



## ST. STEVEN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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BUT WHOEVER LIVES THE TRUTH COMES TO THE  
LIGHT, SO THAT HIS WORKS MAY BE CLEARLY SEEN AS  
DONE IN GOD. - JN 3:21

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4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT

# SUNDAY'S READINGS

## FIRST READING:

Their enemies burnt the house of God,  
tore down the walls of Jerusalem,  
set all its palaces afire,  
and destroyed all its precious objects. (2 Chr 36:19)

## PSALM:

Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you! (Ps 137)

## SECOND READING:

For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus  
for the good works  
that God has prepared in advance,  
that we should live in them. (Eph 2:10)

## GOSPEL:

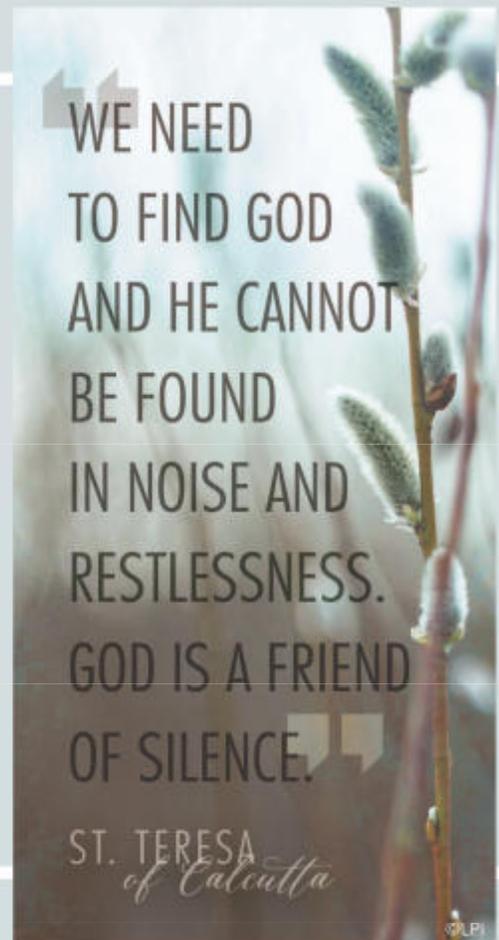
For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him might not perish  
but might have eternal life. (Jn 3:16)

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## OBSERVANCES FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 14, 2021

Sunday: 4th Sunday of Lent; Daylight Saving Time begins  
Wednesday: St. Patrick, Bishop; St. Patrick's Day  
Thursday: St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop and Doctor of the Church  
Friday: St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Next Sunday: 5th Sunday of Lent



## REFLECT

### FIRST READING

The author of 2 Chronicles reflects on how historically God's fidelity and mercy was often met with Israel's disobedience and arrogance. How does the Lenten journey provoke an examination of conscience for you and your faith life?

### SECOND READING

Paul speaks of our faith and our salvation as "the gift of God" to us. In what ways do you show appreciation for God's grace?

### GOSPEL READING

Jesus taught Nicodemus that God sent His only Son into the world to offer eternal life to believers. Who in your life needs to hear this message?

## AWAKE, O SLEEPER!

This morning came a little earlier than I would have liked — Daylight Saving Time always does. Sometimes that morning sunlight seems more intrusive than illuminating. You're still half-lost in sleep, and that sun is demanding of you a lot more than you're ready to give.

I've said it, and I'm sure you've said it, too. "Just five more minutes." You hit the "snooze" button on your iPhone once (maybe twice? Show of hands?) and turn away from the window.

So many kings of the Old Testament were steadfast in their sleepy ways, rejecting the light their God tried to share with them. Likewise, John tells us that, though Light — Christ — was sent into the world, the world preferred darkness.

Sometimes it seems, when reading through Scripture, that all throughout salvation history, God has been trying to pull back the curtains, to rouse us from our defiant slumber. And we resist Him. Time and time again, we resist Him.

Light brings a certain responsibility with it. It seems to compel productivity. Furthermore, there's no hiding in the light. Any photographer worth his salt knows how to manipulate it, highlighting the good and casting some merciful shade on the bad.

As we enter into the fourth week of Lent, we're getting so close to the main event. Can we handle the light that will come on Easter morning, bursting into the tomb as the stone is rolled away? Can we keep ourselves from hitting the "snooze" button on our souls, and sit up to face the dawn of a new day?

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

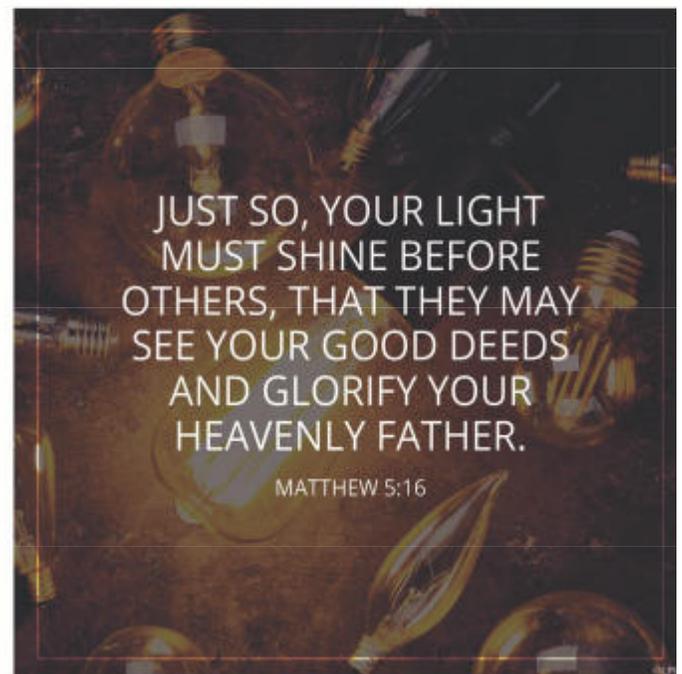
## WHY DO PRIESTS WEAR A ROMAN COLLAR?

The practice of priests wearing the Roman collar developed in the mid-nineteenth century as an alternative to wearing the cassock which in some places was seen as impractical or which was even outlawed by anti-Catholic legislation. Since its introduction, it has taken different forms, and if you visit different countries today, you will see variation in what priests wear.

The Code of Canon Law simply observes that priests wear "suitable ecclesiastical garb" according to the judgments of the national bishops conferences and local custom (no. 284). The US Bishops have instructed that outside of liturgical functions, a "black suit and Roman collar are the usual formal attire for priests. The use of the cassock is at the discretion of the cleric." Priests who are members of religious communities are to follow the rules of their institute regarding the habit or other approved clothing.

In the end, whether a priest wears the Roman collar, a religious habit, or, as is the case in many

European countries, a suit and tie (to distinguish them from Protestant clergy who wear a collar) the goal of their clerical clothing is to serve as a sign of their commitment to guide and to serve, and to also allow them to be truly public figures because they are ordained for the service of all.



## LIVE THE LITURGY

INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

God's messengers always seem to get mocked. They speak a truth that some folks do not want to hear. While on the one hand we admire them, we also are quite happy keeping them at a distance. After all, they are not referring to me but someone else, aren't they? We often wrongly conclude that because we may be more avant-garde, contemporary, politically sensitive, and untraditional, we are somehow more in the light than others. People tend to prefer darkness more than light, even the most spiritually sensitive among us. The light always carries with it the richness of God's mercy and compassion which see beyond ideologies and concepts to relationships that cultivate life, earthly and eternal. Every hand of compassion and mercy extended to a human being must always point back to God. The call always involves ordering our lives in accord with our truth and essence of being. As God never forgets us, we must never forget God. Now is the time to take stock of our infidelity and return to the light, even though it is difficult to look at.

IF I EVER  
FORGET YOU,  
LET ME BE  
*silenced*

PSALM 137

### PLEASE CONSIDER ONLINE GIVING

Our parish is grateful for your continued support at this time. Thank you!



### 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT



## GOSPEL MEDITATION

### ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

Is there something to Lent that goes beyond our own spiritual house cleaning and spiritual refinement? Yes, there is! It has to do with listening and learning so that we can take up the task of the Gospel with greater clarity and fortitude. While the spiritual refocusing of Lent is necessary, the fruit of this Lenten conversion has much more to do with learning how we can be a better Church than it does about our eternal salvation. Salvation is a gift that flows out of God's unconditional Mercy and cannot be merited. The spiritual maturity we can experience as a result of our Lenten disciplines serves to reduce the anxiety and apprehension we may experience as messengers of good, but very challenging, and unsettling, news.

St. Oscar Romero said that, "a church that doesn't provoke any crises, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin, a word of God that doesn't touch the reason of the society in which it is being proclaimed, what gospel is that?" When we listen to those descriptive and provocative words, do they resonate with anything in our experience? As messengers of the Gospel, we are called to bring an unsettling message to the world. If our main concern is protecting our self-interests, then we are missing something huge!



Many really struggle with being rejected, dismissed, or perceived as someone who is speaking out of turn. There is a counter cultural message that must be preached that clearly sides with the poor, marginalized, victimized, oppressed, neglected, disregarded, and lost souls throughout the world. There is a widespread misery among the peoples that is all too often allowed to fester with no one coming forward to offer a change or resolution.

The Church can speak to the needed structural changes that will allow people to earn just wages, feed their families and share abundantly and equally in the gifts of God's good earth. Such a vision is not some

optimistic fairy tale, but the vision of the Creator himself. Lent reminds us as St. Oscar Romero also states, that, "we are workers, not master builder, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own." We are not called to labor simply for the benefit of the here and now but of the "what is to come." Our myopic vision can be replaced by a more far reaching Lenten vision that is much greater and deeper in scope. As long as we are carrying the right blueprints with us and our thoughts extend beyond ourselves, then even the little things we do and the simplest prayer we utter go a long way. They give witness to our preference for the light of Christ and not the darkness of error and sin.

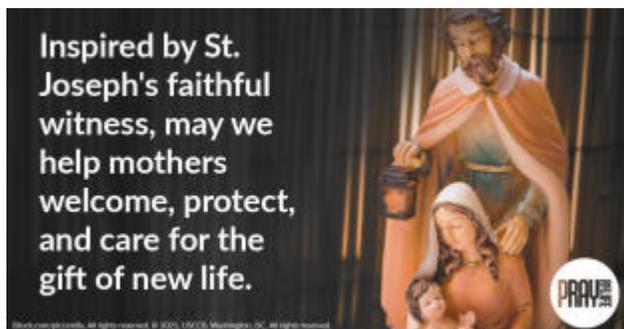
*"For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God." - Jn 3:20-21*

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## INTERCEDE



Inspired by St. Joseph's faithful witness, may we help mothers welcome, protect, and care for the gift of new life.

## PRAY

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## REFLECT

As Catholics we rightly find inspiration in Mary's beautiful "fiat", her "yes" to God's will at the Annunciation, but we should also recall Joseph's own faithful "yes" to God's plan for salvation. Despite the unusual circumstances of Mary's pregnancy, "Joseph accepted Mary unconditionally" (*Patris corde*, 4). Through a series of dreams, God made his will known to Joseph, and each time Joseph faithfully responded. It is Joseph who welcomed the Christ child as his own son, gave Jesus his name as revealed by the angel, and continually protected and provided for the needs of the Holy Family. When Herod threatened the life of the infant Jesus, Joseph fled with his family from their homeland to Egypt and patiently waited until they could return to Israel. "In every situation, Joseph declared his own 'fiat'" (*PC*, 3). Through his constant care for both mother and child, Joseph makes a true gift of himself. God chose this humble carpenter of Nazareth to guide the beginnings of our redemption, and it is Joseph "who was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence" (*PC*, 5). Inspired by St. Joseph, may we proactively help mothers welcome and care for the gift of new life.

## ACT (choose one)

- Pope Francis declared December 8, 2020 – December 8, 2021 as the Year of St. Joseph. Offer a [prayer to St. Joseph](#) for all mothers in need.
- Listen to this [podcast episode](#) unpacking the importance of this Year of St. Joseph. To go deeper, consider taking time to prayerfully read Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter *Patris corde* (*With a Father's Heart*).
- Offer some other sacrifice or prayer that you feel called to do for this month's intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

On March 25<sup>th</sup> the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, as well as the anniversary of the papal encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*). Learn more about how these two observances are connected in this [brief article](#).

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Church also celebrates the Solemnity of Saint Joseph on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Join others in seeking the intercession of St. Joseph for the many people whose lives are touched by adoption by praying the novena from March 10<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup>. Sign up for daily email or text messages at [respectlife.org/adoption-novena](https://respectlife.org/adoption-novena).



Image: A mosaic of Our Lady of Guadalupe decorates a side altar in the Church of Santa Maria della Famiglia at the Vatican. Dec. 15. (CNS photo/Paul Haring.)



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[usccb.org/prayforlife](https://usccb.org/prayforlife)



# Kids Corner

READ THE  
GOSPEL &  
COLOR



When the Hebrews sinned in the desert, snakes came to bite them. Moses lifted up a metal snake in the desert. If God's people looked at the metal snake, their painful snake bites would be healed. Instead of dying from their snake bites, they would live. Our sins are a lot like those snake bites. Sins turn us away from God, hurt us, and hurt other people. When Jesus was lifted up on the cross, he washed our sins away. Jesus gave us healing and forgiveness. We don't need to die from our sins. We can believe in Jesus, follow God with our whole hearts, and live forever.

## PRAYER

God, thank you for sending Jesus to wash away my sins.

## MISSION FOR THE WEEK

Help your parents wash dishes. As you take dirty dishes and wash them clean, talk about how Jesus washed our sins away on the cross.



*Invest just five minutes a day,  
and your faith will deepen and grow  
a day at a time.*

### **Monday, Mar 15, 2021** **Lenten Weekday**

There have been some famous male/female teams in the history of Catholic religious orders. Benedict and Scholastica, Francis and Clare, Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross. Another team included Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, whose feast day is today. While Vincent founded the Vincentians, together he and Louise cofounded the Daughters of Charity. Today, there are 14,000 Daughters of Charity serving the poor all over the world. Commit to improving gender relations in your daily interactions. When woman and men feel free to make their unique contributions, great things can happen.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54*

### **Tuesday, Mar 16, 2021** **Lenten Weekday**

The custom of dipping a finger into holy water and making the sign of the cross upon entering a church serves to remind us of our Baptism, whereby we first entered the Catholic Church. But the waters of Baptism do much more, altering our metaphysical makeup in a profound way. Christians adopted the ritual from John the Baptist, but the practice has even more ancient roots. It's tied to the Jewish use of mikvahs, purifying pools—including those mentioned in the Bible, like Bethesda and Siloam—that believers visited to cleanse themselves of sickness and sin. Let your own bathing rituals remind you of your baptismal promises.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; John 5:1-16*

### **Wednesday, Mar 17, 2021** **Optional Memorial of Patrick, Bishop, Missionary**

As the church and the Irish, and all who are "Irish for the day," celebrate the feast of Saint Patrick, let's also celebrate what we know of this remarkable fifth-century saint who brought the message of Christ to Ireland. Patrick writes in his Confession of his homeland (Roman Britain), his youthful captivity by pirates, his conversion, and his deepening desire to proclaim God's presence. There is no mention of snakes or shamrocks, but there is strong testament to Patrick's missionary zeal: "That is why I cannot be silent . . . about such great blessings and such a gift that the Lord so kindly bestowed in the land of my captivity." Look for God's presence in this day and share your own good news.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 49:8-15; John 5:17-30*

### **Thursday, Mar 18, 2021** **Optional Memorial of Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop, Doctor of the Church**

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem was a scholar and catechist at heart, but he spent years embroiled in the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ. He spent 16 of his 35 years as Jerusalem's archbishop in exile over Arianism and political wrangling. Although he died in 386, it took until 1882 for him to be declared a doctor of the church for his significant theological contributions, many written for adults joining the church. In keeping with Saint Cyril's dedication to catechesis, devote some time today to learning more about your faith.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 32:7-14; John 5:31-47*

### **Friday, Mar 19, 2021** **Solemnity of Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Day of Abstinence**

When God's plans collided with his, Joseph attended to a calling beyond the law or custom of his day. He must have felt angry, betrayed, confused. But he also knew something greater was at stake than simply following rigid Mosaic code, which would have demanded stoning a woman found to be "with child" before marriage. Instead, he trusted Mary and trusted the dream that brought him angelic counsel. As Pope Francis said in his homily on this feast day in 2013, "in [Joseph's] heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength." Practice tenderness—the sign of a strong heart!

*TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a*

### **Saturday, Mar 20, 2021** **Lenten Weekday**

In 1812, six young women joined to devote their lives to providing care and education for Catholic families living in Kentucky. Nineteen-year-old Catherine Spaulding from Maryland was chosen to lead the group that became the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth (S.C.N.). Mother Catherine guided the congregation for 45 years, until her death on March 20, 1858. Today 550 S.C.N. sisters serve in 20 states and four foreign countries. Find your own quiet path of humility so that you, too, can be exalted.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 11:18-20; John 7:40-53*

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Scripture citations from the NAB Rev. Ed.

# March

marzo

## Mass Intentions

**Weekend of March 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>**  
4th Sunday of Lent

✘ Patricia DeRose

For the People of St Stevens

✘ Wieslaw Pajak

**Monday March 15<sup>th</sup>**

✘ Anne Pearson

**Tuesday March 16<sup>th</sup>**

✘ Marilyn Kelly

**Wednesday March 17<sup>th</sup>**

✘ Marion & David Furtaw

**Thursday March 18<sup>th</sup>**

✘ John Daniel

**Friday March 19<sup>th</sup>**

✘ Martha Hart

**Weekend of March 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>**  
5th Sunday of Lent

✘ Ellie Schuck

For the People of St Stevens

✘ Donald Linstrom

## Adoration Chapel

Tues. & Thurs.

8:30, 9:30, 10:30 a.m.,

1:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m.

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Limited to 4 per hour

## *Virtual Masses*

Mass streamed Weekdays at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday at 4:00 p.m.

Sunday at 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

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## MASS & CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Weekdays: Tuesday & Thursday 8:00 a.m.

Weekends: Saturday 4:00 p.m., Sunday 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

**Taking a Moment To Give To Others.** During Lent we are offered the opportunity to give to the most vulnerable in any way we can. **Catholic Charities** has programs that you can pray for and support to continue changing lives:

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**DIGNITY Diversion**-Helping victims of sex-trafficking through a program to start a new life. Victims referred by City of Phoenix Prosecutors Office. Needs? Hygiene products, wrapped snacks/dinner gift cards during session meetings, undergarments & monetary donations.

**North Star Youth Partnership**- Helping low income teens develop their self-esteem and more. Needs? Detergent, hygiene items & gift cards to clothing stores.

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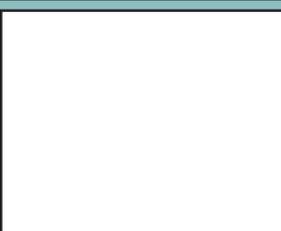
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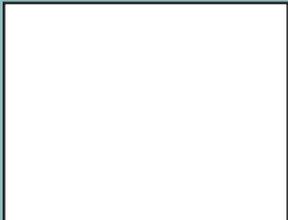
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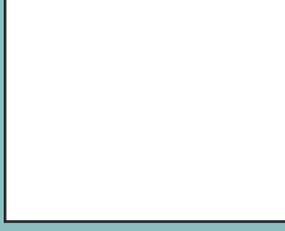
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