

# Abiding Press

St. Patrick's Day

## ***Abiding Presence Faith Community***

*A PARISH OF THE REFORMED CATHOLIC CHURCH  
AN INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
MAKING GOD'S LOVE KNOWN IN CENTRAL FLORIDA*

**March 2023 VOLUME 2 #4**  
**5330 Poinsetta Ave, Winter Park, FL 32792**  
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### *Social Media*

Web Site [www.apfcwp.com](http://www.apfcwp.com)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1386619738179316/?ref=bookmarks>

Twitter - AbidingPresenceWP @AbidingWp

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP9i133esG31IRPfgk-Jn4w>

### *Clergy Serving the People of God*

Pastor: Most Rev. William R. Cavins [bishop@apfcwp.com](mailto:bishop@apfcwp.com)

Kingsport TN Ministry: Rev. Mr. Lucas G. Brown [lucas.brown@apfcwp.com](mailto:lucas.brown@apfcwp.com)

Palm Coast FL Ministry: Rev. Mr. Christopher M. Larsen [dcnchris@apfcwp.com](mailto:dcnchris@apfcwp.com)

### *Volunteer Staff Serving the Parish*

Gene L. Thompson II – Technology  
Dennis Last – JMB Crock Pot Ministry

## Upcoming Dates

- Mar 1 Home with the Word Lectionary Discussion Group 7 PM  
Mar 3 Stations of the Cross 12 Noon and 6:30 PM  
Mar 5 Divine Worship 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent 10 AM  
Intention: Available  
Mar 6 Seminary Class: 7 PM  
Mar 8 Home with the Word Lectionary Discussion Group 7 PM  
Mar 10 Stations of the Cross 12 Noon and 6:30 PM  
Mar 12 Divine Worship 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent 10 AM  
Intention: Available  
Mar 13 First Mission Session 6:30 Bishop Cavins Leading  
Mar 14 Second Mission Session 6:30 Deacon Brown Leading  
Mar 15 Third Mission Session 6:30 Deacon Larsen Leading  
Mar 16 Fourth Mission Session 6:30 Bishop Cavins Leading  
Mar 17 Stations of the Cross 12 Noon and 6:30 PM  
Mar 19 Divine Worship 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent 10 AM  
Intention: Available  
Mar 20 Divine Worship Feast of Saint Joseph 6:30 PM  
Intention Available  
Mar 22 At Home with the Word Lectionary Discussion Group 7 PM  
Mar 24 Stations of the Cross 12 Noon and 6:30 PM  
Mar 25 Divine Worship Solemnity of the Annunciation 10 AM  
Intention: Available  
Mar 26 Divine Worship 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent 10 AM  
Communal Celebration of the Anointing of the Sick  
Intention: People of the Parish  
Mar 27 Seminary Class 7 PM  
Mar 29 At Home with the Word Lectionary Discussion Group 7 PM  
Mar 31 Stations of the Cross 12 Noon and 6:30 PM

SCAP = Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest

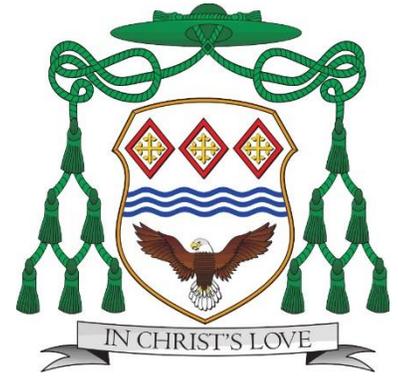
## Mass Intentions & Prayer Requests

Please email the bishop if you want someone remembered at Mass or added to the Prayer Lists. The amount of offering is at your discretion. We also have Mass Cards for you to send to the recipients.

## From the Bishop's Desk

March has arrived! As usual, we will spend it observing the Season of Lent.

Growing up the good sisters would start talking to us weeks before Lent began about what we would be giving up. Movies, candy, playing card games, and a host of other things that were enjoyable in life. We were to pray more, attend Stations of the Cross, collect bottles, and donate the refund money to the church or causes like Pennies for Pagan Babies. We were also expected to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, of course when I was young every Friday of the year was a meatless Friday. Then there was the fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. All of these activities were good to teach children to live Christian lives. However, somehow the church failed to make childhood learning relatable to adult reality.



In the Gospel, Jesus calls upon us to repent, believe in, and proclaim the good news, He shows us how to have an intimate prayer life. Remember how he told us that when we pray go to a private place? He also demonstrated it during his agony in the garden. He withdrew to be by himself. There he didn't just use formula prayers addressed to God, rather he opened his heart and soul up to God in a very intimate way.

Throughout his life on earth, he practiced charity. He showed us how to share what we have with others. We're not talking about food and water. Recall that Judas was the treasurer of the disciples. He kept the money to be used for the maintenance of their ministry and helping others. Being God, Jesus also was able to heal those who in faith asked to be healed.

Throughout his life, Christ showed us how to live a Christian life. It is up to us to carry his example and his teachings. May we each use the time given us by God this Lent to redirect our lives along the path of Christ.

In Christ's Love

+ *William*

Pastor

## Financial Update as of 2/27/2023

Total Income Year to Date: \$578.65 Total Expenditures Year to Date: \$655.04 (-\$76.39)  
Balance on hand: \$1,212.82.

## Online Giving

Donations can now be made online through our website. To make sure we get your full donation please utilize the **Zelle** method. If you choose one of the others, please send it as if to an individual. Thank you for your generosity.

## Happy St Patrick's Day

The Clergy and Board of Directors of Abiding Presence Faith Community wish its members and supporters a very Happy St. Patrick's Day! May the luck of the Irish be Yours Today!



## Exploring Our Faith

We continue to break open the Word for the upcoming Sunday each Wednesday at 7 PM. The class dates are found in the calendar. The book *At Home with the Word 2023* may purchase directly from Liturgical Training Publications at [www.ltp.org](http://www.ltp.org).

## February Drawing

The Winner of our February Drawing was Debranne Lehman.

## Deacon Data by Deacon Chris Larsen

### *Lenten Journey*

Do we ask ourselves this question? What is Lent? Why is it a season? Are we required to fast?

Lent is 40 days before Easter to prepare ourselves for Christ's ultimate sacrifice and resurrection. It is 40 days because it took Jesus 40 days to traverse into the desert and intermitted be tempted by the devil. It was a time to find himself and reconfirm his faith in God. He overcame thirst and hunger in the desert even when coerced by Satan himself. Lent is for lack of a better word, our desert.

It is a time to reflect on our journeys with God. It is a time to reconnect with God by sacrificing a bit of our time and energy to spend time with him without any interruptions from the real world. Oftentimes, we are struggling with time management between work and home and other responsibilities. We ask ourselves when if we have time to pencil God into our busy schedules. We forget to realize that by simply asking God for help in our struggle, so we can communicate with him and be with him. This can be done simply by talking to him on the way and back from work. Set some time aside before bed. Instead of reading a novel or the internet, we can read something spiritual like the Bible or different devotions. Visiting or acknowledging people that we meet and encouraging others to do so. it is up to the individual if they fast. This is about repairing or enhancing your relationship with God. Fasting is a part of that. The less we give up on food, the more we reflect on God's word and what his teachings mean. Not only will it keep our minds off food or activities, but it will make our minds and our hearts open to God's call, simply because our minds are not focused on worldly subjects that would bar us from hearing God's direction.

As I stated in the beginning, Lent is a time to reflect on our relationship with God. It is a time to put aside all worldly care and listen to God for direction. Instead of saying what we are going to give up, we should ask ourselves what we are going to do extra for God. It is also a time to ask ourselves if this is just a one-time thing or if are we continuing God's work 365 days a year.

## **JMB Crockpot Ministry**

The ministry is utilizing the summer break to test recipes and stockpile crockpots. To donate a crockpot or volunteer to conduct a class contact Dennis Last at 321-388-1572.

## **Prayer for Vocations**

*Creating God and Father, we thank you for calling men and women to serve in Christ's Kingdom as priests, deacons, and consecrated persons. Send your Holy Spirit to help others to respond generously and courageously to your call. May our community of faith support vocations of sacrificial love in our youth and young adults. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

## Let's Get to Know the Liturgy by Deacon Lucas G. Brown

What is with all the Ashes, sand, and lack of Flowers in the church?

Lent is the Christian season of spiritual preparation before Easter. In Western churches, it begins on Ash Wednesday. The purpose of the Lenten season is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ—to consider his suffering and his sacrifice, his life, death, burial, and resurrection.

But why Ashes?

In many Churches on Ash Wednesday, the priest or minister distributes ashes by lightly rubbing the sign of the cross with ashes onto the worshippers' foreheads. The ashes used on Ash Wednesday are meant to represent dust. When receiving ashes on their foreheads, they hear the words: "Remember you are dust, and to dust, you shall return." This is a reference to what God says to Adam when exiling him from the Garden of Eden. On Ash Wednesday, the saying is a reminder to be humble in the face of mortality. Thus, observing Ash Wednesday at the start of the Lenten season represents one's repentance from sin as well as Jesus Christ's sacrificial death to set followers free from sin and death.

The flowers and holy water are gone!!

In recent years, some parishes have taken the holy water out of the holy water fonts during Lent. They have even filled them with sand in some cases. The idea, they say, is to convey the thought that Lent is a time of spiritual dryness — a “desert” experience — that precedes Easter, in which we refrain from using the sacramental of holy water. Despite its popularity in some places, this practice is not permitted.

Same general practice with flowers. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) states that flowers should not be used during Lent. While there is little evidence that backs this up it is the same principle that we are in the desert and then comes Easter and all springs to life again.

Too often we get used to the church looking a certain way, yet all the colors, flowers, statues, and everything is meant to help direct us in prayer to Christ. Christ and the Eucharist are the focus. Everything else should help point us there. Even if it reminds us of something simple, barren, and empty so that we appreciate things even more when the flowers return.

## Marvelous March Saints

The month of March provides us opportunities to reflect on the lives of the saints in heaven. You may use Google or an encyclopedia to research each. We begin the month with the celebration of Saint Katharine Drexel followed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> with Saint Casimir on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Saints Perpetua and Felicity whom we hear mentioned in the First Eucharistic Prayer are on March 7. Saint John of God follows on the 8<sup>th</sup>. March 9, we commemorate Saint Frances of Rome. March 17 sees Saint Patrick, patron of the Irish. March 18, we honor Saint Cyril of Jerusalem. While March 19 is the Feast of Saint Joseph the Husband of Mary, his feast is transferred to Monday so we can properly honor him. Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo is remembered on March 24. March 25, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Annunciation. Which one of these saints is your favorite for the month of March? Go to our Facebook group or page and post your answer with a picture of your favorite.

## March Recipes

### *Beignets New Orleans in honor of St. Katherine Drexel founder of Xavier University in New Orlean*

Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (180 mL) lukewarm water
- 1 .25-ounce packet (7 g) of active dry yeast
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) evaporated milk
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup (66 g) sugar
- pinch of salt
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon (4 g) vanilla extract
- 3  $\frac{3}{4}$  – 4 cups (469-500 g) all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons (42 g) butter, melted.
- corn oil (or any flavorless oil), for frying
- powdered sugar, for dusting

Directions:

- In a large bowl or stand mixer, combine lukewarm water and yeast. Let the mixture do its job for about 5 minutes or until it's dissolved and looks a little frothy.
- Lightly whisk evaporated milk, sugar, salt, egg, and vanilla extract. Add it to the yeast mixture.
- Mix in about 2 cups flour and continue mixing with a hand or dough mixer. If using a stand mixer, mix for about 1-2 minutes.

- Finally, add melted butter and mix until the dough is sticky but smooth. Add in additional flour (if needed) to make a soft dough.
- Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 1-2 minutes. Place the beignet dough in a greased bowl, turning once to coat it. Cover loosely with a clean cloth and let rise in a warm, draft-free place for about 2 hours or until doubled in size.
- Punch the dough down and remove it from the bowl. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface until it is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  –  $\frac{1}{3}$  inch thick.
- Cut the dough into 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2" squares using a sharp knife or pizza cutter. Let it rest for about 10 minutes before frying.
- Working in batches to not crowd the oil, fry the dough squares until puffy and golden brown.
- Remove them from the oil, making a pit stop on a paper towel to soak up any extra oil.
- Dust with powdered sugar immediately. Serve hot with café au lait and enjoy!!!

### ***Saint Casimir (Kaziukas) Heart Cookies***

#### Ingredients

- 500 g of AP flour
- 100 g of butter
- 200 g of sugar
- 200 g of honey
- 2 eggs whipped.
- 1 teaspoon Baking powder
- 1-2 teaspoons Spice Mixture: ground cinnamon, cloves, cardamom

#### Directions:

- Add the butter, honey, and sugar to the pot and heat until the butter dissolves and the mass becomes homogeneous.
- Let the sugar cool in the mixer while it is beating, once it has, add the eggs one at a time.
- Mix and add flour with baking powder and spices.
- Mix the dough and let it cool for at least a couple of hours. You can make it from the evening, or even a few days ago, as it was for us this time:
- Roll out to about 3-4 mm in thickness, and we cut the figurines with molds.
- We bring in a baking sheet, lined with baking paper, place cut shapes on the paper, and bake in a 200-degree oven for about 7-8 minutes. or until it's browned.
- After cooling on a wire rack, decorate as you wish.

## ***Tunisian Chicken (or chickpeas) with Cous Cous and Green Harissa Yogurt Sauce ala Sts Perpetua & Felicity***

### Ingredients:

- 1 ½ lbs. boneless chicken thigh meat (or substitute 3 cups cooked garbanzos, 2 cans drained, or a combination of both).
- Vegetarians could also add cauliflower.)
- 2 tablespoons oil
- Generous pinch salt and chili powder
- 3 medium carrots
- 1 large onion
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger-minced
- 5 garlic cloves- roughly chopped
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- ¾ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon caraway seeds, optional but very tasty
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- 1 can diced tomatoes (fire roasted if possible)
- ¼ cup dried apricots, diced (or sub raisins)
- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 ½ cups couscous (or sub cup quinoa)

### Green Harissa Yogurt Sauce

- 1 cup plain yogurt (don't use zero fat, or if you do, add a tablespoon or two of olive oil)
- ½-1 bunch Italian parsley, small stems OK ( or substitute cilantro)
- 1-2 garlic cloves
- ½ to 1 whole jalapeño
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon coriander (or cumin)
- ½ teaspoon salt

Optional garnish: fresh mint leaves, toasted slivered almonds, or pine nuts

### Directions:

- Preheat oven to 400F

- In a large heavy bottom oven proof skillet or Dutch oven heat to the oil. Cut chicken into bigger bite-sized pieces, 1-2 inches, and generously salt and pepper and sprinkle with chili powder (If using chickpeas, see notes). Sear chicken for 5 minutes on each side, turning the heat down to medium if necessary until it's golden brown. While the chicken is searing, prep the veggies.
- Slice the carrots at diagonal 1/3 inch thick. Slice the onions into rings 1/3 inch thick, then cut into half-moons. Rough chop the garlic, and finely mince the ginger.
- Chop the apricots.
- When the Chicken is golden, remove it from the pan, and set it aside on a plate (it will finish cooking in the oven). Add the onions and carrots to the same pan (adding a tad more oil if need be) and cook over medium-high heat for 3-4 minutes, stirring very often. Turn heat to medium and cook for just a few more minutes until onions become tender. Add the garlic and ginger, and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the spices, and sauté for one minute to bring out their flavor. Add the salt, sugar, undrained tomatoes, dried apricots, and water. Bring to a simmer and stir a bit. Once it's simmering, stir in the couscous. Nestle in the chicken cover and place in the oven for 15 minutes.
- While it's baking, make the Green Harissa Yogurt Sauce by placing the parsley or cilantro, garlic, and jalapeño in a food processor and pulse (or finely chop) then place in a bowl. Stir in yogurt, spices, and salt.
- After 15 minutes, pull the pan from the oven. If you want the chicken to darken up a bit, broil for a minute or two. Scatter with the mint leaves and serve with Green Harissa Yogurt Sauce.

### ***Roman Spaghetti Alla Carbonara***

#### Ingredients:

- 1-pound dry spaghetti
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 ounces pancetta or slab bacon, cubed or sliced into small strips
- 4 garlic cloves finely chopped.
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus more for serving.
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 handful fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped.

## Directions:

- Prepare the sauce while the pasta is cooking to ensure that the spaghetti will be hot and ready when the sauce is finished; the pasta must be hot when adding the egg mixture so that the heat of the pasta cooks the raw eggs in the sauce.
- Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, add the pasta, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until tender yet firm (as they say in Italian "al dente.")
- Drain the pasta well, reserving 1/2 cup of the starchy cooking water to use in the sauce if you wish.
- Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a deep skillet over medium flame. Add the pancetta and sauté for about 3 minutes, until the bacon is crisp and the fat is rendered. Toss the garlic into the fat and sauté for less than 1 minute to soften.
- Add the hot, drained spaghetti to the pan and toss for 2 minutes to coat the strands in the bacon fat.
- Beat the eggs and Parmesan together in a mixing bowl, stirring well to prevent lumps.
- Remove the pan from the heat and pour the egg/cheese mixture into the pasta, whisking quickly until the eggs thicken, but do not scramble (this is done off the heat to ensure this does not happen.)
- Thin out the sauce with a bit of the reserved pasta water, until it reaches desired consistency.
- Season the carbonara with several turns of freshly ground black pepper and taste for salt.
- Mound the spaghetti carbonara into warm serving bowls and garnish with chopped parsley. Pass more cheese around the table.

## ***Saint Patrick's Day Pistachio Cookies***

### Ingredients

- 1/2 ripe fresh avocado, peeled and pit removed
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup applesauce with 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Two 3.4-ounce packages of instant pistachio pudding mix
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup peeled and ground unsalted pistachio nuts
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

#### Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 300 to 325 degrees. Line 3 baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside.
- Combine the avocado and butter in the container of a blender or food processor, and process until creamy and smooth. Add the applesauce, sugar, and milk, and process to combine. Add the egg and vanilla extract, and process to combine. Add the pudding mix, baking powder, and salt, and process again. Fold in the ground nuts, and finally, the flour, and stir to blend well. Place heaping teaspoonfuls of dough onto the baking sheets.
- Bake the cookies for about 20 minutes. Watch closely and remove from the oven when the bottoms of the cookies begin to brown. Let them rest on the baking sheets for 5 to 10 minutes before removing them to a cooling rack. Yield 3 ½ dozen cookies.
- Decorate with green icing as desired.

### ***Saint Joseph Limoncello***

#### Ingredients

- Lemons: This homemade limoncello recipe starts with 10 fresh lemons.
- Vodka: You don't have to use expensive vodka, but avoid using the super cheap stuff for the best results.
- Sugar: Three cups of white sugar ensures a perfectly sweet-tart drink.
- Water: You'll need four cups of water.

#### Directions

- Zest the lemons and place the zest in a bottle or container.
- Pour vodka over the zest.
- Cover loosely and let the mixture rest for a week.
- Make a simple syrup with sugar and water.
- Combine infused vodka and simple syrup.
- Strain and let the limoncello age for at least two weeks.

### ***Feast of the Annunciation Waffles***

#### Ingredients

- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup vegetable oil

- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1¾ cups milk (I prefer buttermilk but you can use regular milk if you prefer)
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour (I prefer whole wheat but you can use white if you prefer)
- 2 eggs
- 4 teaspoons baking powder

#### Directions

- Preheat the waffle iron.
- Beat eggs in a large bowl until fluffy. You may use a hand mixer but your grandma wouldn't be happy if you did so.
- Fold in the flour, milk, vegetable oil, sugar, baking powder, salt, and vanilla until smooth.
- Spray preheated waffle iron with non-stick cooking spray or baste with melted butter.
- Pour mix onto hot waffle iron.
- Cook until golden brown.
- Serve hot with syrup, Nutella, butter, peanut butter, apple butter, almond butter, raspberries, blueberries, banana slices, candy sprinkles, ice cream, or jam.

## Family Faith Activities

### March 5, 2023, Second Sunday of Lent

- Abram, who will later be renamed Abraham, is our model for total trust in God. What is your reaction to the radical obedience of this father in faith?
- Paul exhorts us to bear hardship for the Gospel. There is a popular theology that claims material abundance is a sign of holiness—it is commonly called the “prosperity Gospel.” This is not a Catholic understanding. How might life look if you fully followed Jesus? Would there be more or less hardship?
- We hear the voice of God in this story. Where else have we heard God speak similarly? What do you make of the reaction of the disciples? Have you ever strongly felt God’s presence? What was your reaction? What do you make of Jesus’ exhortation not to reveal the story of the transfiguration until after he is raised from the dead?

- Abram follows the direction of God, even when it is very extreme. Here, he must leave his father’s house and the land of his kinfolk. What does the word “obedience” evoke in you? Why? Write in your journal about this.
- Take on a task related to living the Gospel this week—a task that stretches you. Consider fasting this Lent from something that separates you from God’s love and from other people.
- Take a walk up to a high place—a mountain or hill, or the top of a tall building—and place yourself alongside Jesus in this story. If your ability to walk is limited, use your imagination to make the journey.

## **March 12, 2023, Third Sunday of Lent**

- The human condition is so fickle! Here we see the Israelites totally out of touch with the gift of their freedom from slavery. All they can focus on is their thirst, and they grumble constantly. What makes you grumble? Have you ever felt like stoning someone who was making you unhappy? What experience might qualify as your “Massah and Meribah”?
- Reflect on Paul’s words to the Romans. What does it mean to you to be justified by faith?
- In this rich tale, we see Jesus engage the Samaritan woman at the well. Here, water is not only a literal offering but a vivid symbolic offering. What do you make of Jesus’ defiance of Jewish custom to avoid Samaritans at all costs? What do you make of this woman’s bold yet humble interaction with him? How would you explain her conversion and actions?
- Notice where and when you complain. Is God in the midst of things? Invite him to be present at that moment.
- There are various interpretations of the meaning of the “spouses” of the woman. For some exegetes, they are literal spouses. For others, they represent the five ancient Samaritan gods. Discover something you didn’t know about this beautiful story of conversion through some extra reading about the passage in a Catholic study Bible or another Catholic commentary.

## **March 19, 2023, Fourth Sunday of Lent**

- There are several stories in the Bible in which God chooses unexpected people. In what ways is David an unexpected choice? This week, the theme of blindness unfolds in the Gospel. How is this story also about blindness?
- Psalm 23 is a song of solace and comfort. The Lord, a good shepherd, will care for us so fully that there is nothing we will want. Has this psalm meant something special to you or anyone you know? What does the Good Shepherd do for those who trust him? What line is most resonant at this point in your spiritual journey?
- The Gospel recounts for us one of the many stories of Jesus, the healer. Here we see many characters: the blind man, the community, the parents, and the Pharisees. Who are you in this story at this moment? Why do you relate to that person?
- God does not choose by appearances, and yet the story from the Book of Samuel offers us a description of David that is very compelling. Meditate on this seeming contradiction.
- Pray Psalm 23 in your prayer time this week by reading it slowly or listening to a recording that touches your heart and mind.
- Notice the ways that water and light appear in this Gospel, which reads almost like a short story. Where do you see images of baptism in this story? Notice the challenge of speaking the truth in this powerful healing episode. Why is it so difficult to speak the truth? How is this true in our lives, as well as in the story? Discuss or write your thoughts in your journal.

## **March 26, 2023, Fifth Sunday of Lent**

- On this Sunday of Lent, we hear the words of the prophet Ezekiel. The Lord says that the people will rise from their graves and that he will put his spirit in them so that they may live. Many people experience moments of death and resurrection in their lives. Have you had such an experience? What was it? What did you learn from it?
- Paul often uses the word “flesh” to describe the things in humankind that incline us toward sin. He is not actually condemning the body here. What is your understanding of the distinction between flesh and spirit? What does it mean to you to be “in the flesh” versus “in the spirit” in your life?

- The profound and detailed story of the raising of Lazarus is offered to us in the Gospel this week. There are so many points of view and so many emotions. Take time to notice them. What is your relationship with Jesus like right now? Are you like Mary? Martha? Thomas? The bystanders?
- Turn to your Bible and read the full account of Ezekiel's mystical experience of the "dry bones." Write in your journal about this unusual and imaginative scene.
- This week we complete the season of Lent. As we approach Easter, we encounter these stories of death and resurrection. Are you becoming ready to rise again with Christ? Pray for someone who needs an experience of resurrection.
- What do you make of the actions of Jesus in the story? Of his delay? Of his grief? Of his responsiveness? Of his faith? Write in your journal about these themes in your life.

