

Fourth Sunday of Lent (A) – 15.03.2026

1 Sam 16,1.6-7.10-13; Eph 5,8-14; Jn 9,1-41

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, I read about a young boy in a school who loved to build intricate models out of scraps of wood and leftover pieces of metal. His classmates often laughed at him. “Why waste your time on this? It’s small, useless, and nobody will notice,” they said. Yet the boy continued quietly, carefully shaping his creations, seeing possibilities that others overlooked. One teacher paused to watch him, and immediately recognized the care, creativity, and dedication in what seemed trivial to everyone else. What others dismissed as small or unimportant, the teacher saw as full of potential.

Today’s readings call us to see with such eyes. In the First Reading, Samuel assumed the eldest son Eliab must be chosen as king, tall and strong and impressive. But God chose David, the youngest, a small shepherd, overlooked by everyone yet full of faith. God’s vision sees what human eyes often miss.

In the Gospel, Jesus encounters a man blind from birth. To the world, he is defined by his weakness, unable to see, dependent on others, even marginalized. Yet Jesus sees his heart and acts—bringing light where there was darkness, giving sight where there was blindness, revealing God’s power and mercy.

Both readings remind us: God looks beyond appearances. He sees hearts, potential, and faith where we might see nothing. Today, as we gather, we are invited to open our eyes and hearts to God’s action in our lives, to recognize His light breaking into ordinary, overlooked, and even broken places. Let us rejoice that God’s grace transforms the seemingly small and powerless into instruments of His love and glory.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus Christ, no eye has ever seen what you have prepared for those who love you. Lord, have mercy.

You have opened the eyes of people to the work of God. Christ, have mercy.

You have called us to live as children of the light.

Lord, have mercy on us.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God be patient with our impatience. Give us courage where we lose heart. Help us to turn back when we have gone astray. Strengthen and renew our faith where we are weak in belief, and lead us to life everlasting. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, friend of humanity,
you sent us Jesus, your Son, to open the eyes of our hearts, to bring light into the darkness, and to reveal your mercy to all.

Grant that, strengthened by His word and nourished at this table, we may live as children of the light, sharing your love with those around us, bringing hope to the weak, courage to the fearful, and joy to the humble. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns... Amen.

HOMILY – Seeing with God’s Eyes

A few years ago, Radio Horeb, where I work, advertised a position in the editorial department. Applicants were asked to be Catholic, willing to witness their faith, familiar with computers—and to send meaningful application documents. Meaningful, of course, in the eyes of the Church. But the real question is: what counts as meaningful in God’s eyes? What are the credentials that matter when God chooses someone for His work?

This question echoes through our first reading today. The Israelites needed a new king. Saul had been rejected because he disobeyed God. So God sent the prophet Samuel to Jesse in Bethlehem: one of Jesse’s sons would be chosen as king. Samuel, like many of us, looked at appearances. He saw Eliab, tall and strong, firstborn—surely the obvious choice! But God said: *“Do not look on his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not see as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”*

One by one, Jesse's sons passed before Samuel. Not one was chosen. Finally, the youngest, David, the shepherd boy tending sheep, small and seemingly insignificant, was brought forward. And God said: "*This is the one.*" Samuel anointed him, and from that moment, the smallest son became the greatest king in Israel, a man after God's own heart.

God's way of choosing is different from ours. He looks at the heart. He sees potential, faith, and openness, not diplomas, strength, or fame. Look at the apostles: Peter, a simple fisherman who denied Christ three times, becomes the rock of the Church. Look at Jean-Marie Vianney, a struggling student, unremarkable in appearance, yet he becomes the patron saint of parish priests. God delights in choosing the overlooked, the weak, the ordinary, and through them, His glory shines.

And this brings us to today's Gospel, the story of the man born blind. Imagine if tomorrow, a newspaper ad promised 100 euros to anyone who came to the town square. Many

would hesitate, suspect a trick. Some would check, discuss, laugh it off. Yet a few children or those in need would run, take the gift, and rejoice. In the Gospel, the blind man receives a gift far greater than money: sight itself. Jesus heals him in a way that seems strange—mixing clay with His saliva—but it is profoundly intimate, a sign of God's closeness.

Yet the world hesitates. The neighbours doubt. The Pharisees question and accuse. They cannot see God's work even when it is right in front of them. In contrast, the blind man, once healed, recognizes Jesus for who He is. He moves from darkness into light, both physically and spiritually. He becomes a witness, kneeling before the Lord: "*I believe, Lord.*"

So, what does it mean to see, really see? Steve Jobs may have created the iPhone, connecting the world visually and virtually, yet someone blind could never benefit from its images. In contrast, Jesus gives us sight of the heart, the inner life. As Saint-Exupéry reminds us in *The Little Prince*:

“One sees clearly only with the heart. What is essential is invisible to the eyes.”

To see with God’s eyes means looking beyond appearances. It means perceiving the potential, dignity, and goodness in others, even when society overlooks them. It means noticing those on the margins, the humble, the poor, the sinners—like David in the fields or the blind man in the street. It means choosing faith over scepticism, hope over fear.

And this is not abstract. Lent calls us to practice this seeing. Two siblings argue over chores; a neighbour struggles silently; a colleague bears burdens we do not know. In these moments, God invites us to look deeper, to respond with kindness, patience, and understanding.

Eugen Roth said: *“A person is sometimes completely transformed when treated humanely.”* So too, our faith transforms others when it acts in love.

We are also challenged to confront darkness. Paul reminds us in Ephesians: *“Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the*

dead, and Christ will shine on you.” As children of the light, we expose injustice, speak against sin, and allow God’s light to shine through our lives. Just as the blind man’s sight illuminated the world around him, our light, however small, can illuminate our families, our communities, and our Church.

Fear often holds us back from shining. Nelson Mandela said: *“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate... It is our light we fear.”* God has given each of us a unique light, a gift to reflect His glory. Shrinking ourselves to make others comfortable does not serve the world. David, the humble shepherd, shone because God shone through him. So do we, when we trust, obey, and act with love.

Today, let us ask ourselves: Who is really blind? Who is really seeing? Is it the Pharisees, so attached to their rules, or the healed man, whose eyes are opened to truth and love? And more importantly, how do we respond to God’s light in our own lives? Do we see His action? Do we trust

Him? Do we allow His perspective to shape our hearts and choices?

Let me end with a story: Years ago, a small child, born prematurely, was considered too weak to survive. Doctors hesitated, even suggested letting nature take its course. Yet the parents prayed, cared for the child, nurtured him, and eventually, he thrived. Later, that child became a person of remarkable courage, kindness, and service. God's ways are often hidden, unexpected, and miraculous—choosing what the world overlooks, shining where no one expects.

Brothers and sisters, let us open our hearts, see with God's eyes, and allow His light to guide us. Let us rejoice in His work in others, trust His ways, and shine boldly in a world that so desperately needs light. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE CREED

Let us profess our faith, united with the Church throughout the world, by reciting the Creed:

ALTERNATIVE PROFESSION OF FAITH FOR PERSONAL MEDITATION:

I believe in one personal, unique God.
He created all things, life, and humanity.
He knows us and cares for us.
He is our Father and also like a Mother.
I believe in His Son, Jesus Christ,
who became man, born of the Virgin Mary.
He proclaimed God's Word to us – He Himself is this Word.
He taught us to love as God wishes.
For this, He was persecuted and killed.
But He is risen.
He showed Himself to His friends before returning to the Father.
And He will come again
to complete all creation and bring it home.
I also ask for the Holy Spirit: may He be near us,
strengthen us, and guide us in God's ways.
I seek on earth the true Church of God;
the Church that walks this path, seeking and hoping;

the Church that witnesses to me and supports my life.

I await Jesus Christ, who is eternal life. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation.

We come to your altar, bringing bread and wine, symbols of our labour, our lives, and our longing for your presence.

Let us offer them with joy and gratitude, trusting and praying that they may be acceptable to God the Father almighty.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Heavenly Father, we bring the bread – a sign of all that the earth produces, of what sustains human life, of what we hunger for, of what we strive to achieve – bread that could and should feed all the people of the earth.

We also bring the wine, a sign of what the earth gives and offers us, a sign of life itself – for we thirst for life, for fulfillment, for joy – joy promised to all people.

We bring ourselves as well – accept us as we are, and as we hope to be. Look upon our efforts – and make the

bread and wine, make us, your Church, a sign of your presence in our world.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE as in the Missal

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, we know ourselves united with all who believe in You across the world and gather in Your name.

Thinking of our parish community, our diocese, and the Church on the whole earth, united with our Pope, Bishop , and with all men and women who work for the growth of Your Kingdom let us now pray in the words Jesus taught us.

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil; graciously grant us peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin, safe from all distress.

As you opened the eyes of the blind and lifted up the lowly make us ever watchful to see with the eyes of your Son, to

judge with his heart, and to serve with his hands, so that our renewed freedom and hope may shine forth in our lives, radiating your light and love to all the world, as we await with joyful hope the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, you healed the blind and brought light into darkness. Make us instruments of your peace: help us to forgive as we have been forgiven, to heal the wounds of others, and to bring hope where despair reigns. May your peace reign in our hearts, in our families, and in the world, so that all who see us may recognize your love and glory. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. As we receive Christ, let us remember that seeing with the eyes of faith is more important than seeing with our human eyes. Like the man born blind, we are invited to

encounter the light, to trust in God's work, and to let our hearts guide our vision. The bread and wine unite us in Christ and empower us to carry His light into the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

We have received the bread of life, the light of the world. Just as God chose David, the overlooked shepherd, and gave sight to the man born blind, He now calls us to be His instruments in the world.

Let us carry this light into our daily lives—seeing beyond appearances, noticing the hidden needs of others, and offering kindness, mercy, and hope. Even the smallest act of love can reveal God's glory. Today, strengthened by this Eucharist, may our hearts be open, our eyes renewed, and our lives a living testimony to God's mercy and light.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Gracious Lord, friend of humanity,
we thank You for this time of communion with You.
We thank You for our sisters and brothers with whom we

have gathered here.

We thank You for the experience that in our hope, our longing, and our faith, we are not alone.

This gives us joy and lightens our hearts.

We thank You for Your Word, by which You have opened our eyes anew. Remain in us in our thoughts and feelings. Go with us as we now return to our ways, and accompany us through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who sees the heart and not the outward appearance, open your eyes to His presence in your life and in the lives of others.

May He give you the courage to follow Him, even when the way seems small, overlooked, or uncertain, trusting that His grace works powerfully through the humble and the faithful.

May He fill you with the light of Christ, so that your hearts may never be blinded by fear, doubt, or the judgments of the world, and that you may bring His mercy, hope, and

healing to those who are struggling, forgotten, or in darkness.

May He strengthen you in faith, that like David, you may serve Him with a generous heart; and like the man born blind, you may recognize and rejoice in the gift of His healing, sharing it with all whom you meet.

And may Almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in the peace of Christ, to see and serve Him in others.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Who is really blind? Who is truly seeing?

God calls us to see not only with our eyes but with our hearts. Open your heart to His light, trust His work in your life and in the lives of others, and carry His love into every corner of the world.

Monday of the 4th Week of Lent – 16 March 2026

Isaiah 65:17–21; John 4:43–54

INTRODUCTION

As we move deeper into Lent and draw closer to Easter, the Church gently shifts our gaze from penitence toward promise, from struggle toward new life. Today's readings speak not of escape from hardship, but of hope that grows within it.

There is a simple story of a father who once brought his gravely ill child to a trusted doctor. Overwhelmed with fear, he begged for immediate help. The doctor looked at him calmly and said, "Go home. Your child will live." The words felt almost too simple, too easy. Yet the father chose to trust them. And as he walked home, the healing had already begun.

In today's Gospel, we meet a father just like that — a man who dares to believe Jesus' word before seeing any sign. The prophet Isaiah, too, speaks to a wounded people and offers them a vision of joy, rebuilding, and life

renewed. As we gather today, we bring our own worries, hopes, and unfinished journeys. Let us open our hearts to the Lord who speaks life, and trust that his word is already at work among us.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brothers and sisters, trusting in the Lord who brings life out of death and hope out of despair, let us acknowledge our sins and prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart.

Lord, have mercy.

You came to call sinners and offer them a new beginning.

Christ, have mercy.

You lead us from fear into faith and from death into life.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who calls us to trust in his life-giving word and never abandons those who hope in him, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and lead us all to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Almighty and faithful God,
you promise new heavens and a new earth
and offer life to all who trust in your word.
Strengthen our faith when the way is uncertain,
renew our hope when joy seems distant,
and lead us ever closer to the fullness of life
revealed in the Paschal Mystery of your Son.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy
Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A young father once rushed to a doctor with his feverish child in his arms. He pleaded, worried that his son might not survive the night. The doctor, busy with other patients, paused and looked at him and said simply, “Go home; your child will live.” Confused but trusting, the father returned home. Along the way, word came that his son had recovered. He had acted on faith in the promise, not on what he had yet seen.

In today’s Gospel, we hear a story much like this. A royal official, desperate for his seriously ill son, approached Jesus and pleaded for his help. Jesus’ response was unexpected: He did not go with him immediately but said, “Go home; your son will live.” The official believed Jesus’ word and started on his journey, trusting the promise. Only when he arrived home did he discover that his son had indeed been healed. This story is a powerful reminder that faith is not about demanding signs or wonders, but about trusting God’s word even before we see the results.

The first reading from Isaiah speaks to a people who had been through exile, whose city lay in ruins. He promises them a “new heavens and a new earth,” a world where joy, peace, and life flourish. But notice, this promise comes after destruction, after despair. God does not erase suffering instantly, nor does he always intervene in the way we expect. Yet, God is always at work, bringing life out of death, hope out of despair. Just as the royal official journeyed home trusting Jesus’ word, so too must we learn to walk in faith, even when the outcome is unseen.

Isaiah’s vision and the Gospel story together reveal a profound truth: God’s desire is life—full, abundant, life that can begin even now. In our world today, we see places torn apart by war or suffering, families broken by illness or grief, and we wonder if restoration is possible. Isaiah reminds us that God longs to rebuild, to bring joy where there is sorrow, to plant vineyards where the land seems barren. Jesus shows us that this restoration is not only for the distant future but can begin in our lives today through trust in his word and presence.

Faith, like that of the royal official, calls us to action. We are asked to take God at his word and set out on our journey, even when the path is uncertain. We may not always witness miraculous healings or dramatic transformations, but the Lord’s word is a living promise that shapes us, heals us, and makes us instruments of life in the world. Every act of compassion, every moment of hope, every patient prayer becomes a sign of God’s kingdom breaking into our reality.

We end where we began—with a father’s trust. The royal official’s faith teaches us that believing God’s word is not passive. It moves us to return home, to live courageously, and to act in hope. And just as the young father received the life of his son, we, too, are invited to witness the signs of God’s life-giving presence around us—in our families, communities, and hearts—if only we trust and walk in faith.

Let us pray that we may be people of such hopeful faith, ready to believe God’s word, to journey on it, and to see life renewed in unexpected ways.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we place these gifts upon the altar,
we offer not only bread and wine
but also our trust, our fears, and our fragile hopes. May our
prayers be acceptable to God, the Father almighty.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God,
accept the offerings we bring before you
as signs of our faith in your promise of life.
May this sacrifice strengthen our trust in your word
and prepare our hearts to receive
the joy and renewal you offer us in Christ.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in your mercy you never abandon your people,
but speak words of life even in times of suffering and loss.
Through the prophets you promised a world renewed,
a future shaped by joy, peace, and hope.
In your Son, Jesus Christ, you fulfilled that promise,
calling us to trust not in signs alone
but in the power of your living word.

By his death and resurrection
you have opened for us the path to new life,
inviting us to walk by faith
until we share fully in your eternal joy.

And so, with Angels and Archangels
and with all the hosts of heaven,
we proclaim your glory and sing without end:

Holy, Holy, Holy...

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
trusting in the Father who gives life and hope,
we dare to say:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the fear that weakens our faith.
Graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may always trust in your promises
and walk with confidence toward the life you offer us.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him whose word brings life and healing.
Blessed are those who trust in his promise
and are called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In this Eucharist, we have received the living Word made
flesh — the same Lord who spoke healing and life to a
worried father. As we return to our daily journeys,
may this sacrament strengthen our trust,
so that even before we see the outcome,
we may walk forward in faith,
knowing that the Lord's word is already at work within us.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Gracious God, you have nourished us with the Bread of
Life and renewed us with the promise of your word.
Strengthen our faith, deepen our hope, and help us to live
as witnesses to the new life you offer to the world.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the God of life and hope
strengthen your faith when the way is uncertain,
renew your joy even in times of trial,
and guide your steps toward the fullness of life.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, trusting in the word of the Lord,
and let your life be a sign of hope for the world.

Tuesday of the 4th Week of Lent – 17 March 2026

Ezekiel 47:1–9, 12; John 5:1–16

INTRODUCTION

There is an old story about a village built around a well. People believed the water could heal, but only the quickest and strongest ever reached it first. One day, a man who could not walk was carried to the well and left there. He waited, not for water, but for someone to notice him. When a stranger finally stopped and asked, *“What do you want?”* the man discovered that healing begins not with rushing water, but with being seen and loved.

Today, the Word of God speaks to us of **life-giving water**. Ezekiel shows us water flowing from the Temple, bringing life even to dead places. In the Gospel, Jesus meets a man who has waited thirty-eight years beside a pool and asks him a simple yet life-changing question: *“Do you want to be well?”*

We too have crossed a threshold today—from our daily lives into this sacred place. We bring our joys and wounds, our hopes and long waiting, and we place everything before the Lord who sees us and desires to heal us.

Let us begin by opening our hearts to his mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brothers and sisters,
the Lord comes to us not with judgment, but with healing.
Let us acknowledge before God and one another the ways
we have resisted his life-giving presence.

Lord Jesus, you come to us when we are tired of waiting:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you ask us whether we truly desire healing
and new life: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you raise us up and call us to walk in freedom:

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who sees our weakness and hears the deepest desires of our hearts, wash us in the living water of his mercy, forgive us our sins, heal what is wounded within us, and lead us into the fullness of life in Christ.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Merciful God, you are the source of all life and healing.
As we journey through this holy season,
turn our hearts toward your Son,
that we may desire the life he offers,
rise from all that keeps us bound,
and walk as renewed people in the light of Easter.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY: The Life-Giving Water of Jesus

A man once told me about an old village well that everyone believed had magical healing powers. People would line up for hours, hoping the first person to touch the water would stir it and bring blessing to the next. One day, a man who had been bedridden for decades came to that well. He had no friends to help him get in first. He waited quietly, alone, as the crowd grew and the water rippled. But then a stranger approached him, not the water, and simply said, “Do you want to be well again?” That question changed everything, and in that moment, life returned to him.

Today’s readings invite us to reflect on this same truth: God brings life and healing, often in ways we do not expect. In the first reading, the prophet Ezekiel speaks of water flowing from the Temple, reaching even the desert and the Dead Sea, bringing life wherever it touches. The imagery is powerful: where there is God, life blooms—even where it seems impossible. The water is not magic in itself;

it is the presence of God that restores, heals, and makes fruitful what was once barren.

In the Gospel, we meet a man who had been paralysed for thirty-eight years, waiting beside the Pool of Bethesda. People believed the water would heal only if it was stirred first, and someone helped you in. Yet, this man had no one to help him. He was alone, abandoned, perhaps even losing hope. Then Jesus comes—not to the pool, but to him—and asks the simple yet profound question: “Do you want to be well again?” At first, it seems obvious, almost unnecessary. But Jesus asks to enter into the man’s story, to meet him where he is, to draw out the desires of his heart. The man’s faint hope, his whispered desire for life, is all that Jesus needs. With a word, he is healed. The waters of Bethesda never moved; it was the presence of Jesus that made the difference.

This Gospel reminds us that healing is personal. Jesus does not act without engaging with our hearts. He respects our freedom and our desires. His question echoes for each

of us: “What do you truly want? Do you want the life I can give?” Like the man at the pool, we may be isolated in our struggles—through illness, loneliness, or spiritual dryness. Yet Jesus comes to us, sees us, and invites us to respond. He asks, he listens, he heals.

Ezekiel’s vision and the Gospel together teach us that life flows from God, not from rituals or magic, but through encounter and relationship. When we open our hearts to Him, we allow the living water of the Spirit to flow through us. We are made fruitful, healed, and alive, even in places of despair.

Let us return to our opening story: the man by the well received healing not from the water, but from a person who cared enough to ask him about his desire. Today, Jesus asks each of us the same question. He comes into our isolation, into our fears, into our longings, and invites us to rise. Like the man at Bethesda, we are called to respond, to let God’s presence work in and through us. The water may be still, but the Lord’s life-giving touch is always

moving.

“Do you want to be well?” Let that question sink into your heart. And when you answer with hope, the waters of life begin to flow—right where you are.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters,
as we bring bread and wine to this altar,
we also bring our longing for healing,
our quiet hopes, and the places in our lives that feel dry or forgotten. Let us pray that the Lord may transform these gifts and renew us by his life-giving presence.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord God, receive these offerings
and make them signs of your healing love.
As water flowed from the Temple bringing life to all it touched, may this sacrifice renew our hearts
and draw us ever closer to Christ, who gives himself for the life of the world. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you are the source of living water,
and from your presence flows life without end.
Through your Son, you come near to those who are weary,
you see those forgotten by others,
and you ask not only what they suffer,
but what they desire.

In Christ, you raise up the broken, heal the wounded,
and lead us from waiting into new life.

By his saving work, you turn places of dryness into springs
of hope and invite us to walk in freedom as renewed
people.

And so, with angels and saints,
with all who have been healed by your mercy,
we proclaim your glory
and sing with joy: **Holy, Holy, Holy...**

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

Brothers and sisters, the Lord who asks us, "*Do you want to be well?*" also invites us to trust him as children.

With hearts open to his healing grace,
let us pray as he himself has taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from the fear that keeps us waiting
and the discouragement that binds us in place.
Grant peace in our days, that, helped by your mercy,
we may rise with courage, walk in freedom,
and live always in the hope of healing and new life,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you spoke words of healing and peace
to those who had waited too long and hoped too little.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity

in accordance with your will,
for you live and reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, who comes to us not through stirred waters, but through mercy poured out.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In this Eucharist, the Lord has drawn near to us.
He has seen us, asked us what we desire,
and fed us with the bread of life. Let us rest for a moment
in his presence and allow his healing grace
to flow quietly into the places that still wait for renewal.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Gracious God, you have nourished us with the living bread
from heaven. May this sacrament strengthen us
to rise from whatever keeps us bound
and to walk in newness of life,
bearing witness to your healing love
in the world we serve. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May God the Father, source of all life,
renew your hearts with hope. **Amen.**

May Jesus Christ, who sees you and calls you to rise,
heal what is wounded within you. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit, the living water within you,
lead you in freedom and peace. **Amen.**

And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

This week, listen again to Jesus' question:

“Do you want to be well?”

Bring that desire honestly before him—
for where he is welcomed,
the waters of life always begin to flow.

St. Patrick – Solemnity in Australia – 17.03.2026

Jer 1,4-9; Acts 13,46-49; Lk 10,1-12. 17-20

INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, a man was asked why he had chosen to leave a comfortable life and travel to places few wanted to go. He replied, “Because once you know you are loved by God, you cannot keep that love to yourself.” He did not go because he was fearless, well-prepared, or certain of success. He went because he trusted that God would be with him wherever he was sent.

Today we celebrate Saint Patrick, a man who knew what it meant to be sent. Once a captive, later a missionary, he returned to the very land of his suffering—not with resentment, but with forgiveness, courage, and love. The Word of God today reminds us that faith is never meant to be stored away safely. It is meant to be lived, shared, and entrusted to God’s care.

As we gather for this Eucharist, we ask for the grace to hear God’s call anew, to place his priorities above our own, and to become joyful witnesses of his love in our world.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Saint Patrick responded generously to God’s call, trusting not in himself but in the mercy of the Lord. Aware of our own weakness and need for grace, let us now acknowledge our sins and ask for God’s forgiveness.

I confess to almighty God...

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

Lord God, you call imperfect people to serve your perfect will. Cleanse our hearts, free us from fear and self-reliance, and renew us in the joy of your mercy, so that we may follow you with generous and trusting hearts.

COLLECT

O God, who chose Saint Patrick to bring the light of the Gospel to the people of Ireland, grant that we, like him, may listen attentively to your call, trust in your presence when the path is uncertain, and place the demands of your love above all comfort and security.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY: Sent with Nothing but Trust

There is a story of a man who spent years building a secure life for himself—carefully planned, well insured, and comfortably predictable. One day, a sudden illness changed everything. When he later reflected on that time, he said, “I thought security meant control. I discovered that real security is trust.”

The readings today speak directly to that truth. Jeremiah feels unqualified and afraid, yet God assures him, “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.” Paul and Barnabas face rejection, yet they continue to proclaim the Gospel with confidence. And in the Gospel, Jesus sends his disciples out with almost nothing—no spare supplies, no backup plans—only the promise that God will be at work ahead of them.

Saint Patrick lived this reality. He did not return to Ireland because it was easy or safe. He returned because God had captured his heart. Patrick trusted that the same God who had sustained him in captivity would be faithful in

mission. He understood that the Gospel does not advance through power or possessions, but through humble love and courageous trust.

Jesus tells his disciples not to rejoice in success, but that their names are written in heaven. The true joy of discipleship is not recognition or achievement, but belonging to God and participating in his saving work.

There is another story of an elderly priest who, after decades of ministry, was asked what advice he would give to younger priests. He answered simply, “Never forget that God was working long before you arrived—and he will continue long after you are gone.” That wisdom shaped his peace.

Saint Patrick lived with that peace. He trusted that God was already at work in the hearts of the people he served. Today, we are reminded that we are not called to control the mission, only to be faithful to it. When we place God’s priorities above our own, we discover a joy that cannot be taken away.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, the offerings we bring before you.
May these gifts express our desire
to place our lives at your service,
to trust you beyond our fears,
and to follow your Son with generous hearts,
as Saint Patrick once did. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

Trusting in the God who calls us by name
and provides all that we truly need,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil,
and graciously grant peace in our days,
that, freed from fear and selfishness,
we may serve you with generous hearts
and become instruments of your peace
in the world you love, as we await in joyful hope the
coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you sent your disciples ahead of you
to bring peace to every place they entered.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance
with your will. You live and reign for ever and ever Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
May this Eucharist strengthen us
to trust where we are sent
and to live the Gospel with courage and joy.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the Body and Blood of Christ,
we are reminded that we are sent—
into our homes, our communities,
and our world— to carry the love we have received.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Grant, O Lord, that the Sacrament we have received may renew us inwardly, strengthen us in faith, and guide us to follow your call with courage, humility, and joy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May he strengthen you when the way is uncertain.
May he fill you with the joy of the Gospel,
so that, like Saint Patrick, you may bring his love to all whom you meet. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Faith grows when we trust God enough to go where he sends us, carrying nothing but love.

Wednesday, 4th Week of Lent – 18 March 2026

Isaiah 49:8–15; John 5:17–30

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been lost in a busy, unfamiliar place? Perhaps a crowded train station, a marketplace, or even in the busyness of your own mind? A pastor once told the story of a young boy lost in a bustling train station. Frightened and unsure where to go, he called out for his mother, but the crowd seemed endless. A kind stranger noticed him, took his hand, and led him safely to a quiet corner until his mother arrived. The boy's fear was real, yet the love and care surrounding him were stronger than his fear.

Today, Lent invites us to “stop.” Stop the endless rushing, the distractions, the things we chase that do not satisfy. To stop also means to listen—to God, to one another, and to the deepest stirrings of our hearts.

In today's readings, we hear of a God who never forgets us, whose love is tender and personal, like a mother's care

for her child. Even when we feel lost, uncertain, or afraid, God is reaching out to guide us, calling us back to safety, life, and wholeness.

As we gather now, let us pause and bring our whole selves—our bodies, minds, and hearts—into this sacred space. Let us offer to God all the fears, distractions, and burdens we carry, asking for the courage to listen, the grace to trust, and the faith to follow Jesus' example. Just as the lost boy found safety in the hands of a stranger, we are invited to find life, hope, and peace in God's embrace. Let us now enter this celebration with open hearts, ready to encounter the God who loves us deeply, who calls us by name, and who desires life for us in abundance.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus Christ, you seek us when we are lost and call us to life in fullness. **Lord, have mercy.**

You invite us to listen and follow your Word, yet we often ignore your call. **Christ, have mercy.**

You offer us your tender, life-giving love, yet we fail to trust and surrender. **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God, who never forgets his children, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and lead us into the joy of his salvation. May we open our hearts to his tender care and allow his love to guide every thought, word, and action. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Merciful God, you reward the just and forgive the repentant. You never forget your children, even when we wander far from your ways. Teach us to trust in your tender love, to listen attentively to your Word, and to surrender our will to your care. May this Eucharist nourish our hearts so that, like your Son, we may act with compassion, bring hope to the lost, and live fully in your life-giving presence. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A pastor once told of a young boy who was lost in a busy train station. Frightened, he wandered among the crowds, calling out for his mother. A kind stranger saw him and, taking the boy's hand, led him to a safe place. Later, the boy's mother arrived, relieved beyond words. The boy's fear was real, but the love and care surrounding him were stronger still.

In today's readings, we see a God whose love is even more tender, more certain, than a mother's love for her child. Isaiah asks, *"Can a mother forget the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will never forget you."* God's love is not abstract; it is personal, intimate, and life-giving. God remembers each of us, even when we feel lost, even when we forget to turn to Him. This is the God Jesus reveals to us: not a distant judge, but a Father who wills life for every one of us.

Jesus' words in today's Gospel make this clear: *"I can do nothing on my own. I judge as I hear from the Father, and my judgment is just because I do not seek my own will but*

the will of the one who sent me." Everything Jesus does flows from God's love. Just as God cherishes us like a mother cherishes her child, Jesus acts to bring life, healing, and hope. His miracles, his compassion, even his willingness to lay down his life—these are all the fruits of perfect unity with the Father.

But there is a challenge here. Not everyone is ready to trust this love, to walk in the paths God sets before us. Yet Jesus shows us the way. When our will aligns with God's, life unfolds in new, unexpected ways. Listening to his words and allowing them to shape us makes us life-giving to others, just as he was and is. In living God's will, we become partners in the work of salvation, instruments of love and mercy in a world that can feel harsh and unforgiving.

Consider again the image of the returning child in Rembrandt's painting of the prodigal son: the father's embrace is both gentle and strong, protective and freeing. One hand shows tenderness, the other authority. This is the love of God—both motherly and fatherly, caring for us

fully, desiring life for us in abundance. Jesus invites us to step into this embrace, to trust that God's promises are not empty words but active, life-giving truths.

So, like the lost boy in the train station, we are never truly alone. God is always seeking us, leading us to safety, calling us home. Our task is to hear his voice, to follow Jesus' example, and to let his Word shape our lives so that, in turn, we bring life to those around us.

A young woman once shared how, in the midst of a personal crisis, she would whisper a simple prayer: *"Father, help me to want what you want."* Over time, she discovered that her fear lessened, her decisions became clearer, and her heart grew more peaceful. She was learning the profound truth Jesus lived: life in its fullness comes when our will is united with God's, when we trust in the one who will never forget us.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we present our gifts of bread and wine, let us also offer our hearts and lives to the Lord. These gifts are signs of our trust in God's love, our willingness to surrender, and

our desire to be instruments of his tender care. May we, strengthened at this altar, carry God's life-giving love to all whom we meet.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, accept these gifts, the fruits of our labor and the prayers of our hearts. Transform them into the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, so that we may be nourished with your love. Strengthen us to listen to your Word, to follow your will faithfully, and to bring healing, hope, and life to those who are lost, fearful, or in need. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God. For you never forget your children, even when we wander far from your ways. You call us to life in abundance, sending your Son, Jesus Christ, who reveals your mercy, heals the broken, and leads us into your saving embrace. Through him, and with

him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, forever and ever.

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

With hearts open to God's tender care, let us pray with confidence the prayer our Lord taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our hearts, so that, guided by your tender love, we may be free from sin, strengthened to do your will, and ready to share your mercy with others. We await with hope the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, you unite us in your love. Grant that we may live in peace, forgive one another as you have forgiven us, and bring reconciliation and hope to a world in need. Let your Spirit guide us so that our lives may reflect your tender, life-giving care. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, who never forgets his own and gives himself as our life.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In this moment, let us reflect: God's love seeks us even when we feel lost. This Eucharist reminds us that we are never truly alone. Like the child in the train station, we are held, guided, and embraced by God's tender care. Let us allow this love to shape our lives, to give life to others, and to bring hope where there is fear or despair.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord, you have fed us with the bread of life and renewed our spirits. Strengthen us to walk in your ways, listen attentively to your Word, and surrender our will to yours. May we carry your life-giving love to others and be a source of hope, healing, and peace in our world. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May God, who never forgets you and whose love is tender and life-giving, bless you and keep you.

May Christ, who unites his will with the Father, guide your steps and fill your hearts with peace.

May the Holy Spirit, who strengthens and renews, inspire you to bring life, hope, and mercy to all you meet. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

Thanks be to God.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Stop and listen. God's love is always seeking you, calling you by name, and leading you to life. Like the lost boy in the train station, trust that you are never alone—God is always guiding you home.

St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary – 19

March: *2 Sam 7:4-5, 12-14, 16; Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22; Mt 1:16, 18-24 or Lk 2:41-51*

INTRODUCTION

Let me begin with a story. In a small village in Italy, a young man discovered that his fiancée might have been unfaithful. His family urged him to expose her, to protect his honour. But he stayed silent. When asked why, he said, "If I speak, her heart will break. I'll take the pain myself." Years later, it turned out she had done nothing wrong. By acting quietly and mercifully, he protected another's dignity—and perhaps his own soul.

This story reminds us of Saint Joseph, the quiet, strong, and merciful man God chose to be Jesus' earthly father. Like that young man, Joseph faced moments of confusion, fear, and uncertainty. He confronted a reality that no one could have prepared for: his betrothed Mary, whom he loved and trusted, was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. Yet Joseph did not act in anger, fear, or pride. He

planned to “dismiss her quietly,” shielding her from shame and protecting the unfolding plan of God.

Today, as we celebrate his feast, let us open our hearts to learn from Joseph. He teaches us that true strength often looks like gentleness, that faith is shown in listening as much as in acting, and that obedience and trust in God can shape the course of history—even when no one notices. As we gather to worship, may we bring that same openness, humility, and trust into this Mass, offering ourselves to God with the quiet courage of Saint Joseph.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you became human for our salvation, walking among us in weakness and humility: Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are God’s love made human, showing mercy even to those who betray, abandon, or fear you: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the Savior of the poor, the suffering, and the overlooked, calling us to follow your example in our daily lives: Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

Almighty and merciful God, you chose Saint Joseph, a humble carpenter, to guard your Son and guide your Holy Family. Look upon us, your people, and forgive our failings: the pride that isolates us, the fear that paralyses us, the silence that prevents us from acting in love. Strengthen us with the quiet courage of Joseph, that we may protect, guide, and serve others without seeking reward. May your Spirit fill us with faith, hope, and steadfast obedience, so that we too may become instruments of your saving plan. Amen.

HOMILY: Joseph, the Hidden Strength of God’s Plan

Let me start with a story. In a small village in Italy, a young man discovered that his fiancée might have been unfaithful. His family urged him to expose her, to protect his honour. But he stayed silent. When asked why, he said, “If I speak, her heart will break. I’ll take the pain myself.” Years later, it turned out she had done nothing wrong. He had saved her reputation—and perhaps his own soul.

This story reminds us of Joseph, the quiet, strong, and merciful man God chose to be Jesus' earthly father.

Joseph was a carpenter, a man skilled in his trade, familiar with hard work, and yet, in his heart, he carried questions he could not answer. He faced a shock that no young man could have prepared for: his fiancée Mary, whom he deeply trusted and loved, was found to be with child. According to the law of the time, this was a crime punishable by death.

Yet Joseph did not act in anger or pride. Like that young man in Italy, he chose mercy. He planned to "dismiss her quietly," protecting her from public shame. This is the first lesson Joseph teaches us: true strength often looks like gentleness. God's power is not always loud; sometimes it is hidden in silence, restraint, and quiet protection.

Joseph's mercy foreshadows the mercy of Christ Himself: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The second lesson is Joseph's spiritual openness. When he did not understand, when fear and confusion surrounded him, he did not close himself off. He prayed, he

reflected, and God spoke to him in a dream: "Do not be afraid." Joseph listened. He trusted God, even when the path ahead was uncertain. In our lives, too, when things fall apart, we are invited to remain open to God's voice, even if we cannot see the full plan.

Finally, Joseph shows us obedience. When God told him to take Mary as his wife, he did so immediately. When he was told to flee to Egypt, he obeyed without hesitation. Every instruction he received, no matter how costly or inconvenient, he followed. His life was a model of quiet, faithful action. Mary saw this obedience every day, and later, at Cana, she would echo it in her own words: "Do whatever he tells you."

Joseph was not famous. He never spoke in the Scriptures, yet his life shaped salvation history. He reminds us that God often works through ordinary people who trust, listen, and obey.

I'll end with another story. A woman once told me how her father, in the middle of a personal tragedy, knelt quietly and prayed, whispering the psalms. She said, "He didn't

stop the world from hurting, but he taught me how to hold God in the midst of pain.” That is Joseph’s gift to us—he shows us that even in silence, in uncertainty, and in hidden struggles, God is with us.

Let us pray for the grace to walk with Joseph: to protect without boasting, to listen without fear, and to obey without hesitation. Like him, may we allow God to work through our lives, becoming instruments of His mercy and love.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we bring these gifts of bread and wine to the altar, let us offer them with hearts like Joseph’s: open to God’s voice, ready to obey, and humble in service. Let us pray that our lives, like these gifts, may be transformed by God’s mercy and become channels of love, protection, and hope to all we encounter.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look, O Lord, upon the gifts we offer, and grant that, as we honour Saint Joseph’s example of silent strength and trust,

we too may follow your will in our lives. May the bread we offer feed the hungry of heart, and the wine we offer strengthen the faint in spirit. Through these holy mysteries, may we learn to walk in faith, act in mercy, and obey in love, reflecting the life of your faithful servant Joseph. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Saint Joseph, guardian of your Son and protector of the Holy Family, we see the hidden ways your love and mercy work in the world. Though he lived in silence and humility, his heart was attentive to your Word, his hands ready to serve, and his life completely surrendered to your will. By his obedience, he became a model for all who follow Christ: trusting when the path is unclear, merciful when faced with fear or misunderstanding, and

courageous in carrying the burdens of others without seeking glory for himself.

Through Joseph, your plan of salvation unfolded quietly yet powerfully. He welcomed the mystery of the Incarnation with faith, guarded the Holy Family from harm, and walked with steadfast courage through dangers that threatened your Son. In his hidden life of love, he teaches us that true greatness is measured not by recognition, but by faithful service; that strength is often found in gentleness, and heroism in obedience to God's will.

And so, with angels and archangels, with thrones and dominions, and with all the hosts of heaven, we proclaim your glory, as we join their unending hymn of praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

Trusting in the loving care of our Father, guided by the example of Saint Joseph, let us turn to the God who hears and provides for all our needs, and boldly say:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, from all that would harm our souls and hearts. Grant us peace in our families, our communities, and our Church. As we follow your Son with courage and humility, and as Saint Joseph guarded Jesus and Mary with unwavering love, help us guard the gifts you have entrusted to us. Strengthen us in faith, patience, and mercy, and bring us safely to the fulfillment of your kingdom, where we will see the glory of your saving plan fully revealed.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you called your Apostles to peace, even in a world of fear and conflict. Look upon us and grant your peace: the peace of hearts surrendered to God, the peace of minds freed from worry, and the peace of lives offered in service to others. May Saint Joseph, who protected your Holy Family with courage and gentleness, intercede for us,

that our homes, our workplaces, and our communities may become places where mercy, trust, and love flourish.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to share in this sacred meal of love and mercy. Come, as Saint Joseph did, with hearts open to God's guidance, hands ready to serve, and souls yearning for grace.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

As we have received the Body and Blood of Christ, let us pause in the quiet of our hearts and reflect on Saint Joseph. Like him, we are called to be faithful in the hidden moments of life: in our work, in our care for family and neighbours, in small acts of mercy that may go unnoticed.

Joseph shows us that strength is often silent, courage is often patient, and obedience is often humble. In the bread and wine we have just received, Christ offers us the grace to walk this path: to protect without boasting, to serve

without recognition, to trust even when the way is uncertain. Let us carry this Eucharistic strength into our daily lives, so that our actions, no matter how hidden, may participate in God's saving plan.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Almighty God, we give you thanks for nourishing us with the Body and Blood of your Son. May the example of Saint Joseph inspire us to live lives of quiet courage and steadfast faith. Help us to follow your call faithfully, to trust your guidance in times of uncertainty, and to act with mercy and humility in all our relationships. Strengthen our hearts so that we may be instruments of your love and protection, guarding the vulnerable, lifting the downtrodden, and serving others in imitation of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May God, who chose Saint Joseph to protect the Holy Family, bless you with the quiet courage to face trials, the mercy to forgive, and the humility to serve. Amen.

May he help you to trust in God's plan, even when the way is unclear, and to act with gentleness and strength in all your relationships. Amen.

And may almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, guide your steps, guard your hearts, and remain with you always. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth, carrying the example of Saint Joseph in your hearts. Live with courage, serve with humility, and trust in God's guidance in every step you take.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Saint Joseph teaches us that true greatness is often hidden: in quiet obedience, in merciful protection, and in humble service. As you go from this place, look for the hidden opportunities to serve, to protect, and to trust God fully—even in the ordinary moments of your life.

Remember: even the smallest acts of faithfulness participate in God's saving plan.

Friday of the 4th week of Lent – 20.03.2026

Wis 2:1a, 12–22; Jn 7:1–2, 10, 25–30

INTRODUCTION

There is a quiet discomfort we feel when we encounter someone who is genuinely good. Not flawless in a theatrical way, but deeply authentic—kind without calculation, faithful without show, forgiving without keeping score. Such people unsettle us, not because they accuse us, but because their lives silently ask us whether we truly want to live by the values we admire.

A theatre director once said that villains are easy to portray on stage—evil is loud and obvious. Saints, however, are difficult. They look like everyone else. They speak gently. They do not force themselves upon us. Yet, somehow, their presence reveals the truth about us. This is why, throughout history, goodness has so often been mocked, resisted, or even destroyed.

Today's readings confront us with this uncomfortable truth. In the Book of Wisdom, the righteous one is targeted precisely because his life exposes the emptiness of others.

In the Gospel, Jesus is misunderstood, watched, and hunted—not because he has done wrong, but because he comes from God and speaks God's truth.

As we gather in this Eucharist, let us ask for the grace not only to recognize Christ, but also to stand with him—to remain faithful when goodness is questioned, kindness is ridiculed, and faith is treated as foolish. In this sacred celebration, may we discover again that God's love, though often resisted, is never defeated.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

Lord Jesus, you remained faithful even when you were misunderstood and rejected. **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you reveal the Father's love in a world that often resists the truth. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you call us to kindness, courage, and perseverance in faith. **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins, and lead us through the struggles of
this life to the joy of everlasting communion with him,
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Merciful and faithful God,
you know how easily we are discouraged
when truth is misunderstood
and goodness is opposed.
Strengthen us in this Lenten season
to remain faithful to your Son,
to trust in your saving work even in darkness,
and to bear quiet witness to your love
in a world that often resists it.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY: Faith in the Face of Hostility

A few years ago, a young man told me about his experience in a small town where faith was often ridiculed. He had volunteered to help at a local shelter and, when he mentioned that he did it out of his Christian belief, some people mocked him. They said, “Why do you bother? Religion doesn’t matter anymore.” He felt discouraged, even isolated, but he kept going. Over time, his consistent kindness and dedication changed people’s hearts, and some who had mocked him began to ask questions about his faith. His story reminds us that faith is not always easy or popular—it often challenges both ourselves and those around us.

This challenge is nothing new. The Book of Wisdom, written less than a century before Jesus’ birth, speaks of people plotting against the virtuous, saying, “*Let us condemn him to a shameful death.*” In John’s Gospel today, we see this same dynamic: the religious authorities are out to arrest Jesus. Ordinary people are uncertain, and

even those who think they know him—“We all know where he comes from”—don’t truly understand him. Jesus’ origin is not merely Nazareth; he comes from God, sent to reveal the Father. Those who oppose him fail to recognize the depth of his identity, just as we often fail to see the full reality of God at work in our lives.

The Book of Wisdom and the Gospel together point us toward hope. They tell us that, even when goodness is rejected or misunderstood, God’s glory will ultimately be revealed. Faith in God carries the promise of resurrection and eternal life—not a shadowy existence, but life in the fullness of God’s glory. When we encounter hostility, failure, or the limits of human endurance, we can trust that God is at work, opening our lives to new horizons. Jesus himself experienced rejection, yet he remained faithful to the mission for which he was sent. This gives us courage to persevere in our own callings, no matter how difficult the environment may be.

Faith is also a journey of discovery. We may feel that we know Jesus, but there is always more to learn. As Paul prays, may we come to “*know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.*” Jesus reveals God’s heart to us, yet our understanding remains partial. The adventure of faith invites us to keep seeking, to keep learning, and to keep trusting, even when answers seem distant or unclear.

I am reminded of a story from my childhood parish. A man I knew spent decades quietly helping the poor and praying for those who had wronged him. No one paid much attention, and some even criticized him. But near the end of his life, people he had touched in countless ways gathered to honour him, saying how deeply he had influenced them. His faithfulness had borne fruit in ways he never could have imagined—just as God’s promises will bear fruit in us, even when we cannot see it immediately.

Let us take heart from these readings. Whether facing opposition, misunderstanding, or our own doubts, we are called to remain faithful. Let us continue to seek Jesus, to

witness to his love, and to trust in the resurrection that gives ultimate meaning to our lives. In doing so, like the young man at the shelter and the quiet servant of my childhood parish, we become living witnesses to God's enduring faithfulness.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters,
that our sacrifice of faith and perseverance
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

God of steadfast love, receive these offerings
as signs of our desire to remain faithful
even when the path of goodness is costly.
May this sacrifice strengthen us
to follow your Son with courage and humility,
and to trust that your truth will prevail.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
For you sent your Son into a world
that did not fully recognize him,
and yet through rejection and suffering
he revealed the depth of your saving love.
When goodness was questioned
and truth was opposed, he remained faithful to your will,
showing us that love is stronger than fear
and life greater than death.
In him, you teach us that even when faith is mocked
and kindness misunderstood, your grace is at work,
quietly bringing forth fruits of hope and redemption.
Through his obedience, you open for us the path to
resurrection and the promise of life in your glory.
And so, with angels and saints, and with all who persevere
in faith, we proclaim your praise and sing:
Holy, Holy, Holy...

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

Behold Jesus, the One sent from the Father,
rejected by many, yet faithful unto the end.

In this Eucharist, he gives himself to us
as strength for the weary, courage for the faithful,
and hope for all who persevere in love
when goodness is misunderstood.

Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the
Lamb.

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from fear, discouragement, and doubt.

Graciously grant peace in our days,
that, supported by your mercy,
we may remain faithful in times of trial
and courageous in bearing witness to your truth,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you are our peace,
even when the world is divided by suspicion and fear.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her unity and peace,
that she may stand firm in love and truth,
in accordance with your will.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, who remained faithful even unto
death, who takes away the sins of the world.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In this Eucharist, we have received the One
who was misunderstood, rejected, and yet never turned
away from love. May his presence within us
give us courage to remain faithful, gentle in kindness,
and steadfast in hope, even when the path of goodness is
costly.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

God of enduring faithfulness,
you have nourished us with the Bread of Life.
Strengthen us through this sacrament
to remain close to your Son, to trust in your saving work,
and to live as witnesses of hope
in a world that longs for your truth.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the God of truth and compassion
strengthen you when faith is tested,
encourage you when goodness is questioned,
and fill you with hope
in the promise of resurrection.

And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth in peace,
to remain faithful to Christ
and to bear witness to his love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Goodness may be misunderstood, but it is never wasted.
When faith is lived quietly and faithfully,
God is already at work—
often in ways we will only recognize much later.

Saturday of the 4th Week of Lent – 21.03.2026

Jeremiah 11:18–20; John 7:40–53

INTRODUCTION

Most of us know how easily opinions are formed. A single comment, a rumour, or a first impression can shape how we see someone for years. There is a story of a traveller who arrived late in a village and was immediately suspected of wrongdoing—simply because no one recognized him. Only later did the villagers discover that he had come to help them. By then, the damage of judgment had already been done.

In today's readings, we encounter this very human tendency. The prophet Jeremiah is targeted not because his message is false, but because it is uncomfortable. Jesus, too, is judged and rejected—not after careful listening, but because of where he comes from and because he does not fit expected patterns. “Can anything good come out of Galilee?” they ask. Fear, prejudice, and pride close hearts before truth is given a chance.

Yet today's Gospel also offers us hope in the figure of Nicodemus. He reminds us that faith often begins with a simple, courageous question: *Have we truly listened?* He invites us to slow down, to resist the pressure of the crowd, and to allow truth to speak for itself.

As we gather for this Eucharist during Lent, the Lord invites us to examine our own hearts. Where have we judged too quickly? Whom have we dismissed without listening? And have we sometimes done the same with God—deciding who Jesus is before truly giving him a hearing?

Let us now place ourselves humbly before the Lord, asking him to soften our hearts, to forgive our hurried judgments, and to open us anew to his living Word and healing mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you invite us to seek truth with open hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you forgive us when fear closes us to your voice. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you give us courage to stand for what is right.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who is rich in mercy and slow to anger, forgive us our sins, heal our hardened judgments, and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Merciful God, turn our hearts to you;
for without your help, we cannot please you.

Teach us to seek truth with humility
and to listen before we judge.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A few years ago, a young woman started a small community project in her town. Everyone told her it would never work. “Who will even come?” they asked. “You’re too inexperienced,” they said. Yet she persisted, quietly, patiently, inviting people one by one. Over time, what started as a handful of neighbours grew into a thriving

community hub. She didn’t argue with the sceptics; she simply gave the project a chance to prove itself.

In today’s readings, we encounter a very similar story, though on a far greater scale. Jeremiah, the prophet, and Jesus Christ both stood as challenges to the leaders of their times. Their message of truth was clear, yet reason alone could not sway the hearts of those in power. They were dismissed, misunderstood, even treated unjustly. The leaders judged quickly, holding on to prejudice rather than seeking understanding.

In our Gospel, we see this played out in the figure of Nicodemus. As a Pharisee and a respected teacher of the law, he could have followed the consensus of his peers, who mocked and rejected Jesus simply because of where he came from—“Prophets do not come out of Galilee.” But Nicodemus did not allow himself to be limited by the narrow thinking around him. He insisted that Jesus be given a hearing, that truth be sought with patience and an open heart.

This is the key distinction: understanding with the mind alone is not enough. The Pharisees relied on law, rules, and social expectation. Their hearts were closed to the light Jesus offered. Nicodemus, however, represents the courage to seek the truth with both mind and heart. He comes to Jesus secretly by night, yet he grows bolder, eventually standing up to his peers. His journey reminds us that faith is often a gradual process, sometimes tentative, sometimes costly, but always deeply personal.

The temptation to prejudge someone—or something—is not limited to biblical times. How often do we dismiss people or ideas before we truly listen? “Can anything good come out of...?” we ask, inserting our own modern “Nazareths” into the question. Yet Jesus offers each of us the chance to discover what is truly good, what is true, if only we give him a hearing. He approaches us with patience and love, helping the good within us to flourish, just as he did for Nicodemus.

Being a follower of Jesus can sometimes be lonely. Peer pressure, societal expectations, even family opinions can

challenge our faith. Nicodemus shows us that integrity and courage are required to pursue the truth, even when it isolates us. And yet, as the psalm reminds us, “God is the shield that protects me.” We are never truly alone when we follow the path of truth and love.

So let us take inspiration from the small stories of courage around us, from the persistence of young women in our towns to the quiet bravery of Nicodemus. Let us approach Jesus not just with our minds, but with open hearts, listening and trusting him, even when the world tells us otherwise.

A story to end: A child once planted a tiny seed in a cracked pot, unsure if anything would grow. Weeks later, a single green shoot appeared, breaking through the soil. It seemed impossible, yet life had found a way. In the same way, when we give Jesus a hearing, when we open our hearts despite doubt or fear, new life can emerge in us, in ways we could never have imagined.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we place these gifts upon the altar,
let us ask the Lord to accept not only bread and wine,
but also our desire to listen more deeply,
to judge less quickly,
and to follow Christ with courage and integrity.
Let us pray to God, the Father almighty

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May these offerings, O Lord,
cleanse us from our sins
and shape our hearts according to your truth,
so that, freed from fear and prejudice,
we may follow your Son more faithfully.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you call us during this Lenten season
to purify our hearts,
to break free from narrow judgments,
and to open ourselves to the light of your truth.
In your Son, Jesus Christ,
you teach us that truth is not imposed by power
but revealed to humble and listening hearts.

Through him the rejected are lifted up,
the misunderstood are defended,
and those who seek sincerely are led into deeper faith.
And so, with angels and archangels
and all the hosts of heaven, we proclaim your glory,
as without end we acclaim: **Holy, Holy, Holy...**

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

Jesus taught us to trust the Father
even when we walk through misunderstanding and fear.
With hearts open to his mercy, let us pray with confidence:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
especially from fear that closes our hearts
and judgments that divide your people.
Graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free
from sin and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our
Savior, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you stood firm in truth
and offered peace even to those who rejected you.
Look not on our judgments and fears, but on the faith of
your Church, and graciously grant her unity and peace
in accordance with your will.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who give him a hearing,
who open their hearts to his truth,
and are called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

In this Eucharist,
we have not only heard Christ—we have received him.
May his presence within us soften what is hardened,
heal what is fearful, and give us courage to stand for truth,
even when it costs us something.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

May this sacrament, O Lord, strengthen us in faith,
teach us patience in seeking truth, and help us to follow
your Son with open hearts and renewed courage.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May God, who opens hearts to truth
and strengthens those who seek what is right,
bless you with courage, humility, and peace. Amen.

May Christ, who was misunderstood yet faithful,
walk beside you in every trial. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit
guide your hearts into deeper listening and trust. Amen.

And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go forth in peace, listening before judging,
and bearing witness to the truth of Christ.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Before you judge, listen.

Before you dismiss, give space.

Before you decide, invite Christ into your heart—
for truth grows best where hearts remain open.