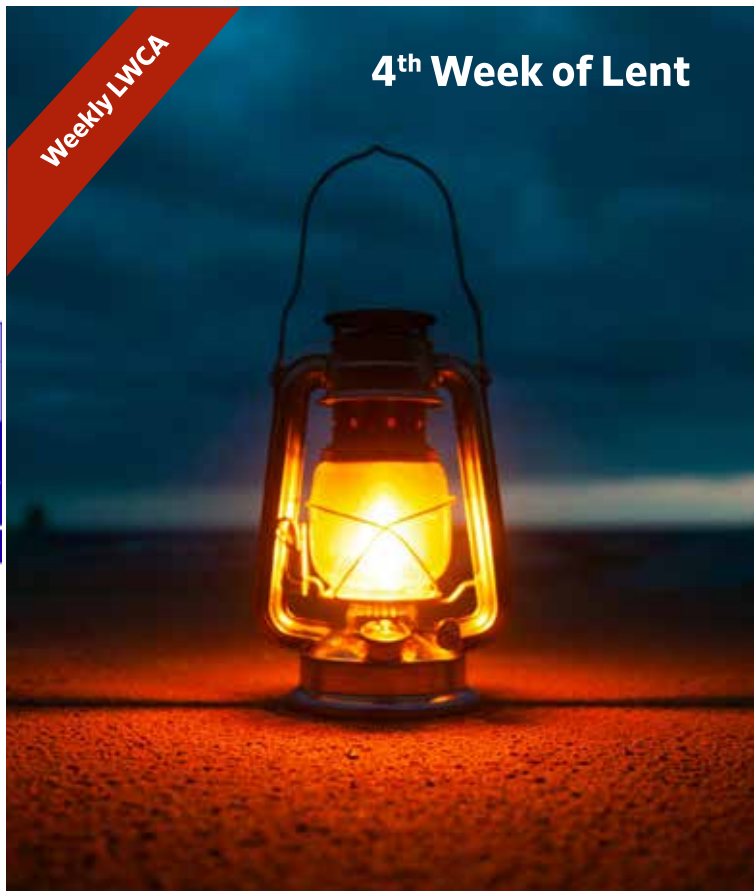


Weekly LWCA

4th Week of Lent

bayard afrique



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On our cover: Light has come into
the world

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Editorial

March 2024



Rev. Fr. Dennis Opoku, Tema Ghana

Tickets to Heaven

Dear family of God, As we embark on the fourth week of Lent, a question arises that I wish to share with you: How far along are we in our Lenten journey? It is already the fourth week, with only a few more to go until its culmination. If you find yourself not having progressed much, rest assured that the bus of faith is still at the station, patiently waiting for you. Within this metaphorical bus, you will discover tickets leading to various faith destinations, such as the cross symbolizing liberation, the healing pool of Bethesda and Jesus, the giver of life. I encourage you to collect all these tickets for a fulfilling journey.

Throughout this spiritual expedition, we are guided towards a new birth in heaven. It is a transformative process initiated by God's profound love for humankind, prompting Him to send His only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to sacrifice Himself for our redemption. Jesus did not come on a mission of condemnation but rather on a mission of salvation. We can partake in the experience of this new birth by exercising faith—by boarding the divine bus provided by God and asking Him to be our Savior and driver.



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For the new martyrs: We pray that those who risk their lives for the gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.

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

The Functions of the Instituted Ministers During the Holy Mass

The ministries of acolyte and lector (reader) are the two instituted ministries in the Catholic Church. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal specifies the duties of the different ministers in the Eucharistic celebration. After focusing the attention on the duties of the ordained ministers in the previous article, I am now underlining the functions of the acolyte and of the lector (reader).

During the Entrance procession, the acolyte may carry the Cross. It is important to know that the minister who carries the cross walks between two other ministers who carry lighted candles. The one who carries the thurible is in front of everyone.

The various functions of the acolyte are specified by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (187-193). The acolyte is instituted to serve at the altar and to assist the priest and the deacon. He may be called to carry some duties that can occur at the same moment of the



Focus on the Symbols

Eucharistic celebration. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal proposes that those various duties be distributed among other acolytes and if there is only one acolyte, he will perform the more important duties leaving the other to the other ministers.

Through the entire celebration, the acolyte approaches the priest or the deacon to present the book to them and to assist them in any way or another. That is why he should occupy a place in the sanctuary in order to perform his duties well. In the liturgy of the Eucharist, in the absence of a deacon, the acolyte places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall and the Missal on the altar. He assists the priest in receiving the gifts and when appropriate, brings the bread and the wine to the altar and brings them to the priest. When incense is used, the acolyte presents the thurible to the priest and assists him when he incenses the offerings, the cross and the altar. It is his duty to incense the priest and the people.

The acolyte distributes the holy communion as an extraordinary minister. In fact, the ordinary ministers of the distribution of the holy communion are the bishop, the

Focus on the Symbols

priest and the deacon. But the help of an acolyte may be needed in some circumstances.

The various duties of the lector are specified by the General Instruction of the roman Missal (194-198). The lector (reader) is instituted to proclaim the readings from the Sacred scriptures, with the exception of the Gospel. He may also announce the intentions for the universal prayer and in the absence of a psalmist, recites the responsorial psalm. It is important to know that the readings are made from the ambo. In the absence of a deacon, the reader may carry the Book of the Gospels during the procession to the altar. If there is no singing during Mass, the lector reads the Entrance Antiphon and the Communion Antiphon.

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



Sunday March 10

4th Sunday of Lent

Second Scrutiny of the Elect. Scrutiny: 1 Samuel 16: 1b. 6-7. 10-13a/ Psalm 23: 1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6 (1)/ Ephesians 5: 8-14/ John 9:1-41. Otherwise: 2 Chronicles 36: 14-16. 19-23/ Psalm 137: 1-2. 3. 4-5. 6 (6ab)/ Ephesians 2: 4-10/ John 3:14-21



"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, the Son of Man must also be lifted up." (Jn 3, 14-21)



God's Compassionate Plan For Restoration

As the Church begins the second part of Lent, Christians are urged to reflect deeply on the life of Christ the Saviour. The fourth week of Lent involves a renewed commitment, self-denial, and a focus on spiritual growth, as we desire to celebrate the approaching mystery of our salvation with greater freedom and joy.

The first reading highlights the increasing unfaithfulness of the people, including the leaders or the priests. Despite repeated warnings from God through prophets, the people persist in their hateful practices, defiling the consecrated temple in Jerusalem. The Lord, in His mercy, sends messengers to call the people to repentance, but they mock and scorn the prophets, leading to the inevitable consequence of divine judgment. The scripture further describes the devastating consequences of the people's disobedience where the temple is destroyed, the walls of Jerusalem are broken down, and the people are carried into exile in Babylon. As Christians, we are reminded of the importance of obedience to God's commands and the consequences of persistent unfaithfulness.



Sunday March 10

The Gospel appeals to Christians to comprehend the necessity of faith in Jesus for eternal life, for God's profound love and redemptive plan, for the consequences of belief and unbelief, and for the transformative power of the light that Jesus brings into the world.

The fourth week which is also the second scrutiny of the elect in the church the scriptures recount the anointing of David as the future king of Israel by the prophet Samuel. In this passage, God emphasizes that human judgment is based on external factors, but God sees beyond appearances to the heart. This scripture is a reminder that God's ways and criteria often differ from human expectations, focusing on inner qualities and purpose rather than external appearances. Have there been we have judged people by their external appearances other than inner qualities? Let us imitate Christ and see beyond external appearances to the heart.

Rev. Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth, FSSA, Nairobi, Kenya



Entrance Antiphon (*Is 66:10-11*)

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

The Gloria in excelsis (*Glory to God in the highest*) **is not said**

Collect

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten towards the solemn celebrations to come. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading (*2 Chronicles 36:14-16.19-23*) —————
A reading from the second Book of Chronicles

In those days: All the leading priests and the people were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place; but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising



Sunday March 10

his words, and scoffing at his prophets, till the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, till there was no remedy. And the Chaldeans burnt the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious vessels. The king of the Chaldeans took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil seventy years. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him. Let him go up.'" The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Responsorial Psalm _____
(Psalm (136) 137:1-2.3.4-5.6)



R. O let my tongue cleave to my palate if I remember you not.

By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat and wept,
remembering Sion;
on the poplars that grew there
we hung up our harps. R.

For it was there that they asked us,
our captors, for songs,
our oppressors, for joy.



Sunday March 10

“Sing to us,” they said,
“one of Sion’s songs”. R.

O how could we sing
the song of the Lord / on foreign soil?
If I forget you, Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither! R.

O let my tongue cleave to my palate
if I remember you not,
if I prize not Jerusalem
as the first of my joys! R.

Second Reading (Ephesians 2:4-10)

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brethren: God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God



- not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Acclamation (*John 3:16*)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should have eternal life. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

Gospel (*John 3:14-21*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Jesus said to Nicodemus, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because



Sunday March 10

their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God. 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 submit humbly to the searching light of Christ, we pray to the Lord: **R.**

For leaders with courage, wisdom and compassion, we pray to the Lord: **R.**

For people weighed down by poverty, despair or infirmity, we pray to the Lord: **R.**

In thanksgiving for the witness of all catechumens, we pray to the Lord: **R.**



Prayer over the Offerings

We bring you with joy these offerings, which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them and present them to you, as is fitting, for the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon (*Ps (121) 122:3-4*)

Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one together. It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to praise the name of the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Monday March 11

4th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (30) 31:7-8) **As for me, I trust in the Lord. Let me be glad and rejoice in your mercy, for you have seen my affliction.**

Collect

O God, who renew the world through mysteries beyond all telling, grant, we pray, that your Church may be guided by your eternal design and not deprived of your help in the present age. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Isaiah 65:17-21)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Thus says the Lord: Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping or the cry of



distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm——
(Psalm (29) 30:2 and 4.5-6.11-12a and 13b)***

℟. I will extol you, Lord, for you have raised me up.

I will extol you, Lord, for you have raised me up, and have not let my enemies rejoice over me. O Lord, you have lifted up my soul

from the grave, restored me to life from those who sink into the pit. *℟.*

Sing psalms to the Lord, you faithful ones; give thanks to his holy name. His anger lasts a moment; his favour all the through life. At night there are tears, but at dawn comes joy. *℟.*

Hear, O Lord, and have mercy on me; be my helper, O Lord. You have changed my mourning into dancing. O Lord my God, I will thank you forever. *℟.*

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



Monday March 11

Gospel —————
(John 4:43-54)

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

At that time: Jesus departed [from Samaria] to Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country. So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast, for they too had gone to the feast. So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come

down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was living. So he asked them the hour when he began to mend, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour, the fever left him.” The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live”, and he himself believed,



and all his household. This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

May we receive O Lord, we pray, the effects of this offering dedicated to you, so that, we may be cleansed from old earthly ways, and

be renewed by growth in heavenly life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ez 36:27) **I will place my spirit within you and make you walk according to my laws; and my judgements you shall keep and observe, says the Lord.**



Monday March 11

Prayer after Communion

May your holy gifts, O Lord, we pray, give us life by making us new, and,

by sanctifying us, lead us to things eternal. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Divine Restoration

Commentary

John 4: 43-54

Through the Gospel of St. John, we are reminded of the transformative power of belief in Jesus. Christ encourages the people to move beyond miracles and instead deepen their faith in Him. In this scenario, we learn that true faith goes beyond seeking signs and wonders but rests in trusting the person of Jesus and His promises. Therefore, even in circumstances that may seem challenging in our Christian life, we are reminded of complete trust in Christ's words.

***Rev. Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth,
FSSA, Nairobi, Kenya***



Tuesday March 12

4th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Is 55:1) **All who are thirsty, come to the waters, says the Lord. Though you have no money, come and drink with joy.**

Collect

May the venerable exercises of the holy devotion shape the hearts of your faithful, O Lord, to welcome worthily the paschal mystery and proclaim the praises of the salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Ezekiel 47:1-9.12)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

In those days: [The angel] brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple towards the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the right side of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar towards the east. Then he brought me out by the way of the north gate, and let me round on the outside

to the outer gate, that faces towards the east; and the water was coming out on the right side. Going on eastward with a line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me though the water; and it was ankle-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the loins. Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said to men “Son of man, have, have you seen this?” Then he led me back along the bank of the river. As I went back, I saw upon the bank of the river very many

trees on the one side and on the other. And he said to me, “This waters flows towards the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when, it enters the stagnant waters of the sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever the river goes every living creature which swarms will live, and there will be very many fish; for this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. “And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their



fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.” The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm ⁽⁴⁵⁾ 46:2-3.5-6.8-9)

R. The Lord hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

God is for us a refuge and strength, an ever-present help in time of distress: so we shall not fear though the earth should rock, though the mountains quake to the heart of the sea. R.

The waters of a river give joy to God’s city, the holy place, the dwelling of the Most High. God is within, it cannot be shaken; God

will help it at the dawning of the day. R.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Come and behold the works of the Lord, the awesome deeds he has done on the earth. R.

Acclamation (Psalm ⁽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 —
(John 5:1-16)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

There was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up

to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethzatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed. One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked. Now that day

was Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet." But he answered them, "The man who healed me said to me, 'Take up your pallet and walk'". They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your pallet, and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews

persecuted Jesus, because he did this on the Sabbath. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

We offer to you, O Lord, these gifts which you yourself have bestowed; may they attest to your care as creator for this our mortal life, and effect in

us the healing that brings us immortality. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps (22) 23: 1-2) **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose, near restful waters he leads me.**

Prayer after Communion

Purify our minds, O Lord, we pray, and renew them with this heavenly sacrament, that we may

find help for our bodies now and likewise in times to come. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Jesus, the Healer**Commentary****John 5: 1-16**

The Gospel portrays Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda where He healed a man who had suffered for 38 years. Therefore, the healing aspect depicts the transformative power of God and the importance of faith and response to divine intervention.

We are invited to seek God's mercy, especially in situations that have troubled our lives and faith. Jesus is the healer and when we confess our sins and see the need to turn to him, we will experience his power that leads to our conversion and healing.

***Rev. Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth,
FSSA, Nairobi, Kenya***



Wednesday March 13

4th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (68) 69: 14) I pray to you,
O Lord, for a time of your
favour. In your great mercy,
answer me, O God, with
your salvation that never
fails.

Collect

O God, who reward the
merits of the just and
offer pardon to sinners
who do penance, have
mercy, we pray, on those
who call upon you, that
the admission of our
guilt may serve to obtain
your pardon for our sins.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Reading

(Isaiah 49:8-15)

A reading from the Book
of Isaiah

Thus says the Lord: "In
a time of favour I have
answered you, in a day of
salvation I have helped
you; I have kept you and
given you as a covenant
to the people, to establish
the land, to apportion the
desolate heritages; saying
to the prisoners, 'Come
forth,' to those who are
in darkness, 'Appear.' They
shall feed along the ways,
on all bear heights shall be
their pasture; they shall not

hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be raised up. Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene.” Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his afflicted. But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me.” “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?” Even these may forget, yet

I will not forget you. The word of Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ 145)***

**R. The Lord is kind and
full of compassion**

The Lord is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in mercy. How good is the Lord to all, compassionate to all his creatures. R

The Lord is faithful in all his words, and holy in all his deeds. The Lord supports all who are bowed down. R

The Lord is just in all his ways, and holy in all his deeds. The Lord is close to

all who call him, who call on him in truth. R

Acclamation (*John*
11:25-26)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; he who believes in me shall never die. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ**

Gospel —————
(*John 5:17-30*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Jesus answered the Jews, “My Father is working still, and I am working.” This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with

God. Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. For the father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son, that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and

believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgement, but has passed from the death to life. “Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of the life. “I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgement is just, because I seek not my own

will but the will of him who sent me.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

May the power of the sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, O Lord, mercifully wipe away what is old in us, and increase in us grace of salvation and newness of life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(John 3:17) **God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.**

Prayer after Communion

May your heavenly gifts, O Lord, we pray, which you bestow as a heavenly

remedy on your people, not who receive them. Through
bring judgement to those Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**God's steadfast
faithfulness**

Commentary

Isaiah 49: 8-15

Prophet Isaiah shares about divine intervention, liberation, compassion, and the unwavering faithfulness of God even in the face of human doubt and despair. He points towards a future redemption and restoration that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. Despite the promises and divine assurances, the people of God feel forsaken and forgotten. God responds with a powerful metaphor, comparing His love to that of a mother for her child. This proves the unchanging and unconditional love of God.

***Rev. Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth,
FSSA, Nairobi, Kenya***



Thursday March 14

4th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (104) 105: 3-4) Let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice; turn to the Lord and his strengthened; constantly seek his face.

Collect

We invoke your mercy in humble prayer, O Lord, that you may cause us, your servants, corrected by penance and schooled by good works, to persevere sincerely in your commands and come safely to the paschal festivities. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Exodus 32:7-14)

A reading from the Book of Exodus

In those days: The Lord said to Moses, “Go down; for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought

you up out of the land of Egypt!” And the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation.” But Moses begged the Lord his God, and said, “O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent he brought them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and

to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you did swear by your own self, and did say to them ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.” And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people. The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (105) 106:19-20.21-22.23)

**R. O Lord, remember us
with the favour you show
to your people**

They fashioned a calf at Horeb, and worshipped an image of metal, they exchanged their glory for the image of a bull that eats grass. R.

They forgot the God who was their saviour, who had done such great things in Egypt, such wonders in the land of Ham, such marvels at the Red Sea. R.

For this he said he would destroy them, but Moses, the man he had chosen, stood in the breach before him, to turn back his anger from destruction. R.

Acclamation (John 3:16)

**Glory and praise to you,
O Christ.** God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son; that whoever believes in him should have eternal life.
**Glory and praise to you,
O Christ.**

Gospel —
(John 5:31-47)

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

At that time: Jesus said the Jews, “If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true; there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that the testimony which he bears to me is true. You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony which

I received is from man; but I say that you may be saved. He was a burning and a shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen; and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom he has sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is

they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men. But I know that you have not the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" The Gospel of the

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

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that what we offer in sacrifice may cleanse us in our frailty from every evil, and always grant us your protection. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Jer 31:33) I will place my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, says the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

May this Sacrament we have received purify us, we

pray, O Lord; and grant your servants freedom from all blame, that those bound by a guilty conscience, a glory

in fullness of heavenly remedy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**God's justice and
compassion**

Commentary

John 5: 31-47

St. John the Apostle in the Gospel highlights that Jesus refers to John the Baptist as a witness to His identity. Jesus brings up John as a conviction emphasizing that accepting the truth about Him is crucial for salvation. Jesus goes ahead to stress that His mission is not about receiving human praise but about revealing God's love. He discerns the lack of genuine love for God in the hearts of the Jews and highlights the importance of true devotion over external appearances."

***Rev.Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth,
FSSA, Nairobi, Kenya***



Friday March 15

4th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (53) 54:3-4) **O God, save me by your name; by your power, defend my cause. O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.**

Collect

O God, who have prepared fitting helps for us in our weakness, grant, we pray, that we may receive their healing effects with joy, and reflect them in a holy way of life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading ————— *(Wisdom 2:1a.12-22)*

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

Ungodly men reasoned unsoundly, saying to themselves, “Let us lie in wait for the righteous man, because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions; he reproaches us for sins against the law, and accuses us for sins against our training. He professes to have knowledge of God, and calls himself a child of the Lord. He became to us a reproof of our thoughts; the very sight of him is a burden

to us, because his manner of life is unlike that of others, and his ways are strange. We are considered by him as something base, and he avoids our ways as unclean; he calls the last end of the righteous happy, and boasts that God is his father. Let us see if his words are true, and let us test what will happen at the end of his life; for if the righteous man is God's son, he will help him, and deliver him from the hand of his adversaries. Let us test him with insult and torture, that we may find out how gentle he is, and make trial of his forbearance. Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for, according to what he says, he will be protected." Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray, for their wickedness

blinded them, and they did not know the secret purposes of God, nor hope for the wages of holiness, nor discern the prize for blameless souls. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm
(Psalm ⁽³³⁾ 34:17-18.19-20.21 and 23)

R. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted

The Lord turns his face against the wicked to destroy their remembrance from the earth. When the just cry out, the Lord hears, and rescues them in all their distress. *R.*

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; those whose spirit is crushed he will save. Many are the

trials of the just man, but from them all the Lord will rescue him. R

He will keep guard over all his bones; not one of this bones shall be broken. The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants. All who trust in him shall not be condemned. 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 ————— *(John 7:1-2.10.25-30)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: Jesus went about in Galilee; he would not go about in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of Tabernacles was at hand. But after his brethren had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that authorities really know that this is the Christ? Yet we know where this man comes from; and

when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.” So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from; but I have not come of my own accord; he who sent me is true, and him you do not know. I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.” So they sought to arrest him; but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

May this sacrifice, almighty God, cleanse us by its mighty power, and lead us to approach its source with ever greater purity. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Eph 1:7) **In Christ, we have redemption by his blood, and forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace.**

Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that as we pass from old

to new so, with former mind. Through Christ our
ways left behind, we may Lord. **Amen.**
be renewed in holiness of

Hostility toward the righteous

Commentary

John 7: 1-2. 10. 25-30

In this season of Lent, Jesus is encouraging us Christians to live a life of righteousness by adhering to God's ways. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is cautious about His movements due to the growing hostility of the Jewish leaders in Judea but despite the tension and the people's attempt to seize Jesus, divine protection shields Him from harm. The fact that Jesus' hour was not yet therefore shows that his ultimate destiny was under God's control.

Rev. Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth,
FSSA, Nairobi, Kenya



Saturday March 16

4th Week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (17) 18: 5.7) **The waves of the death rose about me; the pains of the netherworld surrounded me. In my anguish I called to the Lord and from his holy temple he heard my voice.**

Collect

May the working of your mercy, O Lord, we pray, direct our hearts aright, for without your grace, we cannot find favour in your sight. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading ————— *(Jeremiah 11:18-20)*

A reading from the Book of Jeremiah

The Lord made it known to me and I knew; then you did show me their evil deeds. But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. I did not know it was against me they devised schemes, saying, “Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more.” But, O Lord of hosts, who judge righteously, who test the heart and the mind,

let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause. The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm 7:2-3, 9bc-10, 11-12)***

R. O Lord, my God, I take refuge in you.

O Lord, my God, I take refuge in you. Save and rescue me from all my pursuers, lest they tear me apart like a lion, and drag me off with no one to rescue me. **R.**

Give judgement for me, O Lord, for I am just blameless of heart. Put an end to the evil of the wicked! Make the just man stand firm; it is you who test mind and heart, O God of justice! **R.**

God is a shield before me, who saves the upright of heart. God is a judge, just and powerful and patient, not exercising anger every day **R.**

Acclamation (Luke 8:15)

Glory and praise to you, O Christ. Blessed are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience. **Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

***Gospel —
(John 7:40-53)***

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

At that time: When they heard the words of Jesus, some of the people said, "This is really a prophet."

Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was? So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?” The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this man!” The Pharisees answered them “Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed.”

Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?” They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee.” They went each to his own house. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased, O Lord, we pray, with these oblations you receive from our hands, and even when our wills are defiant, constrain them mercifully to turn to you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(1 Pt 1:18-19) **By the precious blood of the Christ, the blood of a spotless and unblemished Lamb, we have been redeemed.**

Prayer after Communion

May your holy gifts purify us, O Lord, we pray, and by their working render us fully pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Divine Protection**Commentary****John 7: 40-53**

In today's Gospel, St. John depicts the diverse reactions to Jesus' identity, the disbelief and frustration of religious leaders, and the tension that ultimately leads to division among the people. The passage highlights the challenges of recognizing and accepting Jesus as the Messiah, as well as the growing opposition from religious authorities. Despite these challenges, it is crucial to recognize Jesus' divinity. We are extended an invitation to place our trust in divine protection..

***Rev. Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth,
FSSA, Nairobi, Kenya***



Publisher: Cédric BLOQUET
Publishing & Development Manager
Editor in Chief: Rev. Fr. Jean-Paul Sagadou a.a.
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Other **Contributors:**
Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. KOMBI, Rev. Sr. Jecinter Antoinette OKOTH

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ISSN: 2424-7464 ; **Contact:** Living With Christ
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





WhatsApp : **+225 05 94 79 75 68 / +254727074304**



Website : **[https:// www.livingwithchrist.africa](https://www.livingwithchrist.africa)**



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