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 **The Week Ahead**  
Fifth Week in Lent

• **Sunday 18**  
Jer 31:31-34, Psalm 50:3-4, 12-15,  
St John 12:20-30

Lent reminds us that God loved us so much that he was generous with his mercy. If we have faith in that mercy we will not be lost. But we have to bring that message to all. The Christian has to preach to the world the saving work of Jesus Christ.

The readings in Year A may be used to day as alternative readings: Ez 37:12-14, Psalm 129, St John 11:1-45.

• **Monday 19**  
2 Sm 7:4-5, 12-14, 16, Psalm 88:2-5, 27, 29,  
St Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24 or St Luke 2:41-51  
‘The virtues of **St Joseph** have been the object of ecclesial reflection down through the centuries, especially the more recent centuries. Among those virtues the following stand out: faith, with which he fully accepted God’s salvific plan; prompt and silent obedience to the will of God; love for and fulfilment of the law, true piety, fortitude in time of trial; chaste love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, a dutiful exercise of his paternal authority, and fruitful reticence’ (Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy, 219).

**Today** is the anniversary of the inauguration of the Petrine ministry of **Pope Francis**, Bishop of Rome in 2013. An intention for the Holy Father should be included in the Prayer of the Faithful at all Masses.

• **Tuesday 20**  
Num 21:4-9, Psalm 101:2-3, 16-21,  
St John 8:21-30

Christ lifted up on the Cross is the image which identifies his followers everywhere. Christians have knelt before the Cross in all times of need and distress. It has been held before the eyes of those facing death. It has led missionary journeys so that those who looked upon it might have new life.

• **Wednesday 21**  
Dn 3:14-20, 24-25, 28, Psalm Dn 3:52-56,  
St John 8:31-42.

The three young men refused to obey an unjust law – a higher moral law was at stake. God rewarded their faithfulness to the truth and their courage in making a stand for conscience’s sake.

**St Enda** is considered to be one of the three great late vocations (athlaech) of Ireland. His sister, Faenche, a nun, set his thoughts on a religious vocation. He made a small foundation in Cell Aine, Co. Louth, and, after studies in Scotland under Ninian, made several foundations in the Boyne valley. On Faenche’s urging he went to Aran. He died probably in 520 and is considered as one of the early models of ascetic monasticism in Ireland.

• **Thursday 22**  
Gn 17:3-9, Psalm 104:4-9, St John 8:51-59

The God of Abraham and Jesus is beyond and outside time. He is before the Father now to remember for us the past goodness of God so that now in our present time it may continue. In the Eucharist when we remember his Passion, death and Resurrection we are in a position to join with him and through him to make intercession for the whole world.

• **Friday 23**  
Jer 20:10-13, Psalm 17:2-7, St John 10:31-42  
To God we must turn in time of trial. It is God who will be the final judge of the rightness of the cause. Both Jesus and Jeremiah faced a lack of belief but were supported by the knowledge that the Lord was on their side.

**St Turibius of Bongrovejo**, 1538-1606, was a layman when he was appointed archbishop of Lima, Peru by King Philip 11. He combated all the abuses of the conquerors in Peru and built up the Church there.

• **Saturday 24**  
Ex 37:21-28, Psalm Jer 31:10-13,  
St John 11:45-56

In order to gather together scattered humanity, God called Abraham, a wandering Aramean shepherd, to be the father of a multitude of nations. To the people descended from him would be entrusted the promise that one day God would gather all his children into the unity of the Church.

**St Macartan** belongs to a very early generation of saints in Ireland and is recognised as the first Bishop of Clogher. He is known as Patrick’s ‘Strong Man’ for his dedication and faithfulness.

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 **The Pope’s Intention for MARCH**

**Evangelization:** Formation in Spiritual Discernment That the Church may appreciate the urgency of formation in spiritual discernment, both on the personal and communitarian levels.

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