



Third Sunday of Lent March 7, 2021

I, the LORD,
am your God...
You shall not have other
gods besides me.

— Exodus 20:2a, 3

TOTAL ALLEGIANCE

In previous weeks we have seen how the theme of covenant—as a preparation for the baptismal covenant celebrated at Easter—occupies an important place in our cycle of Lenten readings. The notion of covenant as a relationship between two parties carries with it an expectation of mutual accountability and fidelity to the terms of the covenant. When God forged the covenant with the Jewish people on Mt. Sinai, it was a pledge of God's protection, and it would forever permit them familiar access as the Chosen People. For their part, the Jewish people were to observe the dictates of the law, summarized most succinctly here in the form of the Ten Commandments. To be in a covenantal relationship with the Lord God requires an exclusive relationship, just as discipleship with Jesus—ritualized in baptism—demands a total allegiance to him and none other. —J. S. Paluch Co.

FEAST OF FAITH

Postures of the Mass

In the Mass, we pray not only with our lips, but with our bodies as well. We stand when the ministers enter. In Western culture, standing is a sign of attention, a mark of respect: all stand when the judge enters the courtroom, for example. Standing is also an ancient posture of prayer, mentioned frequently in the Old Testament. When the readings begin, we sit down: a listening posture. Mary sat at Jesus' feet to listen to his teaching; the crowds sat on the hillside or the seashore to hear his words. Kneeling is another posture that is full of meaning. It expresses adoration and worship, but it can also express humility and contrition. We bow: a sign of honor and reverence, acknowledging the presence of God, especially when we receive the Eucharist. And there are other ritual gestures as well—striking the breast, genuflecting, and of course making the sign of the cross. The liturgy invites us to pray with our whole person—with heart and mind, voice and body.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

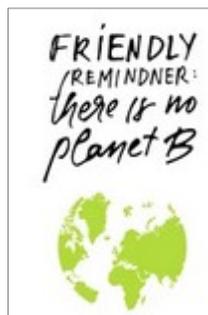
READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 2 Kgs 5:1-15b; Ps 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4; Lk 4:24-30
Tuesday: Dn 3:25, 34-43; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6-7bc, 8-9; Mt. 18:21-35
Wednesday: Dt 4:1, 5-9; Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20; Mt 5:17-19
Thursday: Jer 7:23-28; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; Lk 11:14-23
Friday: Hos 14:2-10; Ps 81:6c-11ab, 14, 17; Mk 12:28-34
Saturday: Hos 6:1-6; Ps 51:3-4, 18-21ab; Lk 18:9-14
Sunday: 2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23; Ps 137:1-6; Eph 2:4-10; Jn 3:14-21

REMINDERS

People more frequently require
to be reminded
than informed.

—Samuel Johnson



WEEKLY



Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated! For the month of **February** offerings:

PLEASE mail to St. Philip/St. Teresa Parish, P. O. Box 339, Occidental CA 95465. Or donate at our website www.stphilipstteresa.org via Paypal or card. Include your offering envelope # with your donation.

February, as of 2/14: 1st coll: \$1296 and \$1197. Add' Op Exp: \$445.

3/7: Operating Expenses. 3/14: CATH RELIEF SER/CAMP HUMAN DEV.

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA Zoom

Finance Council [FC]: TBA Zoom

Liturgy Committee: TBA Zoom

St. Teresa Ladies Guild: Contact Diane, 823-6044

St. Philip Ladies Guild: Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

Centering Prayer ZOOM: Tues. noon/Fri. 9:30am - info www.stphilipstteresa.org

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

3/07 Sun. 8am Mass for the People

3/07 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Brendan Smith

3/14 Sun. 8am Mass for Diana Laczkowski

3/14 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Brendan Smith

Prayer Requests: Leave a message at 707-408-2650.

Teresa K., Pat K., Thomas T., Susan B., Lorri McC., Sarah, Clifford J., Terri A., Fred P., Theresa S., Sara, Mary Anne P., Barbara, Dave C., Jim P., William, Parson P., Dave, Mary O., Bill Z., Daniel, Sally T., Michael D., Richard M., Kathleen, Peter, Rosa S., Susan B., Joyce D., Anita C., George H., Mimi H, Steve, Barry, Lorrin K., Hugh P., Robert S., Britney N., Jacque W., Rebecca A., April K., Jacinta G., Leo A., Ed C. family, Kathy R., Donna W., Jim K., Sherry S., Papke family., Gail F., Marie N., Christine, James, Lynn, Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N., Diane K., Diana Laczkowski

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: Third Sunday of Lent; First Scrutiny

Monday: St. John of God

Tuesday: St. Frances of Rome

Friday: Abstinence

Pastor's Memo...

1. "Way of the Cross" is one of the most important devotions in Lent. While all our parishioners are exhorted to do this devotion at home individually or as a family, you may make use of this [link](#) on our parish website for the recorded one last Lent. Since we have Mass at 9AM every Wednesday inside St Philip's, we will have this devotion after that Mass, around 9:20AM, during the remaining part of this Lent.

2. Bishop Robert F. Vasa in his Bulletin this week exhorts us to make a Novena to St. Joseph from March 10 through 18. For special prayers and other resources, please go to:

<http://www.usccb.org>

3. March 19, 2021: Solemnity of St. Joseph: Mass at 9 am in St. Philip the Apostle Church

SUNDAY MASSES:

Times & Zoom information can be found at our parish website ---- www.stphilipstteresa.org



Detail of *Saint Teresa of Jesus Writing* by Antonio Palomino (Wikimedia)

Deacon-structing St. Teresa's Stages of Prayer, Part 2

by [Deacon Pedro](#)

[Last week](#), we learned a bit about one of the Doctors of the Church, St. Teresa of Avila, and what she has to say about prayer. I explained how I related to her four stages of prayer in my own prayer life. I hope that it made sense to you, too.

I first heard about St. Teresa's stages of prayer during a class with Discalced Carmelite [Fr. Dominic Borg, OCD](#). Fr. Dominic described St. Teresa of Avila as an excellent mentor in the experience of God – not just to pray but to "become a prayer". I don't think I understood that until I read St. Teresa herself.

In a way, the deepening of the union is exactly that: to become a prayer – and that's the call to holiness!

Fr. Dominic reminded us that after the prophet Elijah was sent fleeing by Queen Jezebel, he fell asleep (1 King 19:5). Whenever we encounter sleep in the Bible, it signifies change (think of Jacob in Genesis 28 and St. Joseph in Matthew 1 and 2). After Elijah's sleep, he found God in the silence (1 Kings 19: 9-18). Fr. Dominic suggested that this "silence" is the silence that we should work towards while praying: a silencing of the mind, memory, and understanding. Elijah's rebellion had built a "mountain" between himself and God, but God blew in the wind and blew that mountain down. God came in the earthquake and destroyed Elijah's ideologies (which were getting in the way), and God was also in the fire that came and melted everything, including Elijah's heart of stone. Then, only then, was Elijah able to find God in the silence. And so, we must also silence all those things that get in the way: our expectations, our rebellion, our will, our pride. Once we are able to set all things aside, to truly die to ourselves, God can meet us and water the garden without us getting in the way.

Easier said than done.

It's also interesting that in that story from 1 Kings, Elijah says that God wasn't in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire. Was God not there, or was it that Elijah just couldn't see Him? Fr. Dominic proposed that God was there. Perhaps this is the experience we sometimes have in the first of St. Teresa's stages of prayer: We feel that we have to work at it, but really we just need to let go. God is there.

According to St. Teresa, there are three elements necessary for prayer: humility, love of neighbour, and detachment. We can't just rest in God's arms all the time. We must work at charity and loving our neighbour. Humility is also necessary so we can get ourselves out of the way in order to find detachment.

Being detached means being separate, which is the meaning of the word "holy".

Fr. Dominic explained to us that the Carmelite mission is to bring heaven to earth – it's an inward journey. This is what I understand

the four stages of prayer to be: an inward journey. And if in the fourth stage one is in complete union with God, that *is* heaven on earth! I'll never forget this beautiful quote that Fr. Dominic shared: *"The saints are not in Heaven; Heaven is in the saints."*

As I already mentioned last week, I don't think I've ever passed far beyond the first stage of prayer, or at least this is where I spend most of my prayer time. If I am generous with myself, I can see that perhaps I have had glimpses of the second stage, where I lose some consciousness of having to "do" and it seems as though the prayer is coming out of me without much effort. This happens to me most during Morning and Evening Prayer with the intentions. I am most distracted during the Psalms and Canticles, but something happens when I open myself up to those petitions that are deepest in my heart: I find that I am praying without thinking and without effort, but this happens so briefly, it is hardly the second stage. (Perhaps it means that I am called to be a prayerer of other people's intentions?) I have been in situations of, perhaps, a deeper stage of union or a longer period in the second stage, where I feel complete rest or complete surrender (complete for a beginner). As I mentioned last week, this has only happened during Charismatic conferences or retreats, sometimes at Mass, and in times of deep sorrow or need.

If you struggle with prayer, you are not alone. You may find it a struggle to engage in spiritual reading. My struggle with St. Teresa was that, while I enjoyed her casual writing style, I also found it a bit scattered and distracted, and so it was hard to follow the through-line of her explanations. I am also not sure that these stages describe my prayer journey perfectly. I understand the quest for a deeper union with God – that's what I try to live for – but I don't think I am called to be a mystic and wonder if these stages would apply to a non-mystic. But that doesn't mean that I didn't benefit from reading her. I learned that I have to stop working so hard at prayer and simply be. Prayer is not something that we do; rather, it is a relationship.

God is the doer, and I have to let Him do and be. I have to work at surrender.

If you do struggle, stick with it. Remember that spiritual reading is not an exercise; it is prayer itself. If it means that if you are not intellectually retaining what you are reading (or listening to, if you choose an audio book) or you fall asleep, don't let that bother you. Trust that God will speak to you through the writings of these holy men and women just as much as He speaks to us through Scripture.

Fr. Dominic Borg told us that when we open our hearts, we are ready to receive this gift of contemplation that God wants to give us. He also told us that every Christian needs to be a mystic or s/he is nothing. As I just said, I don't know if I can be a mystic, but I *can* open my heart to receive the gift of contemplation. We have to take off our sandals because *"this is holy ground"* (Exodus 3:5); taking off sandals is death – putting them on again is resurrection. I am realizing as I write this that deacon-structing St. Teresa has helped us deacon-struct contemplation a little bit. How can we be more contemplative? How can this Lenten Season be a time for more contemplation?

One thing I suggest, which I started doing myself many years ago, is setting a place and time aside for prayer (for those of you tuning in to our new Lenten series for kids, [Yes, Lord!](#), you'll know that this is the activity for the first week of Lent). I've always enjoyed a life where prayer and living is fluid. I mean that prayer doesn't have to be structured and that any activity or work can be prayer and I don't have to set aside time: I can pray anywhere and in doing anything. But I've learned that setting time aside is extremely

beneficial. So find a place and a time for your daily prayer and stick to it.

I've also learned that it's not wrong to expect something out of prayer. If we long for a deeper union with God in this life (as we move to a complete union with Him in Heaven), then it's perfectly OK to hope and strive for that, and to expect it as well.

Come back next week, and I'll share a bit more about spiritual reading that I learned from my mother. As you pursue your search for good spiritual reading, you may want to check out [The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism](#), edited by Bernard McGinn.



Every week, Deacon Pedro takes a particular topic apart, not so much to explore or explain the subject to its fullness, but rather to provide insights that will deepen our understanding of the subject. And don't worry, at the end of the day he always puts the pieces back together.

How can I become an ecumenist?

By [Nicholas Jesson](#)



Sometimes people ask me, "How did you become an ecumenist?" I try to answer their curiosity with some honesty, but like most people, my own vocational path was only apparent looking back. Once in a while, someone asks, "How can I become an ecumenist?" The simple answer is that all Christians are called to work for the unity of Christ's church, so becoming an ecumenist is as simple as saying "Amen" to God's call. Becoming an ecumenist does not require extensive education or credentials. It doesn't require ordination or commissioning in a particular ministry. To be an ecumenist is to pray and work for the unity that Christ wills in his church.

While it is the vocation of every baptized Christian to work for the unity of the church, some have a particular call to ecumenical ministry. In a recent document from Rome entitled [The Bishop and Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum](#), we are reminded, "As shepherd of the flock the bishop has the distinct responsibility of gathering all into unity." Vatican II taught us that the bishop is "the visible principle and foundation of unity" within the local church. It is not just that the bishop has been charged with this task, but that in every part of his ministry – teaching the faith, sacramental ministry, and pastoral care – he is to build and strengthen that unity for which Jesus prayed at the Last Supper. For this reason, the [Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity](#) has developed this latest text for bishops. The Latin word "vademecum" is literally translated as "go with me". A vademecum is a handbook or guide constantly kept at hand for consultation. It is hoped that bishops throughout the world will have this little handbook close, if not in their pocket, perhaps on their desk.

This short handbook is just 51 pages but is rich with essential principles and practices of Catholic ecumenism. In just a few pages, the Introduction summarizes the key theological principles that orient the church's ecumenical ministry. The search for unity is intrinsic to the church's own nature; we share a real but incomplete communion with those who believe in Christ and are baptized; Christian unity is the concern of the whole church; the bishop is the "visible principle" of unity. These principles are all found in [Vatican II](#), the 1995 encyclical [Ut Unum Sint](#) (UUS), or the 1993 [Ecumenical Directory](#). Though it doesn't have the formal authority of any of these earlier documents, and despite its brevity, this handbook has a maturity that comes from decades of theological dialogue and engagement with every Christian tradition. The Vademecum offers an authority rooted in the experience of lived ecumenism. In the first part of the document, the Vademecum outlines the ecumenical structures within the local church, updated from the earlier Ecumenical Directory to reflect the experience of local dioceses and eparchies. Focusing on the bishop's role, the Vademecum encourages the appointment of an ecumenical officer to be "a close collaborator" with the bishop in ecumenical matters and a point of contact with other Christian communities. A diocesan commission assists the bishop in implementing the ecumenical teaching of the church. Ecumenical

formation of all the faithful – laity, seminarians, and clergy – is a vital task of the bishop, ecumenical officer, and ecumenical commission. The goal of formation is that the people of the diocese "are properly disposed for engagement with other Christians". The use of media and diocesan websites for the promotion of Christian unity is also addressed. "The Catholic presence through the media should demonstrate that Catholics esteem their Christian brothers and sisters and are a people open to listening and learning from them."

In what is perhaps the richest part of the document, spiritual ecumenism and the three dialogues of love, truth, and life are presented under the broad rubric of "the Catholic Church's relations with other Christians". Here, in addition to prayer for unity and for one another, we are reminded of the Vatican Council's admonition that scripture is "an instrument of the highest value for the attainment of ... unity" ([Unitatis Redintegratio](#) 21). As spiritual ecumenism, the document discusses sharing with other Christians in similar lectionary cycles, liturgical feasts and seasons, "the ecumenism of the saints and of the martyrs", and consecrated life – particularly new communities and ecclesial movements that have a charism for ecumenical hospitality, prayer for unity, and the exchange of gifts. A few paragraphs in section 24 on the "healing of memories" captures the challenge of "a healing of historical memories, a mutual forgiveness, and a firm commitment to strive for communion" (UUS 52). As the 2013 Lutheran-Roman Catholic report [From Conflict to Communion](#) expressed it, "What happened in the past cannot be changed, but what is remembered of the past and how it is remembered can, with the passage of time, indeed change."

The three dialogues of love, truth, and life are commonly found in Catholic ecumenical texts. In their 2014 text [A Church in Dialogue: Towards the Restoration of Unity among Christians](#), Canada's bishops wrote, "As we continue to grow as brothers and sisters in Christ, called to full unity, we are summoned to commit ourselves to grow together in love, to seek the truth together, and to share together in Christian life and witness."

Awareness of a real though incomplete communion compels us to engage other Christians in a culture of encounter at various levels. In love for the truly Christian endowments of our brothers and sisters, we initiate exchanges, visits, and meetings that, by word and gesture, show our love for the other. "How very good and pleasant it is when brothers [and sisters] live together in unity" (Ps. 133:1). The dialogue of truth includes theological dialogue at local, national, and international levels but is essentially an exchange of gifts. Through ecumenical dialogue, each partner contributes from its own gifts to the whole church. As Pope Francis has said:

"It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift to us." ([EG](#) 246)

The dialogue of life embraces all of the practical aspects of life together, including working together to address local pastoral needs, sharing in ministry and resources, working together in mission and catechesis, pastoral care of interchurch marriages, cooperation in service to the world, joint witness, and interreligious dialogue.

Canon 844, n.4 states that either in danger of death or if there is a "grave necessity", Catholic ministers can administer the sacraments to other Christians "who seek such on their own accord, provided they manifest Catholic faith in respect to these sacraments and are properly disposed." It should be noted here that bishops and priests consistently report frustrations when canon 844 is understood in legalistic rather than pastoral terms. Though the Vademecum cannot change canon 844, the document does move the needle incrementally. The Vademecum stresses that the "judgement about what constitutes a 'grave necessity' ... is always a pastoral discernment, that is, it concerns the care and the salvation of souls."

How can I become an ecumenist? Though addressed to the particular context and needs of Catholic bishops, the Vademecum offers helpful advice and pastoral orientations for everyone seeking to respond to the baptismal call to pray and work for Christian unity.

Nicholas Jesson is the ecumenical officer for the Archdiocese of Regina, former ecumenical officer for the Diocese of Saskatoon, and former executive director of the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism. He is a member of the Roman Catholic-United Church of Canada Dialogue, editor of the Canadian Council of Churches' Margaret O'Gara Ecumenical Dialogues Collection, and editor of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue archive [IARCCUM.org](#).

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for FEBRUARY 2021

We distributed food to 53 families totaling 60 adults, 23 seniors and 19 children.

As we plan for and adjust to distribution outside in inclement weather, we have decided to adjust our set-up and distribution times slightly. **Please note the changes below.**

We are so thankful for the support provided to make this program flourish.

This program is funded through the Rural Food Collection each month, private donations, and awesome volunteers. **Thank you for your generous donations as we strive to meet the nutritional needs of all attendees at our food distributions.**

RURAL FOOD VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES in the Parish Hall

Saturday, March 6, 9:00am --10:00am repackaging;

Monday, March 8, 9:00am – 11:00am set up;

Tuesday, March 9, 8:00am – 11:00am distribute food to clients.

March 2021—Prayers for Priests Calendar

A project of the Santa Rosa Diocesan Council of Catholic Women

Join daily by saying at least one prayer for the Priest of the day.

Loving Father, bless our Priests and let the Radiance of your love embrace Father

Prayer for Vocations: O Lord, our God, with love and care you provided companions to the apostles to assist them in teaching and proclaiming that you are with us. Grant to us, your servants here in the Diocese of Santa Rosa, priests to do your work, for our need is great.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 <i>Pope Francis</i>	2 <i>Pope Benedict XVI Emeritus</i>	3 <i>Most Rev. Robert Vasa Bishop</i>	4 <i>Rev. Denis O'Sullivan Retired</i>	5 <i>Rev. Andrew Pacheco St. Vincent de Paul Church Petaluma</i>	6 <i>Rev. Luis Peñalosa St. Elizabeth Church Guerneville</i>
7 <i>Rev. Angelito Peries Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church</i>	8 <i>Rev. Michaelraj Philominsamy St. Rose of Lima Church Santa Rosa</i>	9 <i>Rev. John Plass St. Joseph Church Cotati</i>	10 <i>Rev. Ramon Pons Venura, CA</i>	11 <i>Rev. Msgr. James Pulskamp Star of the Valley Church Santa Rosa</i>	12 <i>Rev. JoJo Puthussery, MF St. Leo the Great Church Boyes Hot Springs</i>	13 <i>Rev. Andres Querijero Our Lady of Good Counsel Church Fort Bragg</i>
14 <i>Rev. Edilberto Ramon St. Joseph Church Fortuna</i>	15 <i>Rev. Ray Rioux Las Vegas, NV</i>	16 <i>Rev. Daniel Roa St. Joan of Arc Church Yountville</i>	17 <i>Rev. Sean Rogers St. John the Baptist Church Healdsburg</i>	18 <i>Rev. Ron Serban Holy Spirit Church Santa Rosa</i>	19 <i>Rev. Patrick Stephenson Retired</i>	20 <i>Rev. Thomas Stuart Cathedral of St. Eugene Santa Rosa</i>
21 <i>Rev. Gary Sumpter Retired</i>	22 <i>Rev. Peter Talcott Retired</i>	23 <i>Rev. Peter Reddy (Rayapu Thirumalareddy) St. Mary of the Angels Ukiah</i>	24 <i>Rev. Robert Torczynski, O.Cart. St. Anthony Church Mendocino</i>	25 <i>Rev. Mario Valencia St. Sebastian Church Sebastopol</i>	26 <i>Rev. Gregory Villaescusa St. Joseph Church Crescent City</i>	27 <i>Rev. Alvin Villaruel St. Francis Solano Church Sonoma</i>
28 <i>Most Rev. Daniel Walsh Retired</i>	29 <i>Rev. Msgr. Daniel Whalton Retired</i>	30 <i>Rev. Mathew Williams, OCD Carmelite Monastery, Oakville</i>	31 <i>Rev. James Zakowicz, OCD Carmelite Monastery, Oakville</i>			