

# The Congregation at Prayer

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer  
 For the Week of the Fourth Sunday in Lent/Laetare Sunday  
 March 19 through March 26, 2023

**Catechesis Notes for the Week — A New Commandment I Give You that You Love One Another as I Have Loved You—**  
 The Passion narrative in St. John’s Gospel begins with Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointing Jesus with oil. It was an act of love for Jesus and a confession of faith in Him. Mary loved Jesus because she had been touched by His love and anointed His body for His coming burial. On Palm Sunday the pilgrims who greeted Jesus with “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” had also been touched by Jesus’ love and confessed their faith in Him because of it. When Jesus’ washed the disciples’ feet in the upper room, He forgave their sin, sanctified them by His Word for service as His apostles, and “loved them to the end” by preaching His forgiving grace and dying for their sins and the sins of the whole world upon the cross. At the conclusion of this week’s narrative, we hear the words of Jesus: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Jesus loved us by laying down His life for our sins and by speaking those words of forgiveness that bind up our wounds and comfort our troubled consciences. This is why Mary, the Palm Sunday pilgrims, and all Christians love Jesus. John would later write of this, “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Jesus calls this command “to love one another” a “new commandment” because it is rooted in the New Covenant in His blood. It’s meaning defines what is at the heart of the Gospel: “the forgiveness of sins.”

## The Order of Meditation and Prayer

Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate. Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.

## Theme: Jesus Is the Bread of Life!

### Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### Apostles’ Creed

#### Verse: Luke 10:2

The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few;  
 therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

#### Psalm 122 and/or the appointed daily psalms listed below.

**Prayer on the Psalm:** Our hearts are glad, and our souls rejoice before You, O Lord God, for by Your Word of truth you have made us members of Your holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive all sins to all whose trust is in Jesus Christ. Grant us grace to abide in the love of Your Word and in purity of faith and piety of life, even to the end of our days, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	84	119:73-80	34	5	38	22	43	84
Evening	42, 32	121, 6	25, 91	27, 51	126, 102	107, 130	31, 143	42, 32

### Bible Readings for the Week:

	Bible Narrative	Second Reading
Sunday	<b>Lent 4:</b> The Feeding of the 5,000—John 6:1-15 <b>St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus:</b> Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23	Deuteronomy 15:7-11
Monday	Jesus Is Anointed at Bethany—John 12:1-11	Psalm 118:1-20
Tuesday	Palm Sunday—John 12:12-26	Psalm 35:1-12
Wednesday	<b>Passion: Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin</b> —Matthew 26:57-75	Exodus 40:1-33
Thursday	Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet—John 13:1-20	Psalm 41
Friday	A New Commandment Is Given—John 13:21-38	Hebrews 9:11-15
Saturday	Lent 5: The Sacrifice of Isaac—Genesis 22:1-14 <b>The Annunciation of Our Lord:</b> Luke 1:26-38	

### The Catechism: What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors (Second Half)

(Preschool children and everyone, review the primary texts of the fourth, fifth, and sixth commandments.)

<b>Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery.</b>	
What does God’s Word say the hearers of God’s Word owe their pastors? We ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.	First Grade + 1 Thessalonians 5:12
Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.	Second Grade + 1 Thessalonians 5:13

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.  
They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.  
Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden,  
for that would be of no advantage to you.

Third Grade +  
Hebrews 13:17

**Prayers: Catechism Prayers, In Our Prayers at Peace, and the Collect for the Week**

**Prayer for Hearers of God's Word:**

*O Lord Jesus, we give thanks to You for the gift of pastors who preach Your saving Gospel and administer Your life-giving sacraments to us. Crucify our flesh and destroy all impenitence and unbelief in us, so that we who have received faithful instruction in the Word of God might provide generously for the support of our pastors. Teach us to believe that our pastors, who faithfully sow the seed and tread out the grain of Your Word, are worthy of their wages and are entitled to reap from what they have sown. Teach us to believe that preaching and teaching Your Word is the most important work that our pastors do, so that we might honor and support them in this work, live together with them in the peace of Your forgiveness, and hold them in the highest regard in love for the sake of the Gospel; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

**Collect for the week of The Fourth Sunday in Lent / Laetare Sunday:**

*Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

**Collect for the Feast of St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus (March 19)**

*Almighty God, from the house of Your servant David You raised up Joseph to be the guardian of Your incarnate Son and the husband of His mother, Mary. Grant us grace to follow the example of this faithful workman in heeding Your counsel and obeying Your commands; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

**Collect for The Annunciation of Our Lord (March 25)**

*O Lord, as we have known the incarnation of Your Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of the angel to the virgin Mary, so by the message of His cross and passion bring us to the glory of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

**In Our Prayers this Week (include the petitions below followed by the Lord's Prayer)**

**Baptism:** Caleb John Krueger, son of Erik and Jennifer Krueger

**Baptismal Anniversaries:** Bonnie Zeretzke, Margit Rhode (3/19), Megan Braunschweig (3/20), Martin Gehlbach (3/21), Luke Voss (3/22).

**The Sick:** Mark Gretzinger medical testing for undiagnosed medical issues; Larry Haga and Dawn Fredrich recovering from surgery; Dennis Michaelis (cousin of Verla Gatchell); Gabby Hartwig; Mike Ferguson, Peyton Locklair, Jamilyn Martin, Kathy Miller, and Heather Peters in cancer treatment.

**Those who mourn:** Jim Weber; Tom Goehner (son of the late Rev. James and Grace Goehner)

**Lord's Prayer and Morning or Evening Prayer from the Catechism.**

**Hymn of the Week**

**"God Loved the World So That He Gave" (stanzas 1 and 4)**

571

**Looking forward to Judica Sunday—The Fifth Sunday in Lent**

**March 26, 2023**

**Hymns: 564, 429, 426, 529, 453, 433, 422**

**Genesis 22:1-14:** Abraham was called by God away from idolatry to be the "father of many nations." The Lord promised Abraham that in his Seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The Lord called Abraham to faith and made this promise to him when he was 75 years old. He and Sarah had to wait for 25 years before Isaac was born. Although it appeared as if the son of the promise would never be born and that it was impossible for a woman of Sarah's age to ever have a baby, Isaac was finally born when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90! The Lord kept His promise! It was a miracle of God's grace. Now, in the Old Testament reading for Lent 5, Abraham is called to sacrifice the very son for whom he had waited for so long. By the call to sacrifice Isaac, "your only son whom you love," the Lord reveals that Abraham's faith was, indeed, in God's promise alone! Because of the promise, Abraham knew and believed that even if Isaac were to be put to death, he would rise from the dead, because God had promised: "In your Seed ALL the nations of the earth would be blessed." The years of waiting had been used by God to convince Abraham that the Lord NEVER breaks His promise, and that the miracle of salvation depends entirely upon the Lord and His Word. Even if Isaac dies, he correctly reasoned, according to the promise he MUST live again. So much of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is revealed in this event: The object of the Christian faith is the promise of salvation in Christ; Abraham is a picture of God the Father who sacrifices His only Son whom He loves for us; the Son of the Promise would bring about the blessing of salvation by being sacrificed in our place; the Ram caught in the thicket continues the theme of substitutionary atonement.

**Hebrews 9:11-15:** The apostle declares that Jesus is not only the faithful High Priest of a better and eternal covenant of redemption, but that He is also the very sacrifice for sin Himself.

**John 8:42-59:** Jesus teaches us that Abraham longed to see the fulfillment of God's promise in the sending forth of God's eternal Son. In this Gospel, Jesus clearly confesses that He is the eternal Son of the Father by applying the divine name given at the burning bush to Himself: "Before Abraham was I AM." This is why the Jews took up stones to stone Him. They believed He was committing blasphemy by applying the divine name to Himself. By this action they showed that they did not love God or His Son whom the Father had sent. Jesus said, "He who is of God, hears God's words ... if anyone keeps My word, he shall never see death."