

March 2022

Community Newsletter

Thrive For Life

30 W. 16th St. | New York, NY 10011
(212) 337-7544 | info@thriveforlife.org



GOSPEL FOR MARCH 2022

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

OTHER READINGS

Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2

MONTHLY EXAMEN

We invite you to prayerfully reflect:

Presence

Become aware that God's presence is active at each moment of your life, looking at you with love, desirous of speaking directly to your heart. How do you feel at this moment?

Ask

Ask God for the grace to see the ways God is working in your life.

Gratitude

Be grateful. Thank God for the gifts, both big and small of the day.
What are you most grateful for today?

Review

Trust that God is with you at each moment of day, during the good and challenging moments. God never abandons you.
What were the good moments of today?
What were the greatest challenges of today?

Respond

You are not stuck. Tomorrow is a new day. Ask God to give you the grace to be the loving and generous person you were created to be.
What can you do tomorrow to be more generous and loving?

Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.

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GOD SEES US

In the Gospel of Ash Wednesday, March 2nd, 2022, Jesus teaches his disciples who God is. "When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you." I do not know why this part of the Gospel is so touching. Our God, who sees what is hidden, will repay me.

There are many types of secrets. Things that I hide from God. When we are alone, many of these secrets come back to us. Things that we are not proud of. Things that we regret doing. Things that we regret not doing. It is frightening to think that God sees all of this. However, when we look away from ourselves and look towards God, who is with us in our inner rooms, He is not looking at our secrets. God is looking at us. God sees us as who we are, His children, deserving of all His love. And God knows that we are trying hard to be our best, making best of our situation.

It is easy for us to look upon the things that we did well or the things that we did not do so well. In this season of Lent, God reminds us to keep our eyes on Him. Our God, who sees all things that are hidden, sees us as who we truly are: His children deserving of his love, mercy, and peace.

*D. Park, Jesuit Scholastic at Ciszek Hall,
Fordham University*

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WE ARE REMINDED, NOT MARKED

Once when I visited someone in the hospital, he mentioned that his neon green splint wasn't to remind the doctors that he was hurt, but to remind him that he was. The bright color made him aware of his current limitations, which he knew he would eventually be free of.

Growing up I never understood why we had ashes put on our foreheads every Ash Wednesday. Didn't God know who we were and what we were sorry for? Why did I need to walk around with a dirty forehead for the rest of the day? I suspect that many people feel like this – why does God need a marker?

In many ways, the ashes work like that brightly colored splint. They aren't signs for God so much as for us who wear them. God is constantly inviting us to be the version of ourselves that God wants us to be. The ashes on our foreheads remind us of this invitation, as well as of the fact that we are called to be so much more than our worst mistake. Ashes remind us not to become so focused on the world, which will eventually pass, that we neglect our relationship with God, who will endure forever. The work that we are called to do in the world cannot be ignored, but neither can it become the sole focus of our existence. The ashes that mark us invite us to spend more time on our relationship with God, who is always with us.

*L. Lapean, Jesuit Scholastic at Ciszek Hall,
Fordham University*



FIRST DAY OF PRAYER FOR OUR INCARCERATED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Thanks to the partnership between Catholic Charities Brooklyn Queens (CCBQ) and Thrive For Life, the faithful of eight parishes in Queens will gather at *Our Lady of Sorrows* to pray for our incarcerated brothers and sisters on March 20th. These parishes are in Corona, East Elmhurst and Jackson Heights: *St. Bartholomew, Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Leo. St. Paul the Apostle, Blessed Sacrament, St. Joan of Arc, St. Gabriel and Our Lady of Fatima.*

During this day, families and friends will have the opportunity to pray for their loved ones behind walls, meet other families affected by incarceration, and share their unique experience. The faithful will gather in response to Jesus' words "For I was in prison, and you visited me" (Mt 25: 35-36).

Guided by Fr. Zach Presutti, SJ, and the Thrive For Life spiritual mentors, all those who wish to pray for the incarcerated are invited to join, experience God's mercy for everyone, and share that gift with others. At the end of the Day of Prayer, Bishop Robert Brennan, Bishop of Brooklyn, will celebrate Holy Mass, and dinner will follow.

BECOME A RESIDENT SCHOLAR AT IGNACIO HOUSE OF STUDIES!

If you are passionate about your education and wish to continue your academic journey post-release, consider becoming a Resident Scholar at Thrive For Life's Ignacio House of Studies.

Ignacio House offers transitional supportive housing along with a holistic suite of services for formerly incarcerated students, to help them find a sense of purpose and overcome barriers to employment, housing, and education. Interested in joining? Send the following to our contact information at the top of this page:

- † Full name & DIN number
- † Current college you are enrolled in and/or where you will study post-release,
- † Contact information for college/university where you will study.