Readings for the week of February 16, 2025

Sunday:
Jer 17:5-8/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4, 6, (40:5a)/
1 Cor 15:12, 16-20/Lk 6:17, 20-26

Monday:
Gn 4:1-15, 25/Ps 50:1 and 8, 16bc-17, 20-21/Mk 8:11-13

Tuesday:
Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10/Ps 29:1a and 2, 3ac-4, 3b and 9c-10/Mk 8:14-21

Wednesday:
Gn 8:6-13, 20-22/Ps 116:12-13, 14-15, 18-19/ Mk 8:22-26

Thursday:
Gn 9:1-13/Ps 102:16-18, 19-21, 29 and 22-23/Mk 8:27-33

Friday:
Gn 11:1-9/Ps 33:10-11, 12-13, 14-15/ Mk 8:34—9:1

Saturday:
1 Pt 5:1-4/Ps 23:1-3a, 4, 5, 6/Mt 16:13-19

Next Sunday:
1 Sm 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23/
1 Cor 15:45-49/Lk 6:27-38

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Gospel Meditation

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

I craved four things as a teenager: success in sports, food, fun and the attention of popular people. However, I noticed that as I acquired them, I was more unsatisfied than before. So, I'd strive even more energetically, achieve more, and the sense of emptiness was greater still. These four things started to feel like burdens or even curses. Soon after, I encountered Christ in my high school youth group. Experiencing his love was totally different than anything those four things previously produced. It produced a lasting happiness.

Jesus utters a kind of four-fold curse in this week's Gospel of Saint Luke's "woes": **"Woe to you who are rich...who are filled now...who laugh now...who are well-spoken of"** (cf. Luke 6:24-26). How marvelous that these correspond perfectly to the four things that obsessed my teenage soul: riches, food, laughter and good reputation. The "woes" the Lord speaks are warnings: when those things are the purpose of your life, you'll be miserable. He is saying, "You'll be happy, or blessed, in the measure that these things do not determine the shape of our lives, and the kingdom of God does."

To some degree, we're all spiritual teenagers, addicted to one or more of those four "woes." How splendid that the Lord wants his to bless us — that is, to satisfy us, make us laugh with joy, and in the kingdom of God, offer us what will truly satisfy us. But first let's admit what is causing our "woes."

— Father John Muir

(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

Mini Reflection: Jesus was radical in his teaching that the "stuff" in life wasn't all that important. It was radical for him to say that the worldly signs of success did not amount to a whole lot in the grand scheme of things and that suffering could sanctify us. Are we ready to be radical, too?

In the End, Does it Matter?
I love today's Gospel passage, and not just because I love a When I was a teenager, the priest I would go to for confession used to tell me, over and over: "In the end, we all get the same dirty hole in the ground."

What he meant was, it doesn't matter how rich or smart or well-liked we are. We're all heading to the same place. This life comes to an end for every man. All the money he earns, all the stuff, all the worldly esteem, will at some point be of no further use. We all get the same dirty hole in the ground.

It was an important message for me to hear, because at the time, it all seemed so important: my after-school job and my FAFSA application and my grades. The admiration of my friends and teachers. I was so consumed with what I was going to become that I wasn't spending a lot of time thinking about who I was going to become. But the who is the only thing that lasts until the next life.

And to be honest, it's all still too important to me. Avoiding sadness and disappointment. Saving money and being liked. Focusing on "the five-year plan" when it comes to career, house plans, and a whole bunch of other things I can't take to my dirty hole in the ground.

Jesus was radical in his teaching that the "stuff" in life wasn't all that important. It was radical for him to say that the worldly signs of success — wealth, popularity, pleasure — did not amount to a whole lot in the grand scheme of things and that suffering could sanctify us. It was radical in the ancient world, and it's radical today.

Are we ready to be radical, too?

— Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Catholic Life Explained

Question:

Carnivale and Mardi Gras celebrations are linked to Ash Wednesday, Lent, fast and abstinence. Can you tell us more about the connections between these events?

Answer:

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the forty days known as Lent. Every year, Christians highlight this penitential season as a time of self-examination, reformation of one's life, and continued development of a deeper spiritual life. The recommended practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving become the focus of Lenten activity and ritual. Each of these spiritual practices is aimed at personal discipline as well as continued concern for the other, especially the poor or alienated.

Forty days is a symbolic biblical period of time, during which personal transformation occurs and out of which people surface as more spiritual, ready to carry out God's mission. Relying on God's providence and care, no matter how difficult life becomes, is crucial to Lenten spirituality. Fasting was initially stricter, permitting only one simple meal a day without meat, fish, or other delicacies. Such things were not even allowed in the house.

In order to prepare for this in an age of no refrigeration, people gathered to consume whatever was not allowed during Lent. This led to parties or celebrations originally referred to as Carnivale, literally meaning "goodbye to meat," or Mardi Gras, literally meaning "Fat Tuesday." The eating and celebrating ended on the Tuesday just before Ash Wednesday. Today we focus more on moderation in all things, as well as a strong concern for the poor. What are you doing for the poor this Lent?

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Weekly Prayer

Sunday's Readings

First Reading:
Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,
whose hope is the LORD. (Jer 17:7)

Psalm:
Blessed are they who hope in the Lord. (Ps 1)

Second Reading:
If the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised,
and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain.
(1 Cor 15:16-17)

Gospel:
"Blessed are you who are poor,
for the kingdom of God is yours." (Lk 6:20)

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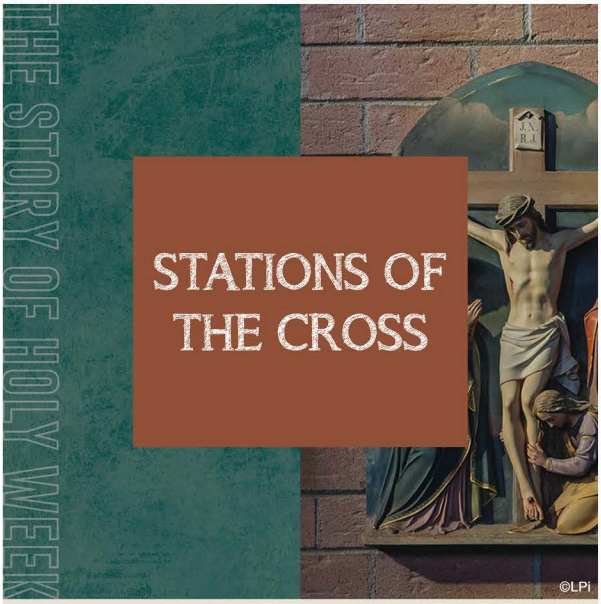
Live The Liturgy
Inspiration of the Week

Too many of us make the mistake of expecting prosperity here on Earth as a reward for following Christ. But Jesus is very clear: sorrow and hardship are a part of life. But when we offer these sufferings to Christ, they become transformed. They become blessed. And so do we.

Observances for the week of February 16, 2025

Sunday:	6th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Monday:	The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order; Presidents' Day
Friday:	St. Peter Damian, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
Saturday:	The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle
Next Sunday:	7th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Devotions, *Explained!*

Since the earliest days of the Church, Christians have meditated upon Christ's passion and death. Over the centuries, the Stations of the Cross was popularized as a devotional means to experience the places and moments central to the story of Holy Week.

Prayer of God's Blessing

Bless me, Lord, mold my heart in imitation of Yours.
Bless me, Lord, help me to see people as You do, and to hear their needs.
Bless me, Lord, replace my understanding with Yours.

Amen.

"Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Behold, your reward will be great in heaven."
- Lk 6:22, 23b

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Questions of the Week

Invite Parishioners to Reflect and Respond to Scripture

First Reading:

Jeremiah believes it is wise to trust in the Lord. When have you had to place your trust in God?

Second Reading:

Paul challenged those in the Corinthian community who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. How do you support family or friends who are non-believers?

Gospel:

We hear today how Jesus brought comfort to those struggling in life and challenged those who lived a life of ease. Is there someone you know who could benefit from your words of comfort this week?

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Liturgical Life

"Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh."
- Lk 6:21

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