



# ST. ROMUALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

394 N HWY 259 · HARDINSBURG KY 40143

[www.stromuald.org](http://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](mailto:stromuald@bbtel.com)

### **Pastoral Staff:**

*Pastor*, Father Brian Johnson

Email: [Brian.Johnson@pastoral.org](mailto: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](http://www.stromualdschool.org)

Principal, Rob Cox

#### **School Board**

#### **Representatives:**

Jamie Barr, Amy Flood,

Jennifer Payne

***Does suffering please God? I've heard we should "offer it up," but to me, God is never pleased with pain.***

Some think God sends suffering into our lives as retribution. In fact, God asks certain things—difficult things—of us so we can avoid suffering in our own lives, in the lives of others, and after death.

When a mother says, "Don't touch that! It's hot," and her child touches it anyway, the mother didn't cause the burn. She knows the consequences of that action and warns her children not to do it. If they disregard her, she doesn't stop loving them. In the same way, God tells us how to live so we can avoid being hurt, and God never stops loving us.

Some suffering is unavoidable no matter how well we love and obey God. This suffering is the hardest to accept. Some is the result of our humanity.

Many seek to assign blame; others want to know why things happen. The truth is, sometimes there is no why, no clear purpose. When there is, we don't feel it any less. We can only trust that God will turn it into something good.

God's power turned a "meaningless" crucifixion into the means of our salvation. This is what "offer it up" means: By turning toward and imitating Christ, we find new depths of faith and hope.

Fr. Joe Nolen, CSsR [sundaybulletin@liguori.org](mailto:sundaybulletin@liguori.org)

February 12, 2017 - Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Masses for the Week

February 13th - 19th

Tues	1:00 pm	John Mudd (Extended Care)
Wed	5:00 pm	Martha Matthews
Thurs	9:30 am	Dale Lawson (DW) (Medco)
Fri	9:00 am	Special Intention (WB)
Sat	5:00 pm	Kalyn Whitworth (KFS)
Sun	7:00 am	In Thanksgiving (MW)
	10:00 am	Geneva Glasscock

### CONFESSIONS

**Wednesday** 4:00-5:00pm

**Saturdays** 4:00 pm

## Readings for the Week

Sunday: Sir 15:15-20/Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34/1 Cor 2:6-10/Mt 5:17-37 or 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37  
 Monday: Gn 4:1-15, 25/Ps 50:1, 8, 16bc-17, 20-21/Mk 8:11-13  
 Tuesday: Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10/Ps 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9c-10/Mk 8:14-21  
 Wednesday: Gn 8:6-13, 20-22/Ps 116:12-15, 18-19/Mk 8:22-26  
 Thursday: Gn 9:1-13/Ps 102:16-21, 29, 22-23/Mk 8:27-33  
 Friday: Gn 11:1-9/Ps 33:10-15/Mk 8:34--9:1  
 Saturday: Heb 11:1-7/Ps 145:2-5, 10-11/Mk 9:2-13

Liturgical Publications Inc

## Stewardship of Finance

### Last Sunday's Collection

Sunday Collection .....	\$9,494.00
Building Fund .....	\$400.00
Children .....	\$9.00
Loose change for the Poor.....	\$41.00

### St. Romuald Parish Financial Summary

July-December, 2016

<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$275,100</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$252,900</b>
	<b>\$ 22,200</b>

**Thank you for your financial stewardship!**

*Obey and teach  
God's commandments*



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## February 18th & 19th

	Eucharistic Ministers	Lectors	Ushers	Servers	Rosary Leaders	Music Ministers
5:00 pm	Jerry Jarboe Bryan O'Reilly	Shannon Aldridge Jennifer O'Reilly	C-Tim Aldridge* C-Tony Critchelow S-Arnold O'Reilly S-Paul Shalosky	Ben Aldridge Lola Allen Phillip Shalosky	Brenda Wheatley	Pippa
7:00 am	Denise Hardesty Anne O'Reilly	Buddy Payne	C-Greg Hardesty* C-Chuck Hardesty S-Michael Whitfill S-Mike Whitfill	Gabe Carwile Luke Carwile	Margie Wethington	Pippa
10:00 am	LaDonna Barton Rosa Hockenberry Cindy Payne Aulton Richards	Lori Carwile Mariah Critchelow	C-Raymond Critchelow* C-Patrick Critchelow S-Alvin Mattingly S-Zack Payne	Mary Grace Mattingly Ava Phillips	JoAnn Henning	Deacon Tony
Radio Minister: Ann Tritschler						
Children's Liturgy:						

## Words from the Pastor

+JMJ+

At the Last Supper, Jesus raised a cup, gave thanks, and said "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you (Luke 22:20). 'New Covenant' implies new conditions, new expectations and new laws guiding its operation. Yet, today's gospel has Jesus saying, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill (Matt 5:17). A lot of people hang up on this line of Jesus and ask the obvious questions, "Is it New or not? What is 'New' about it? How much of the Old do we still keep?" If the Old Law was the contractual details of the religious covenant with God, then what of it stays in effect, for us to have to faithfully perform?

We modern folks in the 21<sup>st</sup> century may be tempted to think that only we have to deal with confusions regarding 'Repeal' or 'Repeal and Replace', or even 'Repeal, but really only Repair!' But, with Jesus' sealing the New Covenant with His death, he initiated a religious 'New Deal'. But of course elements of the 'Old Deal' would remain valid and worthy to be kept, so the question going forward became "How much of the Old Covenant with its particular laws about 1)morality, 2)ritual purity, 3)social customs and 4)daily practices is still to be performed?" Which parts are 'kept' and which parts 'left behind'? The most obvious parts cancelled and 'X'd out, would be the old laws about 'ritual purity and Temple Sacrifice'. Jesus foretold the whole Temple Apparatus coming down, which happened in AD 70 when the Romans destroyed the Temple, clearly making obsolete all of the 'Animal/Grain Fire Temple Sacrifice' legislation. So what about the rest? How about the dietary and ritual purification laws which defined what foods and persons are ritually unclean and to be avoided/shunned? Were all of those details too involved in the Temple Apparatus and its particularities over what foods/items were pure enough to be offered in Temple? And what about the near impossibility to regulate it? For example, who would base their eternal salvation on knowing definitively whether the food you bought had ever physically 'touched' an unclean species or container so that when I buy a 'pure' sardine, how do I know that it was not harvested in the same net (not purified itself according to Temple protocol)? Or was it processed in the same water that also 'netted' an impure 'squid'? This type 'paralyzing' logic goes on forever (until everyone starves!). So we have Jesus say what he says today. He came not to abolish, but to fulfill, "once for all"! For all time, and for all people! The letter to the Hebrews says this "When Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, **He entered 'once for all' into the sanctuary**, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood.(Heb 9:11-12). Jesus himself referred to this accomplishment as He was on the cross, and uttered these words to seal the deal, "**It is finished**" (John 19:30). Jesus Himself (And Only God could have met every detail of the Old Law in all of its minute specificity!) took up the Old Law, embodied it, and **once for all completed it**. So we look no more to the elaborate details of Leviticus and Exodus for our salvation. No, we now look to the person of Jesus Christ and His teaching. So, are any parts of Old Law still valid? Yes. If we parceled out the Old Covenant into parts of '1)social morality, 2)Temple purity, 3)ritual customs', then Jesus brings to a close the need for the elements of Temple purity and ritual customs. And what is most important, the behavioral 'social morality' element remains. Yet, even there, while 'proper behavior' is universally prescribed in 'rules for living with others', Jesus does amend the 'Old' prescribed punishments (makes them more humane/restorative). Two extreme examples of Old

Testament Punishment to be amended by Jesus are Leviticus 24:16 saying "Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord **shall be put to death**" and Exodus 21:17 "He that curses his father, or his mother, **shall be put to death**." The offenses are serious, but what gain comes with 'death'? Thanks be to Jesus, for His Mercy. So while Jesus fulfilled every 'pure' detail of the Old Law 'once for all' (as only God could), he also retained what is eternally relevant: proper behavior and morality between persons, and toward God. Jesus did lessen the severity of punishments for failings, and his new addition was to **motivate** us by His own life's example to follow the law out of loving goodness, more so, than out of fearing dread. As Hosea 6:6 repeated God saying, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice", Jesus himself will say in Luke 15:7 "there is more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner, than over ninety-nine righteous". Jesus prefers to love us onto the right path, instead of scaring us straight into the way!

So what do we do? We follow Jesus. To follow a law properly, we must know the lawgiver. In Catholic Canon Law, a legal principle known as 'Epikieia' (Greek epi=around, near and Greek eikos=likeness, representation) is invoked to properly implement a law, when a contradiction arises about a law's purpose being negated by its specific performance (kind of like going too slow gawking through an accident scene and causing another accident!) Canon #17 reads "Ecclesiastical laws must be understood in accord with the proper meaning of the words considered in their **text and context**. If the meaning remains doubtful and obscure, recourse must be made to parallel places, if there are such, to the purpose and circumstances of the law, and to the **mind of the legislator**." I emphasize the phrase '**mind of the legislator**' and that applies to us knowing our Only Teacher Jesus Himself. (Jesus said, 'You have only one Teacher'-Matthew 23:8). So to understand the law, we sit at the feet of the law giver. **The Old Covenant laid down the Law for us, and Jesus laid down His life for us**. The New Covenant is Jesus opening the heart of the Law, His own Heart. If we want to know what the Law means, we need to know the Lawgiver! With Jesus, at the center of every law to be observed is a Person among Other Persons, all with God-given dignity to be upheld and served for their own good.

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

**Sunday:** What message did I hear at Mass today? How can I share it with others?

**Monday:** How will I be just as faithful today at my work, as I was yesterday at Mass?

**Tuesday:** Do I follow the law, just to get by? Or do I try to understand its purpose and embrace it in letter and spirit?

**Wednesday:** If I was audited/inspected on my practice of faith, would I excel? Would I pass?

**Thursday:** Do I watch closely my mind and heart to root sin out of thoughts and feelings, in addition to simply living externally by rules?

**Friday:** Is there anyone I am angry at that I need to release? Anyone I am tempted by that I need to watch myself more closely? Pray for the grace of God's wholesome forgiveness.

**Saturday:** For what am I thanking God for at Mass this weekend? What is my offering?

Peace and Prayers, Fr Brian Johnson

**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

### **A Word from Pope Francis:**

"Following Christ means that demons will try to draw you away from Christ. They will tempt you to follow your own way. Everyone has temptations. Now someone might object, saying "Father, I am very Catholic; I always go to Mass and never have temptations!" But it isn't so. My response is: "No! Pray, you are on the wrong path, because a Christian life without temptation is not Christian. Demons even tempted Jesus!" Saint Paul speaks of Christian life as a struggle: a struggle every day to win, to destroy Satan's rule. Satan's rule would make us believe everything is okay with us if we are comfortable. If there is no temptation, he has us! Therefore, all Christians must make this examination of conscience and ask: "Do I feel this struggle in my heart? This conflict between my own comfort or serving others more, between having a little fun or praying more?"(Homily 1-19 -2017)

**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.

### **6th Sunday in Ordinary Time - February 12**

*"Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven."*

By our baptism, we are all called to hand on the truths of our faith. Greatness in discipleship is loving God with our whole heart, mind and soul and our neighbor as ourselves. How is God calling you to reflect his great love for us? How is God calling you to love your neighbor? For more information on vocations to the priesthood contact the vocations office:

[www.owensborovocations.com](http://www.owensborovocations.com), 270-683-1545,  
[jason.mcclure@pastoral.org](mailto:jason.mcclure@pastoral.org)

### **Celebration**

**BIRTHDAYS:** John O'Reilly, Feb. 17th.

**March-May Ministry Schedule: If you would like to be added to one of the ministries, taken off, or have any other changes please call the office by Friday, February 17th, 270-756-2356.**

**Family Movie Night:** We will be showing Disney's "The BFG (Big Friendly Giant)." It is an imaginative story filled with magic, wonder and an unexpected friendship. A young girl is thrown into an enormous adventure when she crosses paths with a mysterious being called the Big Friendly Giant. Join us on Friday, February 24, for a night of family entertainment, grab a drink and some popcorn, bring your friends and join in the fun. As always movie night and snacks are free to all who wish to come.



**Senior Day** will be held on Tuesday, February 14th, from 10 am to 1 pm, of course we will be celebrating Valentine's Day! We will study a little history on St. Valentine, St. Polycarp, St. Josephine Bakhita, and St. Blaise. Fried

chicken will be served along with the tasty dishes that our seniors bring to pass. Valentine treats will be handed out to all, so come and enjoy a day of fellowship, bring your husband or wife or just your friends. Senior day is always a good time to gather!

### **Coming Soon—The Catholic's Divorce Survival Guide:**

A program that brings about great 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). Sessions will begin on Monday, March 6 from 6 pm to 8 pm, this is a 12 week program open to anyone who needs guidance, whether you've been divorced 1 month or 30 years we are here for you, so come join us.

### **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.

### **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:**  
**Irvington Gas Company**  
**270-547-2455**

**Thank you for supporting St Romuald Church!**

### THIS WEEK:

Mon	1:00 pm	Blue Army Rosary
	7:00 pm	Al-Anon Meeting
Tues	10:00 am	Scripture Study
	10:00 am	Senior Day
	1:00 pm	Mass (Extended Care)
	4:00 pm	SRIS School Board Meeting
Wed	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Mass
	7:00 pm	Knights of Columbus
Thur	9:30 am	Mass (Medco)
	6:00 pm	Family Holy Hour
Fri	9:00 am	School Mass
Sun	8:30 am	K-6 Religious Ed Classes

### UPCOMING:

Feb 20	6:00 pm	Jail Ministry Training
Feb 22	8:00 am	Jail Ministry Training
Feb 23	6:00 pm	Jail Ministry Training
Feb 24	6:00 pm	Family Movie Night

**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.

### 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, 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, **Judy Seelye**, 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



**Ash Wednesday is coming!** The ashes come from ***last year's palms!*** You can bring in your old palm and place it in the baskets by the church doors to help provide the ashes for this Lent! Many see this as symbolic of spiritual progress, that from last year's failed attempts at spiritual growth in Lent, we can start again and make further progress this year!



### **Journey through Lent:**

Beginning, Wednesday, March 1, 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 1st 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.

**CORRECTION:** Knights of Columbus February Meeting has been moved to Wednesday, February 15.



**Sympathy:** Please pray for the repose of the soul of Tammy Ann Fentress Batts (daughter of Helen Fentress), who was buried last Saturday. Please keep the family in your prayers.



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**Eucharistic First Friday 24-hour Adoration:**

Following the 9:00 am Mass on March 3rd, 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 in prayer with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

**Praying the Psalms in the Office-St Meinrad Retreat**

Thursday, March 9- Sunday, March 12, 2017. The office is a place for work, but in the liturgy the Office is also a time for prayer. While the office staff/team might or might not pray together, the Psalms offer lots to reflect on in a given day. This retreat will examine some of the psalms to help sustain the work of the office by Fr. Jeremy King, OSB For more info or to register, email mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu

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**"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.

**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!

# Mass Etiquette Column



**Does chewing gum, eating candy, breath mints, or lozenges break the fast before Holy Communion?**

Chewing gum during Mass is not acceptable and does violate the Eucharistic Fast. Lozenges, mints, etc. used for medicinal or health related purposes do not break one's fast.

**St Vincent DePaul Report:** St Vincent DePaul conducts works of mercy for our community. The Society is thankful for the generosity of parishioners who contribute monthly to their outreach ministry. Their monthly report for January included the following services and help given: Assistance was provided to a total of 23 families amounting to 72 persons (of which 36 were children). The aid totaled just over \$1,803.48 given to help struggling families and individuals. May God continue blessing the generous donors and all of the recipients of their care.



Congratulations to these St. Romuald School and Parish students who recently participated in the BCHS Choral Production of "The Sound of Music". We are so proud of you. St. Romuald cast members include Drake Bennett, Brittany Carwile, Hayden Roberts, Anna Flood, Trenton Whitfill, Bailee Harper, Cameron Howard, Sarah Eskridge, Audrey Carwile, Gabby Burnett, Halle Barr, Autumn Siler, Miah Glenn, Julia Mattingly, Amelia Barr and Lindsey Whitfill.



**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2017**

**SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

### **Celebrate marriage**

Marriage isn't for everyone, and current trends may point to a declining appeal. But for those who have said, "I do," the rest of us say, "Thank you." Your bold act of casting lots together for better or worse until death offers all of us insight into the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of divine love and the nature and power of God, who is love. Whether or not you're married, do what you can to support the marriages in your midst—today, World Marriage Day, and every day.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 15:15-20; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37 (76). "Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."*

## **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13**

### **In the world but not of it**

Everyone experiences difficulties at some point in their lives. No matter how fortunate a person may be, going a lifetime without adversity is next to impossible. The early church went through trials of a different sort: hostility, persecution, and the general tension of living in a world that did not share its beliefs. These days there is still friction between a life of faith and an increasingly secular world. The response of some is to condemn that world rather than engage it. Contemporary Christians can learn from the first ones, who saw in trials the opportunity to grow in virtue and develop their faith.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 4:1-15, 25; Mark 8:11-13 (335). "He sighed from the depth of his spirit and said, 'Why does this generation seek a sign?'"*

## **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

### **MEMORIAL OF CYRIL, MONK, AND METHODIUS, BISHOP**

#### **In their own words**

There's a small detail in the gospel story of how Jesus fed 4,000 people with a few loaves and fish: "Some of them have come from a great distance." "Great distance" here was a code word for "outsider." Even outsiders, like Gentiles, were welcome at God's table. Eight centuries later the brothers Cyril and Methodius were called to be missionaries. They not only evangelized, at great distances, but also translated scripture and liturgy into the language of the people. These saints recognized that truly welcoming everyone to God's kingdom called for moving out of established boundaries. And that's a miracle we, too, can be part of.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10; Mark 8:14-21 (336). "Do you not remember, when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand?"*

## **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15**

### **Knowing God is the moment of truth**

As any teacher can attest, not everyone comprehends a lesson on the first teaching: Instructions need to be repeated. The same holds true for Christian enlightenment: Some people have a sudden moment of clarity when they know Jesus as their savior; others need continual signs before they realize that through Jesus their lives have been restored. No matter how a person reaches this moment of truth, conversion is the central message of Christianity. We must come to know God, feel the presence of the divine in our lives, and strive for holiness in which we give glory to God and are of service to others.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 8:6-13, 20-22; Mark 8:22-26 (337). "Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and*

*he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly."*

## **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16**

### **Take a united stand against being divided**

At a time in our country when we most need unity, we are divided. We face many difficult issues at one time—war and national security, healthcare, immigration, fiscal policies—each demanding serious attention. Yet our political debate has become toxic. We no longer seem willing to listen carefully, argue dispassionately, or disagree respectfully—much less reach for a compromise of any kind. The internet plays an important role here. In both bread and politics a little yeast goes a long way. Remember, then, to read widely and pay attention to your sources. Where are your "facts" coming from?

*TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 9:1-13; Mark 8:27-33 (338). "You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."*

## **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17**

### **MEMORIAL OF THE SEVEN HOLY FOUNDERS OF THE SERVITE ORDER**

#### **Do you want to know a secret? Pray.**

A good number of religious orders started out as a small group of people looking for a simpler life of prayer and fellowship. Originally a group of seven successful cloth merchants from Florence, the founders of the Servite order started to meet in 1233 to pray and do penance. In time they left their wealthy lifestyles to reside in a dilapidated structure outside the city. Because of their holiness, though, people started coming to them for prayers and spiritual advice. Eventually the community grew into an order that today serves around the world. Make time for an inner life of prayer—and then live out that prayer in the world.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 11:1-9; Mark 8:34—9:1 (339). "What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?"*

## **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18**

### **MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

#### **Be not afraid!**

Children often ask why Mary, the mother of Jesus, stands on a snake in many of her images—they're afraid of snakes; why isn't she? Tradition has long interpreted the divine saying to Eve in Genesis as a prophecy that one day a woman would come to wage war on the serpent who tricked her weaker sister. This woman would have no fear of the snake because she would never experience the bondage of sin. This story explains the origin of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Offer the traditional prayer today:  
*O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.*

*TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 11:1-7; Mark 9:2-13 (340). "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."*

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