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### The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions For This Month

#### General Intention:

That the world economy may be managed according to the principles of justice and equity, taking account of the real needs of peoples, especially the poorest.

#### Mission Intention:

That the Churches in Africa may be signs and instruments of reconciliation and justice in every part of that continent.

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# Disciple

A monthly resource for adult Catholics of  
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## Breaking Open the Word—Notes on the Sunday Gospels

### Mar. 7 (Lk. 13:1-9)

In today's Gospel Jesus is warning the Jews that the time for repentance is at hand and that, unless they repent, they will see the Gentiles enter the Kingdom before they do. There is still time, but they should not delay in changing their behavior—a lesson emphasized by the parable of the fig tree. Israel has been given ample attention by the "Divine Gardener," but a failure to be fruitful will bring speedy consequences.

### Mar. 14 (Lk. 15:1-3, 11-32)

Today's Gospel features the famous parable of the prodigal son. It was considered a disgraceful act for a son to demand an inheritance before his father's death and the fact that he squandered it, had to work with pigs

(considered unclean by Jews), and work for a Gentile (which implied having to violate the Sabbath) only added to the son's shame. This helps to explain the radical nature of his father's joy upon his return. The giving of a robe and ring symbolize honor and authority and the fact that he is given shoes (which were not worn by servants) shows that his father is restoring him to full membership in the family. The bitterness of the older son mirrors that of the Pharisees who believed that Jesus' acceptance of sinners was not in accord with the justice of God.

### Mar. 21 (Jn. 8:1-11)

Today's Gospel recounts the only episode in the NT where Jesus is shown writing. We are not told what He is writing, but

one scholar says, "The gesture may recall Jeremiah 17:13, a warning that those who forsake the Lord 'shall be written in the earth' because they have rejected the 'fountain of living water.'"

### Mar. 28 (Lk. 22:14-23:56)

"The Last Supper, where Jesus gathered with His disciples to transform the Old Covenant Passover into the sacrificial banquet of the New Covenant. As Passover recalls Israel's deliverance from Egypt, so the Eucharist both commemorates and accomplishes our redemption from slavery into sin. Jesus reconfigures this ancient feast by placing Himself at the center of its significance: He is the true Lamb offered for sin and given as food to God's family."

## Faith Foundations—Basics of Catholic Christian Belief

### Man's Freedom

(From the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

The following is a brief overview of Catholic belief about man's freedom.

#### What is freedom?

Freedom is the power given by God to act or not to act, to do this or to do that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. Freedom characterizes properly human acts. The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. Freedom attains its proper perfection when it is directed toward God, the high-

est good and our beatitude.

Freedom implies also the possibility of choosing between good and evil. The choice of evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to the slavery of sin.

#### What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility?

Freedom makes people responsible for their actions to the extent that they are voluntary, even if the imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or sometimes cancelled by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, inordinate attachments, or habit.

#### Why does everyone have a right to exercise freedom?

The right to the exercise of freedom belongs to everyone because it is inseparable from his or her dignity as a human person. Therefore this right must always be respected, especially in moral and religious matters, and it must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and a just public order. **What place does human freedom have in the plan of salvation?**

Our freedom is weakened because of original sin. This weakness is intensified because of successive sins. Christ, however, set us free "so that we should

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## Faith Foundations...Continued

remain free" (Galatians 5:1). With his grace, the Holy Spirit leads us to spiritual freedom to make us free co-workers with him in the Church and in the world.

### **What are the sources of the morality of human acts?**

The morality of human acts depends on three sources: the object chosen, either a true or apparent good; the intention of the subject who acts, that is, the purpose for which the subject performs the act; and the circumstances of the act, which include its consequences.

### **When is an act morally good?**

An act is morally good when it assumes simultaneously the goodness of the object, of the end, and of the circumstances. A chosen object can by itself vitiate an act in its entirety, even if the intention is good. It is not licit to do evil so that good may result from it. An evil end corrupts the action, even if the object is good in itself. On the other hand, a good end does not make an act good if the object of that act is evil, since the end does not justify the means. Circumstances can increase or diminish the responsibility of the one who is

acting but they cannot change the moral quality of the acts themselves. They never make good an act which is in itself evil.

### **Are there acts which are always illicit?**

There are some acts which, in and of themselves, are always illicit by reason of their object (for example, blasphemy, homicide, adultery). Choosing such acts entails a disorder of the will, that is, a moral evil which can never be justified by appealing to the good effects which could possibly result from them.



**"The right to the exercise of freedom belongs to everyone because it is inseparable from his or her dignity as a human person."**

## Faith and Media—Reading and Viewing Recommendations

### **Book of the Month:**

#### ***Theology of the Body for Beginners* by Christopher West**

"Theology of the Body" is the name given to the series of 129 Wednesday audiences delivered by Pope John Paul II over the course of 5 years (1979-1984). These catechetical sessions focused on the sacramental and spousal aspects of the human body, as well as the idea of "the person as gift." Trained in both theology and philosophy, JP II's concepts and language can be dense for the non-specialist at times. That's where this book

comes in. West is a nationally recognized authority on Theology of the Body and does a nice job of simplifying the Pope's insights for the non-academic. The book is appropriate for high school seniors and up.

[This book is available at the Diocesan Resource Center and most libraries and new and used book retailers.].

### **Film of the Month:**

#### ***Rear Window***

This classic thriller, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, continues to provide food for thought today. The protagonist of the film

spends his days observing the lives of his neighbors as he recuperates from a broken leg. In our own day we are growing increasingly isolated from one another precisely through the widespread use of "social networking" services (Facebook, Twitter, etc) which allow us to observe the lives of friends and acquaintances without actually participating in them. The moral questions raised about our neighbors' privacy and our duty towards them continue to strike a note. [This film is available at most video rental/retail stores and libraries.]



**Left: *Theology of the Body for Beginners* (Ascension Press)**

**Right: *Rear Window* (Paramount)**

## Catholic Calendar—Upcoming Opportunities for Adult Faith Formation

### **Days of Reflection**

#### ***Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King: Model for Catechists***

Msgr. David Tressler  
March 20

Fatima Renewal Center  
\$20 (includes lunch)

#### ***Transformed by the Cross—Challenged by New Life***

Msgr. John Esseff

April 10

Fatima Renewal Center  
\$30 (includes lunch)

#### ***The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Parable of Homecoming***

Rev. Philip Altavilla, V.E.  
May 15

Fatima Renewal Center  
\$30 (includes lunch)

Each Day of Reflection will include the celebration of Mass and the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**To register call the Fatima Renewal Center at (570) 563-8500.**

**"Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you..."**

**~1 Pt. 3:15**