

**MONDAY**  
**14 FEBRUARY**  
 James 1:1-11  
 Psalm 119:65-72  
 Mark 8:11-13

**TUESDAY**  
**15 FEBRUARY**  
 James 1:12-18  
 Psalm 94:12-18  
 Mark 8:14-21

**WEDNESDAY**  
**16 FEBRUARY**  
 James 1:19-end  
 Psalm 15  
 Mark 8:22-26

**THURSDAY**  
**17 FEBRUARY**  
 James 2:1-9  
 Psalm 34:1-7  
 Mark 8:27-33

**FRIDAY**  
**18 FEBRUARY**  
 James 2:14-24. 26  
 Psalm 112  
 Mark 8:34 – 9:1

**SATURDAY**  
**19 FEBRUARY**  
 James 3:1-10  
 Psalm 12:1-7  
 Mark 9:2-13

## REFLECTION

An air of foreboding hangs over this week's readings from Mark. Already on Monday we find a hint of things to come in the Pharisees'

demand that Jesus prove himself with a sign, and Jesus' exasperated refusal. And it is not only the Pharisees who do not understand – Jesus' disciples are little better, unable to interpret the signs they are privileged to see. By Thursday Jesus is spelling it out to them. As God's servant his destiny is to meet hatred and anger, to be rejected and killed. This time it is Peter who cannot or will not understand, and he earns Jesus fiercest rebuke: "Satan", Jesus calls him.

Even seeing Jesus revealed for a moment in his glory is not enough to provoke the necessary insight. When he comes down from the mountain, there is a sense that Jesus is truly alone, facing his destiny, surrounded by hostility and misunderstanding even from his closest friends. But we know that there are people who see him clearly, not least those who have been physically blind, as Wednesday's reading has reminded us.



Transfiguration Church, Mount Tabor, Israel. DyziO / Shutterstock.com

PRAYER

Almighty God,  
 Give us reverence for all creation  
 and respect for every person,  
 that we may mirror your likeness  
 in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## HOLY COMMUNION

### PART III – THE OFFERTORY

"You are to be taken, blessed, broken and distributed that the work of the Incarnation may go forward" (St Augustine).

We have gathered as God's people, confessed our sins and received forgiveness, opened ourselves to God's word and let it soak into our lives, prompting both an affirmation of faith and a prayerful response as we engage with the needs of the world.

Now we know who we are and what we are called to, the focus shifts from book to table and, as a final act of preparation for the communion to come, we stand to receive God's peace before we in turn share it.

Sometimes this is almost too challenging.

We may manage to pray with genuine warmth and compassion for Christian brothers and sisters far away – but those in the pew beside us are a different matter. And as for the strangers in our midst – we're often quite happy to overlook them entirely.

It's as well, then, that the peace we share is not the easy comfortable peace of a familiar fireside but a deeper peace beyond understanding – God's reconciling gift to us.

Despite the common practice that sees congregations far and wide scrabbling for cash as the offertory hymn begins, the "gifts of the people" that are presented are far more than money, or even bread and wine. As the president offers these gifts they become symbols of all that we have and all that we are – the things God has given us, offered to God again. Of course, what we can bring feels very paltry. Sometimes it is nothing but regrets and failures, mess and anxiety – but no matter.

"There you are on the altar," as Augustine told his confirmation candidates. We trust that as we offer ourselves to God, with all our brokenness, God will receive and bless the offering – and in a few short moments give us in exchange God's very self in a scrap of bread and a sip of wine.



# LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by  
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 and  
 Heather Smith

Third week before Lent  
 Monday 14 February to  
 Saturday 19 February  
 2022

WEEK