

— 2024 —

Lenten

— Reflection —



Catholic
Archdiocese
of Adelaide



Dear sisters and brothers,

During these 40 days of Lent, it is our practice as Catholics to pray, fast and give alms. These simple acts are in imitation of Christ, who by the example of his life, taught us to fast, pray, and live in service to others, especially the least among us. These practices are part of our formation, our *becoming* more human and Christ-like. Indeed, all of Lent is a deepening of our formation in Christ – to be as Pope Francis says, *missionary disciples*, and a preparation for the new life of Easter.

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19)... Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries”, but rather that we are always “missionary disciples” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120)

The Sunday readings from the Lectionary, Year B, provide a pathway for this formation: “Repent, and believe the Good News” (Mark 1:12-15); “This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him” (Mark 9:1-10); the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17); “God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved” (John 3:14-21); “Deep within [my people] I will plant my Law, writing on their hearts. I will be their God and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:31-34).



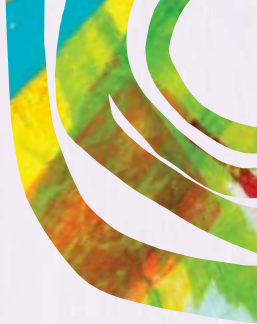
Or to put it in another way, “Disciples, transformed by God’s tender mercy, “have an endless desire to show mercy,” they are impelled to be missionary disciples (EG, 24). They desire God’s love as the fundamental truth of their lives; indeed it is the truth of the whole of creation and of history. Living God’s truth, disciples speak of it readily and seek to be agents of mercy in their own unique circumstances” (*Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, pg 5).

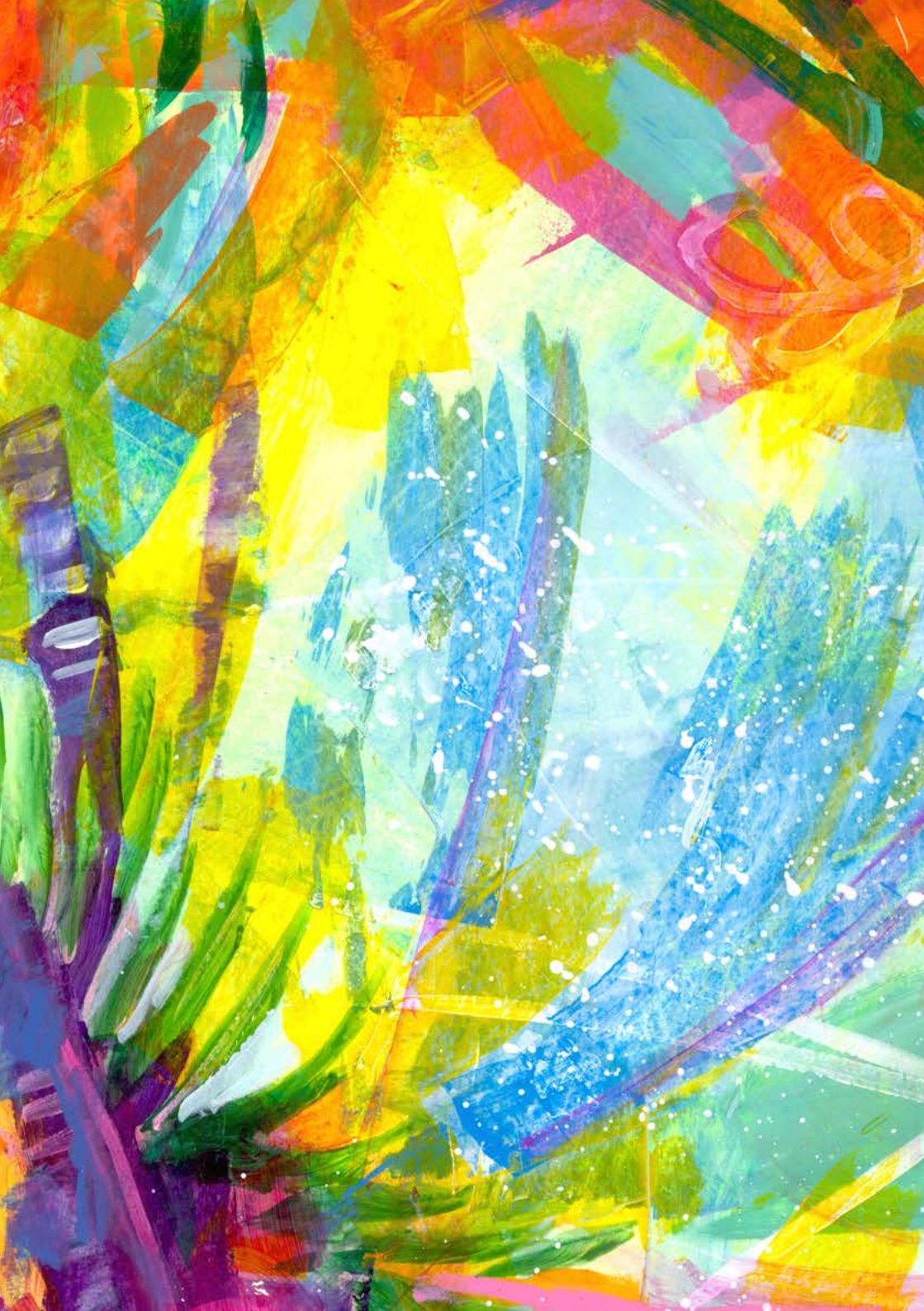
This year, I invite you to reflect on the Lenten Scriptures through the lens of *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, our new Archdiocesan statement on formation. Through our Lenten observance, may we all become a little more like Christ. For God is good; good indeed.

In Domino,

+ Pat O'Regan

+ Patrick O'Regan DD
Archbishop of Adelaide





Introduction

Lent is a season of renewal and transformation. Last October the Archdiocese published, *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel: Formation in the Archdiocese of Adelaide*. This Lenten resource is designed to be read along with *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*.

Throughout Lent this year, we will read and reflect on the Sunday readings for Year B through the lens of *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*. These readings continually remind us that God has chosen each of us for a particular purpose, and though we may stray from that purpose from time to time, God calls us back in mercy and love. We are formed, and transformed throughout our lives, becoming more like Christ in all we say and do.

Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel

Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel outlines the Archdiocese of Adelaide's commitment to foster the faith formation of the people of God in this place—that is, to provide opportunities that draw Catholics into a closer encounter with Jesus Christ, and thus ensure that we are “permanently in a state of mission” (EG, §25).

How to Use this Resource

Each week includes the Sunday Readings, a short introduction to the week's themes, a reflection from *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, a reflection question and prayer meditation. You are encouraged to use a bible or a Sunday Missal to read the scriptures, and a copy of *Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel*, which is available online at:

<https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-works-and-community/pastoral-services/publications>



Ash Wednesday | Year B

14th February 2024

1st Reading: Joel 2:2-18

2nd Reading: 2nd Corinthians 5:20-6:2

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

While not a day of obligation in Australia, people attend Mass on Ash Wednesday in impressive numbers. Our churches are as busy as they are at Christmas or Easter. Receiving ashes signed as a cross on the forehead, and hearing the sobering message: 'Repent, and believe in the Gospel', appears to have wide enduring appeal.

In its organic way, a collective meditation on our deepest reality and simple faith unfolds on Ash Wednesday. It's a public ritual of humble acknowledgement that our lives are not all that they could be, that we long for good news of God's mercy.

With Ash Wednesday, the season of Lent begins - a season of transformation. Over 40 days we are invited to re-experience 'the triumph of mercy over all that would crush us or reduce us to something unworthy of our dignity as God's children' (Pope Francis, Homily, Ash Wednesday 2017).

Scripture Focus

'Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks – come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning.' Let your hearts be broken not your garments torn, turn to the Lord your God again, for he is all tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, and ready to relent.'

Joel 2.12-13

Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel – Introduction (Page 5)

Disciples, transformed by God's tender mercy, "have an endless desire to show mercy," they are impelled to be missionary disciples (EG, §24). They know God's love as the fundamental truth of their lives; indeed, it is the truth of the whole of creation and of history. Living God's truth, disciples speak of it readily and seek to be agents of mercy in their own unique circumstances.

Reflection Question

How have I experienced God's tenderness and mercy in my own life? How have I offered that mercy to others?

Prayer

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned. (Psalm 50)

Gospel Readings and Daily Psalms after Ash Wednesday

15th February, Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Gospel: Luke 9:22-25

Psalm 1: *Happy are they who hope in the Lord.*

16th February, Friday after Ash Wednesday

Gospel: Matthew 9:14-15

Psalm 50: *A broken, humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn.*

17th February, Saturday after Ash Wednesday

Gospel: Luke: 5:27-32

Psalm 85: *Teach me your ways, O Lord, that I may be faithful
in your sight.*



1st Sunday of Lent | Year B

18th February 2024

1st Reading: Genesis 9:8-15

2nd Reading: 1st Peter 3:18-22

Gospel: Mark 1:12-15

This week we are presented with greatly contrasting images: the desert wilderness and the waters of flood and baptism. The first represents the challenges of life that 'test' us. Jesus himself was tested by the devil with the temptations of status, possessions and power, but he withstood the testing and chose instead to follow God's way.

The waters of the great flood were the means by which God gave the Chosen People a second chance. Their past infidelity and sinfulness was washed away as a New Covenant was struck between God and 'every living creature of every kind'. Today, the waters of baptism establish an unbreakable relationship between us and God and Lent is a 'grace-full' time for us to renew our commitment to baptism.

Scripture Focus

'God spoke to Noah and his sons, 'See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you ... everything that lives on the earth.'

Genesis 9.8-9

Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel – Renewal in the Church (Page 6)

“Every person’s encounter with Jesus Christ connects in some way with the believing community, the church. No one walks these paths alone. Parents, grandparents, siblings, and other family members are primary witnesses to faith and nurture a communion of love, the “domestic church.” Couples, singles, and friends are equally agents of that loving communion. Parishes and communities, centred on the word of God and the Eucharist, are called to be beacons of joy in their own locales. Catholic schools educate students so that they can discover and be transformed by the faith that helps them to flourish as individuals and as essential members of faith-filled communities. In all of these contexts, and a multitude more, individuals experience the faith of God’s people and the mystery of the living God.”

Reflection Question

How has my faith community assisted my own faith formation and renewal? How have I contributed to the life of the community?

Prayer

Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.
(Psalm 24)

Gospel Readings and Daily Psalms for the 1st Week of Lent

Monday, 19th February

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Psalm 18: *Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.*

Tuesday, 20th February

Gospel: Matthew 6:7-15

Psalm 33: *From all their afflictions God will deliver the just.*

Wednesday, 21st February

Gospel: Luke 11:29-32

Psalm 50: *A broken, humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn.*

Thursday, 22nd February (Chair of St. Peter)

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

Psalm 137: *Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.*

Friday, 23rd February

Gospel: Matthew 5:20-26

Psalm 129: *If you, O Lord, laid bare our guilt, who could endure it?*

Saturday, 24th February

Gospel: Matthew 5:43-48

Psalm 118: *Happy are those who follow the law of the Lord!*



2nd Sunday of Lent | Year B

25th February 2024

1st Reading: Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

2nd Reading: Romans 8:31-34

Gospel: Mark 9:2-10

'This is my beloved Son'. These words of our Heavenly Father in the story of the Transfiguration are full of meaning for us. It's Christ's willingness to sacrifice himself that gives full meaning to these words. The Son has come and offered himself out of obedience and the desire to do the Father's will. The outcome is the Transfiguration, a glimpse into the glory of Jesus that follows his journey to Jerusalem. He becomes the sign of the transfiguration every person will experience who chooses to walk the path of God while doing the Father's will.

Scripture Focus

*'With God on our side who can be against us?
Since God did not spare his own Son,
but gave him up to benefit us all,
we may be certain, after such a gift,
that he will not refuse anything he can give.'*

Romans 8.31-32

Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel – Renewal in the Church (Page 6)

“Pope Francis, echoing the Second Vatican Council, identifies the church as “first and foremost a people advancing on its pilgrim way towards God” (EG, §111). Authentic pilgrimage requires all elements of the church to be open “to a constant self-renewal born of fidelity to Jesus Christ” (EG, §26). The Holy Spirit is the agent of this renewal. It is the Spirit who initiates and sustains the ongoing conversion of individuals, communities, and structures in the church for the sake of the church’s discipleship.”

“Pope Francis has promoted synodality as an indispensable means of finding expression for the deepest truth of the gospel in this age. A synodal church is a church of shared discernment, of walking and listening together. Francis has urged the church to “a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit.” As those words indicate, a widespread synodal culture will impact upon every dimension of Christian life. The ongoing formation of all members of the church must foster a synodal conversion.”

Reflection Question

How do I give space to the listen to the Spirit through others? What is God asking of us at this time?

Prayer

I walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living. (Psalm 115)

Gospel Readings and Daily Psalms for the 2nd Week of Lent

Monday, 26th February

Gospel: Luke 6:36-38

Psalm 78: *Lord, do not deal with us as our sins deserve.*

Tuesday, 27th February

Gospel: Matthew 23: 1-12

Psalm 49: *To the upright I will show the saving power of God.*

Wednesday, 28th February

Gospel: Matthew 20:17-28

Psalm 30: *Save me, O Lord, in your steadfast love.*

Thursday, 29th February

Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

Psalm 1: *Happy are those who hope in the Lord.*

Friday, 1st March

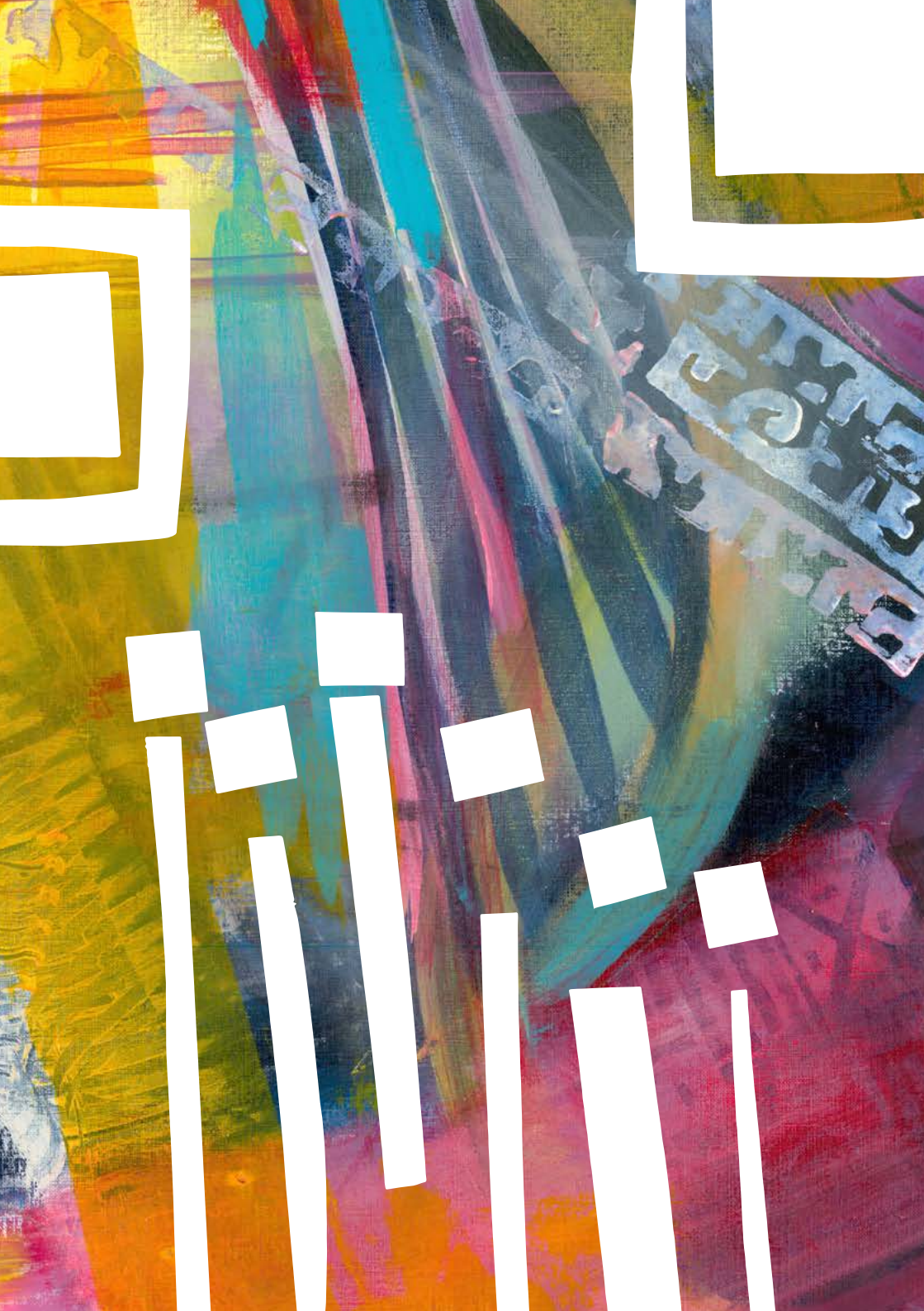
Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

Psalm 104: *Remember the marvels the Lord has done.*

Saturday, 2nd March

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Psalm 102: *The Lord is kind and merciful.*



3rd Sunday of Lent | Year B

3rd March 2024

1st Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

Gospel: John 2:13-25

The Preface is the prayer at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer that always begins with the words: *'It is truly right and just'*, and then proceeds to name those gifts of God for which we give thanks.

The Prefaces for the Sundays of Lent reflect the Gospel readings of Year A, so this Sunday's Preface speaks of the thirst for faith of the Samaritan woman at the well and the gift of 'living water' given to her by Jesus.

We can parallel this 'living water' with the 'living word' of this week's readings. The First Reading proclaims the words of God spoken to Moses on Mt Sinai; the Psalm reminds us that it is God who has the words of eternal life; the Second Reading reminds us that the 'word' we preach is Christ crucified; and in the Gospel, Jesus speaks the prophetic words: *'Destroy this sanctuary and in three days I will raise it up'*. As Christians, we know that Jesus was speaking of his resurrection.

Scripture Focus

'The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul. The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, they gladden the heart. The command of the Lord is clear, it gives light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever. The

decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just. They are more to be desired than gold, than the purest of gold and sweeter are they than honey, than honey from the comb.'

Psalm 118:8-11

Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel – Renewal in the Church (Page 6)

The renewal of our common life must be fed by a deepening appreciation of both the scriptures and the tradition of faith. It is only in this way, Francis emphasises, that the judgement of the church will mature (EG, §40). The scriptures are the privileged vehicle through which God speaks to humanity; they are the word of God. The tradition preserves and hands on the scriptural word through the whole life and practice of the church. A deeper knowledge and love of both scripture and tradition are essential for the renewal of the ecclesial community. They provide sure guides for discerning how best to respond to new questions, and advance toward the fulness of God's kingdom.

Reflection Question

How have I engaged in deepening appreciation of scripture and the tradition of faith? How can I make this an intentional part of my life?

Prayer

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life. (Psalm 118)

Gospel Readings and Daily Psalms for the 3rd Week of Lent

Monday, 4th March

Gospel: Luke 4:24-30

Psalm 41: *My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him
face to face?*

Tuesday, 5th March

Gospel: Matthew 18: 21-35

Psalm 24: *Remember your mercies, O Lord.*

Wednesday, 6th March

Gospel: Matthew 5:17-19

Psalm 147: *Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.*

Thursday, 7th March

Gospel: Luke 11:14-23

Psalm 94: *If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Friday, 8th March

Gospel: Mark 12:28-34

Psalm 80: *I am the Lord, your God; hear my voice.*

Saturday, 9th March

Gospel: Luke 18:9-14

Psalm 50: *It is steadfast love, not sacrifice, that God desires.*



4th Sunday of Lent | Year B

10th March 2024

1st Reading: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23

2nd Reading: Ephesians 2:4-10

Gospel: John 3:14-21

Life becomes less overwhelming when we are open to God's love in our lives. God has shown us through Jesus that there is a better way to live, a way that doesn't condemn us but gives life and hope. Each time we falter, we can be assured of God's generous mercy and love.

God's love for us is beyond understanding, however a glimpse of that love may be discerned through the special bond we may have with a child or grandchild, where that feeling of love is overwhelming and all-encompassing.

Jesus lived in the world and showed us how we should live in the world; He gave the ultimate sacrifice of his life for us.

This week as we journey through Lent, may we be enabled to give personal and immediate expression to God's love.

Scripture Focus

*'Yes, God loved the world so much
that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost
but may have eternal life.'*

*For God sent his Son into the world
not to condemn the world,
but so that through him the world might be saved.'*

John 3.16-17

Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel – Formation in Parishes and Communities (Page 7)

'Because the joy of the gospel is a joy to be shared, parishes and communities seek to be agents of joy; to do so, they must be outward-facing or mission-oriented (EG, §28). Our parishes and communities take many forms, some strikingly multicultural and others with a specific cultural identity. Pope Francis insists that vital parishes and communities are always going to the outskirts and to new sociocultural settings (EG, §30); they are in touch with the whole of their neighbourhood. Every pastoral activity in these communities must aim to be "more inclusive and open" (EG, §27), since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord. Further, this outward-facing orientation also characterises how we proclaim the gospel. This is the task of evangelisation."

Reflection Question

How have I experienced the personal love of Christ in my own life?
How has this love impelled me to share the joy of the Gospel with others?

Prayer

We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live a good life as from the beginning he has meant for us to live it. (Ephesians 2:10)

Gospel Readings and Daily Psalms for the 4th Week of Lent

Monday, 11th March

Gospel: John 4:43-54

Psalm 29: *I will praise, Lord, for you have rescued me.*

Tuesday, 12th March

Gospel: John 5:1-3, 5-16

Psalm 45: *The mighty Lord is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

Wednesday, 13th March

Gospel: John 5:17-30

Psalm 144: *The Lord is kind and merciful.*

Thursday, 14th March

Gospel: John 5:31-47

Psalm 105: *Lord, remember us for the love you bear your people.*

Friday, 15th March

Gospel: John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Psalm 33: *The Lord is near to broken hearts.*

Saturday, 16th March

Gospel: John 7:40-52

Psalm 7: *Lord, my God, I take shelter in you.*



5th Sunday of Lent | Year B

17th March 2024

1st Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

2nd Reading: Hebrews 5:7-9

Gospel: John 12:20-30

Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus exclaims: 'my hour has not yet come'. However, in this week's Gospel, we meet Jesus at the threshold of his Passion, as he proclaims: 'the hour has come'! Here we are privileged to gaze into Jesus' merciful heart. Intent on bearing witness to the glorious New Covenant between God and humanity that he heralds, Jesus prepares to undergo great suffering and a humiliating death. Truly, his soul is troubled by the shame of the harsh, cross-shaped path ahead. Yet Jesus disregards this 'for the sake of the joy... set before him' (Hebrews 12.2).

Through God's grace, we are learning to share in his suffering and 'joy' as our lives grow evermore open to God and merciful towards our neighbours. While we often traverse cross-shaped paths - we never do so alone: Jesus is our resolute and joyful companion.

Scripture Focus

*'Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls
on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain;
but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest.'*

John 12.23-24

Drawn into the Joy of the Gospel – Introduction (Page 5)

“Joy is an unfathomable gift that seizes the imagination, leading us beyond ourselves and illumining the everyday with the infinite tenderness of God. Acceptance of this gift invites us to a deeper trust in the God who embraces our lives and our world in Jesus Christ – “What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people” (Jn 1:3–4). What Pope Francis calls “the joy of the gospel” flows from a personal encounter with Jesus. This is a joy to be shared.”

Reflection Question

What has been my experience of Lent this year? For what am I thankful?

Prayer

Create in me a clean heart, O God. (Psalm 50)

Gospel Readings and Daily Psalms for the 5th Week of Lent

Monday, 18th March

(St. Patrick, observed. Patron of the Archdiocese of Adelaide)

Gospel: Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

Psalm 116: *Go out to all the world, and tell the Good News.*

Tuesday, 19th March (St. Joseph)

Gospel: Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24; **OR** Luke 2:41-51

Psalm 88: *The son of David will live for ever.*

Wednesday, 20th March

Gospel: John 8:31-42

Psalm: *Glory and praise for ever!* (Daniel 3:52-56)

Thursday, 21st March

Gospel: John 8:51-59

Psalm 104: The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

Friday, 22nd March

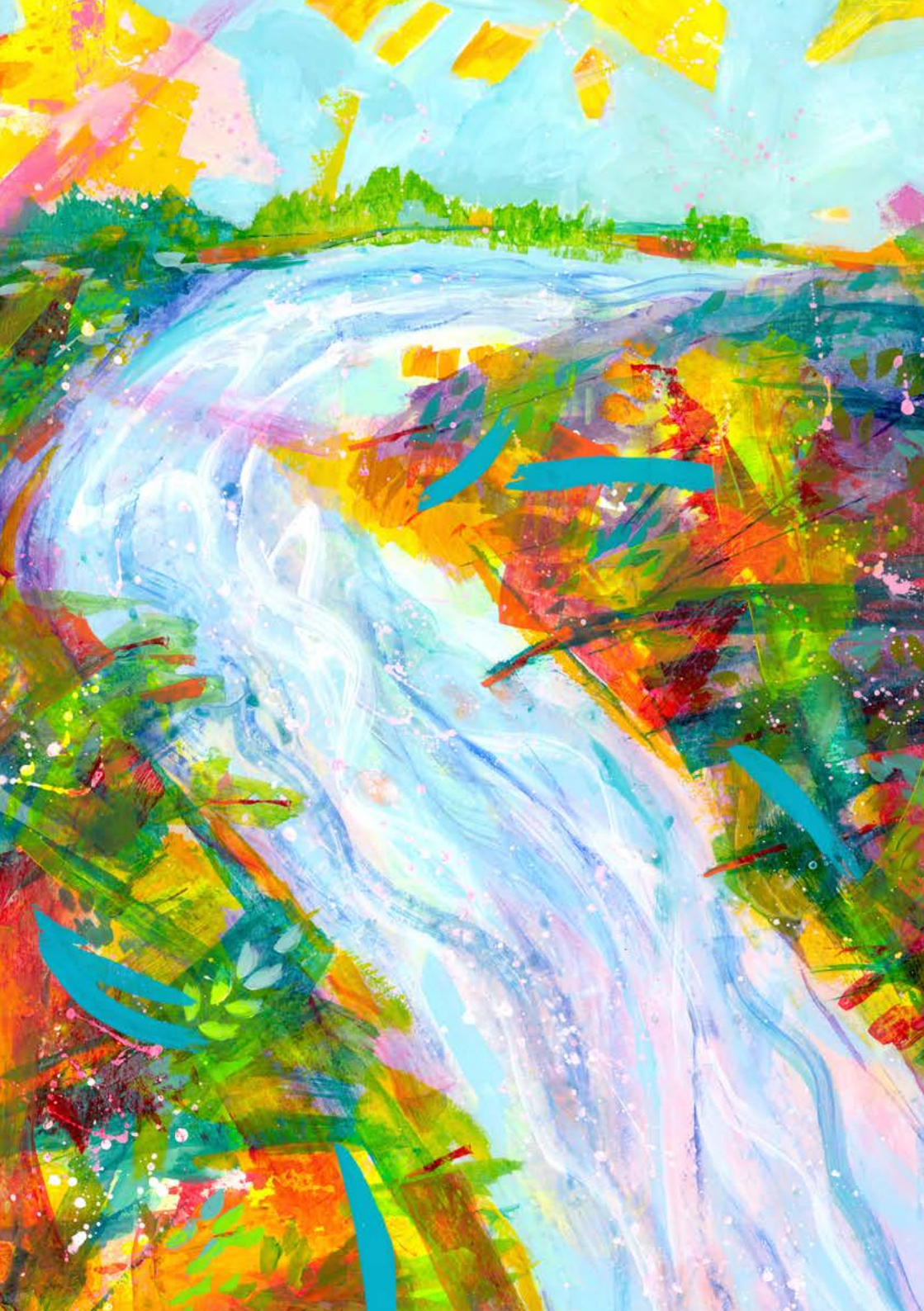
Gospel: John 10:31-42

Psalm 17: *In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice.*

Saturday, 23rd March

Gospel: John 11:45-56

Psalm: *The Lord will guard us, like a shepherd guarding his flock.*
(Jeremiah 31:10-13)



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