

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]

MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT – Day 6

TURNING TOWARD OUR NEIGHBORS

Matthew 25:31-40

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?...a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?...[or] sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

FALLING MADLY IN LOVE WITH GOD

This text is as clear as any in scripture in its description of what Jesus requires of us. One of my favorite monks: Carlo Carretto, in his book, *Why Me Lord^{ff}*, says that in order for him "to be happy on earth [he] must fall madly in love with God...Then...in time of suffering the easiest way to ally the suffering...is to get out of myself - yes, get out of myself; visit someone who is suffering worse than I am, do something to remind me of the sufferings of the world, set my heart in order if I feel a residual dislike of someone...answer a tiresome letter from someone who wants me to tell him whether hell exists, or what he should not do to leave his nasty possessive wife. In other words, perform an act of love that requires patience and honesty."

The frankness with which Carretto speaks is so sincere, there is no mistaking his misgivings at his own weakness in suffering. And in his faithfulness to the God, to whom he has pledged his life, he does what he knows God expects and requires and does not give in to his own desires. As disciples of the Christ, we have to do what is required of us, not just

what we feel like doing at the time. The Prophet Micah answers the ultimate question: *I have told you, O Mortal, what is good and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.* (Micah 6:8)

PRAYER

Loving and merciful God, help me to see when my actions are not the ones you would have of me. Help me not to take my blessings from you for granted. Forgive me Lord, for the error of my ways and increase my faithfulness to you. Amen.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

What was my last act of charity? Why did I do it?*(p. 13)

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Visit www.HopeForNiagara.org for more spiritual resources.

Lent 2022 – Day 6

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Because of Your Love I Am Free!, Drawing, Lingnan University, Hong Kong, China

MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK TURNING TOWARD OUR NEIGHBORS



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.