

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]

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

1 John 3:11-14, 16-18

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death... We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us - and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help?

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

TRUTH AND ACTION

From the beginning of all things, our text says, God's message is that we should live a life based on love. The text is actually trying to answer a very deep questions: What is *life* and how can we live it to the fullest? The text says, *We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another*. So living a full life depends on how we love *others* because Christ laid down his life because of his love for us.

And yet, the text also points out that sometimes as Christians we can get bogged down by seeing all the sad, hurtful, and even violent ways people treat each other. Sometimes we even see Christians act in these harmful and sinful ways, all the while claiming that they do it in the name of God. Sometimes we see all this hurt and hate in the world and it causes us to begin to hate as well. We are stung by what we see and experience and we find ourselves wanting to sting back!

What are we to do then, and how do we find our way back to what God has wanted us to hear from the beginning—*that we should love one another?*

This text from 1 John does not leave any middle ground: love your neighbor and help them. Do not hate, even when you see and experience things that are hateful. This text in 1 John asks the hard questions that we need to ask ourselves: "*How does God's love abide in anyone*

who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help?" Then it gives us the clear, simple, and challenging answer: "Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action."

PRAYER

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life. (St. Frances)

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Is there someone you *hate*? How can you serve that person in the love of the Christ?

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Lent 2022 – Day 35

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Sermon on the Mount, Károly Ferenczy (1896)

TUESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT *TRUTH AND ACTION*



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

Visit www.HopeForNiagara.org for more spiritual resources.