

Introduction To This Guide

These daily devotions 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]

FULFILLED IN YOUR HEARING

Luke 4:16-22

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

THE FULFILLMENT

Jesus has returned to the Galilee from the wilderness *filled with the power of the Spirit*. (Luke 4:14) Word is spreading throughout the region about him, and he comes to Nazareth, his hometown and enters the synagogue where he is handed the scroll from which to read.

We don't know anything from scripture about Jesus' life from the time he was twelve (Luke 2:41-52) until he begins his ministry at thirty. So there is a lot we don't know about Jesus' formative years.

When I think of my own formative years between the ages of twelve and thirty, there were periods that definitely were wilderness times: dangerous times, times when temptations overcame me, and times when I was able to resist. And so when I think about the people who knew me during those years it is not surprising that many of them did not understand my *conversion*. My outlook on life and my lifestyle changed drastically, but they still remembered that *other* person. Some could only talk about it this way: She *got religion*.

Those who knew me well could see the *real* me beginning to blossom, but for many it was, and still is, a mystery. So it not surprising that when Jesus returns to his hometown, *filled with the power of the*

Holy Spirit, and identifies himself as one *anointed to bring good news to the poor...sent to proclaim release to the captives...to restore sight to the blind, and to bring justice to the oppressed*, the townspeople just have a hard time wrapping their minds around that...but this is *Joseph's son*...

PRAYER

Almighty God, you can transform each and every one of us into who you want us to be. Allow your Spirit to change us in ways that reveal your power and glory, and make us faithful servants for your purpose. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

When have you emerged *from the wilderness* a different person?

Visit www.HopeForNiagara.org for more spiritual resources.

Lent 2022 – Day 20

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Return of the Prodigal, Rembrandt (1663-1669)

MONDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK FULFILLED IN YOUR HEARING



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 are taken from Lent & Easter, Wisdom from Thomas Merton, Linguori Publications.

ⁱ Paula Ripple, Growing Strong at Broken Places, as quoted in A Guide to Prayer for All God's People, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room, p. 255-6.

ⁱⁱ James M. Efird, in Jeremiah Prophet Under Siege, Judson Press, Valley Forge, 1979, p. 100.

ⁱⁱⁱ Charles de Foucauld, Meditations of a Hermit, as quoted in A Guide to Prayer for All God's People, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room, p. 111.

ⁱ Richard J. Foster, Prayer, HarperCollins Publishers, 1992., p. 2-3

ⁱⁱ Henri J. M. Nouwen, Beloved: Henri Nouwen in Conversation, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007. p. 46,48,18.

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