

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]

THURSDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK - Day 30

WHAT DO THEY HAVE AGAINST YOU?

Matthew 5:21-24

You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder"; and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgment." But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, "You fool," you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

BE RECONCILED

I know when someone has done something against *me*—something for which I am called to *forgive*. But do I always know when I have done something to someone else? Jesus says if I *remember that I have*, then I must go and make amends.

This is consistent with the 12-Step program of Alcoholic's Anonymous* - a program that claims to be *spiritual but not religious*:

- Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Notice that *six* out of the twelve steps are about making direct amends! One thing that stands out to me in these steps is the *willingness* and *readiness* that must be in place in order for one to accomplish this task. The 12-Step program illustrates the complexity of our actions,

and the difficulty of untangling some of the webs of deceit that we weave into our lives.

It is easy for us to look at The 12-Step program and console ourselves by saying that “well of course if you’re an *alcoholic or drug addict* you have things to confess,” but Jesus does not so easily let us off the hook. Jesus says anger, insults, name calling, all must be reconciled. This humbles us, and reminds us that we are not perfect, helps us to realize that we are *all* imperfect creatures in need of God’s mercy and dependent upon God’s grace. And *that* realization can change our hearts. The Apostle Paul spoke the truth: “There is no one who is righteous, not even one...” (Romans 3:10)

PRAYER

Show me, Lord, how I have hurt my brother or sister. Give me the courage to see it, and the strength to make amends. Amen

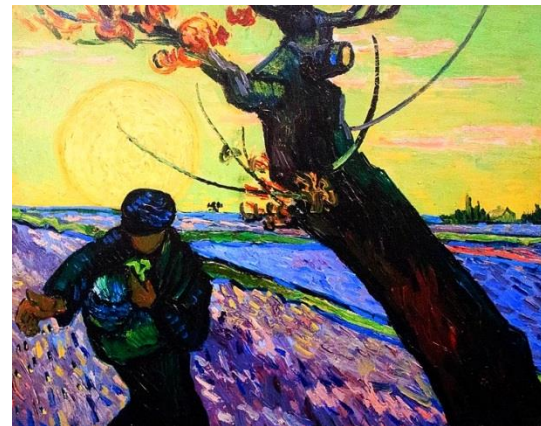
FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Recall a time when your wronged someone. What would it take to reconcile with that person?

Visit www.HopeForNiagara.org for more spiritual resources.

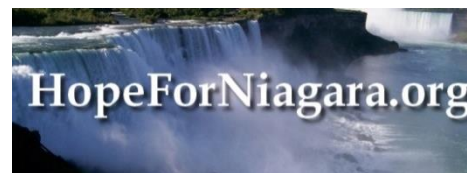
Lent 2022 – Day 30

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Sower With The Setting Sun, Vincent Van Gogh (1888)

THURSDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK BE RECONCILED



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

**One Day At A Time In Al-Anon*, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia, 1996, pg. 368-369. [ISBN:0-910034-63-X Large Print]

**James C. Howell, *Servants, Misfits, and Martyrs*, Upper Room Books, Nashville, 1999. Pg 26-28

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