

AFRICA

# Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

## 7<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time

bayard africque



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#### **Liturgical texts:**

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**On our cover:** Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

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# Editorial

February 2023



Rev. Fr. Walter C. Ihejirika, Nigeria

## Practical Christianity

Christianity is a practical religion. Believers are obligated to cooperate with God the Creator to impact positively on their fellow human beings and also on their environment. The liturgy of the Fifth Sunday of the Year contrasts between ‘showbiz’ and ‘action’ believers.

‘Showbiz’ believers can spin beautiful words as expressions of their faith, but do not engage in deeds to show their faith. They are like the lamp hidden under a bushel and do not give light (Mt 5:13-16)

Action believers demonstrate their faith through practical actions as enshrined in the Scriptures: They share their bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the home-less; clothe the naked. They do not engage in oppression, false accusations and malicious speech (cf Is 58:7-10)

Practical Christians are like the just man whose light shines out in the darkness for the upright (Ps 112). They are the salt which adds taste to life on earth and the light which brightens the whole world.



# The Pope's Prayer Intention

***For parishes:*** We pray that parishes, placing communion at the centre, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need.

Other papal intentions and videos can be found on: <http://apostleshipofprayer.org/>

### **Ash Wednesday**

**A**sh Wednesday is a special day in the Catholic Church and in many other Christian denominations like the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Church, etc. In the Catholic Church, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season which is a forty-day period during which the faithful are invited to convert, to reconcile with God and with their brothers and sisters. From that day until Easter the *Gloria* (Glory to God) and the *Alleluia* are not sung in the liturgy. Ash Wednesday is a day of prayer and fasting. On that day, the priest or another minister who has received the mandate of the Church applies ashes on the foreheads of the faithful generally in the form of a cross. During the Eucharistic celebration, the imposition of the ashes takes place after the homily. It can also take place outside the Eucharistic celebration.

What do ashes symbolise in the Bible? In the holy Scriptures, ashes are associated with mourning, great sorrow, repentance or contrition. The penitent changes their external appearance sitting in ashes and putting

## **Focus on the Lenten Season**

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on sackclothes to symbolise their interior conversion. In other words, ashes can be considered as a visible sign of interior repentance which can be expressed through actions. Therefore, it is of no use for one to use ashes while they are still hardening their heart.

While applying ashes on those who come forward, the priest or another minister pronounces one of the following sentences: *Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel or Remember, man, you are dust and to dust you will return.* The first sentence insists on repentance and faithfulness to the Gospel. By virtue of Baptism, Christians decide to imitate Jesus Christ by living according to the Gospel. On Ash Wednesday they are reminded to have the holy Scriptures as their spiritual food that will help them overcome temptations during the Lenten season.

The second sentence reminds of man's origin. Man came from dust and to dust he will return. Man is not eternal. Despite all his achievements on earth, man will end up dying. Saint Augustine says that the only thing that man can be sure of is that he will die one day. Therefore, Christians must be aware that they are

pilgrims on earth. That awareness must guide their lives on earth. Christians are invited to be humble given that they are not eternal. They must trust in God in whom they live, move and have their being.

From the African perspective, Christians can have an easy understanding of Ash Wednesday. In traditional cultures in which soap was unknown, people used ashes or dust during the washing of dishes. This means that ashes played and continue to play a big role in removing dirt. The fact that ashes are applied on the forehead is very interesting since the head symbolises the entire human being. Therefore, we understand that on Ash Wednesday, ashes are applied on our foreheads to remove dirt from our beings in order to be clean. In this context, dirt would mean bad conduct, evil ideas and everything that can corrupt the soul.

***Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. Kombi,***  
*Kinshasa, D.R. Congo*



# Sunday February 19

## 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*Leviticus 19: 1-2. 17-18 / Psalm 103: 1-2. 3-4. 8. 10. 12-13*  
*1 Corinthians 3: 16-23 / Matthew 5: 38-48*



“But I say unto you, Love your enemies and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44)





## *Becoming Holy*

**T**he readings of today invite us to be holy as our Heavenly Father is holy. Therefore, it is paramount to note that the readings challenge us to live in accord with the will of God. To begin with, it is worthwhile to note that gratitude is the beginning of holiness. Thus, we cannot achieve holiness unless we adopt the culture of thanksgiving. We should know that it is only the heart that is full of thanksgiving that can easily ascend to the holiness that we are invited to embrace in our lives as Christians today.

However, some people think that becoming holy means doing extraordinary things in extraordinary ways. Others think that becoming a saint means living an ascetic life. Others think that becoming a saint one has to pray for long hours, fast and do charity work without being recognized by others and so on. Nevertheless, I would like to deconstruct the above kind of thinking. First of all, it is important to know that it is well and good to undertake the above mentioned tasks as a Christian, but it is not enough to acquire holiness.



## Sunday February 19

The foundation of holiness in our Christian lives is thanksgiving. We should be able to recognize that everything that we are able to achieve is always through the grace of God. We should know that we are not entitled to anything and recognize that everything we have, what we are and what we do, is a gratuitous gift from God. Thus, if every good thing we have or do is a gift from God, then we should be grateful to Him. Consequently, if everything we have or do is a gift from God, then we should be ready and willing to give it out freely to others without expecting anything in return. We should do this not because it is a duty but because we are grateful to the Supreme giver of gifts.

Let us remember that if we are not grateful to God, the Supreme giver of gifts, then we shall not be able to bear much fruit in our Christian lives. At the end of the day, let us recognize that holiness is a free gift from God, therefore, our holiness should then become a gift to others.

***Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Kahindo, Nairobi, Kenya***



**Entrance Antiphon** (*Ps (12) 13:6*)

**O Lord, I trust in your merciful love. My heart will rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me.**

**Collect**

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, always pondering spiritual things, we may carry out in both word and deed that which is pleasing to you. Through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**First Reading** (*Leviticus 19:1-2.17-18*)

**A reading from the Book of Leviticus**

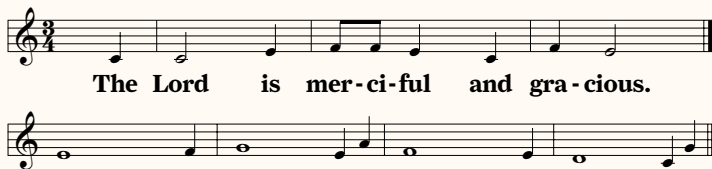
The Lord said to Moses, “Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy. “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbour, lest you bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.”

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Sunday February 19

**Responsorial Psalm** \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Psalm (102) 103:1-2.3-4.8 and 10.12-13)**



**R. The Lord is compassionate and gracious.**

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and all within me, his holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and never forget all his benefits. R.

It is the Lord who forgives all your sins,  
who heals every one of your ills,  
who redeems your life from the grave,  
who crowns you with mercy and compassion. R.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
slow to anger and rich in mercy.  
He does not treat us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our faults. R.



As far as the east is from the west,  
so far from us does he remove our transgressions.  
As a father has compassion on his children,  
the Lord's compassion is on those who fear him. R.

***Second Reading (I Corinthians 3:16-23)***—————

**A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the  
Corinthians**

Brethren: Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are. Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Sunday February 19

**Acclamation** (*1 John 2:5*)

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** Whoever keeps Christ's word, in him truly love for God is perfected. **Alleluia.**

**Gospel** (*Matthew 5:38-48*)

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**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do



not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **Prayer of the Faithful**

*The following intentions are suggestions only.*

**R. Lord, hear us!**

For our Church in its mission to further the reign of God in the world, we pray to the Lord: R.

For charity, mercy and justice in our communities and societies, we pray to the Lord: R.

For strength and comfort for all who are suffering physically, spiritually or emotionally, we pray to the Lord: R.

For our parish community, challenged to see the face of Christ in everyone, we pray to the Lord. R.



Sunday February 19

## Prayer over the Offerings

As we celebrate your mysteries, O Lord, with the observance that is your due, we humbly ask you, that what we offer to the honour of your majesty may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Communion Antiphon (*Ps 9:2-3*)

**I will recount all your wonders, I will rejoice in you and be glad, and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.**

*Or: Jn 11:27*

**Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, who is coming into this world.**

## Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we may experience the effects of the salvation which is pledged to us by these mysteries. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**





# Monday February 20

7<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time

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## Entrance Antiphon

*(Ps (11) 12:6)* **O Lord, I trust in your merciful love. Let my heart rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful to me.**

## Collect

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, always pondering spiritual things, we may carry out in both words and deed that which is pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Reading --- *(Sirach 1:1-10)*

**The beginning of the Book of Sirach**

All wisdom comes from the Lord and is with him for ever. The sand of the sea, the drops of rain, and the days of eternity – who can count them? The height of heaven, the breadth of the earth, the abyss and wisdom – who can search them out? Wisdom was created before all things, and prudent understanding from eternity. The source of wisdom is God's word in the highest heaven, and

her ways are the eternal commandments. The root of wisdom – to whom has it been revealed? Her clever devices – who knows them? The knowledge of wisdom – to whom was it manifested? And her abundant experience – who has understood it? There is One who is wise, the Creator of all, the King greatly to be feared, sitting upon his throne, and ruling as God. The Lord himself created wisdom in the holy spirit; he saw her apportioned her, he poured her out upon all his works. She dwells with all flesh according to his gift, and he supplied her to those who love him. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm**——  
*(Psalm (92) 93: 1abc.1d-2.5)*

**R. The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed.**

The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed. The Lord has robed himself with might, he has girded himself with power. **R.**

The world you made firm not to be moved; your throne has stood firm from old. From all eternity, O Lord, you are. **R.**

Truly your decrees are to be trusted. Holiness is fitting to your house, O Lord, until the end of time. **R.**

**Acclamation**  
*(See 2 Timothy 1:10)*

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** Our saviour Christ Jesus abolished death and brought life and

immortality to light through the Gospel. **Alleluia.**

***Gospel*** \_\_\_\_\_  
***(Mark 9:14-29)***

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark**

At that time: [When Jesus came down the mountain with Peter and James and John] and they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd about them and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, “What are you discussing with them?” And one of the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a mute spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down

and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately, it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, “How long had he has this?” And he said, “From childhood.” And it has often cast him into fire and into water, destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him; “If you can, all things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately, the father of the child cried

out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean, spirit saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you; come out of him and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

As we celebrate your mysteries, O Lord, with the observance that is your due, we humbly ask you, that what we offer to the honour of your majesty may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

*(Ps 9:2-3)* **All your wonders I will recount. I will rejoice in you and be glad, and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.**

*or*

*(Jn 11:27)* **Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the son of the living God, who have come into this world.**

**Prayer after Communion**

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we may experience the effects of the

salvation which is pledged to us by these mysteries. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Prayer and Faith****Commentary****Mark 9 : 14-29**

Gospel text makes us aware of two scenarios. One is the triumph of Jesus' power to heal and the second is the tragedy of mere human power. First of all, bearing in mind that Jesus was both divine and human, he was able to heal those who approached Him with various infirmities. In today's episode, Jesus first of all wonders why the generation of our times is faithless. This is because Jesus is already aware that He will not be always physically present to be approached by people for healing requests. On the other hand, we see the tragedy of mere human power because the disciples of Jesus had already failed to heal the boy brought to Jesus because they relied on mere human power. However, Jesus heals the boy unconditionally and His disciples wonder why it was not possible for them. He reminds them about the importance of prayer and fasting.

***Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Kahindo, Nairobi, Kenya***



# Tuesday February 21

7<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time

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## **Ferial**

or **Saint Peter Damian**, *optional memorial*

### **Entrance Antiphon**

(Ps (11) 12:6) **O Lord, I trust in your merciful love. Let my heart rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful to me.**

### **Collect**

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, always pondering spiritual things, we may carry out in both words and deed that which is pleasing to you. Through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Reading**

**(Sirach 2:1-11)**

**A reading from the Book of Sirach**

My son, if you come forward to serve the Lord, remain in justice and in fear, and prepare yourself for temptation. Set your heart right and be steadfast, incline your ear, and receive words of understanding, and do not be hasty in time of calamity. Awaits God's patience, cling to him and do not depart, that you may be wise in all your ways. Accept

whatever is brought upon you and endure it in sorrow; in changes that humble you be patient. For gold and silver are tested in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation. Trust in God, and he will help you; hope in him, and he will make your way straight. Stay in fear of him and grow old in him. You who fear the Lord wait for his mercy and turn not aside, lest you fall. You who fear the Lord, trust in him and your reward will not fail, you who fear the Lord, hope for good things, for everlasting joy and mercy. You who fear the Lord, love him, and your heart will be made radiant. Consider the ancient generations and see: who ever trusted in the Lord and was put to shame? Or who ever persevered in

his commandments and was forsaken? Or who ever called upon him and was overlooked? For the Lord is compassionate and merciful; he forgives sins and saves in time of affliction, and he is the shield of all who seek him in truth.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm —**  
*(Psalm <sup>(36)</sup> 37: 3-4.18-19.27-28.39-40)*

**℟. Commit your way to the Lord and he will act.**

Trust in the Lord and do good; then you will dwell in the land and safely pasture. Find your delight in the Lord, who grants your heart's desire. ℟

The Lord takes note of the days of the blameless; their heritage will last forever. They shall not be put to shame in evil days; in time of famine, they shall have their fill. *R.*

Then turn away from evil and do good, and you may abide forever; for indeed, the Lord loves justice, and will never forsake his faithful. The unjust shall be wiped out forever, and the descendants of the wicked destroyed. *R.*

But from the Lord comes the salvation of the just, their stronghold in time of distress. The Lord helps them and rescues them, rescues and saves them from the wicked: because they take refuge in him. *R.*

### Acclamation

*(Galatians 6:14)*

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. **Alleluia.**

### Gospel

*(Mark 9:30-37)*

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark**

At that time: Jesus and his disciples went on from the mountain and passed through Gallilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them; “The son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” But



they did not understanding the saying, and they were afraid to ask him. And they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them; and taking him in the arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

As we celebrate your mysteries, O Lord, with the observance that is your due, we humbly ask you, that what we offer to the honour of your majesty may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

*(Ps 9:2-3)* **All your wonders I will recount. I will rejoice in you and be glad, and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.**

*or*

*(Jn 11:27)* **Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the son of the living God, who have come into this world.**

**Prayer after Communion**

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we may experience the effects of the

salvation which is pledged to us by these mysteries. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Following Jesus****Commentary****Mark 9:30-37**

In today's Gospel text, Jesus embarks on an important task of making His disciples aware that He will die but that He will definitely resurrect after three days. However, His disciples did not comprehend His prophetic manner of speaking. The disciples somehow realize that they are obliged to follow Jesus unconditionally if they want to reap from His teachings. It is in the same way that Jesus is inviting us to follow Him unconditionally in order to learn from Him and live according to the will of God. In addition, Jesus teaches His disciples about the demands of all those who wish to follow Him. He plainly tells them that their authority should be directed towards the service of others. Their authority should not be about their own selfish interests.

***Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Kahindo, Nairobi, Kenya***



# Wednesday February 22

Ash Wednesday

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## Ash Wednesday

### Entrance Antiphon

*(Wisdom 11:24.25.27)* **You are merciful to all, O Lord, and despise nothing that you have made. You overlook the sins of man, to bring him to repentance, for you are the Lord our God.**

### Collect

Grant, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting this campaign of Christian service, so that as we take up battle against spiritual evils, we may be armed

with weapons of self-restraint. Through Christ our Lord... **Amen.**

### First Reading

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*(Joel 2:12-18)*

**A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel**

“Even now,” says the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and tear your hearts and not your garments.” Return

to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy, and repents of evil. Who knows whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, a cereal offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Sion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say, "Spare your people,

O Lord, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, "Where is their God?" Then the Lord became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm —**  
**(Psalm <sup>(50)</sup> 51:3-4.5-6ab.12-13.14 and 17)**

**R. Have mercy, O Lord, for we have sinned.**

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.*

My transgressions, truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. *R.*

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.*

Restore in me the joy of your salvation; sustain in me a willing spirit. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. *R.*

***Second Reading*** ———  
***(2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2)***

**A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians**

Brethren: We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now

is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Acclamation** (*Psalm 94*)  
*95:7d.8a*)

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ.** Today, harden not your hearts, but listen to the voice of the Lord. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

**Gospel** —————  
*(Matthew 6:1-6.16-18)*

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “Beware of practising your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your

Father who is in heaven. “Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret;



and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

As we solemnly offer the annual sacrifice for the

beginning of Lent, we entreat you, O Lord, that through works of penance and charity, we may turn away from harmful pleasures and, cleansed from our sins, may become worthy to celebrate devoutly the Passion of your Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen..**

### **Communion Antiphon**

*(Psalm 1:2-3)* **He who ponders the law of the Lord day and night will yield fruit in due season.**

**Prayer after Communion**

May the Sacrament we have received sustain us, O Lord, that our Lenten fast

may be pleasing to you and be for us a healing remedy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Commentary****Keeping Close to God****Matthew 6:1-6.16-18**

Today being Ash Wednesday, we begin the season of Lent. On this day, we are all invited to reflect about our commitment in following Jesus. On this day, ashes will be smeared on our foreheads to remind us about the temporality of our life as human beings. Therefore, we are all invited to be charitable, to fast and to pray unceasingly. Through charity, fasting and prayer, our relationship with God and our fellow human beings is strengthened. Through prayer, we are able to communicate with God and make our wishes known to Him. We are encouraged to find time to be intimate with God even in our busy schedules. Let us rediscover the need of being in dialogue with God through prayer. In addition, If prayer is real, it always turns us towards others. Therefore, charity springs from our sincere prayers.

***Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Kahindo, Nairobi, Kenya***





# Thursday February 23

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

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## **Ferial**

**Or: St Polycarp, bishop and martyr, Memorial**

### **Entrance Antiphon**

*(Ps (54) 55:17-20.23)* **O When I cried to the Lord, he heard my voice; he rescued me from those who attack me. Entrust your cares to the Lord, and he will support you.**

Through Christ, our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**Reading** —————  
***(Deuteronomy 30:15-20)***

**A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy**

### **Collect**

Prompt our actions with your inspiration, we pray, O Lord, and further them with your constant help, that all we do may always begin from you and by you be brought to completion.

Moses spoke to the people, saying, “See, I have set before you this day life and death, good and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day, by loving the Lord your God, by

walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice,

and clinging to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***Responsorial Psalm —  
(Psalm 1:1-2.3.4 and 6)***

**R. Blessed the man who  
has placed his trust in the  
Lord.**

Blessed indeed is the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the path with sinners, nor abides in the company of scorners, but whose delight is the law of the Lord and who ponders his law day and night. R.

He is like a tree that is planted beside the flowing waters, that yields its fruit in due season, and whose leaves shall never fade; and all that he does shall prosper. *R.*

Not so are the wicked, not so! For they, like winnowed chaff, shall be driven away by the wind. For the Lord knows the way of the just, but the way of the wicked will perish. *R.*

**Acclamation**  
*(Matthew 4:17)*

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ.** Repent, says the Lord, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

**Gospel** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Luke 9:22-25)*

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” And he said to all, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” The Gospel of

the Lord. **Praise to you,  
Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Regard with favour, O Lord,  
we pray, the offerings we  
set upon this sacred altar,  
that, bestowing on us your  
pardon, our oblations may  
give honour to your name.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

*(Ps (50) 51:12)* **Create a  
pure heart for me, O  
God; renew a steadfast  
spirit within me.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

Having received the  
blessing of your heavenly  
gifts, we humbly beseech  
you, almighty God, that

they may always be for us and of salvation. Through  
 a source both of pardon Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Sharing in Christ's  
 suffering**

**Commentary**

**Deuteronomy 30: 15-20/ Psalm  
 1: 1-2. 3. 4 and 6/ Luke 9: 22-25**

Today's Gospel text makes us understand that Jesus' success comes only through suffering. Jesus makes us aware of the fact that in God's eyes, His death was necessary for us to be saved. Even though a cross was a familiar Roman instrument of death, Jesus reverses this view and makes the cross a sign of victory. Through His death on the cross, Jesus brought salvation to the world. Jesus invites all of us to bear our own little crosses because sharing in Christ's suffering is an essential requirement for anyone who is a genuine disciple of Jesus. It is worthwhile to note that the memorial of Saint Polycarp today turns out to be one of the best examples of a person who willingly accepted to follow the most painful way rather than the easy way to protect his faith.

***Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Kahindo, Nairobi, Kenya***



# Friday February 24

Friday after Ash Wednesday

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## Entrance Antiphon

*(Ps (29) 30:11)* **The Lord heard and had mercy on me; the Lord became my helper.**

## Collect

Show gracious favour, O Lord, we pray, to the works of penance we have begun, that we may have strength to accomplish with sincerity the bodily observances we undertake. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Reading

*(Isaiah 58:1-9a)*

**A reading from the Book of Isaiah**

Thus says the Lord God: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they

delight to draw near to God. ‘Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord? “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose

the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am.” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm** —  
**(Psalm (50) 51:3-4-5-6ab.18-19)**

**R.** A broken and humbled heart, O God, you will not spurn.

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.**

My transgressions, truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. **R.**

For in sacrifice you take no delight; burnt offering from me would not please you. My sacrifice to God,

a broken spirit: a broken and humbled heart, O God, you will not spurn. **R.**

**Acclamation**  
**(Amos 5:14)**

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ.** Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and the Lord will be with you.  
**Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

**Gospel** —————  
**(Matthew 9:14-15)**

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew**

At that time: The disciples of John came to Jesus, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them,



“Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

We offer, O Lord, the sacrifice of our Lenten observance, praying that it may make our intentions

acceptable to you and add to our powers of self-restraint. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

*(Ps (24) 25:4)* **O Lord, make me know your ways, teach me your paths.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

We pray, almighty God, that through partaking of this mystery, we may be cleansed of all our

misdeeds, and so be suited for the remedies of your compassion. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Fasting

### Commentary

**Matthew 9: 14-15.**

In today's Gospel, we are invited to reflect about fasting in our Lenten observance. Fasting is an important spiritual activity. It is common in many religions today. For Christians, Lent is a season of grace and repentance. Therefore, fasting is paramount during this time. Fasting is not just about foregoing a meal, it is much more: As Christians, fasting should help us to strengthen our relationship with God and others. Jesus Himself set an example by fasting for forty days. He helped us understand that fasting should help us in spiritual and moral conversion. Through fasting, we should aim at building up a good relationship with God and others. It has to be accompanied by prayer, charity, penance and other spiritual activities. During fasting, our hearts should be spiritually hungry and thirsty for God. Let us all strive to observe this sacred act in our lives as Christians.

***Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Kahindo, Nairobi, Kenya***



# Saturday February 25

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

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## Entrance Antiphon

*(Ps (68) 69:17)* **Answer us, Lord, for your mercy is kind; in the abundance of your mercies, look upon us.**

## Collect

Almighty ever-living God, look with compassion on our weakness and ensure us your protection by stretching forth the right hand of your majesty. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Reading ---

*(Isaiah 58:9c-14)*

**A reading from the Book of Isaiah**

Thus says the Lord: “If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered

garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. “If you turn back your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you honour it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm —**  
**(Psalm <sup>(85)</sup> 86:1-2.3-4.5-6)**

**R. Teach me, O Lord, your way, so that I may walk in your truth.**

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am faithful; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. R.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long. Gladden the soul of your servant, for I lift up my soul to you, O Lord. R.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of mercy to all who call to you. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer, and attend to my voice in supplication. R.



## Acclamation

*(Psalm (94) 95:7d.8a)*

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ.** I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord, but that he turns from his way and live. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

## Gospel

*(Luke 5:27-32)*

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke**

At that time: Jesus saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he left everything, and rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house; and there was a large company of tax collectors and others sitting at table with them.

And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, we pray, O Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation and praise, and grant that, cleansed by its working, we may offer minds well pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

**(Mt 9:13) I desire mercy, not sacrifice, says the Lord, for I did not come to call the just but sinners.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

Nourished with the gift of heavenly life, we pray, O Lord, that what remains for us a mystery in this present life may be for us a help to reach eternity. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Jesus came for the Sinners**

## **Commentary**

**Luke 5:27-32**

In today's Gospel text, we are reminded that Jesus was despised because of the kind of people He mingled with. The Pharisees were courageous enough to ask Him why He interacted freely with public sinners. Jesus responds in a very straightforward manner in order to demonstrate the kind of mission He had here on earth. It is explicitly clear that Jesus mingled with public sinners in order to help them convert and leave their sinful way of life. His mission was not to condemn anyone but to redeem all those who were under the chains of the devil.

***Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Kahindo, Nairobi, Kenya***



**Publisher:** Pierre LANGLOIS

**Publishing & Development Manager**

**Editor in Chief:** Rev. Fr. François NZANZU a.a.

**Assistant:** Rev. Fr. Jean-Claude DIWEDIGA a.a.

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Other **Contributors:** Rev. Fr. Elvis MENSAH

Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. KOMBI; Rev. Fr. Emmanuel KAHINDO.

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Rue E104, Lot 1076 Ilot 116 - Cocody Riviera 3 Abidjan , Côte d'Ivoire

Address: P.O. BOX 08 BP 2469 Abidjan 08 -

Phone number : (+225) 25 22 02 11 11 -

E-mail: [info@livingwithchrist-africa.com](mailto:info@livingwithchrist-africa.com)





WhatsApp : [+225 05 94 79 75 68](https://www.whatsapp.com/chat?phone=2250594797568) / [+254727074304](https://www.whatsapp.com/chat?phone=254727074304)



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