

Introduction To This Guide

These daily devotional guides are provided to encourage you to listen and reflect on how God is speaking to you during this Season of Lent. The question at the end of each day's contemplation is intended to foster further reflection and prayer throughout the day. In addition, space is provided for you to document your thoughts on how you hear God speaking to you at this time. May you be blessed and transformed through the Holy Spirit as you ponder God's word during this most holy of seasons. ++ *Provided by:* Community Missions Inc., 1570 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls, NY 14303, Phone: (716) 285-3403, www.communitymissions.org

Where Do I Begin?

Begin each day with the Prayer of Illumination to help, prepare your heart to hear God's word for you. Read "to be formed and transformed rather than to gather information...Read with a vulnerable heart. Expect to be blessed...Read as one awake, one waiting for the beloved. Read with reverence."*

Let us Pray a *Prayer of Illumination*:

All-Seeing One, above me, around me, within me —
guide my vision as I engage with your sacred words.
Look down upon me, look out from within me, look all around me.
See through my eyes, hear through my ears, feel through my heart.
God of Wisdom, touch me where I need to be touched;
and when my heart is touched, give me the grace to lay
down this Holy Book and ask significant questions:
Why has my heart been touched by you?
How am I to be changed through your touch?
All-Seeing One, I need to change, I need to look a little more like You.
May these sacred words change and transform me.
Then I can meet You face to face...when I shall be healed forever.
Your Word and the touch of your Spirit bring healing...
a healing that will last.
O Eye of God, look not away.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me. Amen.

Adapted from *A Tree Full of Angels* by Macrina Wiederkehr [As quoted in *A Guide To Prayer For All God's People*, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room]

ASH WEDNESDAY - Day 1 A SEASON OF CELEBRATION

2 Corinthians 5:17 - 6:2

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself...So we are ambassadors for Christ...we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

LENT IS OUR "HOLY SPRING"

During a time when we are steeped in the dead of Winter, the Season of Lent reminds us to prepare for the newness of Spring: "See, everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" Indeed, Lent [from *lencten* meaning: Spring] can be seen as the Church's *Holy Spring*.* There is anticipation in this season; there is a looking forward from a time of darkness to a new light, a new hope.

Thomas Merton, in his book Seasons of Celebration, says:
"Even the darkest moments of [worship] are filled with joy, and Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten fast, is a day of happiness, a Christian feast." Indeed it is a time to rejoice in our deliverance from darkness into God's marvelous light. As we begin this Season of Celebration*, this season of remembering the Christ's journey to Jerusalem, and to the cross; let it be for us not only a time of solemn reflection but also a Season of Celebration as we move through these 40+days of Jesus journey from wilderness to resurrection glory.

PRAYER

Almighty God, as we enter this most holiest of seasons, may we search our hearts, and renew our minds seeking forgiveness and reconciliation in you. Prepare our hearts, dear Lord, to be renewed in our faithfulness as we

journey with you through this Season of Lent; make it be for us a Season of Celebration and hope in your merciful grace - not only in this season - but throughout our whole lives. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

However you choose to document your thoughts, you may begin here. It can be full sentences, short thoughts, even pictures. The question posed for each day is only a suggestion. Give your heart and mind free range. First question: In what ways do you consider Lent to be a “season of celebration”?

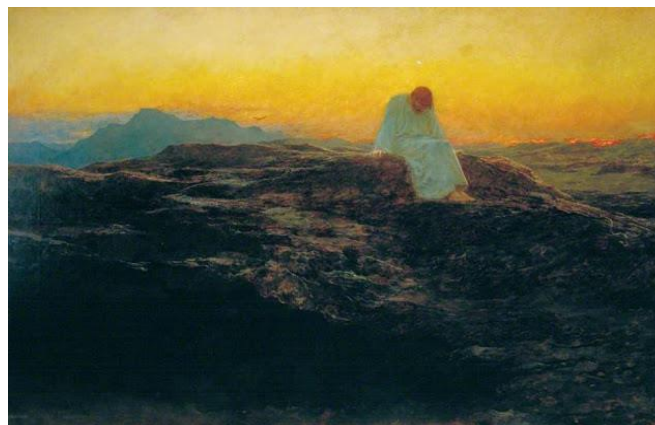
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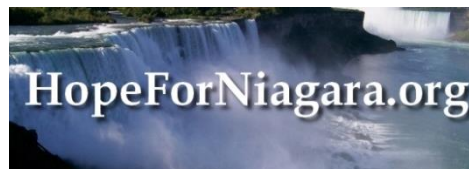
Lent 2022 - Day 1

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



The Temptation In The Wilderness Briton Rivière (1840–1920)

ASH WEDNESDAY A SEASON OF CELEBRATION



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This week’s devotional resource was written by Rev. Wendy Depew Partelow, President of the American Baptist Churches of New York State Board of Missions, and edited by Rev. Mark H. Breese of Community Missions. The content was created specifically keeping in mind the populations served by Community Missions.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Scripture Verses are from the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV), HarpurCollins Publishers, 1989.

*The choice of Daily Scripture texts and reflection questions are taken from *Lent & Easter, Wisdom from Thomas Merton*, Linguori Publications.

ff Frank G. Honeycutt, “How Jesus Hangs On”, *Marry a Pregnant Virgin: Unusual Stories for New and Curious Christians*, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2008, p. 100-104.

ff Carlo Carretto, *Why Me Lord*, as quoted in *A Guide to Prayer for All God’s People*, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room, p. 117.

Visit www.HopeForNiagara.org for more spiritual resources.