

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]

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY – Day 2

CHOOSE LIFE

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life for you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

RECOMMITMENT BRINGS JOY

Lent is a time for recommitment; and time for us to search our hearts and with joy and sorrow assess how we have - and have not - lived in faithfulness to God.

Moses reminds the Israelites that they always have a choice whether or not to love the Lord their God, who delivered them from slavery, and from the oppression of Pharaoh. They can "walk in God's ways and observe his commandments, decrees, and ordinances" and claim the blessings of the promise God gave to Abraham: fruitful land, abundant descendants, and peace among nations; or they can choose to "bow down to other gods" and perish.

Now is the time for us to choose life, but to also admit that we have not *always* chosen well. For those times when we have *not* chosen well, we express sorrow and seek forgiveness; and in our confession we recommit to "walking in God's ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances." And when we have searched our souls and repented, there is joy in the freedom of forgiveness, and restoration of the blessings and promises of God.

PRAYER

My God, you are the very ground of my being. Help me Lord, to recommit my life to you each and every day, and to immediately seek forgiveness when I err in my ways. You set obstacles before me each day. Help me turn every obstacle into blessings for your glory in your everlasting faithfulness and love. I call upon heaven and earth as witnesses today that I choose life in you, whatever obstacles my come. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

In what ways does *choosing life* change the way I currently live?

Four horizontal lines for reflection.

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front cover
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Lent 2022 – Day 2

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



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

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY
CHOOSE LIFE



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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.