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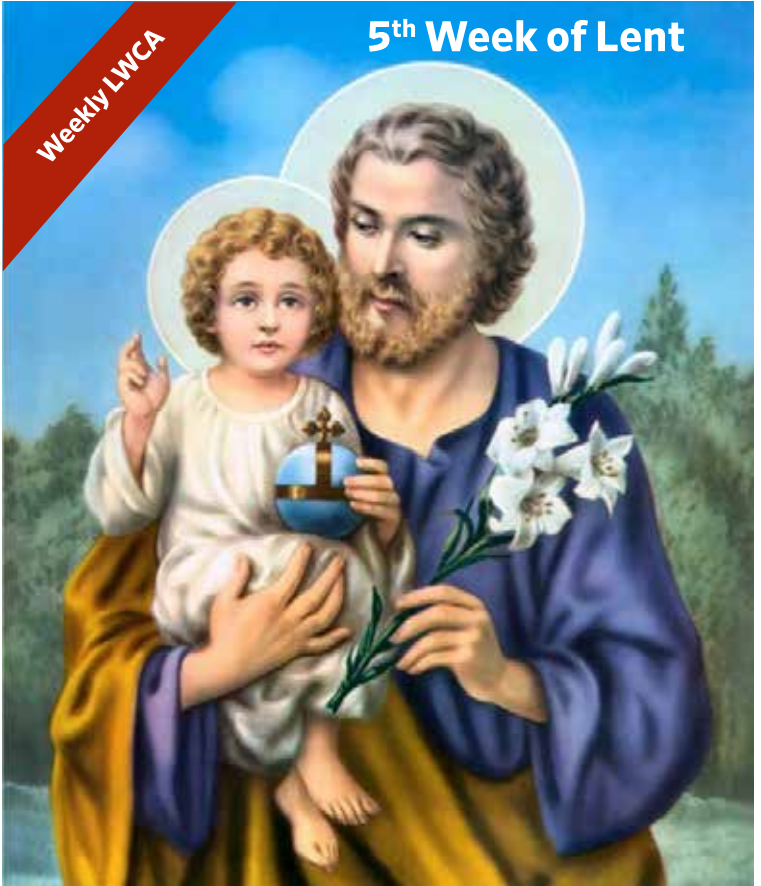
Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

5th Week of Lent

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Liturgical texts:

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On our cover: Saint Joseph (Solemnity)

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Editorial

March 2024



Rev. Fr. Dennis Opoku, Tema Ghana

The Passion Week

Beloved, We have entered a more solemn week in our Lenten journey with the Lord. This period calls for deep reflection on making the sufferings of Jesus our fundamental goal. Additionally, during this time, we commence a special sub-season known as Passiontide, extending until Holy Saturday. You will observe that liturgical celebrations adopt a more somber and sorrowful mood, shedding light on various practices within the liturgy.

The readings of the week will greatly aid us in this journey of faith. Specifically, the Gospel readings from John chapters 8, 10, and 12 present Jesus as a defender of His testimony, the way out of death, and a safe shelter for the sheep. Let us seize the opportunity offered by this rich liturgical tradition to foster our growth in faith.

May this Lenten season be a time of deep reflection, spiritual renewal, and abundant grace for you and your loved ones.



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For the new martyrs: We pray that those who risk their lives for the gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.

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

The Functions of the Instituted Ministers During the Holy Mass

The ministries of acolyte and lector (reader) are the two instituted ministries in the Catholic Church. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal specifies the duties of the different ministers in the Eucharistic celebration. After focusing the attention on the duties of the ordained ministers in the previous article, I am now underlining the functions of the acolyte and of the lector (reader).

During the Entrance procession, the acolyte may carry the Cross. It is important to know that the minister who carries the cross walks between two other ministers who carry lighted candles. The one who carries the thurible is in front of everyone.

The various functions of the acolyte are specified by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (187-193). The acolyte is instituted to serve at the altar and to assist the priest and the deacon. He may be called to carry some duties that can occur at the same moment of the



Focus on the Symbols

Eucharistic celebration. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal proposes that those various duties be distributed among other acolytes and if there is only one acolyte, he will perform the more important duties leaving the other to the other ministers.

Through the entire celebration, the acolyte approaches the priest or the deacon to present the book to them and to assist them in any way or another. That is why he should occupy a place in the sanctuary in order to perform his duties well. In the liturgy of the Eucharist, in the absence of a deacon, the acolyte places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall and the Missal on the altar. He assists the priest in receiving the gifts and when appropriate, brings the bread and the wine to the altar and brings them to the priest. When incense is used, the acolyte presents the thurible to the priest and assists him when he incenses the offerings, the cross and the altar. It is his duty to incense the priest and the people.

The acolyte distributes the holy communion as an extraordinary minister. In fact, the ordinary ministers of the distribution of the holy communion are the bishop, the

Focus on the Symbols

priest and the deacon. But the help of an acolyte may be needed in some circumstances.

The various duties of the lector are specified by the General Instruction of the roman Missal (194-198). The lector (reader) is instituted to proclaim the readings from the Sacred scriptures, with the exception of the Gospel. He may also announce the intentions for the universal prayer and in the absence of a psalmist, recites the responsorial psalm. It is important to know that the readings are made from the ambo. In the absence of a deacon, the reader may carry the Book of the Gospels during the procession to the altar. If there is no singing during Mass, the lector reads the Entrance Antiphon and the Communion Antiphon.

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



Sunday March 17

5th Sunday of Lent

Scrutiny: Ezra 37: 12-14/ Psalm 130: 1-2. 3-4. 5-6. 7-8/ Romans 8:8-11/ John 11: 1-45 / Otherwise: Jeremiah 31: 31-34/ Psalm 51: 3-4. 12-13. 14-15 (12a)/ Hebrews 5: 7-9/ John 12: 20-33



“He who loves his life loses it, but he who hates his life in this world will keep it safe right on into eternal life!” (Jn 12, 20-33)



Lent: A Call to see Jesus

Beloved in the Lord, today is the third Sunday of the third month of the year. Liturgically, today marks the fifth Sunday of the Season of Lent. You may call it the last Sunday of Lent. Today's Gospel is presented below:

Some unnamed Greeks want to see Jesus. A key word in this sentence is "see," which means to experience. You may ask, for what? Why did the Greeks want to see Jesus? What did they hear about Jesus? What was their experience of Jesus? The fact is that they had an explicit intention: TO SEE JESUS! Beloved, the Season of Lent is an invitation to be like these Greeks. It is a call to also want to see Jesus. You need not go to Jerusalem like these Greeks in order to see Jesus. Why? This same Jesus is with us. He is in the Roman Catholic Church. He is in the Holy Bible. He is in the Blessed Sacrament. He is with humanity.

It is good to see Jesus, but it is not enough. That is, seeing Jesus should lead to conversion. It should make you become better than you have been. This explains the quote that nobody sees Jesus and remains the same.



Sunday March 17

When was your last encounter with Jesus?

What is the result of your encounter with Jesus? Today, allow Jesus to make you a better person.

How did the Greeks see Jesus? The intervention of Philip and Andrew. In other words, these Apostles acted as pointers to Jesus. They helped the Greeks in their bid to see Jesus. They made this encounter possible. The Season of Lent is a call to imitate the Apostles. It is to lead someone or some people to Jesus. If the Apostles did it many years ago, you can and you should also do the same now and even beyond.

Finally, the reaction of Jesus to the Greeks is worth noting. He received them with open arms. He listened to them. He didn't drive them away. Today, let us check our engagement with people. Let us listen to people in order to draw them to God.

Rev. Fr. Elvis Mensah, Accra Ghana

Sunday March 17



Entrance Antiphon (*Ps (42) 43:1-2*)

Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

The Gloria in excelsis (*Glory to God in the highest*) is not said

Collect

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

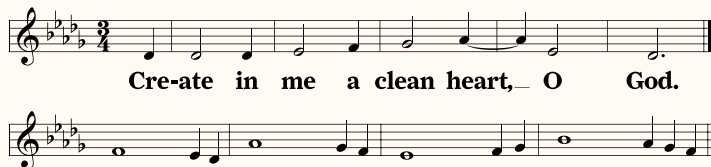
“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, and I showed myself their Master, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after



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those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm _____
(Psalm (50) 51:3-4.12-13.14-15)



***R.* Create a pure heart for me, O God.**

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your merciful love;
according to your great compassion,
blot out my transgressions.

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Wash me completely from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin. 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.
I will teach transgressors your ways,
that sinners may return to you. R.

Second Reading (Hebrews 5:7-9) —————

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learnt obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



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Acclamation (*John 12:26*)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. If any one serves me, he must follow me, says the Lord; and where I am, there shall my servant be also. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel (*John 12:20-33*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honour him. Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, for this purpose I have come to his hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had



thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” He said this to show by what death he was to die. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, as we reflect and act upon the words of Jesus today, we pray to the Lord: R.

For governments, responsible for ensuring a life of dignity for all, we pray to the Lord: R.

For the women, men and children throughout the world who struggle through each day, we pray to the Lord: R.



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For our community, thirsting for justice and the courage to express our solidarity with the poor this Lent, we pray to the Lord: *R.*

Prayer over the Offerings

Hear us, almighty God, and having instilled in your servants the teachings of the Christian faith, graciously purify them by the working of this sacrifice. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon (*Jn 12:24*)

Amen, Amen I say to you; Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single grain. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Prayer after Communion

We pray, almighty God, that we may always be counted among the members of Christ, in whose Body and Blood we have communion. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**



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5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (55) 56:2) **Have mercy on me, O God, for people assail me; they fight me all day long and oppress me.**

Collect

O God, by whose wondrous grace we are enriched with every blessing, grant us so to pass from former ways to newness of life, that we may be made ready for the glory of the heavenly Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Daniel 13:1-9.15-17.19-30.33-62)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel

In those days: There was a man living in Babylon whose name was Joakim. And he took a wife name Susanna, the daughter of Hilkiah, a very beautiful woman and one who feared the Lord. Her parents were righteous, and had taught their daughter according to the law of Moses. Joakim was a very rich, and had a spacious garden



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adjoining his house; and the Jews used to come to him because he was the most honoured of them all. In that year two elders from the people were appointed as judges. Concerning them the Lord had said: "Iniquity came forth from Babylon, from elders who were judges, who were supposed to govern the people." These men were frequently at Joachim's house, and all who had suits at law came to them. When the people departed at noon, Susana would go into her husband's garden to walk. The two elders used to see her every day, going in and walking about, and they began to desire her. And they perverted their minds and turned away their eyes

from looking to Heaven or remembering righteous judgements.

Once, while they are watching for an opportune day, she went in as before with only two maids, and wished to bathe in the garden, for it was very hot. And no one was there except the two elders, who had hidden themselves and were watching her. She said to her maids, 'Bring me oil and ointments, and shut the garden doors so that I may bathe.'

When the maids had gone out, the two elders rose and ran to her, and said: "Look, the garden doors are shut, no one sees us, and we are in love with you, so give your consent, and lie with us. If you refuse, we will testify against you that a



young man was with you, and this was why you sent your maids away.”

Susanna sighed deeply, and said, “I am hemmed in on every side. For if I do this thing, it is death for me; and if I do not, I shall not escape your hands. I choose not to do it and to fall into your hands rather than to sin in the sight of the Lord.” The Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and the two elders shouted against her. And one of them ran and opened the garden doors. When the household servants heard the shouting in the garden, they rushed in at the side door to see what had happened to her. And when the elders told their tale, the servants were greatly ashamed, for

nothing like this had ever been said about Susanna.

The next day, when the people gathered at the house of her husband Joakim, the two elders came, full of their wicked plot to have Susanna put to death. They said before the people, “Send for Susanna, the daughter of Hilkiah, who is the wife of Joakim.” So they sent for her. And she came, with her parents, her children, and all her kindred. But her family and friends and all who saw her wept.

Then the two elders stood up in the midst of the people, and laid their hands upon her head. And she, weeping, looked up towards heaven, for her heart trusted in the Lord; The elders said, “As



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we were walking in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, shut the garden doors, and dismissed the maids. Then a young man, who had been hidden, came to her and lay with her. We were in a corner of the garden, and when we saw this wickedness we ran to them. We saw them embracing, but we could not hold the man, for he was too strong for us, and he opened the doors and dashed out. So we seized this woman and asked her who the young man was, but she would not tell us. These things we testify.”

[Beginning of the short reading] Daniel (13:41c-62)

The assembly believed in them, because they were elders of the people and judges; and they condemned her to death.

Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said, “O eternal God, who discern what is secret, who are aware of all things before they come to be, you know that these men have borne false witness against me. And now, I am to die! Yet I have done none of the things that they have wickedly invented against me!” The Lord heard her cry. And as she was being led away to be put to death God aroused the holy spirit of a young lad named Daniel; and he cried with a loud voice, “I am innocent of the blood of this woman.” All



the people turned to him, and said, "What is this that you have said?" Taking his stand in the midst of them, he said, "Are you such fools, you sons of Israel? Have you condemned a daughter of Israel without examination and without learning the facts? Return to the place of judgement. For these men have borne false witness against her." Then all the people returned in haste. And the elders said to him, "Come, sit among us and inform us, for God has given you that right." And Daniel said to them, "Separate them far from each other, and I will examine them. When they were separated from each other, he summoned one of them and said to him, "You are relic of wicked

days, your sins have now come home, which you have committed in the past, pronouncing unjust judgements, condemning the innocent and letting the guilty go free, though the Lord said, 'Do not put to death an innocent and righteous person.' Now then, if you really saw her, tell me this: Under what tree you see them being intimate with each other?" He answered, "Under a mastic tree." And Daniel said, "Very well! You lied against your own head, for the angel of God has received the sentence from God and will immediately cut you in two." Then he put him aside, and commanded them to bring the other. And he said to him, "You



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offspring of Canaan and not of Judah, beauty has deceived you and lust has perverted your heart. This is how you both have been dealing with the daughters of Israel, and they were intimate with you through fear; but a daughter of Judah would not endure your wickedness. Now then, tell me: Under what tree did you catch them being intimate with each other?” he answered, “Under an evergreen oak.” And Daniel said to him, “Very well! You also have lied against your own head, for the angel of God is waiting with his sword to saw you in two, that he may destroy you both.” Then all the assembly shouted loudly and blessed God, who saves those who

hope in him. And they rose against the two elders, for out of their own mouths Daniel had convicted them of bearing false witness; and they did to them as they had wickedly planned to do to their neighbour; acting in accordance with the law of Moses, they put them to death. Thus the innocent blood was saved that day. [End of the short reading]

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm——
(Psalm (22) 23:1-3a.3b-4.5.6)

R. Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of the death, no evil would I fear, for you are with me.

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me; he revives my soul. *R.*

He guides me along the right path, for the sake of his name. Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of the death, no evil would I fear, for you are with me. Your crook and your staff will give me comfort. *R.*

You have prepared a table before me in the sight of my foes. My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. *R.*

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I

dwell for length of days unending. *R.*

Acclamation
(Ezekiel 33:11)

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 —————
(John 8:1-11)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman

who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in their midst they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?” This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone

with the woman standing before him. Jesus looked up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that preparing to celebrate the holy mysteries, we may bring before you as the fruit of the bodily penance, a joyful purity of heart. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(Jn 8:10-11) **Has no one condemned you, woman?**

No one, Lord. Neither shall I condemn you. From now on, sin no more.

Prayer after Communion

Strengthened by the blessing of you Sacraments, we

pray, O Lord, that through them we may constantly be cleansed of our faults and, by following Christ, hasten our steps upward towards you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Give Your All To
Jesus**

Commentary

John 11:1-45

A woman shows love to Jesus. She anoints the feet of the Lord with an expensive ointment. She gives her all to the Lord.

Surprisingly, someone has an issue with this woman's generosity. This person thinks that this woman went too far.

Today, this same woman challenges us to do something for Jesus, to do something for the Church, and to do something for humanity.

The above is a picture of today's Gospel (John 8:1-11)

Rev. Fr. Elvis Mensah, Accra Ghana



Tuesday March 19

5th Week of Lent

Solemnity

Saint Joseph Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Entrance Antiphon

(Lk 12:42) **Behold, a faithful and prudent steward, whom the Lord set over his household.**

First Reading

(2 Samuel 7:4-5a.12-14a.16)

A reading from the second Book of Samuel

Collect

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that by saint Joseph's intercession your Church may constantly watch over the unfolding of the mysteries of human salvation, whose beginnings you entrusted to his faithful care. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

In those days: The word of the Lord came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from the body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I

will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm ⁽⁸⁸⁾ 89:2-3.4-5.27 and 29)

R. His descendants shall continue forever.

I will sing forever of your mercies, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your fidelity. I have declared your mercy is established forever; your fidelity stands firm as the heavens. R.

“With my chosen one I have made a covenant; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your descendants forever, and set up your throne through all ages.” R.

“He will call out to me, ‘You are my father, my God, the rock of my salvation.’ I will keep my faithful love for him my covenant shall last. R.

Second Reading —
(Romans 4:13.16-18.22)

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brethren: The promise to Abraham and his descendants, that they should inherit the world, did not come through

the law but though the righteousness of faith. That is why all depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants -not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, for he is the father of us all, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations" – in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; as he had been told, "So shall your descendants be." That is why his faith

was "reckoned to him as righteousness." The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Acclamation (*Psalm (83) 84:4*)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Blessed are those who dwell in your house, O Lord, ever singing your praise!
Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel —————
(*Matthew 1:16.18-21.24a*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.



Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph woke from

sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

We pray, O Lord, that just as Saint Joseph served with loving care your Only Begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary, so we may be worthy to minister with a pure heart at your altar. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Mt 25:21) **Well done, good and faithful servant. Come, share your master's joy.**



 **Tuesday** March 19

Prayer after Communion

Defend with unflinching protection, O Lord, we pray, the family you have nourished with food from this altar as they rejoice

at the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, and graciously keep safe your gifts among them. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

May God Bless Husbands

Commentary

Matthew 1:16-24

We celebrate today the Solemnity of St. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

What is striking about this man is the description given to him: **JUST!** This sense of justice is expressed in these ways: maturity, obedience to God, care for family, and religious foundation of Jesus.

May God bless all husbands!

Rev. Fr. Elvis Mensah, Accra Ghana



Wednesday March 20

5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (17) 18:48-49) My deliver from angry nations, you set me above my assailants; you saved me from the violent man, O Lord.

Collect

Enlighten, O God of compassion, the hearts of your children, sanctified by penance, and in your kindness grant those you stir to a sense of devotion, a gracious hearing when they cry out to you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Daniel 3:14-20.24-25.28)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel

In those days: King Nebuchadnezzar said, “It is true, O Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music to fall down and worship the image which I have made, well and good; but if you do not worship,

you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?" Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up." Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more

than it was accustomed to be heated. And he ordered certain mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He said to his counsellors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered the king, "True, O king." He answered, "But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods." Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted

in him, and set at nought the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Daniel 3:29-30.31.33.32.34)

R. You are to be praised
and highly exalted for ever.

Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers, and to be praised and highly exalted for ever; And blessed is your glorious, holy name and to be highly praised and highly exalted for ever. *R.*

Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory

and to be extolled and highly glorified for ever. *R.* Blessed are you upon the throne of your kingdom and to be extolled and highly glorified for ever. *R.* Blessed are you, who sit upon cherubim and look upon the deeps, and to be praised and highly exalted for ever. *R.*

Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven and to be sung and glorified for ever. *R.*

Acclamation (*Luke 8:15*)
Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Blessed are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.
Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel —————
(John 8:31-42)

**A reading from the holy
Gospel according to John**

At that time: Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham, and have never been in bondage to any one. How is it that you say, ‘You will be made free?’” Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not continue in the house for ever; the son continues for ever. So if the Son makes you free, you

will be free indeed. I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me, because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.” They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God; this is not what Abraham did. You do the works of your father.” They said to him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.” Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I

proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Receive back, O Lord, these sacrificial offerings which you have given to be offered to the honour of your name, and grant that they may become

remedies for our healing. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(Col 1:13-14) **God has brought us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.**



 **Wednesday** March 20

Prayer after Communion

May the mysteries we have received, O Lord, bring us heavenly medicine, that they may purge all evil from

our heart and strengthen us with eternal protection. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Defend The Faith With Courage

Commentary

Daniel 3:14-20

Today's first reading presents us with an account of how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego witnessed to the Most High. They boldly defended the faith. They set a wonderful mark. To this day, their names continue to be mentioned, and others name their children after them.

Today, what can you do to defend the faith? What will you be remembered for? We are also called to defend our faith. You need no conditions- anyone can be a witness of our Lord.

Rev. Fr. Elvis Mensah, Accra Ghana



Thursday March 21

5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 9:15) **Christ is mediator of a New Covenant, so that by means of his death, those who are called may receive the promise of an eternal inheritance.**

Collect

Be near, O Lord, to those who plead before you, and look kindly on those who place their hope in your mercy, that, cleansed from the stain of their sins, they may preserve in holy living and be made full heirs of your promise. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Genesis 17:3-9)

A reading from the Book of Genesis

In those days: Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. And I will establish my

covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
Psalm (104) 105: 4-5.6-7.8-9)***

R. The Lord remembers his covenant forever.

Turn to the Lord and his strength; constantly seek his face. Remember the wonders he has done, his marvels and his words of judgement. R.

O children of Abraham, his servant, O descendants of the Jacob he chose, he, the Lord, is our God; his judgement are in all the earth. R.

He remembers his covenant forever: the promise he ordained for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. R.

Acclamation (*Psalm 94*
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 _____
(John 8:51-59)

**A reading from the holy
Gospel according to John**

Jesus said to the Jews
“Truly, truly, I say to
you, if any one keeps
my word, he will never
see death.” The Jews said
to him, “Now we know
that you have a demon.
Abraham died, as did the
prophets; and you say, ‘If
any one keeps my word,
he will never taste death.’
Are you greater than our

father Abraham, who
died? And the prophets
died! Who do you claim
to be?” Jesus answered, “If
I glorify myself, my glory
is nothing; it is my Father
who glorifies me, of whom
you say that he is your
God. But you have not
known him; I know him.
If I said, I do not know
him, I should be a liar like
you; but I do know him
and keep his word. Your
father Abraham rejoiced
that he was to see my day;
he saw it and was glad.”
The Jews then said to him,
“You have not fifty years
old, and have you seen
Abraham?” Jesus said to
them, “Truly, truly, I say
to you, before Abraham
was, I am.” So they took
up stones to throw at him;
but Jesus hid himself, and



 **Thursday** March 21

went out of the temple.
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Look with favour, Lord, we pray, on these sacrificial offerings, that they may profit our conversion and the salvation of all the

world. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Rom 8:32) **God did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all; with him, he has given us all things.**

Prayer after Communion

Nourished by your saving gifts, we beseech your mercy, Lord, that by this same Sacrament with

which you feed us in the present age, you may make us partakers of the life eternal. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Flee From Danger

Commentary

John 8:51-59

The last line of today's Gospel reads, "So they took up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the Temple."

You may ask, why harm Jesus? What did He do? There may have been no good reason, but the fact is, an attack was staged against Jesus.

Today, let us not harm, but help people. Let us not kill, but build. In responding to the situation, Jesus escaped. He didn't stay on but moved to avoid danger. Today, imitate the Lord. Be smart!

Rev. Fr. Elvis Mensah, Accra Ghana



Friday March 22

5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (30) 31:10.16.18) **Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in distress. Deliver me from the hands of my enemies and those who pursue me. O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call on you.**

Collect

Pardon the offences of your peoples, we pray, O Lord, and in your goodness set us free from the bonds of the sins we have committed in our weakness. Through our Lord. **Amen.**

Or:

O God, who in this season give your Church the grace to imitate devoutly the Blessed Virgin Mary in contemplating the Passion of Christ, grant, we pray, through her intercession, that we may cling more firmly each day to your Only Begotten Son and come at last to the fullness of his grace. Who lives and reigns. **Amen**

Reading _____
(Jeremiah 20:10-13)

A reading from the Book of Jeremiah

I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! “Denounce him! Let us denounce him!” say all my familiar friends, watching for my fall. “Perhaps he will be deceived, then we can overcome him, and take our revenge on him.” But the Lord is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonour will never be forgotten. O Lord of hosts, who test the righteous, who see the

heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause. Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm
(Psalm (17) 18:1-2a. 2bc-3.4-5.6)

R. In my anguish I called to the Lord,

And he heard me.

I love you, Lord, my strength; O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my saviour. R. My God, my rock where I take refuge; my shield, my saving strength, my

stronghold. I cry out, “Praised be the Lord!” and see, I am saved from my foes. *R.*

The waves of death rose about me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; the snares of the grave surrounded me; the traps of the death confronted me. *R.*

In my anguish I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry to him reached his ears. *R.*

Acclamation

(Jn 6.63c.68.c)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life; you have the words of eternal life.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel _____
(John 10:31-42)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: The Jews took up stones to stone Jesus. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?” the Jews answered him, “We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods’? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and Scripture

cannot be nullified), do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." Again they tried to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John at first baptised, and there he remained. And many came to him; and they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this

man was true." And many believed in him there.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant, O merciful God, that we may be worthy to serve ever fittingly at your altars, and there to be saved by constant participation. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(1 Pt 2:24) **Jesus bore our sins in his own body on the cross, so that dead to sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds we have been healed.**



 **Friday** March 22

Prayer after Communion

May the unfailing protection of the sacrifice we have received never leave us, O Lord, and may

it always drive far from us all that would do us harm. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord Is Your Strength

Commentary

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Prophet Jeremiah didn't have it easy. He was persecuted. He was rejected by his own people. He was put in a pit. He was almost killed.

In all of these, Prophet Jeremiah praised the Lord. He didn't give up. He didn't quit ministry. He didn't speak against God's name.

Today, this same God continues to encourage us. He tells us that He is our strength.

Rev. Fr. Elvis Mensah, Accra Ghana



Saturday March 23

5th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (21) 22:20.7) **O Lord, do not stay afar off; my strength, make haste to help me! For I am a worm and no man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.**

Collect

O God, who have made all those reborn in Christ a chosen race and a royal priesthood, grant us, we pray, the grace to will and to do what you command, that the people called to eternal life may be one in the faith of their hearts and the homage of their deeds.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Reading

(Ezekiel 37:21-28)

A reading from the Book of Ezekiel

Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I take the sons of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all sides, and bring them to their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; and they shall be

no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves any more with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. “My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes. They shall dwell in the land where your fathers dwelt that I gave to my servant Jacob; they and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there for ever; and

David my servant shall be their prince for ever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I the LORD sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore. The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Jeremiah 31:10.11.12ab.
13)

R. The Lord will keep us,
as a shepherd keeps his
flock.

Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the islands afar off; say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.” R.

For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Sion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord. R.

They shall the maidens rejoice in the dance, and

the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. R.

Acclamation
(Ezekiel 18:31)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, says the Lord, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel —————
(John 11:45-57)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: When they heard the words of Jesus, some of the people said,

“This is really a prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was? So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?” The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this man!” The Pharisees answered them “Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed.”

Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?” They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee.” They went each to his own house. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

May the gifts we offer from our fasting be acceptable to you, O Lord, we pray, and, as an expiation for our sins, may they make us worthy of your grace and lead us to what you promise for the eternity. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Jn 11:52) **Christ was handed over, to gather into one the scattered children of God.**

as you feed us with the nourishment which comes from the most holy Body and Blood of your Son, so you may make us sharers of his divine nature. Who lives and reigns. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

We entreat your majesty most humbly, O Lord, that,

Commentary

The Danger Of Gossip

John 11:45-57

Jesus restores Lazarus to life. Some Jews reported this incident to the Pharisees.

The question is, why report? What was their intention? The fact is, they did something that is indicative of gossip.

In life, never gossip about anybody to anyone. It never helps. The person you gossip with will also gossip about you with others. If you have a mouth to talk about others, you should use to speak good of others.

Rev. Fr. Elvis Mensah, Accra Ghana



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