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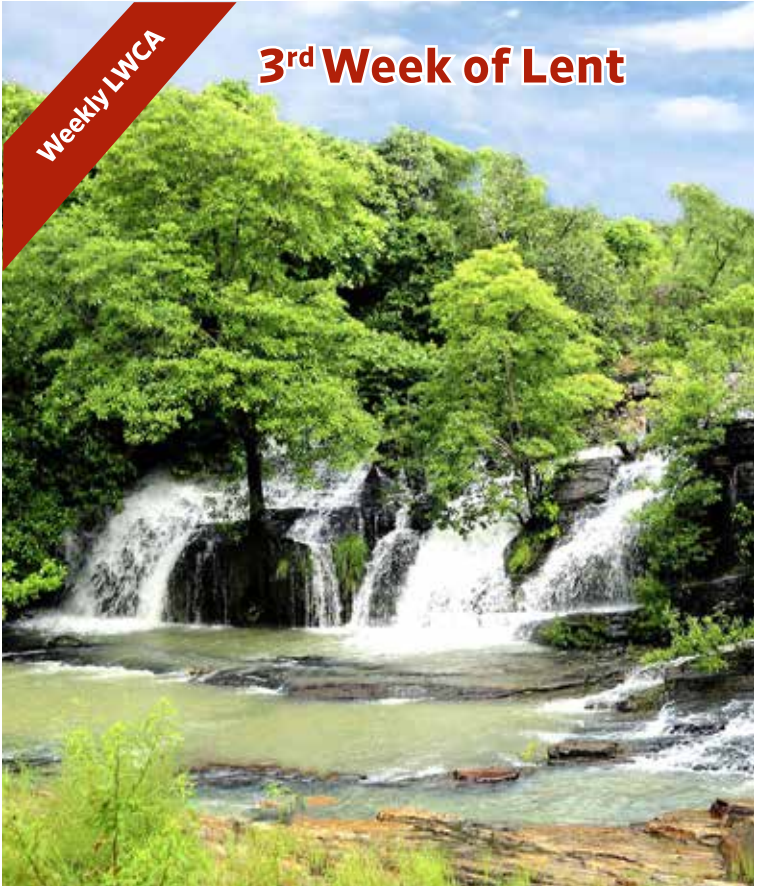
Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

3rd Week of Lent

bayard africque



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Liturgical texts:

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On our cover: Kota falls, northern region of Benin.

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Editorial

March 2023



Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Salifu,
Tema-Ghana

We Are Sorry

Pain is an unpleasant experience. It is that which nobody wants to go through, yet, that is not the case. The aged go through a moment of pain, the youth also experience it.

What caused your pain? When did it happen? What is your relationship with the person who caused you pain? How did you manage the pain?

Some people may have been hurt by members of the Church. This might be verbal, sexual, etc. On account of the pain, some victims might want to dissociate themselves from the faith or even commit suicide.

If you are a victim of the above, please seek spiritual direction. Speak to someone you can confide in. Hide nothing. Bring out everything you have within yourself. We are sorry for the harm caused to you. Our prayers are with you. Pope Francis puts the above in these words: “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.”



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/>

The Holy Mass: Introduction

The Holy Mass begins with the sign of the cross during the initial rites and ends with the sign of the cross during the concluding rites. However, before the first sign of the cross, the faithful already prepare for Holy Mass from their respective homes, and at the end of the Mass, the celebrant sends the faithful on mission. In this regard, the faithful are invited to live according to the Word of God that they have heard and to be the living sacrifice that they have participated in. That is the reason why the prayer after communion often creates a link between the Eucharistic celebration and real life. As an example, the prayer after communion of the fifth Sunday in the Ordinary Time, Year A says this: *O God, who have willed that we be partakers in the one Bread and the one Chalice, grant us, we pray, so to live that, made one in Christ, we may joyfully bear fruit for the salvation of the world.*

The Holy Mass is composed of two parts: The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The two parts are linked. In fact, the Word that the faithful hear in the first part is the same Word that becomes flesh in

the second part. For this reason, the faithful are invited to participate in the entire Mass. It is worth saying that the second part of Holy Mass can never be celebrated without the first. In other words, the Liturgy of the Eucharist cannot stand on its own. It is the continuation of the first part. On the contrary, the first part can be celebrated without the second. This is the case of the celebration of the Word without a priest.

As in every liturgical celebration, during Holy Mass, it is God who speaks to us. He is the one who takes the initiative. We just respond to his call. The Holy Mass should not, therefore, be reduced to a mere external ceremony. But it is, as Pope Francis likes to say, the encounter between God and his people. In fact, the two major liturgical actors are Christ and the Church.

The Eucharist brings us together as one people. All our differences (tribes, races, preferences, etc.) disappear because we are all children of God. Indeed, the purpose of the Eucharist is unity as stated in the Missal: *“Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit”*. In this perspective, the faithful who participate in Holy Mass

should be aware that they belong to one people: The People of God.

In a Eucharistic celebration, it is necessary to use the official texts. The Church always provides liturgical books for the people celebrating to use. To invent personal texts and use them in the Eucharistic celebration is to go against the Church's prescriptions. Although we are one people, in the celebration of the Eucharist each of us plays his own role. In fact, there are different ministers: the priest, the deacon, the altar boys, the readers, the choir, the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the assembly, etc.

In traditional African cultures, people made sacrifices for various reasons: recognition of the greatness of the gods, request for a good harvest, request for health, protection against evil spirits and bad weather, etc. When the missionaries arrived, they christianized some of the traditional practices. African Christians understand that the Mass is a sacrifice offered to God to glorify him and for their own sanctification.

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



Sunday March 12

3rd Sunday of Lent

*Exodus 17: 3-7/Psalms (94) 95: 1-2. 6-7. 8-9/Romans 5: 1-2. 5-8/
John 4: 5-42)*



“...if you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, « Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” (John 4:10)



The Living Water

For us to contemplate the message of this Gospel passage better, we need to take into account some of the historical context.

First, that the Samaritans were despised and even hated by the Jews because of a number of historical rivalries and because the Jews considered them to be an “unpure” race, “children of prostitution”.

Secondly, for a man to talk about religion with a woman was something unusual, since they had no right to approach the Holy Scriptures.

And finally, “living water” at that time meant water flowing in a river.

With this context we can now approach the text. The dialouge between Jesus and the Samaritan woman begins by breaking with the first obstacle to attain true eternal life: hatred between human races. Jesus, a Jewish man, should not talk to a Samaritan, more especially if she was a woman. However, we see Jesus, taking advantage of her need she was thirsty seeking to find the way to break with the second



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obstacle, the sin of the woman (she had had 5 husbands). We see how in this journey towards the inner liberation of the Samaritan woman, she resists, she turns it around, she appeals to her religious traditions, she speaks with half-truths. She does not want to go to the heart of the problem: her inner life.

Once she manages to recognize that the man in front of her is the Messiah, she can begin to become the spring of living water that Jesus had promised her if she drank of his water. She then runs to the people of her village to announce that she has met the Christ, the Messiah, her Savior.

Today the Gospel tells us that a Christian's life is that continuous dialogue with Christ through which he makes of us true fountains of living water, true springs from which others can drink the love of God.

How many of us walk through life like that Samaritan woman? How many evasions and justifications do we use to avoid allowing God to come in and heal us fully! May we never be blinded by lies and justifications of all kinds that come to mind. May we know how to recognize that we are “thirsty” for God.

Rev. Fr. Silvano Ochuodho, Nairobi, Kenya



Entrance Antiphon (*Ps (24) 25:15-16*)

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

OR: (*EZ 36:23-26*)

When I prove my holiness among you, I will gather you from all the foreign lands; and I will pour clean water upon you and cleanse you from all your impurities, and I will give you a new spirit, says the Lord.

Collect

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Exodus 17:3-7*)

A reading from the Book of Exodus

In those days: The people thirsted for water, and the people murmured against Moses, and said, “Why did you



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bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" So Moses cried to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." And the Lord said to Moses, "Pass on before, taking with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand the rod with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the fault-finding of the children of Israel, and because they put the Lord to the test by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm _____
(Psalm (94) 95:1-2.6-7abc.7d-9)

O that to-day you would list-en to the
voice of the Lord. Do not hard-en your hearts!



R. O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

Come, let us ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the rock who saves us. Let us come into his presence, giving thanks; let us hail him with a song of praise. R.

O come; let us bow and bend low. Let us kneel before the God who made us, for he is our God and we the people who belong to his pasture, the flock that is led by his hand. R.

O that today you would listen to his voice! “Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert when your forebears put me to the test; when they tried me, though they saw my work.” R.

Second Reading (Romans 5:1-2.5-8)—————

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brethren: Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory



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of God. And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Acclamation (*John 2:42.15*)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Lord, you are truly the Saviour of the world; give me living water, that I may not thirst. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel (*John 4:5-42*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Jesus came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"



For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?” Jesus said to her, “Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.” Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly.” The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true



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worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things.” Jesus said to her “I who speak to you am he.” Just then his disciples came. They marvelled that he was talking with a woman, but none said, “What do you wish?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” They went out of the city and were coming to him. Meanwhile the disciples begged him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” So the disciples said to one another, “Has any one brought him food?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.” Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He



told me all that I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of world.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.

℟. **Lord, listen to our prayer!**

For religious, political and traditional leaders in Africa and in other parts of the world, let us pray to the Lord our God. ℟.

For a closer relationship and personal experience with Christ, let us pray to the Lord our God. ℟.

For those who still do not believe in Christ, for our salvation and the salvation of the world, let us pray to the Lord our God. ℟.



Sunday March 12

Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbour. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon (*Jn 4:13-14*)

For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord, the water I shall give will become in him a spring welling up to eternal life.

Prayer after Communion

As we receive the pledge of things hidden in heaven, and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Monday March 13

3rd Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (83) 84:3) My soul is longing and yearning for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out to the living God.

Collect

May your unfailing compassion, O Lord, cleanse and protect your Church, and since without you she cannot stand secure, may she be always governed by your grace. Through Christ our Lord...
Amen.

Reading ---

(2 Kings 5:1-15a)

A reading from the second Book of Kings

In those days: Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favour, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valour, but he was a leper. Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little maid from the land of Israel, and she waited on Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the

prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” So Naaman went in and told his lord, “Thus and so spoke the maiden from the land of Israel.” And the king of Syria said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten festal garments. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, “When this letter reaches you know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.” And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy?

Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me.” But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel.” So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the door of Elisha’s house. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.” But Naaman was angry, and went away, saying, “Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand

over the place, and cure the leper. Are not Abana and Pharper, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of little child, and he was clean. Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came

and stood before him; and he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel." The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (41) 42: 2.3; 43: 3.4)

R. My soul is thirsting for God, the living God. When can I enter and appear before the face of God?

Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God. R.

My soul is thirsting for God, the living God; when can I enter and appear before the face of God? R.

O send forth your light and your truth; they will

guide you on. They will bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. R.

And I will come to the altar of God, to God, my joy and gladness. To you will I give thanks on the harp, O God, my God. R.

Acclamation

(Ps (129) 130:5.7)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. I wait for the Lord, and in his word I hope; with him is mercy and plenteous redemption. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel _____ *(Luke 4:24-30)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

At that time: When Jesus had come to Nazareth, he said to the people in the synagogue, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian. When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled



with wrath. And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But passing through the midst of them he went away. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

May what we offer you, O Lord, in token of our service, be transformed by you into the sacrament of salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps (116) 117:1.2) **O praise the Lord, all you nations, for his merciful love towards us is great.**

Prayer after Communion

May communion in this
your Sacrament, we pray,
O Lord, bring with it

purification and the unity
that is your gift. Through
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Commentary

Love for Others

2 Kings 5: 1-15b / Luke 4: 24-30

“No prophet is well received in his own country.” This has already happened many times not only in the Old Testament, but also in the history of the Church as we see saints loved throughout the world but criticized in their own homeland.

It is not necessary for a saint to be outwardly spectacular, even if his union with God is often really noticeable through his love for others; it is enough for him to be spectacular inwardly: in his love, in his dedication, in his humility, in his hidden and discreet sacrifice.

Rev. Fr. Silvano Ochuodho, Nairobi, Kenya



Tuesday March 14

3rd Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 17:6.8) **To you I call, for you will surely heed me, O God; turn your ear to me; hear my words. Guard me as the apple of your eye; in the shadow of your wings protect me.**

Collect

May your grace not forsake us, O Lord, we pray, but make us dedicated to your holy service and at all times obtain for us your help. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Daniel 3:2.11-20)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel

In those days: Azariah stood and offered this prayer; in the midst of the fire he opened his mouth and said: “For your name’s sake do not give us up utterly, and do not break your covenant, and do not withdraw your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham your beloved and for the sake of Isaac your servant and Israel your holy one, to

whom you promised to make their descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the shore of the sea. For we, O Lord, have become fewer than any nation, and are brought low this day in all the world because of our sins. And at this time there is no prince, or prophet, or leader, no burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, no place to make an offering before you or to find mercy. Yet with a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted, as though it were with burnt offerings of rams and bulls, and with tens of thousands of fat lambs; such may our sacrifice be in your

sight this day, and may we wholly follow you, for there will be no shame for those who trust in you. And now with all our heart we follow you, we fear you and seek your face. Do not put us to shame, but deal with us in your forbearance and in your abundant mercy. Deliver us in accordance with your marvellous works, and give glory to your name, O Lord!”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
*(Psalm 25:4-5ab. 6 and
 7cd.8-9 (R. 6a)*

R. Remember your
 compassion, O Lord.

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. **R.**

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. **R.**

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. **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 —————
(Matthew 18: 21-35)

**A reading from the holy
 Gospel according to Mat-
 thew**

At that time: Peter came
 up and said to Jesus,
 “Lord, how often shall
 my brother sin against
 me, and I forgive him?
 As many as seven times?”
 Jesus said to him, “I do not
 say to you seven times,
 but seventy times seven.
 “Therefore the kingdom of

heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' "And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said,

'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' "He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my

heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant us, O Lord, we pray, that this saving sacrifice may cleanse us of our faults and become an oblation pleasing to your

almighty power. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Ps (14) 15:1-2) **Lord, who may abide in your tent, and dwell on your holy mountain? Whoever walks without fault and does what is just.**

Prayer after Communion

May the holy partaking of this mystery give us life, O Lord, we pray, and grant us

both pardon and protection. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Love One Another

Commentary

**Daniel 3: 25. 34-43/ Psalms 25: 4-5ab. 6
and 7bc. 8 and 9/ Matthew 18: 21-35**

Does the capacity to forgive have a *quota*? Yes, it does, in the sense that it has a capacity: the same as the capacity to love. If I love little, I will have little capacity to forgive; if I love much, I will have much.

Anyone of us could have asked Christ the same question: "How much should I love my brother? His answer is clear: "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34), that is, without measure, which He symbolically express with the phrase: "up to seventy times seven."

Rev. Fr. Silvano Ochuodho, Nairobi, Kenya



Wednesday March 15

3rd Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (118) 119:133) **Let my steps be guided by your promise; may evil never rule me.**

Collect

Grant, we pray; O Lord, that, schooled through Lenten observance and nourished by your word, through holy restraint we may be devoted to you with all our heart and be ever united in prayer. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Deuteronomy 4:1.5-9)

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

Moses spoke to the people, saying, “And now, O Israel, give heed to the statutes and the ordinances which I teach you, and do them; that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, gives you. Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land which you are entering

to take possession of it. Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day? "Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm 147:12-13.15-
16.19-20)***

R. O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord!

O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord! O Sion, praise your God! He has strengthened the bars of your gates; he has blessed your children within you. R.

He sends out his word to the earth, and swiftly runs his command. He showers down snow like wool; he scatters hoarfrost like ashes. R.

He reveals his word to Jacob; to Israel, his decrees and judgments. He has not dealt thus with other nations; he has not taught them his judgments. R.

Acclamation

(John 6:63c.68c)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life; you have the words of eternal life.
Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel

(Matthew 5:17-19)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away; not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever

then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called in the kingdom of heaven.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the prayers of your people along with these sacrificial offerings, and defend those who celebrate your mysteries from every kind of danger. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps (15) 16:11) **You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, O Lord.**

Prayer after Communion

May the heavenly banquet at which we have been fed, sanctify us, O Lord, and, cleansing us of all

errors, make us worthy of your promises from on high. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Keeping the Commandments

Deuteronomy 4:1. 5-9/ Psalm 147: 12-13. 15-16. 19-20/ Mathew 5: 17-19

Commentary

The Church, the new People of God, now has the mission of ensuring that not a single one of these commandments, even the least of them, is broken. Led by the successors of the apostles, the Church has kept the doctrine intact throughout the centuries, while at the same time guided the faithful to apply it to the current situations of each era and of each people.

Let us ask our Lord Jesus that we may effectively fight the fear of rules, of commandments, that is there in our environment as if they were against freedom.

Rev. Fr. Silvano Ochuodho, Nairobi, Kenya



Thursday March 16

3rd Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord. In whatever tribulation they will call out to me, I will hear them, and I will be their Lord for ever.

Collect

We implore your majesty most humbly, O Lord, that as the feast of our salvation draws ever closer, so we may press forward all the more eagerly towards the worthy celebration of the paschal mystery. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading --- *(Jeremiah 7:23-28)*

A reading from the Book of Jeremiah

Thus says the Lord: “This command I gave my people, ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’ But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went back and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently

sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day, yet they did not listen to me, or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers. “So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to them. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. And you shall say to them, “This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
***(Psalm (94) 95:
1-2.6-7abc.7d-9)***

R. O that today! You would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

Come, let us ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the rock who saves us. Let us come into his presence, giving thanks; let us hail him with a song of praise. R.

O come; let us bow and bend low. Let us kneel before the God who made us, for he is our God and we the people who belong to his pasture, the flock that is led by his hand. R.

O that today you will listen to his voice! “Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert when your forebears put me to

the test; when they tried me, though they saw my work.” 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 11:14-23)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

At that time: Jesus was casting out a demon that was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke and the people marvelled. But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the

prince of demons”; while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and house falls upon house. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; but when one stronger than he

assails him overcomes him, he takes away his armour in which he trusted, and divides his spoil. He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Cleanse your people, Lord, we pray, from every taint of wickedness, that their gifts may be pleasing to you;

and do not let them cling to false joys, for you promise them the rewards of your truth. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps (118) 119:4-5) **You have laid down your precepts to be carefully kept; may my ways be firm in keeping your statutes.**

Prayer after Communion

Graciously raise up, O Lord, those you renew with

this Sacrament, that we may come to possess your salvation both in mystery and in the manner of our life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Free Will

Commentary

Luke 11: 14-23

Christ performs a patent miracle, and simple people are amazed. But others prefer to look for the “squaring of the circle” before recognizing that Christ is God.

One can always find a way not to believe in Jesus. It must be so, because otherwise we would not love Him freely, but rather obliged by the evidence.

What is my attitude in the face of so many interventions of God in my life? These are part of God’s ordinary Providence: the ordinary things that happen in our life are willed and sent by God for our good.

Rev. Fr. Silvano Ochuodho, Nairobi, Kenya



Friday March 17

3rd Week of Lent

Ferial

or **St Patrick, bishop**, *optional memorial*.

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (85) 86:8.10) **Among the gods there is none like you O Lord, for you are great and do marvellous deeds; you are alone God.**

Collect

Pour your grace into our hearts, we pray, O Lord, that we may be constantly drawn away from unruly desires and obey by your own gift the heavenly teaching you give us. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Hosea 14:1-9)

A reading from the Book of Prophet Hosea

Thus says the Lord: Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take with you words and return to the Lord; say to him, “Take away all iniquity; accept that which is good and we will render the fruit of our lips. Assyria shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses; and

we will say no more, ‘Our God,’ to the work of our hands. In you the orphan finds mercy.” I will heal their faithfulness; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them. I will be as the dew to Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, he shall strike root as the poplar, his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive and his fragrance like Lebanon. They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow, they shall flourish as a garden; they shall blossom as the vine, their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress, from me comes your fruit. Whoever

is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the Lord are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (80) 81:6c-8a.8bc-9.
10-11ab.14 and 17)***

***R. I am the Lord your God:
listen to my voice.***

A voice I did not know said to me: “I freed your shoulder from the burden; your hands were freed from the builder’s basket. You called in distress and I delivered you.” *R.*

“I answered, concealed in the thunder; at the waters of Meribah I tested you. Listen, my people, as I warn you. O Israel, if only you would heed!” R.

“Let there be no strange god among you, nor shall you worship a foreign god. I am the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. R.

“O that my people would heed me, that Israel would walk in my ways! But Israel I would feed with finest wheat, and satisfy with honey from the rock. 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 ————— *(Mark 12:28b-34)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At that time: One of the scribes came up to Jesus and asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that he is one, and there is

no other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any question. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Look with favour, we pray, Lord, on the offerings we delicate, that they may be pleasing in your sight and always be salutary for us. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Mk 12:33) **To love God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself, is worth more than any sacrifice.**

Prayer after Communion

May your strength be at work in us, O Lord,

pervading our minds and bodies, that what we have received by participating in this Sacrament, may

bring us the fullness of redemption. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Holiness

Commentary

Mark 12: 28-34

Am I loving God with all my heart or do I have a divided heart? Who am I putting first in my intentions? Am I looking for God: what He wants, what He needs from me, what He expects from me; or am I content with a “going along for the ride” which, deep down, is selfishness?

God wants me to be holy, not just to remain calm, satisfied with myself, or even to look good in front of others. May I therefore know how to dedicate quality time to my Christian formation, as much as I dedicate to my professional formation ?

Rev. Fr. Silvano Ochuodho, Nairobi, Kenya



Saturday March 18

3rd Week of Lent

Ferial

or **St Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop**, *optional memorial*

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (102) 103:2-3) **Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits; it is he who forgives all your sins.**

Collect

Rejoicing in this annual celebration of our Lenten observance, we pray, O Lord, that with our hearts set on the paschal mysteries, we may be gladdened by their full effects. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading _____ **(Hosea 6:1-6)**

A reading from the Book of Prophet Hosea

“Come, let us return to the Lord, for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring

rains that water the earth.” What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and my judgement goes forth as the light. For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
(*Psalm* ⁽⁵⁰⁾ 51:3-4.18-19.20-21ab)

℟. I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.

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. ℟

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. ℟

In your good pleasure, show favour to Sion; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in right sacrifice, burnt offerings wholly consumed. ℟

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 _____
(Luke 18:9-14)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

At that time: Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.’ “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast,

saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

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

Prayer over the Offerings

O God, by whose grace it comes to pass that we may approach your mysteries with minds made pure, grant, we pray, that in reverently handing them on, we may offer you fitting homage. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon
(Lk 18:13) **The tax collector stood at a distance,**

beating his breast and saying: O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Prayer after Communion

May we truly revere,
O merciful God, these

holy gifts by which you ceaselessly nourish us, and may we always partake of them with abundant faith in our heart. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gift of Grace

Commentary

Luke 18: 9-14

Sometimes, in our inner struggle and daily worries, we rely too much on ourselves: I will fix this, next time I will surely win, etc.

Although we do not consider ourselves righteous, sometimes we are geniuses when it comes to finding excuses: today I am too tired; now I do not have time; it is not always possible to win; others do not do it either, etc.

Let us ask our Lord Jesus to give us His grace so that we may improve in all ways and to learn to stop making excuses and justifications.

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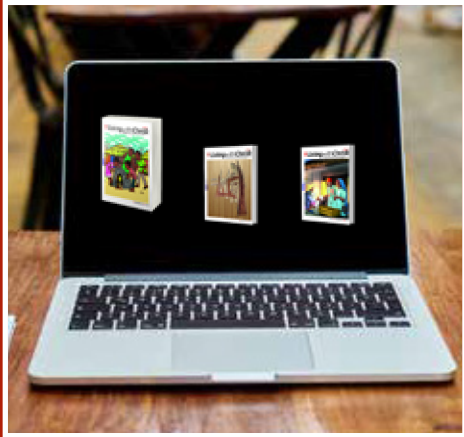
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