

**SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**January 15, 2012 Cycle B**

**Opening prayer:** *Good and gracious God, thank you for gathering us together to share life and listen to your Holy Word. Today you speak on how you call out to us in the events and encounters of daily life. May we discern your call to us and respond with generosity and obedience. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Sharing life:** What are you most and least grateful for this week?

**Ordinary Time:** This week we begin the Sundays in Ordinary Time. The 34 Sundays of Ordinary Time are wrapped around the two major seasons: Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter. Ordinary Time does not mean unimportant time because *every day* is a day the Lord has made. Yet in another sense Ordinary Time is ordinary in that it does not focus primarily on the major events in Christ's life. We might say Ordinary Time developed not so much for what it is, but for what it is not. It is not Advent, Christmas, Lent or Easter Time. We should have a special feeling for Ordinary Time because our lives are spent doing ordinary things such as working, eating, paying bills, shopping, driving, etc.

**Facilitator reads focus statement:** The first and third readings focus on a central theme in Scripture, namely, God's *call* and our *response*. Also, in both of these readings, people are being introduced to God and Jesus. They have a *personal experience* or encounter with God or Jesus. In the second reading, Paul reminds the Corinthians that because their lives belong to Christ through baptism, their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and cannot be used to engage in sexual promiscuity.

Consider reading the commentary before or after each Scripture reading.

**FIRST READING: 1Samuel 3:3b-10, 19**

In this beautiful call-response story, Patricia Sanchez notes *six* dimensions of the call-response dynamic. *First*, Samuel does not recognize God's call, which illustrates the fact that calls from God are not always immediately discernible. *Second*, the repetitiveness of God's calling assures us that God does not easily quit on us. He keeps calling. *Third*, the setting of God's call to Samuel (at night while he slept in the temple sacristy) reminds us that God's call to us

can come at any time or place or during any human activity. *Fourth*, the fact that Samuel resorts to his mentor Eli for help suggests that we often may need help from other experienced pilgrims to discern God's call. *Fifth*, the description of Samuel's growing to maturity in the presence of God underscores the power of grace to sustain whoever responds to God's call. *Sixth*, the effectiveness of Samuel's ministry (whereby the Lord did not allow any word of his to be without effect [v.19]) reassures those called that active cooperation with God can yield astounding results.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM 40

The response of the true disciple is an unqualified acceptance of God's will: "*Here I am, Lord. I come to do your will.*"

## SECOND READING: 1Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20

During these Sundays in Ordinary Time, our second reading will be from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Sexual promiscuity is one of the problems Paul encounters in the port town of Corinth. Some Corinthian Christians believe that their bodies, like all mortal things, will pass away and they can therefore do anything they want, e.g. engaging in unrestrained eating, drinking, sexual activity, etc. Paul thinks otherwise. He uses a striking parallel, reminding them that in baptism, our body (and spirit) is given to Christ; hence, it belongs to Christ. Because our body belongs to Christ, it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. For that reason, it is wrong and sinful for anyone bound by Christian marriage to give his/her body to another outside that sacred bond—which mirrors Christ's love for his Church.

## GOSPEL: John 1:35-42

Just as Eli introduced Samuel to the Lord, John the Baptist, in this Gospel, introduces two of his disciples to Jesus (which underlines John's subordinate role). John's ministry is (as is ours) to introduce others to Christ. When the two disciples begin to follow Jesus, he asks

them: "*What are you looking for?*"—or, simply put, "What does your heart seek?" They answer with a question of their own: "*Rabbi, where do you live?*" Jesus replies: "*Come and see.*" So they go off to have a long chat (a mini-retreat) with Jesus. During their "stay" with him, the eyes of the two disciples are opened to his true identity. "*Seeing*" and "*staying*" are key terms in John's Gospel. The one whose eyes are opened to who Jesus truly is, is invited to come and *stay* with Jesus, to come and share Jesus' relationship with his Father. It is an introduction into a life of discipleship, which leads one into "*staying*" with the Blessed Trinity.

Having had their eyes opened, one of the two disciples, Andrew, seeks out his brother, Simon, and introduces him to Jesus. Jesus immediately changes Simon's name to *Cephas*, meaning "rock." Henceforth, Peter will have a key and central role in the new community of believers.

## FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What verse spoke to you and how does it relate to your life?
2. The young Samuel needed Eli to help him recognize the voice of the Lord. Who or what has helped you to be a hearer of God's Word?
3. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. How should this awareness impact our lives, especially the way we care for our body?

4. How would you respond if Jesus were to ask you, “What are you looking for?”

5. How easy or hard is it for you to introduce others to Christ or to share your faith?

### **RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD**

Name one way you can act on today’s readings. Suggestion: Try to be more aware of how God might be calling you in the events and encounters of daily life.

### **CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION**

Especially pray that each of us hear and respond to God’s call and that young people take seriously the Church’s teaching on sexual morality.

**THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**January 22, 2012 Cycle B**

**Opening prayer:** *God, our loving Father, we gather in your name to share your holy Word. May your Spirit break open for us the true meaning of the Word we share. May your Spirit bind us together so that we may become a small church family. Above all, help us to become doers of your Word. We make our prayer through your Son, Jesus. Amen.*

**Sharing life:** What is your favorite past time? What do you love about it so much?

**Facilitator reads focus statement:** This week, the Church places before us readings that are filled with a sense of urgency with regard to the call to *conversion*. In the Gospel, Jesus calls his contemporaries to conversion. In the first reading, the Ninevites surprisingly respond to Jonah's message of conversion. In the second reading, Paul encourages the Corinthians to make the best of the time that they have by conforming their lives to Christ.

Consider reading the commentary before or after each Scripture reading.

**FIRST READING: Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

Jonah, the runaway prophet, preaches a message of repentance to the Ninevites, a people whom the Israelites despise because of their war crimes. To Jonah's amazement, the Ninevites, from their king down, respond *immediately* to the call to repentance. The sudden conversion of a very sinful city and people points to the transformative power of God's Word. For the Israelites of Jonah's time, the lesson learned is that no people, regardless of how godless they are, should be looked upon as excluded from God's concern.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM 25**

This psalm stresses the rightness of God's ways, which, if followed, lead us to life.

**SECOND READING: 1Corinthians 7:29-31**

There is a sense of urgency as in the first and third readings. Paul believes Jesus' Second Coming is imminent so he sets out to show his readers how to live in a world that is transitory. In light of the fact that the world will soon be coming to an end, it is foolish to treat as permanent that which is transitory. Paul is not suggesting that people sit around and do nothing but that their primary focus should be on "higher things"—that they should use their time to conform their lives to Christ.

**GOSPEL: Mark 1:14-20**

We hear two central themes of the Gospel: the call to *radical conversion* and the call to *discipleship*. The Hebrew word for conversion or repentance,

*shubh*, means to return to God, to do an about-face, i.e., to turn completely away from a former way of life in order to begin anew. Conversion and repentance are not just about turning from evil and sin. It is not just about fasting. It is, first and foremost, turning one's whole mind and heart, one's whole life to God, in the manner little children allow themselves to be led with unlimited trust.

The *immediate* response of the disciples to Jesus is a practical example of the radical nature of Jesus' call. On hearing Jesus' call, they *immediately* abandon their old ways and start a new life of discipleship with him.

Mark's mention of the "arrest of John the Baptist" signals to his readers that the reign of God would not be established without sacrifice and that following Jesus could be dangerous.

The fishermen are not just called to learn from Jesus but to share in his ministry of drawing people to the reign of God. They, like Jesus, will be sent to bring people to God by the authenticity of their lived faith.

## **FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS**

1. What verse or image spoke to you and why?

2. Jonah or his Jewish contemporaries are probably not happy when the Ninevites respond so readily to the call to repentance. What about you? Do you think it would be easy for you to accept a

murderer, rapist, or child molester who has experienced a true conversion? Might you continue to see them despite their former way of life?

3. In the second reading, Paul says: "*The world in its present form is passing away.*" For the victims of hurricanes, fires and earthquakes, much of their world passes away. What, if any, part of your current world is passing away?

4. The Christian life is a call to ongoing conversion. What does this mean to you?

## **RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

Name one way you can act on today's readings. Suggestion: Try to be awake and aware to what Jesus might be calling you to leave behind, so that you can give yourself more fully to him.

## **CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION**

Especially pray that God show you how your life still needs conversion.

**FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**January 29, 2012 Cycle B**

**Opening prayer:** *Loving and caring God, you send messengers like Moses, Paul and Jesus to speak your divine Word to us. Give us ears to hear your Word and strength to act on it. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Sharing life:** What is going on in our world or Church that makes you happy or sad?

**Facilitator reads focus statement:** Jesus as teacher and prophet is the fulfillment of today's first reading. In the second reading, Paul encourages his readers to be ready for Christ's Second Coming by living a Christ-centered life. The readings today bid us to *listen* to the voice of the messengers whom God sends to us.

Consider reading the commentary before or after each Scripture reading.

**FIRST READING: Deuteronomy  
18:15-20**

Moses tells the people how the ministry of prophecy will live on after his death. Through the prophets, the Lord will continue to speak to the people of Israel and guide them in their ways. The people are reminded how they preferred the mediation of a prophet rather than God speaking to them directly, which they find very frightening: *"Let us not hear again the voice of the Lord, nor see his great fire again, lest we die."*

When the people receive a prophet, they must *listen* to his word and follow it. And the prophet must make sure that he only speaks an oracle or a word that *God* gives to him.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM 95**

The people's response to the prophetic word must be one of total acceptance.

**SECOND READING: 1Corinthians  
7:32-35**

The context for these verses is the same as last week's. Paul believes that the Second Coming of Christ is imminent and he wants his people to prepare for it by placing their total focus on Christ and their relationship with him. Then Paul gives an opinion which has had great historical impact on our Church. Based on his own experience, Paul advocates that the unmarried state is to be preferred over the married state given that the unmarried person would likely be more focused on the Lord and better equipped to give himself totally to the Kingdom of God. Even though these verses have led many in the Church to conclude that the celibate life is superior to the married state, this was not Paul's intention. Paul is rather concerned that unless one is free from earthly commitment, one cannot place his *total* focus in the Lord—whose return is imminent.

## **GOSPEL: Mark 1:21-28**

Having called a handful of disciples, Jesus begins his teaching and healing ministry. Mark notes how impressed the people are with Jesus. They are “spellbound” by him. He teaches with authority unlike their own scribes. What is this authority? It is the authority of God. Like the prophets of old, Jesus was anointed with God’s Spirit, which enables him to touch people’s hearts. His teaching is accompanied by signs and wonders. When Jesus teaches, things happen. The sick are healed, the cripple walk, and the oppressed are liberated. All of this leaves the people in awe.

Jesus begins his battle with the “powers of darkness”—which will be a central part of his mission. Here Jesus defeats Satan. He bids him to leave the man. In doing this, Jesus not only shows compassion for the troubled person, but he also announces the beginning of the messianic era and the Reign of God. The Gospel builds on the first reading: Jesus is seen as the prophet whom Moses spoke about. He is a prophet in word and in action. He is the living oracle of God. Mark uses this story to teach and encourage his community 30 or 40 years later. They are experiencing “hostile voices” in their persecution by Jewish leaders and the Romans. If their lives are firmly rooted in Christ, they will be able to withstand the evil forces attacking them.

## **FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS**

1. What verse spoke to you most and why?
2. What can cause you or others to harden your hearts against God and his Word?
3. In the second reading, Paul speaks about the anxieties that can distract us from following the Lord. Name some of these anxieties and what we can do about them.
4. What are some of the “unclean spirits” that can inhabit our lives and our world today?

## **RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD**

Name one way you can act on today’s readings. Suggestion: Be aware of how God wants to use you this week to be his messenger in the world.

## **CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION**

Pray for church leaders as they seek God’s will concerning the shortage of priests today.

**FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**February 5, 2012 Cycle B**

**Opening prayer:** *Good and gracious God, thank you for drawing us together for fellowship and the sharing of your holy Word. Open our minds and hearts to hear the message you want to convey to us. May your Word grow strong in our hearts so that others may come to know and love you through the witness of our lives. Amen.*

**Sharing life:** What are you most and least grateful for this week?

**Facilitator reads focus statement:** The first reading and the Gospel address the mystery of evil and sickness. In the second reading, Paul shares with us his compulsion to preach the Word of God.

Consider reading the commentary before or after each Scripture reading.

**FIRST READING: Job 7:1-4, 6-7**

The Book of Job is a theological statement about the issue of innocent human suffering. The book begins with the question: Are God's people only faithful to him because of the blessings they receive? Would they remain faithful if God withdrew his blessings? Satan raises the question and God uses Job as a test case. When the prosperous and just Job is suddenly afflicted by the death of his family, loss of wealth, and personal illness, a series of "friends" argue that Job's misfortunes must be a punishment for some sin. Job refuses to accept this traditional explanation of why "bad things happen to good people."

Today's reading represents Job's response to one of his so-called "comforters." He rejects their shallow explanation of his misery. Job reflects not only on his own pain but also on the suffering of all innocent people. He gives voice to the sentiments that many people feel at a time of suffering: *Life is futile. It has no meaning. Is not man's life on*

*earth drudgery? The sooner death comes along, the better. Why doesn't God speak to me?* God's silence and seeming absence is also a part of our suffering. (God does speak in chapter 40.) Job's lament is a "complaint of the righteous." We need to know that it is okay for us to complain to God about the circumstances of our lives.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM 147**

This psalm praises God for his concern for the brokenhearted.

**SECOND READING: 1Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23**

Paul tells us how he has no choice but to preach the Gospel. He seeks no pay for his ministry. He is totally dedicated to it, seeking to be all things to all people so that he can win all for Christ.

**GOSPEL: Mark 1:29-39**

The Gospel, like the first reading, deals with the issue of evil and sickness. It

recounts “a *day* in the life of Jesus.” These verses weave together *four events*.

In the *first* event, Jesus heals Peter’s mother-in-law. After being healed, she immediately gets up and begins to *serve*. Jesus’ action involves healing, leading to service and discipleship. “*The greatest in the kingdom is the one who serves.*”

The *second* event could be titled *Evening Healing and Deliverance Service in the Streets*. In this event, Jesus directly confronts his enemies, namely, evil and sickness, and *he demonstrates* his power over both. Notice that Jesus forbids the demons to reveal his identity. This is known as the “*messianic secret*.” The popular understanding of the Messiah’s role is political and military—one who will lead the people in rebellion against the Romans and restore the glory of Israel. Jesus knows that it is not God’s will for him to fulfill this understanding of Messiahship. He is going to be a *suffering* Messiah who will triumph through suffering—something the people would not fully comprehend until after the Resurrection.

In the *third* event, Jesus teaches the importance of balancing a busy schedule with time for quiet and solitude. He shows us his need to “get away from it all” and to spend time “recharging spiritual and emotional batteries.” But the disciples chase after him saying, “Everyone is looking for you.”

In the *fourth* event, Jesus heads back to the ministry of teaching and preaching, casting out demons along the way.

## FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What verse or image spoke to you and why?
2. Can you recall a time when you felt like Job? If so, what helped you to deal with it?
3. In the second reading, Paul tells us that he is “compelled to preach the Gospel.” He is filled with zeal for the Gospel. What might you do to make yourself more on fire for the Gospel of Christ?
4. In today’s Gospel, Jesus is very busy. Yet he finds time for prayer. How about you—how do you seek to make space for God in the midst of your busy life?

## RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

Name one way you can act on today’s readings. Suggestion: Pray frequently for people who spend their days lying in pain and for all who are carrying a big cross. If prayer is not a part of your schedule, consider setting aside one of the 96 fifteen minutes in every day to pray.

## CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION

Especially pray for the sick and their caregivers. Pray for evangelists and catechists and for people engaged in the healing ministry.

**SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**February 12, 2012 Cycle B**

**Opening prayer:** *Good and gracious God, thank you for enabling us to gather together to listen to your holy Word and to share life and fellowship. May your Holy Spirit show each of us the message you want us to hear today. Cleanse our hearts of all that would prevent us from hearing your Word and acting on it. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Sharing life:** If you had a chance to live your life all over again, what would you do differently?

**Facilitator reads focus statement:** There is a strong *contrast* between the first reading in which lepers must declare themselves “unclean” and the Gospel in which Jesus declares a leper “clean.” In the second reading, Paul encourages the Corinthians to do all for the glory of God and to protect their unity.

Consider reading the commentary before or after each Scripture reading.

**FIRST READING: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46**

In Old Testament times, leprosy is a term used to describe a variety of chronic skin diseases. When the priest determines that one has a contagious disease, the person is declared “unclean” and banished from the community. If someone unknowingly approaches the leper, he/she must shout “Unclean! Unclean!” for such *contact* renders the “clean” person “unclean.” If a leper is cured, he must go to the priest to undergo purification before he can be readmitted to the community. Because there is widespread belief that leprosy is brought on by sin, lepers are not only physically loathsome and socially dangerous, but are also viewed as morally reprehensible.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM 32**

This is one of the seven “penitential psalms” in the Psalter. It is a prayer of thanksgiving for the removal of sin.

**SECOND READING: 1Corinthians 10:31--11:1**

This reading concludes Paul’s section on the question of foods offered to idols in pagan sacrifices. Paul sees no problem with eating the food offerings since he does not believe in pagan idols. But this should be avoided if it scandalizes the weaker members of the community. What is really important is not the issue of food but rather that we give glory to God in all things and lead people to salvation. When Paul says: “*Give offense to no one – Jews, Greeks or to the church,*” he is not counseling us to be just nice and wishy-washy, but encouraging us to preserve unity despite our differences.

**GOSPEL: Mark 1:40-45**

Although excluded from the community, lepers are allowed to attend synagogue, but they sit behind a protected screen, never daring to come into the main part

of the synagogue. While we do not know the exact location of today's event, perhaps it occurs during a synagogue service. Recognizing Jesus to be a holy man, the leper may have done the unthinkable; he rushes from behind the screen and approaches Jesus. He believes Jesus *can* heal him, but he was not sure if Jesus will *want* to heal him. "*If you wish, make me clean.*" Then *Jesus* does the unthinkable, he stretches out his hand and *touches* the *untouchable* thereby incurring ritual uncleanness. Jesus tells the rejected man: "*Of course I want to heal you. Be made clean.*" Jesus' touch heals the man not only on a *physical* level but also on a *social* and *spiritual* level. He no longer feels rejected by the community or by God.

We notice again a reference to the *messianic secret* (explained in last week's commentary). The leper is told not to tell anyone about his healing— but how does one contain wonderful good news. So he runs off and tells everyone. The man is told to go to the priest so he can get a certificate declaring himself clean, enabling him to once again mix with the community and worship with them.

### **FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS**

1. What verse spoke to you and why?
2. In the second reading, Paul pleads for unity. Unity within a parish is often hurt by gossip. What can cause divisiveness in a Church family?
3. Who are the "lepers" in today's society and even in our Church? Are there

individuals or group of people you prefer not to embrace or associate with?

4. What are examples of 'inner lepers'— parts of us that we do not want to touch or look at?

### **RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

Name one way you can act on today's readings. Suggestion: Think of someone who feels isolated or somewhat excluded. See what you can do to heal that person's sense of isolation.

### **CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION**

Especially pray for all who suffer from skin diseases. Pray for those researching a cure. Pray for all who feel excommunicated from society and Church today, e.g., pedophiles.

#### **Concluding Prayer**

God of all people,  
remind us that your love  
knows no boundaries.  
You love the outcasts  
and the oppressed  
with a love that is fierce  
in its protection and grace.

When our lives get too comfortable,  
nudge us into going beyond  
our own boundaries,  
bringing outsiders into  
the warmth of our communities.  
This we pray through  
Christ Our Lord. Amen.

**SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**February 19, 2012 Cycle B**

*Opening prayer:* Loving Creator, thank you for drawing us together for this time of sharing our lives and your Word. Break open the message of your Word for our lives. May we experience your forgiveness for our past sins and truly believe that you remember them no more. Amen.

*Sharing life:* What are you most and least grateful for this week?

*Facilitator reads focus statement:* Both the first reading and the Gospel speak about God's mercy for sinners. In the second reading, Paul tells us God's Word to us is true and that his Word to the Corinthians is trustworthy.

Consider reading the commentary before or after each Scripture reading.

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 43:18-25**

Writing in the sixth century B.C. after the Israelites have returned from the Babylonian exile, Isaiah invites the exiles to recognize the lessons God may be trying to teach them through their painful experience. Shamed and disappointed, they discover that they cannot rely solely on their own resources but on God. They learn that infidelity to God has dire consequences. But perhaps, most of all they come to understand that their God is not one who holds grudges. Rather than tally up past failures, their God is going to do a "new thing," namely, offer a new beginning. Failures of the past will not be remembered. What wonderful news for the exiles and for us.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM 41**

This psalm is a lament of one suffering from some debilitating illness. The connection between sin and suffering seen in today's Gospel is evident in this psalm.

**SECOND READING: 2Corinthians 1:18-22**

In defending himself from a charge of vacillating (for his failure to come to Corinth and for which he is judged harshly), Paul uses the occasion to speak about the constancy or "yes" of God. The "yes" of God through Jesus, and the "yes" of Jesus to God, is the ground of the steadfast "yes" of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy in worship and service.

In Jesus, God has said "yes" to life and "no" to death; "yes" to forgiveness and "no" to sin; "yes" to healing and "no" to sickness and disease. In response to God's affirmation of humankind in Christ, Paul calls the Corinthians to join their voices in saying a grateful and emphatic "Amen!" i.e., "Yes!" or "So be it!" to God. Rather than continue to bicker, Paul will have his readers raise the level of their thinking to dwell on greater things, like their unity with him and with one another in Christ, like the gift of the Spirit whose presence in believing hearts can make even the

most diverse and disparate group of people into a living and harmonious community.

The passage ends with a baptismal Trinitarian theme in the language of commerce. Baptism puts down the “first installment” (the Spirit in our hearts) in a promise of future glory in Christ. God can be trusted to deliver the balance in full.

### **GOSPEL: Mark 2:1-12**

In this miracle story, Jesus claims God’s power to forgive sins. Jesus is “at home” (Peter’s home, according to some scholars). While he is preaching, four men come carrying a paralytic on a stretcher. We can imagine the commotion caused when the man is presented to Jesus through the roof. When Jesus sees *their* faith, he acts. Usually Jesus acts in response to the faith of the sick person; in this case, he responds to the faith manifested in the friends of the sick man. These four are unsung heroes of the New Testament. Jesus welcomes these “gatecrashers.”

Jesus begins the healing by pronouncing forgiveness of sin. The scribes are shocked and enraged, saying among themselves: “*Who does this guy think he is? Doesn’t he know that only God can forgive sin?*” Everyone knows, including Jesus, that it is very easy to say: “*Your sins are forgiven.*” But when Jesus follows up his words of pardon with: “*Rise, pick up your mat and walk,*” he shows that he acts with the power of God. His enemies have to be baffled. But the

people are “*astounded.*” They glorify God saying, “*We have never seen anything like this.*” For the paralytic, the event is a resurrection. Through the healing touch of Jesus, he is made whole and freed from spiritual and physical sickness. The story clearly shows Jesus’ power over spiritual and physical sickness.

### **FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS**

1. What verse or image spoke to you most? Why?
2. At the end of the first reading, God tells us that he wipes out our past offenses and remembers them no more. Why do we, or others, have a hard time letting go of our own past failures or the failures of others?
3. The second reading speaks about God’s ‘yes’ to us in and through Christ. Name one way you have said ‘yes’ to God. Name one way you could say a greater ‘yes’ to God in the upcoming Lenten season.
4. Have you ever had to spend a long period in bed? If so, what was that like for you? If not, what do you fear most about such an experience?
5. To what extent is your parish sensitive and responsive to the needs of the physically challenged?

### **RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD**

Name one way you can act on today’s readings. Suggestions: Reach out to someone who may be suffering from

some form of paralysis. If you have a past failure you are still guilty about, let it go. If need be, go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### **CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION**

Especially pray for paralyzed people and for all who have a difficult time believing God has truly forgiven them for their past failures. Say a prayer of thanksgiving for those who have been a support to you in tough times.