

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]

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT - Day 33

LOSING AND KEEPING

John 12:24-32

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say - "Father save me from this hour?" No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

ADMIRER OR DISCIPLE?

I read a story about Clarence Jordan and his experience founding Koinonia Farm - an intentional bi-racial community begun in the 1940's in Americus, Georgia. Clarence had this notion that blacks and whites could live together peaceably in community if given the opportunity. The deep south in the 1940's was not exactly ready for that. "The Ku Klux Klan repeatedly terrorized, bombed, and vandalized Koinonia,"** and businesses boycotted their produce.

"Jordan once asked his brother, Robert...to be Koinonia's attorney. "I can't do that. You know my political aspirations. I might lose my job, my house, everything I've got." Clarence said, "*We* might lose everything too." "It's different for you," Robert responded. "Why is it different?... You and I joined the church...as boys...when we came forward the preacher asked...'Do you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?' And I said, 'Yes.' What did you say?" Robert replied, "I follow Jesus, Clarence, up to a point." "Could that point be any chance be - the cross?" [Robert replies] "I follow him *to* the cross, but not *on* the cross. I'm not getting myself crucified."

Then Clarence tells him he's an "admirer" of Jesus, but not a disciple, and he should go tell *that* to his church. Robert replies that if everyone who feels like he does did that, "we wouldn't have a church..." But Clarence asks, "The question is, do you *have* a church?" (p. 28) His brother eventually did become their attorney, as well as a state senator and a justice on the state's Supreme Court; and he "boasted that his brother was the greatest Christian he had ever known."

Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

PRAYER

I need your strength and guidance Lord. Give me the courage to trust in your faithfulness, so that you can trust mine. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Do one thing just for Jesus today. How did it feel?

Visit www.HopeForNiagara.org for more spiritual resources.

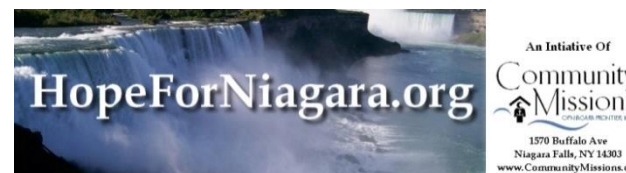
Lent 2022 – Day 33

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Sermon on the Mount, Károly Ferenczy (1896)

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT ADMIRER OR DISCIPLE?



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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