



AND JESUS WEPT SCULPTURE, OKLAHOMA CITY (1998)

## SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT; THIRD SCRUTINY OF THE ELECT  
**It's not over**

Theologian John Shea has written that “In two words the full theology of incarnation is revealed: ‘Jesus wept.’” Jesus knew the desolation and pain of grief. Today the elect—those training to be initiated into the church—say “Amen” to the priest’s prayer calling for the Father of life to “Free these elect from the death-dealing power of the spirit of evil, so that they may bear witness to their new life in the risen Christ.” Our role as Christians is to give witness to Jesus’ proclamation that death is not the end. Eternal life is promised to all who believe. Today, give thanks for the life of a loved one who has died and now lives in your heart and among God’s saints.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Ezekiel 37:12-14; Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45 (34)*. “*I am the resurrection and the life.*”

## MONDAY, MARCH 14

**It takes two to testify**

“Testify! Testify!” In some evangelical churches, those words ring out as an affirmation when someone speaks their inner truth. It takes one person to speak the truth and another to hear and verify it. In a court of law, testimony means providing witness or evidence; in faith matters, it means declaring the truth or witnessing to the faithfulness of another. For those in an RCIA program, training to join the church, sponsors testify to a candidate’s intent to grow in faith. Testimony is given in word and deed, and ultimately it is our lives that testify to God’s life in the world.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; John 8:12-20 (251)*. “*If you knew me, you would know my Father also.*”

## TUESDAY, MARCH 15 LENTEN WEEKDAY

**Contemplate the cross**

Christians have rendered the basic shape of the cross in many different ways in order to convey various aspects of this central symbol of our faith. Perhaps you have a favorite: The Celtic cross? The Franciscan Tau? The ankh? The anchor? The fleur de lys? Whatever the form, simple or ornate, with Christ’s body or without, the diverse expressions of the cross are prompts not only to venerate, not only to meditate on Christ’s sacrifice and victory, but also to heed the personal call to take up a cross of your own.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Numbers 21:4-9; John 8:21-30 (252)*. “*When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM.*”

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16 LENTEN WEEKDAY

**We believe**

When we recite the Nicene Creed at Mass, we profess our belief in “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.” These Four Marks of the Church, as they are known, are its essential, distinguishing features. Christians are one body in Christ, a holy body because it belongs to Christ, catholic (which means “universal”) because it is open to all, and apostolic because it comes from and continues the teachings of the apostles. May this ancient living tradition, this unity in faith and worship, fortify you as you look forward to the “life of the world to come.”

TODAY’S READINGS: *Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; John 8:31-42 (253)*. “. . . *you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*”

## THURSDAY, MARCH 17

FEAST OF PATRICK, BISHOP, MISSIONARY

**Three is a lucky number**

How would you explain the Holy Trinity to someone who has never heard of the concept? How do you explain three divine beings who are really one, united yet distinctive? Saint Patrick of Ireland had many legends associated with him. Some are quite fantastic (such as the claim he chased all the snakes out of Ireland), but one is so practical it is quite possibly true. It is said that Patrick taught the Irish about the Holy Trinity with the help of a shamrock, the legendary three-leafed plant. The shamrock has since become a central symbol for St. Patrick’s Day and for all of Ireland. God can be found in all of nature—where do you see the evidence?

TODAY’S READINGS: *Genesis 17:3-9; John 8:51-59 (254)*. “*Whoever keeps my word will never see death.*”

## FRIDAY, MARCH 18 FEAST OF CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

**Just say no**

For Catholics who are vegan, the Lenten meat sacrifice is a moot point. Those who go to AA know well what it means to “just say no” to something for a long time or a lifetime. Church father Cyril reflected on self-denial as a process aimed not at abhorring food or drink but at seeking something finer: “Having scorned things of the senses, we may enjoy a spiritual and intellectual feast. Having sown now in tears we may reap in joy in the world to come.” Say no now and enjoy a deeper yes.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Jeremiah 20:10-13; John 10:31-42 (255)*. “*But the Lord is with me, like a mighty champion.*”

## SATURDAY, MARCH 19 FEAST OF JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY

**Saint Un-forgotten**

Our age-old veneration of Mary has—unintentionally—kept Joseph, the so-called “forgotten saint,” in the background. While Mary’s Annunciation is one of the most popular subjects in art, Joseph *also* had an Annunciation from an angel and was utterly obedient. Matthew’s infancy narrative focuses not on Mary but on Joseph and his Davidic ancestry. He is instructed to name his child, an act that makes Joseph Jesus’ legal father and confirms that Jesus is a “Son of David.” Saint John Paul II said Joseph takes his place in history “with simplicity and humility which reveal the man’s spiritual depth.” What are your instructions from God?

TODAY’S READINGS: *2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a (543)*. “*When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.*”



*Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.*

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