SUNDAY MASS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:
O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

FIRST READING: Jonah 3:1-5,10.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 25.

RESPONSE:
O Lord, make me know your ways.

1. O Lord, make me know your ways.
   Teach me your paths.
   Guide me in your truth, and teach me;
   for you are the God of my salvation. ℟
2. Remember your compassion, O Lord,
   and your merciful love,
   for they are from of old.
   in your merciful love remember me,
   because of your goodness, O Lord. ℟
3. Good and upright is the Lord;
   he shows the way to sinners.
   He guides the humble in right judgement;
   to the humble he teaches his way. ℟

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:
Alleluia, alleluia! The kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Mark 1:14-20.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:
Look towards the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

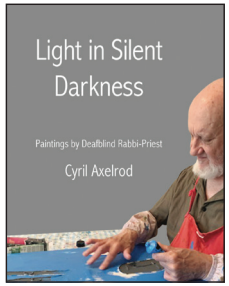
Books from Redemptorist Pastoral Publications

A book of paintings by deafblind Rabbi-Priest Cyril Axelrod with reflections on each painting by friends who know him.

Fr Cyril celebrated 50 years as a priest in November 2020 and this book has been compiled as a tribute to him and his amazing life.

"Cyril has never seen a single painting which he himself created. Instead, he invites you to use your own gift of eyesight to see them.

But beyond that, to experience them with "heart-sight", as he does.



R300 plus delivery

Order from our website **www.rpp.org.za** or email **orders@rpp.org.za.** Enquiries: 082 667 3857.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Live the Word

Mon 25 Jan CONVERSION OF ST PAUL

Acts 22:3-16; Psalm 117; Mark 16:15-18

Without Paul's conversion, without Paul's utterly courageous response, how would the Good News have ever reached us today? With your courageous response to God, however small, you too can alter history!

Tue 26 Jan St Timothy & Titus

2 Timothy 1:1-8; Psalm 96; Mark 3:31-35

Jesus' view of family goes way beyond blood. For him, those who forgive, who show kindness, who care for the poor, who show mercy and compassion are our family. We are all intimately bound together.

Wed 27 Jan (St Angela Merici, V)

Hebrews 10:11-18; Psalm 110; Mark 4:1-20

Only personal prayer and reflection can keep us in touch with our deeper selves, where God resides. If God's law resides in your heart, it might be a good thing to take a look in there from time to time.

Thu 28 Jan St Thomas Aquinas, PrD

Hebrews 10:19-25; Psalm 24; Mark 4:21-25

As hard as it may sometimes be we need to take a step back and hear the criticism of others, for they see us objectively. "O the gift that God could give us, to see ourselves as others see us." – Robert Burns.

Fri 29 Jan Liturgy of the Day

Hebrews 10:32-39; Psalm 37; Mark 4:26-34

Regular exercise contributes to the health of our bodies. It is the same in our spiritual lives – if we regularly nourish it through prayer, the sacraments and reading Scripture, we will grow spiritually.

Sat 30 Jan Liturgy of the Day

Hebrews 11:1-2.8-19; Psalm: Luke 1:69-75; Mark 4:35-41

A relationship with God is not a private affair. God's place in our lives and presence in our hearts are not meant to be carefully guarded secrets. Let your words and actions proclaim God's greatness to the world.

Sun 31 Jan 4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 95; Mark 1:21-28

Never underestimate the impact that your small act of kindness or compassion has on the life of another. Your act of reaching out is almost certainly God's way of anwering the heartfelf prayers of others.

(KEY: **SOLEMNITY**; FEAST; Memorial; (Optional Memorial) V=Virgin; Pr=Priest; D=Doctor

Redemptorist Publications SouthAfrica

Copyright. Do not reproduce without permission. © Redemptorist Pastoral Publications, P O Box 341, Merrivale, 3291. Phone 082 667 3857. Fax 086 545 4381. Email: janet@rpp.org.za. Internet: www.rpp.org.za.

Catholic Link

FAITH AND THE PANDEMIC

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B
Divine Office: Week III • 24 January 2021

Retreat

Fr Georg Ziener OMI was a well-known retreat director in South Africa. Forcibly co-opted into Hitler's army he found himself on the march to Moscow where the Nazis were defeated by the icy winters of that latitude and forced to retreat. The beloved retreat director quipped, "When I was in Russia I specialised in retreats."

There are retreats and there are retreats. In a very real sense the Covid pandemic put us all into retreat, not simply retreating to the relative safety of the home during strict lockdown, but retreating from the hustle and bustle of life to face the inevitable experience of soul-searching, life-questioning personal reflection.

Desert is not just about deprivation. It is also about facing some hard, personal truths

Indeed, there can be no personal growth in the spiritual life without taking time out; without taking stock of oneself. All the great characters of the Bible experienced this process at one stage or the other. Think of Moses in the desert, Elijah in his cave, Jonah under a bush (and even in the belly of a whale!), John the Baptist in the wilderness, and of course, Jesus himself in his temptations in the desert.

The desert is a powerful metaphor for personal retreat. It is a place of harsh deprivation. There, you are deprived of comfort, company, and even a sense of control. There you face your demons, your vulnerability and most of all your unredeemed ego.

Whether we liked it or not, in strict lockdown we've all been through desert deprivation. Never mind the alcohol ban. Where people of faith felt the greatest loss was the comfort of being in the company of fellow disciples of Jesus, gathered in liturgy to hear the Word of God proclaimed and to celebrate and receive the Eucharist. But there were compensations. For many people it was an opportunity to turn to the Bible. Families got together and shared on the scripture readings of a particular Sunday. They experienced the oft-neglected truth of being the "domestic Church". A saying did the rounds on social media: It's not about going to church, it's about being Church. (Note the small c and the big C!)

Desert is not just about deprivation. It is also about facing some hard, personal truths. The desert offers an opportunity to reflect on uncomfortable things like the ego, and one's mortality. The biggest demon in the desert is the ego: its habits, its obsessions, and its character flaws. Temptation has one aim, and that is to feed the ego. Jesus dealt with this by refusing to engage, by ignoring the same old broken record and proposing higher truths: That we don't live on bread alone but on God's Word. That we do not put God's patience to the test. And that we centre our lives completely on God, trust God, and serve God alone.

The four Rs in our spiritual reflection on the Covid pandemic, to reiterate, are retreat, return, remember, renew. Today we have concentrated on retreat. But it's best not to divide them too neatly. They overlap. Countries experiencing a "second wave" at the time of writing are back on retreat. A mature spirituality doesn't wait for circumstances to dictate its agenda, it holds its components in a continuum. Retreating is always a part of that continuum.