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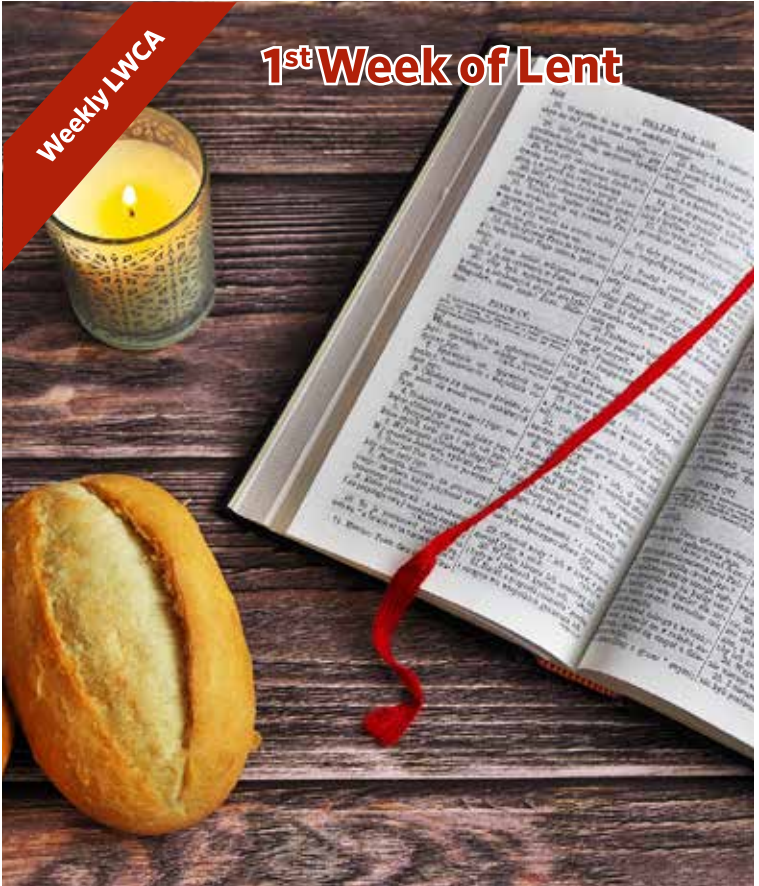
Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

1st Week of Lent

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Liturgical texts:

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On our cover: Christ the Word
and Bread of Life

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Editorial

Feb-March 2023



Rev. Fr. François Nzanzu, a.a. Nairobi-Kenya

Lent: A forty-day Season of inner conversion

This liturgical year, the month of March is covered by lent season. A forty-day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving for an inner conversion. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. Lent is a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.

During Lent, we are called not only to abstain from luxuries, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were baptized into Christ's death, and began new life in Christ. Apart from the tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays, we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast. In addition, the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts, not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents. In Lent, the baptized are called to renew their baptismal commitment as others prepare to be baptized through the rite of christian initiation of adults to become Catholics.



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For victims of abuse: We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering.

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

Ash Wednesday

Ash 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

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 he is still hardening his 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 26

1st Sunday of Lent

*Genesis 2: 7-9; 3: 1-7 / Psalm 51: 3-4. 5-6. 12-13. 17 / Romans 5: 12-19
or 5: 12. 17-19 / Matthew 4:1-11*



“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)



No, You Will not Die!

We are celebrating today the first Sunday of Lent. During this Lenten season we will ask ourselves: How am I going to try to grow this Lent? How will I use this time to resist the temptations in my life?

In today's Liturgy, the destiny of the human race is told as the tale of two "types" of men: the first man, Adam, and the new Adam, Jesus. By one person's disobedience, sin and condemnation entered the world, and death came to reign over all. By the obedience of another one, grace abounded, all were justified, and life came to reign for all.

The first reading recounts the story of how Adam and Eve turned away from God. The psalm is a repentant appeal to the goodness of God. The second reading reminds us that even though we are sinners, we are saved through the obedience of Jesus Christ. And the Gospel tells us how Jesus went to the desert to fast and pray for 40 days and resisted the temptations of Satan. The remedy against temptation is prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Almsgiving frees us to give away our goods, trusting that God will provide for our needs. Fasting unites our suffering with the suffering



Sunday February 26

of others. And prayer helps us place our destiny in God's hands.

We are generally very oblivious of the consequences of sin. Religious leaders and people quite sensitive to spiritual growth and development often lament the general loss of the sense of sin in our generation today but there is another loss: the consequences of our sin. Very often we do not notice it and even when it stares right in our faces, we do not recognize it. The wages or the consequences of sin is death but when Eve ate of the fruit, it stands to reason that she was only able to pass it on to Adam because she did not recognize the effect of the sin for she did not die. Very often because we do not see the consequences of our sinful action, we keep at it. This recognition must be in two ways: first, what sin does to our souls and secondly, what it does to those around us. Eve did not only fail to recognize that she had killed something within her but passed on this poison because she failed to recognize it as such. This Lenten season, our attention should not only be drawn to the sin we commit but equally important are the consequences of our sinful actions.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Salifu, Tema-Ghana



Entrance Antiphon (*Psalm (90) 91:15-16*)

When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

Collect

Grant, almighty God, through the yearly observances of holy Lent, that we may grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7*)

A reading from the Book of Genesis

The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of



the trees of the garden; but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die,’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes, will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm _____

(Psalm (50) 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 salvation;
sustain in me a willing spirit.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. R.



Sunday February 26

Second Reading (Romans 5:12-19)

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brethren: As sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned -sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift it not like the effect of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so



by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Or shorter: (Romans 5:12.17-19)

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brethren: As sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned. If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Acclamation (Matthew 4:4b)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**



Sunday February 26

Gospel (Matthew 4:1-11)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time: Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will give his angels charge of you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, called to serve all nations, we pray to the Lord: R.

For open and ongoing dialogue between nations, we pray to the Lord: R.

For those who suffer persecution and loneliness, we pray to the Lord: R.

For us, called in baptism to be prophets of God's word, we pray to the Lord: R.

Prayer over the Offerings

Give us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray, to make these offerings, for with them we celebrate the beginning of this venerable and sacred time. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Sunday February 26

Communion Antiphon (*Mt 4:4*)

One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Or: (Ps (90) 91:4)

The Lord will conceal you with his pinions, and under his wings you will trust.

Prayer after Communion

Renewed now with heavenly bread, by which faith is nourished, hope increased, and charity strengthened, we pray, O Lord, that we may learn to hunger for Christ, the true and living Bread, and strive to live by every word which proceeds from your mouth. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Monday February 27

1st Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (122) 123:2-3) **Like the eyes of slaves on the hand of their lords, so our eyes are on the Lord our God, till he show us his mercy. Have mercy on us, Lord have mercy.**

Collect

Convert us, O God our Saviour, and instruct our minds by heavenly teaching, that we may benefit from the works of Lent. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading --- ***(Leviticus 19:1-2.11-18)***

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 steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. “You shall not oppress your neighbour or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning. You

shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. “You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge neighbour. You shall not go up and down as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand forth against the life of your neighbour: I am the Lord. “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.**

Responsorial Psalm——
(Psalm (18) 19: 8.9.10.15)

R. Your words, O Lord, are Spirit and life.

The law of the Lord is perfect; it revives the soul. The decrees of the Lord are steadfast; they give wisdom to the simple. R.

The precepts of the Lord are right; they gladden the heart. The command of the Lord is clear; it gives light to the eyes. R.

The fear of the Lord is pure, abiding forever. The judgements of the Lord are true; they are, all of them, just. R.

May the spoken words of my mouth, the thoughts of my heart, win favour in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer! R.

Acclamation*(2 Corinthians 6:2b)*

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation.
Glory and praise to you, O Christ

Gospel _____*(Matthew 25:31-46)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the

sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. “Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I

say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' "Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' "Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, "Truly, I say to you as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but

the righteous into eternal life. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

May this devout oblation be acceptable to you, O Lord, that by your power it may sanctify our manner of life and gain for us your conciliation and pardon. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Mt 25:40.34) **Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of my brothers, you did for me, says the Lord. Come, you blessed of my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

Prayer after Communion

We pray, O Lord, that in receiving your Sacrament we may experience help in mind and body so that, kept

safe in both we may glory in the fullness of heavenly healing. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Commentary

The Call to Holiness Leviticus 19: 1-2, 11-18 / Psalm 19: 8, 9, 10, 15 / Matthew 25: 31-46

“To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case.” Holiness is for all. God told Moses to tell the entire people without exception that they should be holy as He is holy. To be holy, one needs to first recognise God as the prime source of holiness and finally exude it in relationships with others without judgment.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Salifu, Tema-Ghana



Tuesday February 28

1st Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (89) 90:1-2) **O Lord, you have been our refuge, from generation to generation; from age to age, you are.**

Collect

Look upon your family, Lord, that through the chastening effects of bodily discipline, our minds may be radiant in your presence with the strength of our yearning for you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Isaiah 55:10-11)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Thus said the Lord: “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return three but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I intend, and prosper in the thing for which I sent

it.” The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm*—
(Psalm ⁽³³⁾ 34:4-5.6-7.16-
17.18-19)**

**R. The Lord rescues them
in all their distress.**

Glorify the Lord with me;
together let us praise his
name. I sought the Lord, and
he answered me; from all
my terrors he set me free. R.

Look towards him and be
radiant; let your faces not
be abashed. This lowly one
called; the Lord heard, and
rescued him from all his
distress. R.

The Lord turns his eyes
to the just, and his ears are

open to their cry. The Lord
turns his face against the
wicked to destroy their
remembrance from the
earth. R.

When the just cry out,
the Lord hears, and rescues
them in all their distress. The
Lord is close to the broken-
hearted; those whose spirit
is crushed he will save. R.

Acclamation
(Matthew 4:4b)

**Glory and praise to you,
O Christ.** Man shall not live
by bread alone, but by every
word that proceeds from the
mouth of God. **Glory and
praise to you, O Christ**

Gospel —————
(Matthew 6:7-15)

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

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “In praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Receive, O Creator, almighty God, what we bring from your bountiful goodness, and be pleased to transform this temporal sustenance you have given us, that it may bring us eternal life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps 4:2) **When I called, the God of justice gave me answer; from anguish you released me, have mercy, O Lord, and hear my prayer!**

Prayer after Communion

Grant us through these mysteries, Lord, that by moderating earthly desires we may learn to love the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Effect of the Word

Commentary

**Isaiah 55: 10-11 / Psalm 34: 4-5. 6-7.
16-17. 18-19 / Matthew 6: 7-15**

The word of God is powerful compared to the rain and the snow that do not return until it has watered the earth, so are our words effective (if only we are sincere with them) when we pray. Hence, there is no need to bubble or to try and lure God with our words. We must believe that no matter how simple a word is, when it is uttered in sincerity would not return to us until it has pierced the heavens and reach the sanctuary of God most high.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Salifu, Tema-Ghana



Wednesday March 1

1st Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (24) 25:6.2.22) **Remember your compassion, O Lord, and your merciful love, for they are from of old. Let not our enemies exult over us. Redeem us, O God of Israel, from all our distress.**

Collect

Look kindly, Lord, we pray, on the devotion of your people, that those, who by self-denial are restrained in body, may by the fruit of good works be renewed in mind. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Jonah 3:1-10)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jonah

The word of the Lord came to Jonah, saying, “Arise to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.” So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days’ journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he cried, “Yet forty

days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. Then tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them cry mightily to God; yes let every one turn from his evil way and from the

violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?” When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (50) 51:3-4.12-13.18-19)

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.*

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.*

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 (*Joel 2:12-13*)
Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, for I am gracious and merciful. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ**

Gospel —————
(Luke 11:29-32)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

At that time: When the crowds were increasing, Jesus began to say, “This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men

of Nineveh will arise at the judgement with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

We offer to you, O Lord, what you have given to be dedicated to your name, that just as for our benefit you make these gifts a

Sacrament, so let them become for us an eternal remedy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps 5:12) **All who take refuge in you shall be glad, O Lord, and ever cry out their joy, and you shall dwell among them.**

Prayer after Communion

O God, who never cease to nourish us by your Sacrament, grant that the

refreshment you give us through it may bring us unending life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Turning from evil

Commentary

Luke 11: 29-32

Evil is enticing otherwise it will not be attractive to anyone. Abandoning evil is such a difficult task because we get comfortable with the deed. To turn from evil requires a radical move. It requires sometimes being austere with self. It is this part of austerity which people seek to avoid that keeps them entrapped in their evil deeds. Fasting, wearing of sackcloth etc. will help in tearing oneself off evil-doing although uncomfortable and directly opposing one's desires.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Salifu, Tema-Ghana



Thursday March 2

1st Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 5:2-3) **To my words give ear, O Lord; give heed to my sighs. Attend to the sound of my cry, my King and my God.**

Collect

Bestow on us, we pray, O Lord, a spirit of always pondering on what is right and of hastening to carry it out, and since without you we cannot exist, may we be enabled to live according to your will. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Esther 14:1.3-4.11.13.14)

A reading from the Book of Esther

In those days: Esther the queen, seized with deathly anxiety, fled to the Lord. And she lay on the earth together with all her maidservants, from morning until evening, and said: “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, blessed are you; help me, who am alone and have no helper but you, for my danger is in my hand. I have heard

from the books of my ancestors that you liberate all those who are pleasing to you, O Lord, until the very end. And now, assist me, who am all alone, and have no one but you, O Lord, my God. Come to my aid, for I am an orphan. Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the man who is fighting against us, so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. But save us from the hand of our enemies; turn our mourning into gladness and our affliction into well-being.” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm ⁽¹³⁷⁾ 138:2a.2bcd-3.7d-8)

℟. On the day I called, you answered me, O Lord.

I thank you, Lord with all my heart; you have heard the words of my mouth. In the presence of the angels I praise you. I bow down toward your holy temple. ℟

I give thanks to your name for your merciful love and your faithfulness. You have exalted your name and your promise over all. On the day I called, you answered me; you increased the strength of my soul. ℟

With your right hand you save me; the Lord will accomplish this for me. O

Lord, your merciful love is eternal; discard not the work of your hands. *R.*

Acclamation

(Ps (50) 51:10a.12a)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Create in me a clean heart, O God; restore to me the joy of your salvation. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ**

Gospel _____

(Matthew 7:7-12)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who

seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Be merciful, O Lord, to those who approach you in supplication, and, accepting the oblations and prayers of your people,

turn the hearts of us all towards you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Mt 7:8) **Everyone who asks receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to**

the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Prayer after Communion

We pray, O Lord our God, that, as you have given these most sacred mysteries to be the safeguard of our salvation,

so you may make them a healing remedy for us, both now and in time to come. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All good comes from God

Commentary

Mathew 7: 7-12

Knowing the source of all good, we must never hesitate in going to Him for help. He is not only the source of all good but he also knows what is especially good for us. Hence, He will not give you that which will destroy you even if in your opinion it is good. Ask in prayer, search in scripture and knock on the door of life and God will provide ways and opportunities you cannot imagine. This is what the holy men and women like Esther did and they had their breakthrough.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Salifu, Tema-Ghana



Friday March 3

1st Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (24) 25:17-18) Set me free from my distress, O Lord. See my lowliness and suffering, and take away all my sins.

Collect

Grant that your faithful, O Lord, we pray, may be so conformed to the paschal observances, that the bodily discipline now solemnly begun may bear fruit in the souls of all. Through Christ our Lord...**Amen.**

Reading

(Ezekiel 18:21-28)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

Thus says the Lord God: “If a wicked man turns away from all his sins which he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness which he has done he shall

live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity and does the same abominable things that the wicked man does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds which he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, he shall die. Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die for it; for the iniquity

which he has committed he shall die. Again, when a wicked man turn away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is lawful and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions which he had committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die." The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (129) 130:1-2.
3-4-5-7a.7bc-8)

R. If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord,

hear my voice! O let your ears be attentive to the sound of my pleading. R.

If you O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But with you is found forgiveness, that you may be revered. R.

I long for you, O Lord, my soul longs for his word. My soul hopes in the Lord more than watchmen for daybreak. More than watchmen for daybreak, let Israel hope for the Lord. R.

For with the Lord there is mercy, in him is plentiful redemption. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities. R.

Acclamation

(Ezekiel 18:31)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, says the Lord, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ**

Gospel _____

(Matthew 5:20-26)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not kill;

and whoever kills, shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in

prison; truly I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny." The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept the sacrificial offerings, O Lord, by which, in your power and kindness, you willed us to be reconciled to yourself and our salvation to be restored. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ezekiel 33:11) **As I live, says the Lord, I do not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that turn back and live.**

Prayer after Communion

May the holy refreshment of your Sacrament restore us anew, O Lord, and cleansing us of old

ways, take us up into the mystery of salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Growing tired

Commentary

Mathew 5: 20-26

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up (Gal. 6:9). Virtue for Jesus, in the Gospel, must grow beyond externalities; it must touch the core of man such that nothing can make a person of virtue abandon his way of acting because it becomes second nature. The catechism of the Catholic Church defines virtue as the firm and habitual disposition to do the good.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Salifu, Tema-Ghana



Saturday March 4

1st Week of Lent

Ferial

or **Saint Casimir, optional memorial**

Entrance Antiphon

The law of the Lord is perfect; it revives the soul. The decrees of the Lord are steadfast; they give wisdom to the simple.

Collect

Turn our hearts to you, eternal Father, and grant that, seeking always the one thing necessary and carrying out works of charity, we may be dedicated to your worship. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading _____

(Deuteronomy 26:16-19)

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

Moses spoke to the people, saying: “This day the Lord your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances; you shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. You have declared this day concerning the Lord that he is your God, and that you will walk in his ways,

and keep his statutes and his commandments and his ordinances, and will obey his voice; and the Lord has declared this day concerning you that you are a people for his own possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, that he will set you high above all nations that he has made, in praise and in fame and in honour, and that you shall be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he has spoken.” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (118) 119:1-2.4-5.7-8)

R. Blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord!

Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep his decrees! With all their hearts they seek him. R.

You have laid down your precepts to be carefully kept. May my ways be firm in keeping your statutes. R.

I will thank you with an upright heart, as I learn your just judgments. I will keep your statutes; do not ever forsake me. R.

Acclamation
(2 Corinthians 6:2b)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation.
Glory and praise to you, O Christ

Gospel _____
(Matthew 5:43-48)
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “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 over the Offerings
May these blessed mysteries by which we are restored, O Lord, we pray, make us worthy of the gift they bestow. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect, says the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

Show unceasing favour, O Lord, to those you refresh with this divine mystery, and accompany with salutary consolations those you have imbued with heavenly teaching. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Perfection on Earth?

Commentary

Mathew 5: 43-48

Is it possible to be perfect as God is perfect as we live here on earth? If it's not, why the invitation? Perfection here on earth is a steady growth towards the Father and that growth can only occur in love. We draw closer to God if we learn to love as he loves. The love of God is universal, unconditional and passionate. For this reason he lay down his life for his friend (John 15:13) and so should you.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Salifu, Tema-Ghana



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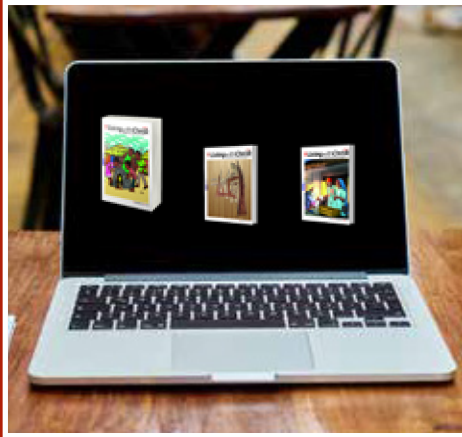
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