

## SUNDAY MASS

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

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

**FIRST READING:** Jeremiah 31:31-34.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Psalm 51.

### RESPONSE:

Create a pure heart for me, O God.

1. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your merciful love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me completely from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. **R**
2. Create a pure heart for me, O God; renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence; take not your holy spirit from me. **R**
3. Restore in me the joy of your salvation; sustain in me a willing spirit. I will teach transgressors your ways, that sinners may return to you. **R**

**SECOND READING:** Hebrews 5:7-9.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

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

**GOSPEL:** John 12:20-33.

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

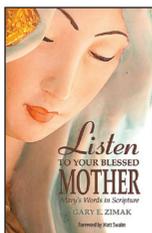
Amen, Amen I say to you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single grain. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Books from Redemptorist Pastoral Publications

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is recorded minimally in Scripture. Yet her words are filled with significance and rich meaning that can easily be misunderstood or misinterpreted by untrained hearers.

Gary Zimak explores both the spoken and unspoken words that Mary is recorded to have said and acted upon in the gospel narratives. The Word of God reaps manifold fruits in those who hear. Are we able to listen and understand the words of Mary in Scripture with open hearts?

Our Lady is a woman of few words, but when pondering with our hearts, we begin to understand that wisdom often begins in silence.



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## THE WEEK AHEAD

# Live the Word

### Mon 22 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Daniel 13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62; Psalm 23; John 8:1-11  
The story of the woman caught in adultery is one of the most familiar in the Gospels, but unfortunately its lesson is so easily forgotten when it comes to conversations around crime and capital punishment.

### Tue 23 Mar (St Turibius of Mogrovejo, B)

Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 102; John 8:21-30  
God invites us to say with confidence what Jesus said in today's gospel: "The one who sent me... has not left me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to him." It is an invitation to live your life in selfless love.

### Wed 24 Mar (St Oscar Romero, BM)

Daniel 3:14-29,91-92,95; Daniel 3:52-56; John 8:31-42  
God gives each of us free will, the freedom to choose right or wrong. But sin never makes us free. It makes us beholden to our passions and enslaves us in selfishness. How do free people choose? How do you choose?

### Thu 25 Mar ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Psalm 40; Luke 1:26-38  
Today, with Mary, we ask, "How can this be?" Who are we that God loves us – all of us – so much? Ponder today the greatness and wonder of God's incredible and unconditional love.

### Fri 26 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Jeremiah 20:10-13; Psalm 18; John 10:31-42  
Listening demands our full attention. Do we really listen to someone with a different point of view to us, to try and gain a better understanding? Or are we too busy picking up 'stones' to hurl at them?

### Sat 27 Mar Liturgy of the Day

Ezekiel 37:21-28; Jeremiah 31:10-13; John 11:45-56  
Violence is never a solution to anything. It only begets and creates a spiral of violence. Through prayer and non-violent action may God's dream of peace in our world and in our hearts become a reality.

### Sun 28 Mar PALM SUNDAY

Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 22; Mark 14:1-15:47  
Jesus empties himself, lets go, and surrenders. He lets go of the privileges of his divinity and embraces our humanity. *Suffering Jesus, may I accompany you this week as you hand your life over in love.*

(KEY: **SOLEMNITY**; **FEAST**; **Memorial**; (Optional **Memorial**)  
(**B**=Bishop; **M**=Martyr)

# Catholic Link

## LITURGY AND LENT

5th Sunday of Lent • Year B  
Divine Office: Week I • 21 March 2021



## Lamb of God

Agnus Dei  
c. 1635-1640,  
by Francisco  
de Zurbarán,  
Prado Museum

The "Agnus Dei" or "Lamb of God" litany-like prayer which we recite just before Communion takes its inspiration from John the Baptist's description of Jesus as "lamb of God" (John 1:29 and John 1:36). For the Baptist, Jesus is the perfect and ultimate sacrifice for sin. To understand what this means, we must turn to the Old Testament as John the Baptist himself did. Isaiah 53:10 prophesies the coming of the Messiah as a "guilt offering". The whole sacrificial system in the Old Testament set the stage for the coming of Jesus Christ who is the "perfect sacrifice" to atone for the sins of His people (see Romans 8 and Hebrews 10).

The sacrifice of lambs played an important role in Jewish religious life. Jews hearing John the Baptist referring to Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" would have immediately understood. They would have related this description to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, the ritual of the most important Jewish annual festival which is a celebration in remembrance of God's deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. The slaying of the Passover lamb and applying its blood to doorposts of the houses in Exodus 12:11-13 is a "type" (technical term in the Bible for anticipation) of Christ's atoning work on the cross. Those for whom He died are covered by His blood protecting us from the angel of death – the death of sin.

The Letter to the Hebrews also mentions the daily sacrifice of lambs at the temple in

Jerusalem. Every morning and evening, a lamb was sacrificed for the sins of the people (Exodus 29:38-42). But as the Letter to the Hebrews makes clear, these daily sacrifices are no longer relevant or necessary in view of "the one perfect sacrifice" (Hebrews 10:14), once and for all, of Jesus Christ. He is the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah who foretold the coming of One who would be brought "like a lamb led to the slaughter" (Jeremiah 11:19; Isaiah 53:7) and whose sufferings and sacrifice would provide redemption for Israel.

The idea of a sacrificial system might seem strange to us today. Yes, we know that sin separates us from God. We know that we stand guilty before God. But God himself provides a way for us to be reconciled to Him: by sending his Son, Jesus Christ, to make atonement for our sin. Through his death on the cross as God's perfect sacrifice for sin, and his resurrection three days later, we can now have eternal life if we believe in Him. 1 Peter 1:18-19 puts it this way: "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

Let us pray with certainty and conviction: *Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us!* And may we look and listen with faith as the celebrant raises the Host and Chalice, saying: *This is the Lamb of God...*