



ST. ROMUALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

394 N HWY 259 · HARDINSBURG KY 40143

www.stromuald.org

dear Padre

Parish Office:

Phone: 756-2356

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Hours: Monday - Friday

8:00am - Noon, 1:00 - 3:00pm

Email: stromuald@bbtel.com

Pastoral Staff:

Pastor, Father Brian Johnson

Email: Brian.Johnson@pastoral.org

Deacon, Tony Anthony

Deacon, Mike Wiedemer

Administrative Asst, Jane Haynes

CRE: Adult, Rosa Hockenberry

CRE: RCIA, Lyvenia Anthony

CRE: 7-12, Gayle Poole

CRE: K-6, Kim Brumfield

Pastoral Council:

Dana Bland, Harry Mattingly,

Janet Bland, David Morton

Christi Brooks, Kevin Oelze

Chris Brumfield, Don Payne,

Jerry Dowell, Gail Pollock

Betty Heavrin, Pam Pollock

St. Romuald

Interparochial School:

Phone: 756-5504

Website:

www.stromualdschool.org

Principal, Rob Cox

School Board

Representatives:

Jamie Barr, Amy Flood,

Jennifer Payne

Why is it OK to eat fish during Lent? What if I'm a vegetarian?

The other day I was grocery shopping. I bought chicken on sale for \$1 per pound and salmon for \$8.99 per pound. If penance were about being economical, I would be eating chicken. If penance were the same as living simply, I might give up both proteins for an egg or bean alternative. (If you asked my fellow priests, they might say all food is penance when I cook.)

The Catechism teaches, "The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others" (CCC 1434). Notice the last word: others. Fasting and abstaining from meat during Lent are shared sacrifices and part of our Catholic identity and duty (Canons 1249–53). The pope in Rome, your grandmother in Milwaukee, Catholics in India, and our fellow Christians (if and when they participate) are all united by this common penance. You express that unity by eating fish on Fridays.

If you are a vegetarian or vegan, I encourage you to do something additional during the Fridays of Lent to reflect the spirit of discipline and self-denial. However you observe Lent, remember: All Catholics are united to each other and to God in our prayer, penance, and worship.

Patrick Keyes, CSsR sundaybulletin@liguori.org

March 5, 2017 - 1st Sunday of Lent

Masses for the Week

March 5th - 12th

Tues	1:00 pm	Poor Souls (DW) (Extended Care)
Wed	5:00 pm	Brenda Monin (BM)
Thurs	9:30 am	Shelly & Buck Bland (SB) (Medco)
Fri	9:00 am	Victor Henning
Sat	5:00 pm	Brown Family (DH)
Sun	7:00 am	Germie & Isabell Winchell
	10:00 am	Mary & John Sulpa (MW)

CONFESSIONS

Wednesday 4:00-5:00pm

Saturdays 4:00 pm

Readings for the Week

Sunday: Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7/Ps 51:3-6, 12-13, 17/Rom 5:12-19
 Monday: Lv 19:1-2, 11-18/Ps 19:8-10, 15/Mt 25:31-46
 Tuesday: Is 55:10-11/Ps 34:4-7, 16-19/Mt 6:7-15
 Wed: Jon 3:1-10/Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19/Lk 11:29-32
 Thurs: Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25/Ps 138:1-3, 7c-8/Mt 7:7-12
 Friday: Ez 18:21-28/Ps 130:1-8/Mt 5:20-26
 Saturday: Dt 26:16-19/Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8/Mt 5:43-48
 Next Sunday: Gn 12:1-4a/Ps 33:4-5, 18-20, 22/2 Tm 1:8b-10/Mt 17:1-9

Liturgical Publications Inc

Stewardship of Finance

Last Sunday's Collection

Sunday Collection	\$7,636.00
Building Fund	\$15.00
Children	\$6.15
Loose change for the Poor.....	\$27.55
St. Vincent de Paul.....	\$816.00

St. Romuald Parish Financial Summary

July-December, 2016

Total Income	\$320,300
Total Expenses	\$288,000
	\$ 32,300

Thank you for your financial stewardship!



First
Sunday
in Lent

March 11th & 12th

	Eucharistic Ministers	Lectors	Ushers	Servers	Rosary Leaders	Music Ministers
5:00 pm	Shelly Jefferies Bryan O'Reilly	Autumn Siler Christi Tivitt	C-Leroy Henning* C-Corey Masterson S-Jim Siler S-Carroll Whitfill	Caleb Masterson Shelby Tivitt Haley Weise	Brenda Wheatley	Shannon
7:00 am	Amelia Anthony Shirley Bland	Tom Aull	C-Chuck Hardesty* C-Michael Kennedy S-Kevin Oelze S-Stephen Oelze	Brianna Laslie Trey Laslie	Lorena Bland	
10:00 am	Lori Carwile Ort Critchelow Sally Hinton Sandra Hinton	Barbara Critchelow Mariah Critchelow	C-Raymond Critchelow* C-Patrick Critchelow S-Greg Hinton S-Allen Wheatley	Parker Davis Tyler Davis	Kathryn Ables	PJ/Choir Cantor George
Radio Minister: Randy Howard Children's Liturgy: Andrea Masterson & Jennifer Payne						

Words from the Pastor

+JMJ+

Lent calls us into the desert! Are we ready for a challenge? We may ask, "What is the desert going to do for us?" It strengthens us and sharpens our focus in life. The desert demands discipline and dedication to deepen our life with God. We will examine our inner resources and draw all that we can from our surroundings to grow in faith, and to progress spiritually. Jesus went into the desert after His baptism by John, to pray & commune with the Father more intensely. He also, clarified his mission of embodying the Kingdom of the Father on earth. So, as we enter the desert we also look to draw nearer to God and to God's people, one another! We are co-workers in the vineyard and builders of the Kingdom on earth. What new spiritual practices will we take on to strengthen and grow in our discipleship to Christ and his mission?

Our first mass reading and the gospel present great Lenten material to reflect on as we start our spiritual conditioning in the desert! I love how our church has placed these two readings (Creation and Temptation stories) in the lectionary series of readings for us. Of course, the **lectionary** is our book of public readings that some have called our Three Year Bible Reading Plan, read at every Mass. Two verses for today, I place side by side. They are Genesis 2:7 and Matthew 4:1. First from Genesis 2:7, we read, "The LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and **blew into his nostrils the breath** of life," and then Matthew 4:1 "Then Jesus was **led by the Spirit** into the desert." Keep in mind that what just happened in chapter 3 of Matthew right before this reading was the baptism of Jesus, when **the Spirit (breath-wind) of God as a dove was seen hovering aloft Jesus as the voice of the Father** proclaimed Jesus as His Son. If we look ahead, to an almost exact replay of this scene at the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:5, the detail is added of the Father's voice also saying, "**Listen to Him.**" For Lent, we want to receive the 'Word -Voice of the Father-Jesus as our renewing, life-giving Spirit breathed into us!

What I want to connect from these two readings is 1) God's 'spirit breathed into the dust of human beings' in Genesis and 2) the Spirit within Jesus leading him into the dust of the desert for our salvation (our being created anew). For us, Jesus is the breath of God, Voice of God teaching us new life. His voice animates our coming to life again and being saved!

Notice that **God creates by voice** in Genesis 1, 'Let there be light' and so it was created by His *Voice*. 'Let there be a dome to separate the waters' and so it was created by His *voice*. God's voice brings to life, so it is no surprise to see God breathe his spirit into dust, giving it life. So Jesus' first act after the physical appearance of the Spirit on Him at baptism, is of going into the desert dust. That is the scripture's way of showing that a **new creation is taking place**. With Adam, there was dust that God blew into, and with Jesus there is a whole desert (world) that God desires to resuscitate. And the voice of Jesus in us, the Holy Spirit in us is what brings this new life. So for a fruitful Lent, we want our lives filled with the Spirit of God, the Words of God **'in our minds, on our lips and in our hearts'**. We make that symbolic gesture before the gospel reading at every mass marking a cross upon our foreheads, lips and heart before hearing it to prepare those spaces of mind, lips and heart to receive the life-giving word Jesus proclaims!

Yet, we have to be real and aware that we are not the only ones in the desert: the devil is there too! He waits to test, tempt, and taunt us away from God's redemption

in us! The devil knows us, so we better become aware of Him. What do we know about the Devil from our scripture?

First, **the Devil lies**. He promises what he cannot deliver. Jesus says in John 8:44 "there is no truth in him-(Devil)he is a liar and the father of lies."

Secondly, **he tricks, deceives and manipulates reality, creating illusions**. The Devil tries to trick even Jesus by twisting scripture to turn Him against the Father (Matt 4:6). St Paul describes the Devil in Acts 13:10 "You son of the devil, full of every deceit and fraud. Will you not stop twisting the straight paths of the Lord?"

Thirdly, the **Devil preys upon any weakness**. His first attack upon Jesus hits him where he was most vulnerable-his work of strict fasting 40 days causes him to feel so hungry. That is where the Devil begins, tempting him to feed himself (Matt 4:3). St Peter says in 1Pet 5:8 "Your opponent the **devil is prowling** around like a roaring lion". He watches and waits for any weakness and then pounces on us.

So, we need to know the enemy's tactics and be aware of what we are up against in our time of spiritual growth and deepening life with God. The Devil certainly doesn't want us growing closer to God, so beware! Expect no favors from Satan! We begin Lent facing the Truth. The world is fallen, and we live in the world, so we too are fallen. Not able to trust our own wills and ideas, we need to open ourselves to Jesus. Turn to Him in the desert, admitting up front that something is wrong in us and in the world. We need help out of this trap-world of the Devil. But, Jesus is the solution. St Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:4 "the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they may not see the light of the gospel." Jesus comforts u with hope saying in John 12:31 "Now is the judgment of this world; **now will the prince of this world be cast out.**" So the way out of the desert is following Jesus. The only way out is to stay by Jesus. Listen to Jesus and let His spirit infuse us bringing to new life. Let him speak inside of us of what is real, and what is true regardless of what the world around us tempts us by saying.

So next week I will pick up on what follows from this parallel. God speaks in Genesis and new life is created. God speaks in the Person of Jesus/Spirit on the Transfiguration Mountain and new life is created. We are trans-figured, trans-created anew in His image. But we must remain open to His Voice, and be led by His Spirit. 'Listen to Him'!

Here are some daily questions to consider in our prayer time!

Sunday: What is the life-giving, life creating word I heard at Mass today?

Monday: Am I dedicating more time to pray in Lent? If not, start today?

Tuesday: Do I take seriously the temptations of the Devil, and alert to his deceiving ways in the world?

Wednesday: Am I too influenced by 'spectacular' sights or visions? Or am I content with simple acts of faith and devotion?

Thursday: Do I ever tempt God or others to 'my own way' instead of seeking only God's will?

Friday: Perform an act of penance for the good of someone today.

Saturday: What am I offering to God in my worship time this weekend?

Peace and Prayers, Fr Brian Johnson

Picnic News

Picnic Time is here again, well in 3 ½ months.

We need donations for the beautiful Green "Nothing Runs Like A Deere" Booth, The New Sporting Goods Booth and The Memory Wagon. This year we will be debuting our new booths thanks to T.G.H.

Drop off items at the parish office.
Thanks and God Bless.

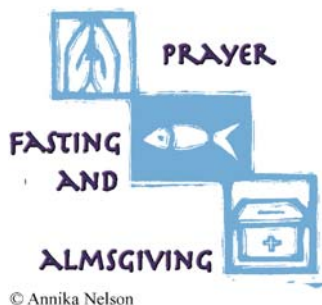
Picnic Raffle: Anyone who would like to donate \$25 or more for the picnic raffle, contact Ann Denton at 270-668-9629 or 270-756-2172 before March 24th.



Senior Day: Come join us on Thursday, March 16, 2017 for Senior Day as we celebrate a day filled with "blarney" and the luck of the Irish. Our day will start with a

review of the saints, St. Patrick, St. Turibius, St. Perpetua and St. Felicity. Fried chicken will be served and as always, we ask that you try to bring a dish to pass. So, bring a friend or maybe even someone new to the area as your guest, we welcome everyone. Don't forget to wear green that day so those pesky leprechauns don't pinch you!

Family Movie Night: "Angel in Our Midst" is a story about a boy, a girl, and an angel. After the death of his parents during 9/11, Tobey Marshall finds comfort in his faith and his only confidant, a guardian angel. Despite his unusual behavior, Tobey becomes friends with a kind classmate named Suzy. The more time they spend together the more they realize just how much they have in common, much to the dismay of the star basketball player Jim Doder, who wants to date Suzy. After Suzy rejects Jim, Jim sets Tobey up for a robbery attempt. Tobey must face reality as he pushes to prove his innocence to Suzy and his classmates. Join us on Saturday, March 25, 2017 at 6:15 pm, for popcorn and a drink and a great movie to watch.



The Catholic's Divorce Survival Guide:

A program that brings about healing and reconciliation for individuals with themselves, their families and the Church. The program is complete with DVD teachings, personal survival guide and Leader Guides (Deacon Mike Wiedemer and Rosa Hockenberry). Join us on **Monday, March 13** from 6 pm to 8 pm.

Matthew 25:36 "I was sick and you cared for me..." Are you being called to be a Communion Minister to the Sick? If you are interested in joining this caring ministry to the sick and administering Holy Communion please contact Deacon Mike 270- 756-0120 or Fr Brian 270-756-2356.

A Word from Pope Francis:

"War begins right here in my heart, and spills out into the world. The news we see in the papers & on television... Today so many people die, and that seed of war, bred by envy, jealousy, and greed in my heart, is the same –a seed grown into a tree – as the bomb which falls on a hospital, on a school, and killing the sick or children. The responsibility of peace falls on every person; we are our brothers' keeper, and when there is blood spilt, there is sin, God will demand an accounting of the blood of our brothers and sisters who are suffering effects of war, whether we are close to it physically or far from it. Many brothers and sisters are dying, even innocent people, because the great and powerful want a larger slice of the earth; they want more power, or they want to make more money selling weapons used by others (Homily 2-16-2017)

Celebration

BIRTHDAYS: Kenny Potts, March 13th and Dolores Mattingly, March 14th.

We thank our advertiser for making the bulletin possible!

Please take a moment to read the back of the bulletin and note the generous advertisers from the business community who provide our bulletin each week! Each time you visit their business, let them know you are thankful for their support of our parish's weekly bulletin!

Advertiser of the week:

First State Bank
207-756-2175

Thank you for supporting St Romuald Church!

THIS WEEK:

Mon	1:00 pm	Blue Army Rosary
	6:00 pm	Divorce Group
	7:00 pm	Al-Anon Meeting
Tues	10:00 am	Scripture Study
	1:00 pm	Mass (Extended Care)
	6:00 pm	St. Vincent de Paul
Wed	12:00 pm	Stations of the Cross with the School
	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Mass
	6:00 pm	Journey through Lent Study Group
Thur	9:30 am	Mass (Medco)
	5:00 pm	Liturgy Committee Meeting
	6:00 pm	Family Holy Hour
Fri	9:00 am	School Mass
	4:00 pm	Fish Fry
	6:30 pm	Stations of the Cross
Sun	8:30 am	K-6 Religious Ed Classes
	11:30 am	7-12 Religious Ed Classes

UPCOMING:

Mar 16	10:00 am	Senior Day
Mar 18/19		Knights of Columbus Recruitment Drive

Rosary Leaders: We are in need of Rosary Leaders at all the Masses. Please volunteer for this ministry. Call the church office if you would like to volunteer!

We Pray For:

Gene Aldridge, Paula Anthony, Gene Bennett, Joe Bennett, Juanita Burch, Billy Carwile, Jerry Carwile, Russel Carwile, Cindy Cashen, Martha Cashen, Mallorie Collins, Debbie Critchelow, Roger Dowell, Kenneth Dowell, Treyten Drake, Davye Duggins, Tijuana Duncan, Rhett Flener, Ginny Flood, Pat Flood, Cindy Getz, Bill Greenwood, JoAnn Henning, Lisa Henning, Karen Herbert, Kitty Himmelhaver, Bill Hinton, Doug Hinton, Rugene Hinton, Rick Hurley, **Merri Hurt**, Braddock Inman, Mary Lois Irwin, Barbara Jarboe, Virginia Jeffries, Mary Ann Johnson, Tracy King, Patricia Lane, Angie Lawrence, Annette Lucas, Dorothy Manning, Red McClellan, Oleta McDaniel, Bevan Michael Miller, Richard Miller, Blaise Mills, Dorothy Morris, Don O'Donoghue, Eddie O'Donoghue, Joe Oelze, Earl O'Reilly, Libby Osborne, Martha Payne, Peggy Phillips, Doris Priest, Joe Priest, Robert Priest, Sandy Priest, Rita Roach, Shirley Robbins, Suzanne Rose, Jerry Sosh, Virginia Stanford, Lucye Stupak, Pam Sturgeon, Loretta Swink, Adalee Taul, Becky Taul, Beavin & Gina Thornsberry, Paul Tucker, Gil Urban, Buddy Weatherholt, Greg Wethington, Raymond Wethington, Jimmy Whitworth, Mary Rita Whitworth, Carolyn Wilcheck, Kevin Wilcheck, Robert D. Wilson, Anne Wolfe, Sandra Zanone. **Serving in the Armed Forces:** Mandie Adams, Kevin Arnold, Fred Barham, Austin Brown, Timothy Cashen, Cody Garst, Parker Findlay, James Hanor, Jack Hayes, Stevie Higgs, James Howard, Charles Kuhlman, SSgt Bradford O'Reilly, Jordan Pate, Cody Simmons, Liana Tindle, Chase Upchurch, Garrett Wadsworth



Journey through Lent:

Beginning, **Wednesday, March 8, 2017**, weekly scripture reflections for Lent will be offered. "Journey through Lent" by Art Zannoni will be offered as a study group during the Lenten season by Father Brian and Deacon Mike. Everyone is encouraged to join in as we journey through Lent every Wednesday

from March 8th through April 12th. Sessions will start at 6:00 pm with light refreshments being served. So make it a family affair during Lent or come with your friends, this is a chance to give of yourself during this 40 days and 40 nights as we walk with our Lord.



Sympathy: Please pray for the repose of the souls Helen Mattingly (sister of Nancy Walz) who was buried last week. Please keep the family in

your prayers.

"I was in prison and you visited Me"

Jesus says in Matthew 25:36. Is Jesus calling you to join in jail ministry? We visit, offer prayer and study the bible every first Sunday and First Thursday at Breckinridge County Detention Center. Pray about joining one of the teams. Please call Deacon Mike at 270-756-0120 with any questions about what is involved in this needed and rewarding ministry.

Family Information: If you have a new address or phone number, please call the office at 270-756-2356 to update your information. Thank you.



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First Friday 24-hour Adoration:

Following the 9:00 am Mass on April 7th, we begin the 24 hour adoration until Saturday morning mass at 8:00 am. We are blessed with dedicated adorers for each hour, but can use extra people for some hours. Please call Minnie Nimmo 270-617-0297 or Patsy Whitfill 270-617-2557 to volunteer spending an hour if prayer with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Contemplative Living: St. Meinrad

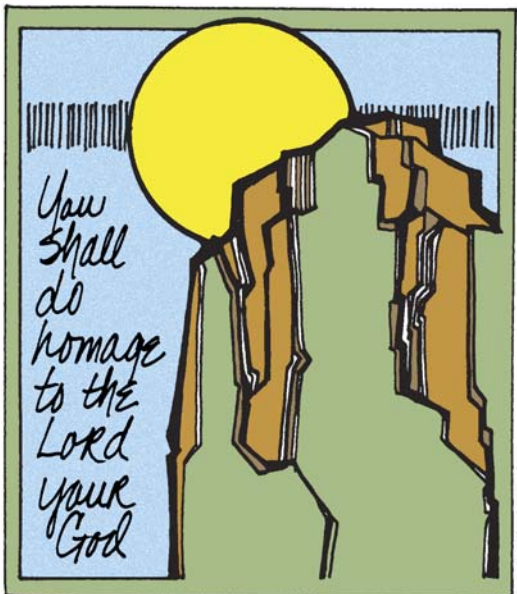
Retreat Friday, March 17- Sunday, March 19, 2017 This retreat explores deep prayer, gleaned from the mystical tradition of the Church. Contemplation is a mode of prayer rooted in one's inmost self - the simple and quiet sanctuary with God. Retreat led by Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB For more info or to register, email mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu

Marriage Enrichment Retreat:

The Family Life Office is pleased to bring Mario Sacasa, to our Diocese for a "Married Couple's Retreat-Living the Gift of Marriage" on March 25-26, 2017 at Lake Barkley Lodge in Cadiz, Kentucky. TO register or for more info, please call the Family Life office 270-683-1545

Pray to end abortion: Join other Catholics and those from other faiths that gather each Saturday at 2nd and Market in Louisville from 7:00-8:00 am (EST) to pray for families entering the abortion clinic. Many children have been saved and mothers spared future grief by this prayer action and support. With God, all things are possible! Archbishop Kurtz is known to show up and pray with everyone too!

Al-Anon Meeting: Mondays 7:00 pm St Romuald Parish Hall. Come find support and understanding to recover a sense of serenity in your life.



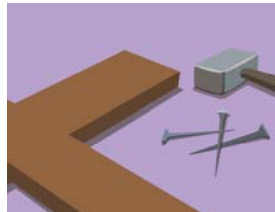
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Mass Etiquette Column



Silence/turn off cell phones and pagers prior to Mass beginning. Cell phones should never be used in Mass for calls, texting or games. If you need to use your cell phone, please walk out of church to do so. Exceptions to this include emergency workers, police, children with special needs, etc.

Receive a Daily Email Lenten Video Message delivered to your inbox: Visit <http://dynamiccatholic.com/bestlentever/#signup> to register!



STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Every one is invited to join the SRIS students on Wednesday at 12 Noon for the Rosary and the

Stations of the Cross and every Friday come retrace the steps of Jesus to the cross, by praying the stations with others and meditating on our Lord's Passion at 6:30 pm.

St Romuald Interparochial School Fish Fry:

Come enjoy a great dinner and support the school every Friday 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM in SRIS Gym!



SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2017 FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Talking to the devil

Temptation is part of the human story, as unavoidable as original sin. Each of us regularly spends a few moments chatting with the devil about the weaknesses that haunt us the most.

Should we have another piece of cake or another drink? Why not leave work early (no one's watching) or say that unkind remark (it will never get back to her) or tell that lie (it will make you look better)? To fortify yourself against those little chats so potentially destructive to integrity, why not spend a few minutes each day in conversation with the Lord? Prayer is the best-known antidote to temptation.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11 (22). "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert."

MONDAY, MARCH 6

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Less is more

Possessions might seem like blessings but can end up being burdens, and many saints went to great lengths to empty their pockets in order to lighten their hearts. Case in point: Sixth-century Brigid of Kildare, who enraged her Druid dad by giving to the needy everything that wasn't nailed down. When a nobleman tried to stop her chariot, she charged his blockage, surviving but totaling her chariot. Finally her father decided to sell her at market, but she entered a monastery instead. Give in to the spirit of generosity—and you just might find that the new lighter you can't get enough of less.

TODAY'S READINGS: Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18; Matthew 25:31-46 (224). "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink."

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

MEMORIAL OF PERPETUA AND FELICITY, MARTYRS

I am what I am

In 203 A.D., a time of persecution of Christians, 22-year-old Vibia Perpetua put her life in danger by converting. Her father tried to persuade her of the danger of such a move. Perpetua pointed to a water jug, asking, "Do you see that pot lying there? Can you call it by any other name than what it is?" Her father said, "Of course not." Perpetua replied, "Neither can I call myself by any other name than what I am—a Christian." She and her friend, Felicity, didn't let others define who they were or what they believed—even at the risk of death. It takes courage to remain true to one's Baptism, even in the face of much less extreme challenges. Remember the example of these women and stay strong in your faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 6:7-15 (225). "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF GOD, RELIGIOUS

It's no trouble

What might be your first thought about a person described as a wanderer, an alcoholic, and a psychiatric patient? "Saint" would probably not be the word, and yet today's memorial celebrates a person who, despite many struggles throughout his life, oriented himself to God. Saint John of God's experiences—which often left him as an outcast in society—were transformed through the grace of God and John's willingness to be transformed by this grace. He opened not

only his heart but his door to helping others who were in difficulty, eventually founding the Hospitaller Order in Granada, Spain. How might your own struggles in life be an opportunity for grace?

TODAY'S READINGS: Jonah 3:1-10; Luke 11:29-32 (226). "In the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense."

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

LENTEN WEEKDAY

The original super girl

Looking for teen superheroes? During Women's History Month, look no further than the Book of Esther. A Jewess orphaned in Persia, Esther was raised by a sympathetic uncle. A kingdom-wide beauty contest obliged her to audition for the position of next Queen of Persia. She didn't want to be queen, and she didn't want to be exposed as Jewish—since Jews were due to be systematically eliminated. Esther had no superpowers, but even an Everygirl can find in herself the courage to save a nation. Support the young Esthers you know!

TODAY'S READINGS: Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Matthew 7:7-12 (227). "Help me, who am alone and have no help but you, for I am taking my life in my hand."

FRIDAY, MARCH 10

LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Fast with a light heart

Fasting is a spiritual practice acknowledged across religions. Muslims respect it as a way to grow in compassion for the needy. Jews see it as a way to heighten awareness of God's many gifts and broaden periods of self-denial to include refraining from bathing, sexual relations, and wearing leather shoes (once considered a luxury). Synagogue attendees could show up feeling quite grubby—and grumpy—for certain observances. We might keep in mind the fourth-century monk John Cassian's warning: "What we gain from fasting does not compensate us for what we lose through anger." Food for thought!

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 18:21-28; Matthew 5:20-26 (228). "Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court."

SATURDAY, MARCH 11

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Honk if you love your enemies

Surely Jesus' most radical command is to love our enemies. But exactly how are we supposed to do that? One way to begin is by learning from the example of others. A man was waiting in his car at the window of a drive-up Starbucks. His order was taking some time and eventually the person behind him began impatiently blowing his horn. Instead of becoming angry himself, the first man paid for the second one's order and drove away. With this profoundly simple but powerful act, he turned a negative interaction into a positive one and changed the other man's day. Today may we pray to offer a loving response to anyone who tries to cause us grief.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Matthew 5:43-48 (229). "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?"