lord, that our Lenten fast may be pleasing to you and be for us a healing remedy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer over the People

Pour out a spirit of
compunction O God on
those who bow before
your majesty, and by your

mercy may they merit the
rewards you promise to
those who do penance.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Lent: a time for spiritual renewal

Commentary

On this day, ashes are imposed on our foreheads to remind us that we are dust and that, someday, we shall return to dust. Lent is a time to prepare for our return to our eternal home re-examining the state of our soul and by renewing our relationship with God. In our Gospel today, Jesus encourages us to embrace prayer, fasting and alms-giving. These spiritual works, when engaged in collectively, enjoy pre-eminence before God's eyes by which we are sanctified and united to God.

Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, Nigeria



Thursday February 15

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 55:17-20.23) **When I cried to the Lord, he heard my voice; he rescued me from those who attack me. Entrust your cares to the Lord, and he will support you.**

Collect

Prompt our actions with your inspiration, we pray, O Lord, and further them with your constant help, that all we do may always begin from you and by you be brought to completion.
Amen.

Reading --- *(Deuteronomy 30:15-20)*

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

Moses spoke to the people, saying, “See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the

Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and clinging to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land

which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm 1:1-2.3.4 and 6
(R. 40:Sab))***

R. Blessed the man who has placed his trust in the Lord.

Blessed indeed is the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the path with sinners, nor abides in the company of scorners, but whose delight is the law of the Lord, and who ponders his law day and night. R.

He is like a tree that is planted beside the flowing waters, that yields its fruit

in due season, and whose leaves shall never fade; and all that he does shall prosper. R.

Not so are the wicked, not so! For they, like winnowed chaff, shall be driven away by the wind. For the Lord knows the way of the just, but the way of the wicked will perish. R.

Acclamation
(*Matthew 4:17*)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Repent, says the Lord, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel —————
(*Luke 9:22-25*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” And he said to all, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Regard with favour, O Lord, we pray, the offerings we set upon this sacred altar, that, bestowing on us your pardon, our oblations may give honour to your name.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(Cf Ps 5112) **Create a pure heart for me, O God renew a steadfast spirit within me.**

Prayer after Communion

Having received the blessing of your heavenly gifts, we humbly beseech you, almighty God, that

they may always be for us a source both of pardon and of salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

“If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself”

Commentary

To renounce oneself is to live out the words of St Paul: “... it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” (Gal. 2:19). In other words, renouncing oneself is allowing Jesus to take possession of our lives such that his will becomes our will. Jesus gave us an example of renouncing the self when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he prayed: “I wish this cup would pass me by but not my will but your will be done.” Seeking to do everything according to God’s will is a challenge we must embrace

Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, Nigeria



Friday February 16

Friday after Ash Wednesday.

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 30:11) **The Lord heard and had mercy on me; the Lord became my helper.**

Collect

Show gracious favour, O Lord, we pray, to the works of penance we have begun, that we may have strength to accomplish with sincerity the bodily observances we undertake. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading ---

(Isaiah 58:1-9a)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Thus says the Lord God: “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God. ‘Why have we fasted, and

you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord? "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the

things of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm 51:3-45-6ab.18-19 (R. 19bc))

R. A broken and humbled heart, O God, you will not spurn.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your merciful love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me completely from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. R.

My transgressions, truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. R.

For in sacrifice you take no delight; burnt offering from me would not please

you. My sacrifice to God, a broken spirit: a broken and humbled heart, O God, you will not spurn. R.

Acclamation

(See Amos 5:14)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and the Lord will be with you.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel —

(Matthew 9:14-15)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: The disciples of John came to Jesus, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” And

Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.” The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

We offer, O Lord, the sacrifice of our Lenten observance, praying that it may make our intentions acceptable to you and add to our powers of self-restraint. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps 25:4) **O Lord, make me know your ways, teach me your paths.**

Prayer after Communion

We pray, almighty God, that through partaking of this mystery, we may be cleansed

of all our misdeeds, and so be suited for the remedies of your compassion. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Fasting and our journey toward holiness

Commentary

Luke 1: 46-56

We are called to fast as a way of exercising self-restraint with the ultimate aim of being able to say no to sin and lead holiness of life. “These 40 days”, according to Pope Leo the Great, “should be given over to fasting which means not simply a reduction in our food but the elimination of our evil habits.”

We could aim at getting rid of one or two vices in our lives, considering that consistency over this period can lead to habit change, setting a hopeful trajectory for lasting transformation.

Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, Nigeria



Saturday February 17

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

Ferial

Or: Seven Founders of the Order of Servites, Optional memorial

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 69:17) **Answer us, Lord, for your mercy is kind; in the-abundance of your mercies, look upon-us.**

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, look with compassion on our weakness and ensure us your protection by stretching forth the right hand of your majesty. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading _____

(Isaiah 58:9c-14)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Thus says the Lord: “If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord

will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. “If you turn back your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you honour it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord,

and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm 86:1-2.3-4.5-6 (R.
11ab))***

R. Teach me, O Lord, your way, so that I may walk in your truth.

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am faithful; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. *R.*

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long. Gladden the soul

of your servant, for I lift up my soul to you, O Lord. *R.*

O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of mercy to all who call to you. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer, and attend to my voice in supplication. *R.*

Acclamation

(See Psalm 95:7d.8a)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord, but that he turn from his way and live.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel ————— *(Luke 5:27-32)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he left everything, and rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house; and there was a large company of tax collectors and others sitting at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At that time: Jesus saw a tax collector, named Levi,

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, we pray, O Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation and praise, and grant that, cleansed by its working, we may offer minds well pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Mt 9:13) **I desire mercy, not sacrifice, says the Lord, for I came to call not the just but sinners.**

Prayer after Communion

Nourished with the gift of heavenly life, we pray, O

Lord, that what remains for us a mystery in this present life, may be for us

a help to reach eternity. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The gain in following Christ

Commentary

Levi responded positively and promptly to the call of Christ. In following Jesus, Levi showed he preferred a sinless life with Jesus to a lucrative career that plunged him deeper and deeper into sin. In following Jesus, he lost money but gained his soul; he lost clients but got the company of Jesus; he lost his profession, but found a vocation. Jesus calls us in this season of Lent to leave behind our sinful ways. According to Pope Benedict XVI, “if we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing.

Rev. Fr. Michael Banjo, Nigeria



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Growing up Daily with the Good News