

For Your Study and Reflection This Week
Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting from punishment. (vv. 12-13)

Psalms 51:1-17

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy,
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin. (vv. 1-2)

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (vv. 20b-21)

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven . . . Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.” (vv. 1, 19-20)

Questions for Reflection

In today's Gospel reading from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches his disciples to do acts of piety in secret (Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21). However, in an earlier part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs his disciples, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). How do you manage this paradox in your life?

Household Prayer: Morning

Lord Jesus,
help me be your disciple today.
If I receive rebuke from anyone, let me suffer it with grace.
If I receive commendation, let me accept it without vanity.
Strengthen my hope in the treasure that endures,
that I may know with you the joy of heaven. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

O God, my heart has been stained with the sin of this world;
my spirit is weary and my joy has grown dim.
With the psalmist I pray:
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain me in a willing spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you. Amen.