

AFRICA

Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

1st Week of Lent

bayard afrique

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Liturgical texts:

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On our cover: Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness praying and fasting

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Editorial

February 2024



Rev. Fr. Walter C. Ihejirika, Nigeria

Prayer and fasting

In this first week of Lent, we reflect on two important pillars of our Lenten observances: prayer and fasting. In prayer, we reaffirm our faith in God as our heavenly Father and ask for our needs and that of our fellow human beings. Through fasting, we make sacrifices for our spiritual wellbeing and for the good of others. True fasting entails: “releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked ...” (Is 58:1-9) Just as our prayers are not only for our personal good, so too is true fasting. It is going out of one’s way to be kind to others, to help others and generally promote the wellbeing of others. As we live with Christ during this season of Lent, I pray that you may reap the prophetic blessings which flow from true fasting: “Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!” (Is 58:8).



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For the terminally ill: We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

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

The Duties of the Ordained Ministers During the Holy Mass

In this article I would like to focus on the duties of the ordained ministers during the Eucharistic celebration. It is important to know that the sacrament of Holy Orders includes the episcopate (bishop), the presbyterate (priest) and the diaconate (deacon). We will put an emphasis on what they all can do before focusing on what is reserved to each one of them.

Only ordained ministers venerate the Altar by kissing it at the beginning of the Holy Mass. Kissing the Altar is a very meaningful sign. The Altar symbolises Christ himself who convokes the Community. Therefore, they need to have to enter into a profound relationship with Him who is the first actor of every liturgical action. Therefore, the kissing of the Altar at the beginning of the holy Mass can be interpreted as a way of acknowledging the presence of Christ in the Community and declaring that nothing can be done without him. At the end of the Mass, the kissing of the Alter is like a thanksgiving

to Christ for all the graces that he has bestowed on the Community.

Ordained ministers are the only ones who recite the Apologies. Apologies are the prayers that the ministers recite quietly. For instance, during the offertory when the priest washes his hands, he recites the following apology quietly: ***Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*** Through the apologies, the ministers recognise their worthlessness before God and ask for a special grace so that they may carry out properly their ministry.

Let us now point out some specific liturgical roles that are linked to these three levels of ordination. It is important to know that a ministry does not suppress another. A bishop is still a priest and a deacon and a priest; a priest is still a deacon. Therefore, whatever a deacon can do in the Eucharistic celebration, a priest and a bishop can do it too.

To the bishop is reserved the ordinations: diaconal ordination, priestly ordination and episcopal ordination. In the case of the episcopal ordination, there is need for

three bishops: the presiding bishop is called *Consecrator* and the other two are *Co-consecrators*. Therefore, a catholic priest cannot ordain. He cannot even be delegated by the bishop. Moreover, ordinary minister of the Sacrament of confirmation is the bishop. But for this sacrament, he can delegate to a priest.

The priest is an ordinary minister of the Holy Eucharist. He celebrates an ordinary Mass. He celebrates all the sacraments except the Holy Orders. In the Eucharistic celebration, the deacon doesn't have anything that is reserved for him as far as the Holy orders are concerned. But when he is present at the celebration of the Eucharist, he has three major roles to play according to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal: a. He assists the priest and walks at his side, b. He ministers at the Altar, both as regards to the chalice and the book (Missal), c. He proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the priest celebrant, give the homily. Generally, at the end of the holy Mass, he is the one dismissing the assembly.

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



Sunday February 18

First Sunday of Lent

*Genesis 9: 8-15 / Psalm 25: 4-5. 6-7. 8-9 / 1 Peter 3: 18-22 /
Mark 1: 12-15*



"The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15)



A Victorious and Renewing Lenten 'Desert' Experience

We are in the renewing season of Lent which we began on Wednesday, a preparation for the Easter celebration of Jesus' resurrection and a favorable or opportune time, that invites us to return to God, something completely desirable and positive. We say an affirmative 'no' to the devil's lures, and to sin, trusting in God's covenant. It is a time to review our lives, reflect upon our thoughts, words and deeds, and concentrate our efforts more fully on the things of God; 'what is above' (Col 3:2). Every year, on the first Sunday of Lent, the Gospel speaks of Jesus' forty-day desert experience, when He was tempted by the devil, but ultimately is victorious over the forces of evil that beset Him. The desert marks the beginning of Jesus' battle with Satan; the ultimate test will be in Jesus' final hours on the cross. Similarly, our Lenten observances are only a beginning, a preparation for and a reinforcement of our ongoing struggle to resist the temptations we face in our lives. In the desert experience, Jesus endured, He teaches us that trials are not to defeat us, but to strengthen us.



Sunday February 18

We all face trials, but what we do with them makes all the difference; we can become bitter or transfigured by our trials. Whatever crisis we endure, it can be a source of victory. To enter the 'desert' implies the recognition of our fragility and fears. However, only with the Holy Spirit can we be comforted and sustained in our efforts. As the Holy Spirit protected Christ in the desert, so we too can count on the same kind of help. In moments of our 'desert journey' we too are assured of the presence of the same Holy Spirit, who also reminds us of our vows of Baptism in which we promised to reject sin and to follow Jesus. Only our own choice of rejection of God, by our free will, can forfeit the promise/covenant made to us by God. May this Lenten journey, be a time of grace and growth. May Christ, be our guide throughout the Lenten Journey.

Rev. Fr. Franc Mbiu, Tanzania



Entrance Antiphon (*Cf Ps 91:15*)

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

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

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 9:8-15*)

A reading from the Book of Genesis

God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every



living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.”

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

Responsorial Psalm _____ *(Psalm Ps 25:4-5ab.6 and 7bc.8-9 (R.)*



R. All your paths, O Lord, are mercy and faithfulness, for those who keep your covenant.



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.

Second Reading (1 Peter 3:18-22) —————

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter

Beloved: Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear



Sunday February 18

conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him. 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.**

Gospel (*Mark 1:12-15*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At that time: The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel." The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Creed is said.

Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.



R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, called to transformation in the spirit of Lent, we pray to the Lord: R.

For all who exercise authority over others, we pray to the Lord: R.

For all who dwell in the darkness of poverty, injustice, war or disease, we pray to the Lord: R.

For this community, called to be Good News for all we encounter, 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.**

Preface: The Temptation of the Lord.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our



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Lord. By abstaining forty long days from earthly food, he consecrated through his fast the pattern of our Lenten observance, and by overturning all the snares of the ancient serpent, taught us to cast out the leaven of malice, so that, celebrating worthily the paschal mystery, we might pass over at last to the eternal paschal feast. And so, with the company of Angels and Saints, as we sing the hymn of your praise, without end we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.

Communion Antiphon (*Mt 44*)

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

Or: Cf Ps 91

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 19

1st week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 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 judgement; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your 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 19:8.9.10.15
(R. see John 6:63c))

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 a 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.**

Love and Compassion

Commentary

Matthew 25: 31-46

The Gospel of today offers us love as a positive stimulus to personal conversion and amendment. The Lord will return as a Supreme Judge and we will be judged individually based on the standard of love we have shown. It will reveal those who have and haven't shown true compassion and mercy to others. Jesus identifies Himself with the lost, the least, and the last, no matter how disgusting they may appear to us. Do we treat 'these' with loving compassion? May our Lenten observances be inspired by love.

Rev. Fr. Franc Mbiu, Tanzania



Tuesday February 20

1st week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 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 says the Lord: “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there 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 34:4-5.6-7.16-17.18-19 (R. see 18b))

**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 troubles 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 Gos-
 pel 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

(Cf. 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.**

Prayer**Commentary****Matthew 6: 7-15**

One of the pillars for Lent is prayer, growing daily in our 'connectivity' with God and in the Gospel, Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray. Today, take a moment and ask yourself: how is my prayer life, my connectivity with God? Currently, at this time in your life and even more so during this Lenten season, what words of the 'Our Father' are most meaningful to you? What do you really stand in need of and what is it that you really desire to grow more in?

Rev. Fr. Franc Mbiu, Tanzania



Wednesday February 21

1st week of Lent

Ferial

Or: St. Peter Damian, optional memorial

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 25:62.22) **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, go 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 51:3-4.12-13.18-19 (R. 19b))***

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 judgement 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

(Cf. 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.**

The Love of Christ**Commentary****Luke 11: 29-32**

Most of us are bypassed by the liturgical seasons, especially the season of lent, whereby most of us might just realize its Easter yet no 'metanoia' has taken place in our lives. The Gospel reading invites us to re-focus on the Person of Jesus and the certitude He instills in us: Gazing at His suffering face during His Passion, can we still dare question His Love? Do we still ask for more signs? In Christ's blood-stained suffering face of the hour of the Cross, is indeed a sign per excellence.

Rev. Fr. Franc Mbiu, Tanzania



Thursday February 22

1st week of Lent

Feast

The Chair of St. Peter, the apostle

Entrance Antiphon

(Lk 22:32) **The Lord says to Simon Peter: I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.**

The Gloria in excelsis

(Glory to God in the highest) **is said.**

Collect

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that no tempests may disturb us, for you have set us fast on the rock of the

Apostle Peter's confession of faith. Through Christ our Lord **Amen.**

Reading

(1 Peter 5:1-4)

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter

Beloved: I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God

that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm 23:1-3a.3b-4.5.6
(R. 1))***

***R. The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.***

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;
he revives my soul. *R.*

He guides me along the
right path, for the sake of
his name. Though I should
walk in the valley of the
shadow of death, no evil
would I fear, for you are
with me. Your crook and
your staff will give me
comfort. *R.*

You have prepared a
table before me in the sight
of my foes. My head you
have anointed with oil; my
cup is overflowing. *R.*

Surely goodness and
mercy shall follow me all
the days of my life. In the
Lord's own house shall I
dwell for length of days
unending. *R.*



Acclamation

(Matthew 16:18)

Alleluia. Alleluia. You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. **Alleluia.**

Gospel

(Matthew 16:13-19)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the

Christ the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept with favour, O Lord, we pray, the prayers

and offerings of your Church, that, with Saint Peter as her shepherd, she may come to an eternal inheritance, for it is through his teaching that she holds the faith in its integrity. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf Mt 16:16.18) **Peter said to Jesus: You are**

the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus replied: You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.

Prayer after Communion

O God, who at our celebration of the feast day of the blessed Apostle Peter have nourished us by communion in the Body and Blood of Christ,



grant, we pray, that this redeeming exchange may be for us a Sacrament of

unity and peace. Through Christ our Lord.. **Amen.**

Who Do You Say I Am?

Commentary

Matthew 16: 13-19

In the Gospel of today, Jesus brings His disciples to Caesarea Philippi, because He has a question for them before they proceed to Jerusalem. He asks them, "Who do you say I am?" It is essential that they are able to answer this question. Today, Jesus asks us the same question. The most important moment of grace in each one of us, or metanoia is the moment when each one of us moves away from who people say Jesus is, to who He is for me. We pray for clarity, to be able to see Christ for who is.

Rev. Fr. Franc Mbiu, Tanzania



Friday February 23

1st week of Lent

Ferial

Or: S. Polycarp, bishop, martyr, opt. memorial

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 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.
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 turns 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 130:
1-2.3-4.5-7a.7bc-8 (R. 3))

**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 g 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 judgement.' 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 the 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 you 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

(Ez 33:11) **As I live, says the Lord, I do not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he 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.**

Make A Choice**Commentary****Mt 5: 20-26**

Anger is the rawest, strongest, and most destructive of human emotions. In the Gospel, Jesus is talking about holding onto grudges, anger, hurt, and hate. But we all have a choice. We can choose to focus on the positive emotions or we can choose to focus on the negative emotions. Our emotions are neither 'bad' nor 'good.' They simply are. St. Paul advises us 'be angry (righteous anger), but do not sin' (Eph 4:26). Lent is a period to tame our anger and learn the great lesson of forgiveness.

Rev. Fr. Franc Mbiu, Tanzania



Saturday February 24

1st week of Lent

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 19:8) 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 119:1-2.4-5.7-8
(R. 1b))

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

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 judgements. 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

Blessed are those whose
way is blameless, who



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

(*Mt 5:48*) **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.

Love for All**Commentary****Matthew 5: 43-48**

We live in a culture that thrives on the Principles of 'I cannot love everyone and I choose whom to love.' In the Gospel, Jesus instructs His disciples that they are to love their enemies, to be completely countercultural. We are to love everyone. Our love has to supersede daily irritations, disagreements, and petty arguments. Each and every person is lovable, even the one who gets on our very last nerve. 'Man cannot live without love.' (Saint John Paul II). May we seek true Perfection in charity.

Rev. Fr. Franc Mbiu, Tanzania



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