

# Second Sunday of Lent



## Prayer for Insight and Courage

Lord of all,  
Creator of the heavens and the earth,  
we give thanks for this time of reflection  
and prayer.

We give thanks for the beauty of the earth,  
for the coming of spring,  
and for this Lenten season of walking  
with you.

Give us the grace to see you revealed  
in the cloud at the mountaintop  
and in the person we meet on the street.  
Help us to know your glory  
and to bring others to the knowledge of it.

Give us courage to leave our safe havens  
and proclaim your presence to the world.  
You alone are worthy of our praise and  
our glory.  
Through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

## February 28, 2010 Preparing for the Mountain

It takes discipline to set aside time every day to talk with God. Still, the more frequently we make a space in the noisiness of our lives, the more likely we will be able to hear what God is saying to us. In today's Gospel (Luke 9:28b-36), when Jesus took Peter, James, and John up the mountain to pray, they were "weighed down with sleep." But they managed to stay awake, and they saw the transfigured Jesus with Moses and Elijah (symbols of the law and the prophets). Although the disciples' desire to stay on the mountain was misguided, their awe at seeing the glory of Jesus and hearing the voice of God was understandable. God spoke from the cloud, declaring that Jesus was his Chosen. "Chosen,"

sometimes translated as Beloved, reminds us of God's words at Jesus' baptism.

We cannot expect every prayer experience to be a "mountaintop experience." Sometimes prayer is a matter of placing our thoughts, experiences, emotions, and desires in the hands of God without a clear sense of the divine presence. We simply trust that God will hold what needs to be held and transform what needs to be changed. Sometimes God makes himself known, revealed in scripture, in nature, in a friend, or in the deep silence of our hearts. By developing a habit of prayer, we ensure that we will not be asleep when that moment comes; rather, we too will be drawn into the cloud and the mystery of God.

# This Week at Home



## Monday, March 1

### The Grace to Forgive

In today's reading (Luke 6:36–38) we hear part of Luke's "Sermon on the Plain." Jesus urges everyone to be merciful as God is merciful, a theme Luke often stresses. In Jesus' eyes, our willingness to forgive others is an act of gratitude for the abundant forgiveness that God has shown us. Lent is a good time to ask for the grace to forgive someone who has wronged us. We ask, not out of obligation or guilt, but from gratitude, recognizing that God first forgave us.

## Tuesday, March 2

### True Service Comes from Humility

Jesus reminds us today that true service comes from humility before God and a genuine love of others (Matthew 23:1–12). Many times, though, we expect a reward, or thanks, or admiration. Jesus scolded the Pharisees because they refused to serve others, even though they taught God's law. The Pharisees' words were good, but their actions betrayed their motives. As disciples of Jesus, we are to serve one another, remembering that it is God who is our master teacher and Father of us all. Pray today for a spirit of service.

## Wednesday, March 3

### Saint Katharine Drexel

Katharine Drexel was the second American-born person to be canonized. Appalled by the conditions she saw among Native American tribes in the late nineteenth century, Katharine founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to minister to and educate Native Americans and other oppressed people of color. The family fortune she inherited (around 20 million dollars) was spent on her mission. Among her many accomplishments was the establishment of Xavier University in New Orleans and Blessed Sacrament Monastery in Tucson. Her tomb is at the Katharine Drexel Shrine in Bensalem, Pennsylvania.

## Thursday, March 4

### Saint Casimir

Saint Casimir (1458–1484) was a member of the royal family of Poland in the fifteenth century. He was well educated in the management of government and very devout in his faith. Though he never actually became king of Poland, he governed the country prudently and justly when his father, King Casimir IV, had to be away in Lithuania. The young man died during a trip to Lithuania in the third year of his governance. He is buried in the Vilnius Cathedral and was canonized in 1522.

## Friday, March 5

### Fasting

Again this Friday we abstain from meat, which all adult Catholics do on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent. Abstaining from meat reminds us of our solidarity with the poor of the world who do not have the luxury of rich food or even enough food every day. Abstaining from meat also provides a way of making us aware of hunger—not just hunger for food, but our hunger for justice, peace, love, and God. Both fasting (not eating any food) and abstinence (avoiding certain foods) were once a year-round practice for Catholics. Many are beginning to embrace the practice once again.

## Saturday, March 6

### Becoming Aware

During the year, it is easy to take what we possess for granted, and it is hard to remember that even a modest American salary outpaces more than three quarters of the rest of the world. Today, remember those who have less by counting how many books or CDs you have in your house and donating a dime, nickel, or penny for each one to Catholic Relief Services or another organization that works with the poor around the world.



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