

Feast of Faith

The Penitential Rite

Standing together in the presence of the Lord, we acknowledge our weakness, our sins and faults and failings. But the penitential rite is really less about our sins than it is about God's mercy. It is not a time for individual confession, like a mini-sacrament of reconciliation. It is, rather, a preparatory rite, preparing us to praise the mercy of Christ as we acknowledge our own weakness. When Simon Peter witnesses the miraculous catch of fish—when he realizes who is in the boat with him—he falls at Jesus' feet with the words, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). We are like Peter. The more aware of the Lord's presence we become, the more awareness we also have of our sinfulness, our weakness.

The penitential rite of the Mass takes several forms, from the traditional Confiteor or "I confess" to a litany, spoken or sung by the deacon or cantor with responses by the entire assembly. The penitential rite always includes the words Kyrie, eleison; Christe, eleison—Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy. This ancient Greek prayer came to the Roman liturgy from the East, and still echoes in many of the litanies of the Eastern Rite Churches. These words turn our gaze from our own weakness to the gentleness, the kindness, the forgiving love of Christ. —Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Family Influence

Disorder in the society is the result of disorder in the family.
—St. Angela Merici

A New Day Dawns

Today we hear how Jonah, sent by God to warn the people, storms through the streets of Nineveh, scaring the citizens out of their wits. And it works! God has a change of heart, seeing "by their actions" how the people turn from evil (Jonah 3:10). A new day dawns.

Next we hear Paul telling the Corinthians, "The world in its present form is passing away" (1 Corinthians 7:31). He calls for a change of heart. Stopping short of telling them to stop carrying out their everyday activities, he urges them—rather mysteriously—to live "as though" they aren't doing the things they are doing. A new day has dawned.

Finally, Jesus stands on the shore and cries, "The kingdom of God is at hand!" (Mark 1:14). Simon and Andrew abandon their nets—and even their father—and follow him. A new day had dawned.

Everyone has to change when a new day dawns: the Ninevites, the Corinthians, the apostles, even Jesus! Didn't a new day dawn today for us as well?
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Readings for the Week

Monday:	Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22; Ps 117:1bc, 2; Mk 16:15-18
Tuesday:	2 Tm 1:1-8 or Ti 1:1-5; Ps 96:1-3, 7-8a, 10; Mk 3:31-35
Wednesday:	Heb 10:11-18; Ps 110:1-4; Mk 4:1-20
Thursday:	Heb 10:19-25; Ps 24:1-6; Mk 4:21-25
Friday:	Heb 10:32-39; Ps 37:3-6, 23-24, 39-40; Mk 4:26-34
Saturday:	Heb 11:1-2, 8-19; Lk 1:69-75; Mk 4:35-41
Sunday:	Dt 18:15-20; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; 1 Cor 7:32-35; Mk 1:21-28

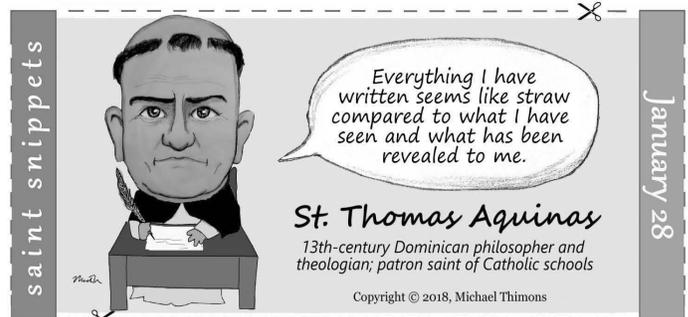
Not Without Love

The soul cannot live without love.

—St. Francis de Sales

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Monday:	The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle
Tuesday:	Ss. Timothy and Titus
Wednesday:	St. Angela Merici; Tu B'Shvat (Jewish new year of trees) begins at sunset
Thursday:	St. Thomas Aquinas



Today's Readings

First Reading — The Ninevites turn from their evil ways in response to Jonah's message (Jonah 3:1-5, 10).

Psalm — Teach me your ways, O Lord (Psalm 25).

Second Reading — The world in its present form is passing away (1 Corinthians 7:29-31).

Gospel — Jesus proclaims, "Repent, and believe in the gospel." The new disciples abandon their nets and follow him (Mark 1:14-20).

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Third Sunday In Ordinary Time January 24, 2021

**The kingdom of God is at hand.
Repent, and believe in the gospel.**

—Mark 1:15

A New Way, A New World

In the reading from Jonah, God told him to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. When the whole city repented the very first day, they showed it by wearing sackcloth and fasting from food. Sometimes we might think that way: That repenting means punishing ourselves or feeling sorry. Jesus sees things differently.

He preached repentance that was a change of heart, a new way of looking at things, a new way of acting. In the gospel today, we see an example. The first people he calls to be disciples were fisherman. They would have considered their family, their partners, and their boat as the most important things in their lives. You need all of them to be a successful fisherman. One man sitting on a dock with a pole could barely keep himself fed, much less support a family.

Yet the disciples don't even hesitate when called by Jesus. They leave behind their boats, their nets, even their father, to follow Jesus. They don't worry about what they will do, or look back at what they are leaving behind. Now they are fishers of men. Their "repentance" was more than just giving up sins. They were beginning a new life and a new way of looking at the world.

Saint Paul refers to this as a new world. By following Jesus, we put the values of the present world behind us and look forward to a new one. His examples could apply today as much as in his time. Marriages, joy, sadness, buying property are still considered important to worldly people. Paul doesn't expect everyone to stop doing those things. When he talks about not using the world fully, he means not fully engaged in the world, but looking to a better one, where God is more important than any passing pleasure or pain. Is your marriage an example of God's love for your friends and relatives? When you are rejoicing, do you give thanks to God? When weeping, do you ask for his help? When you are shopping, do you buy what you really need, or what you think will make you happy? Jesus calls us all to this new way of living. With Jesus, we can make a new world.

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Treasures From Our Tradition

Today there is an abrupt shift in the season of Advent. From here on the tone is more joyful and expectant and the tug of the Christmas message is irresistible. At daily Mass on December 17 we begin to unfold the story of Jesus' birth. Who can resist the beauty of the first reading today—deserts aflame with flowers, arthritics set to dancing, the tone-deaf singing hymns? So we don't miss the change, the parish may take rose-colored vestments out of mothballs, we may light rose-colored candles on the wreath, or fill in our wreaths with desert flowers, pink seashells, seed pods, cones and berries. The seeds of God's kingdom have been sown in us. In these shining days of Advent they are sprouting in many ways. How do we bring the promise to light? This is the week to prepare gifts for the poor. It is the week to invite a lonely neighbor to your Christmas dinner, the week to write a note forgiving a lost friend, the week to shatter a family grudge so that even in the desert places of your heart, Christ's life may blossom.

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

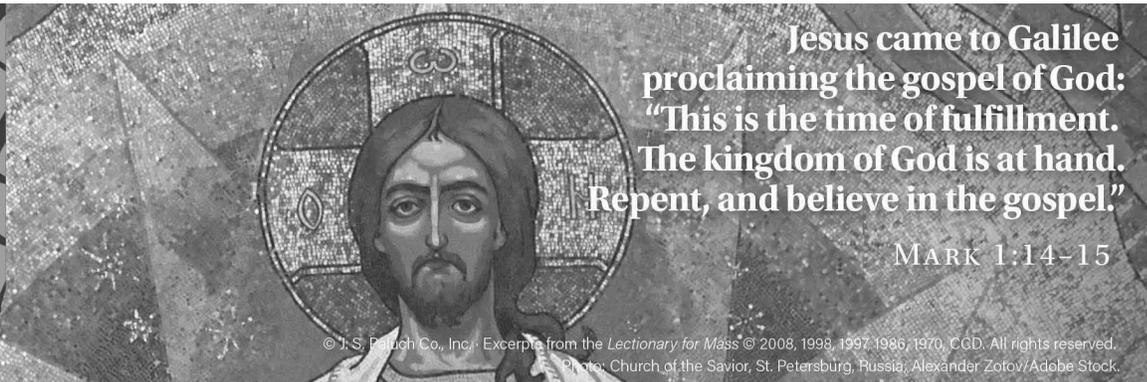
SAINT ANGELA MERICI (c. 1474-1540)

January 27

Born in Northern Italy, orphaned in childhood, Angela Merici faced a society in which education was largely the privilege of wealthy young men and based primarily in monastic schools. This reality shaped Angela's insightful conviction that society's disorder was caused by disorder in the home, and a lack of model Christian mothers the result of neglecting the education of young women. Transform the Christian family by placing an educated wife and mother at its heart, Angela believed, and the whole world would be renewed in Christ! So she gathered a small group of unmarried women, many of them Franciscan Tertiaries (lay affiliates) like herself, and set out to educate poor girls, free of charge, in their homes. She and her band of teachers called themselves "companions," pioneering a new form of non-cloistered religious life for women, bearing witness to evangelical simplicity in the midst of the world, not as a formal "order" but as the "Company (compagnia) of Saint Ursula." Known today as the Ursulines, Angela Merici's spiritual daughters continue serving the Church and society in a rich diversity of ministries.

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January 24, 2021
THIRD Sunday
in ORDINARY TIME



“KAIROS” MOMENTS

Our readings today speak of “Kairos” times, of God proclaiming new moments of opportunity of encounter with the Divine. From Jonah, we hear of God’s summons to the people of Nineveh to turn from evil. We hear Paul tell the church in Corinth that those who live in Christ must avoid clinging to anything transient, as all is secondary to God. And we hear of the beginning of Jesus’ ministry in Mark, as Jesus proclaims a moment of both opportunity and crisis. In these passages, there are no delaying tactics, no getting caught up in life’s distractions. Just a simple moment of choice. Perhaps we have had “Kairos” moments like these, or we may be facing one now. Sometimes, amid the complexities and uncertainties of our lives, clear choices emerge, and God asks us to choose. And our always patient and merciful God will accompany us in our choices.

THE INAUGURATION

Mark describes the beginning of Jesus’ ministry with his proclamation that the “kingdom of God is at hand.” The rest of Mark’s Gospel—all of Jesus’ preaching and healing, his death and resurrection—describes the inauguration of this kingdom of God. For Mark, the life of Jesus is the center point of history, where everything leads up to Jesus, and everything follows from Jesus. Mark then tells us that the first disciples follow Jesus immediately and wholeheartedly. They leave their work and family, all for Jesus. Because compared to Jesus and the life he offers, everything else is secondary.

Perhaps our invitations from God do not entail such dramatic life changes. But all who follow Jesus are called to align our life and values with his ways of love. As we continue to mature in love and in faith, we might ask: What needs to be renewed, re-oriented, or discarded in light of our life in Christ?

JONAH AND NINEVEH

Jonah makes a rare appearance this week. The book of Jonah is a fascinating tale of God, stubborn Jonah, surprising Nineveh, and the famous fish (or whale). Please consider reading the whole book, just 48 verses, together with a good commentary. The book is read at Jewish services at Yom Kippur, as a profound reflection about God and about all of us.

Today’s passage takes place shortly after Jonah’s time in the fish’s belly. Jonah finally performs the task that God asks of him, to call the people of Nineveh to repentance. (Nineveh was notorious for its brutality.) Their sudden repentance is bitterly accepted by Jonah, as he resents God’s mercy for Nineveh. God reminds Jonah that the people of Nineveh are God’s beloved too. Like the parable of the Prodigal Son, the story hints at the vastness of God’s mercy, especially forgiveness of those who seem least deserving. We are reminded that all of us are sinners, and we are all in need of God’s mercy.

TODAY’S READINGS

- Jonah 3:1–5, 10
- Psalm 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9
- 1 Corinthians 7:29–31
- Mark 1:14–20

Prayer of the Faithful

Let us bring our needs and the needs of the world to the God who has invited us to change our ways and follow the path to holiness.

**For our Church as we proclaim Jesus's call to repentance and discipleship,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For those who live in our cities large and small,
who struggle against crime, violence, and
apathy on a daily basis,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all those who hear Jesus' call to the priesthood
and religious life, for wise and understanding directors
of their formation, and for the support of their
families and loved ones,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all those who live and work on the sea:
for fishers, sailors, oil workers, researchers, and
others; for success and safety,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For everyone in our nation and community to
respond generously to the call to consideration of
their neighbor as we all work to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all those who are sick, for all who suffer from
COVID-19, and for all who have died,
especially N., N., and N.,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all the prayers that we hold in the silence
of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**O God,
you call us to repentance and discipleship.
Teach us to change our hearts
and follow you faithfully.**

**We ask for this and all these our prayers
in the name of your Son and our Lord,
Jesus Christ.**