

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]

SATURDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK - Day 25

REJOICE AND BE FREE

Psalm 51:7-15

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return you.
Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.
O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

READINESS

The Psalmist asks to be *purged with hyssop*. Hyssop was used as a sign of purification, its stems were used to sprinkle the blood on the doorposts of the Israelites at the Passover. It was used to sprinkle blood and water as a sign that a leper had been cleansed, or a home had been sanctified. A vinegar soaked sponge on a hyssop branch was offered to Jesus as he hung on the cross. The purpose of *purging with hyssop* would to drive out impurity and then to use the hyssop as a symbol of that purification.

When we ask God to *Create a clean heart...and put a new and right spirit within us*, we pray for the *readiness* or *willingness* to accept God's will for our lives, we pray for a heart that is free from the desire for retribution, and a spirit that is steadfast in love for all of God's creation.

But opening ourselves up to God's desire is risky. It leaves us vulnerable to those who would use our willingness against us. It leaves us open to persecution, misunderstanding, and perhaps even *crushed bones* and *bloodshed*. Yes, opening ourselves up to God's desire - or surrendering to God's will - is risky. But it is worth the risk to rejoice in the freedom of deliverance from all of these things, and praising God with a pure heart!

PRAYER

God of mercy and all righteousness, give me the courage and strength to look inside myself and have you cleanse my heart. Make me a faithful witness to your never-ending love and sustain me with your presence always. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

How has God put a new and right spirit within you?

Visit www.HopeForNiagara.org for more spiritual resources.

Lent 2022 – Day 25

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Return of the Prodigal, Rembrandt (1663-1669)

SATURDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK READINESS



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)*. *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, HarpurCollins Publishers, 1989.

Prayer of Illumination adapted from, *A Guide to Prayer for All God's People*, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room, p. 125.

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

¹*The HarperCollins Study Bible*, HarpurCollins Publishers, 1989, p. 2293

¹Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, as quoted in *A Guide to Prayer for All God's People*, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room, p. 123.

¹¹Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1992.

-----fold here
↓ front cover ↓
-----fold here