

# Second Sunday of Lent



## Prayer for Transformation

God, our loving Father,  
you speak to us as you did to Jesus,  
reminding us that we  
are your beloved.  
You continually transform us  
into clearer images of yourself.  
Guide us as we climb  
treacherous mountains.  
Be with us as we descend  
from our peak experiences.  
Teach us to listen to your Son,  
and focus our sights on Jesus alone.  
We ask this through the same Lord  
Jesus Christ,  
your Son, who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit  
one God forever and ever. Amen.

**Sunday, March 4, 2012**

## Affirmation and Transformation

Today's Readings: Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Psalm 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19 (116:9); Romans 8:31b-34; Mark 9:2-10. Today the "call" story of Jesus continues from last week. He moves from temptation to Transfiguration, showing that like every human being, he is always a "work in process." The way he gradually develops models the path for us. Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor," a flowering that continues in the adult Jesus.

The Transfiguration may have been one of those times when "you had to have been there." Mark fills in with abundant details for those of us who weren't, but perhaps the best way to understand what happened is to relate Jesus' experience to our own transformations. There on the mountaintop

he is given the vision that would carry him through the Passion (which Mark begins five chapters later).

As then, so now. Over the years, we too change, and hopefully, improve. Even our positions on controversial issues can gradually evolve. Remembering and cherishing God's expressions of love for us can help us endure harder times that follow. God's affirmation of his beloved Son must have steadied and comforted Jesus when he was interrogated, tortured, and nailed to a cross. As he slowly, painfully suffocated, he must have remembered that voice speaking from the cloud (for the Jewish people, the sign of God's presence). We also have this bright spot to cherish as we continue through the rest of Lent. Furthermore, we have the encouragement of Romans 8:31: "If God is for us, who is against us?"



## This Week at Home

### Monday, March 5 Create an Alms Box

Today's Readings: Daniel 9:4b-10; Psalm 79:8, 9, 11 and 13 (see 103:10a); Luke 6:36-38. Today's Gospel calls us to be "merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). One step in that direction is Lenten almsgiving. Setting up an alms box in your home will make the practice more regular and easier. Contribute to it whenever you feel gratitude for your blessings. Then, as Jesus promised, "the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Luke 6:38).

### Tuesday, March 6 Service without Hypocrisy

Today's Readings: Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Psalm 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21 and 23; Matthew 23:1-12. It's easy to condemn the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, but more challenging to find examples of those who serve single-heartedly, without pretension. Make it a project this week to search out those who do, finding their stories in the newspaper or on the web.

### Wednesday, March 7 Saints Perpetua and Felicity

Today's Readings: Jeremiah 18:18-20; Psalm 31:5-6, 14, 15-16 (17b); Matthew 20:17-28. Martyred on this day in 203 at Carthage, Perpetua was a young noblewoman and Felicity was her slave. After their arrest, the two catechumens and their three companions were baptized. Perpetua (age 22) was especially concerned about her young son, whom her mother would bring to visit the jail. Felicity gave birth to a daughter two days before she was led into an amphitheater with wild animals. In today's Gospel, the mother of the sons of Zebedee clearly did not know what she asked from Jesus. But the two young women whose optional memorial we honor celebrate today "drank the cup" of suffering that Jesus himself drank.

### Thursday, March 8 Saint John of God

Today's Readings: Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 (40:5a); Luke 16:19-31. Saint John of God, whose optional memorial we may celebrate today, is the official patron of booksellers, heart patients, and nurses, but he might also inspire "slow starters," who come to insight in mid-life. At 40, in 1535, he left his life as a soldier in Spain, recovered his Christian belief, and traveled to Africa. After a time spent selling religious books and pictures, he began a care center for indigent sick people in Grenada. Later his followers founded the religious order of the Brothers Hospitallers.

### Friday, March 9 Saint Frances of Rome

Today's Readings: Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Psalm 105:16-17, 18-19, 20-21 (5a); Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46. A wife and mother of three children who lived from 1384 to 1440, Frances, whose optional memorial we celebrate today, was drawn to prayer and care for the poor. She sold much of her wealth to help victims of a plague that killed her son and daughter. Turning part of her home into a hospital, she recruited friends and relatives to be nurses. Eventually, they coalesced into a group that didn't take vows and lived at home. Read about similar lay movements today: the Jesuit Volunteers ([www.jesuitvolunteers.org](http://www.jesuitvolunteers.org)) and the Vincentian Volunteers, ([www.vincentianvolunteers.org](http://www.vincentianvolunteers.org)).

### Saturday, March 10 A Parable of Comfort

Today's Readings: Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12 (8a); Luke 15:1-3, 11-32. The parable of the prodigal son from Luke is a good one for children to act out. Or use it for *lectio divina*, reading it, and then choosing one phrase to repeat and reflect on. Many have found reassurance in the Father's words to the son: "you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours" (15:31). Imagine God the Father saying that over and over to you.



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*Keeping the Seasons*

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