

## 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](http://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]

## FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK - Day 38

### *COMPASSION*

Matthew 9:35-38

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

### *A MATTER OF THE HEART*

As Jesus *went about all the cities and villages*, he was surrounded by people in need. I can only liken it to when I have been with my son and waited for his case manager to take him into her office, to reapply for social services. Seeing all the people in need: mothers with children, unkempt young men in shabby clothes, many with hygiene problems, some with addiction issues, some with mental health concerns, not knowing where to turn and hoping against hope that someone will help them get out of the mess that they find themselves in, many through no fault of their own. I see so much need and my heart actually hurts because I can't fix it, I don't know how to help, and I don't even know what WILL help.

Jesus sees that sometimes we are born into situations that make it hard for us to move forward in life. They don't make it *impossible*, but these situations make it harder for people to make ends meet, harder to have a sustainable life, harder to have a *good life* - whatever one perceives that to be.

Social Service agencies do help people with basic needs, but people need more. They need hope, they need to see a way beyond the help they need in the moment. Jesus sees them as *sheep without a shepherd*.

And so he sends out his disciples knowing the harvest is plentiful - people need the hope, faith, and love that only God can provide; but the workers - the disciples - you and me - the followers of Christ -

we are few. And so we pray for more help, we pray for *the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*

The *followers of Christs* are the means of providing for the community. People need a leg up, as much or more than they need a handout. Followers of Christ and their churches often provide food pantries, thrift stores and soup kitchens: but they could also provide mentors and counselors and people to *walk with* folks to help them get their lives together. In this way we share the love and compassion of the Christ. When we go into the fields and *be* the shepherd who leaves the 99 who are doing just fine to attend to the one who is lost and alone, we are being a laborer for Christ reaping in the harvest.

*PRAYER*

Lord, we know the harvest is plentiful. Send out laborers to reap in the abundant harvest of those who are lost and alone. Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

When have you offered hope to someone who was hopeless?

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Visit [www.HopeForNiagara.org](http://www.HopeForNiagara.org) for more spiritual resources.

# Lent 2022 – Day 38

## A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Sermon on the Mount, Károly Ferenczy (1896)

### FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK A MATTER OF THE HEART



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.
- <sup>1</sup>Invocation, *A Guide to Prayer for All God’s People*, Shawchuck and Job, Upper Room Books, p. 137.
- <sup>2</sup>Carlo Carretto, *In Search of the Beyond*, as quoted in *A Guide to Prayer for All God’s People*, Shawchuck and Job, Upper Room Books, p. 138-9.
- <sup>3</sup>Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan, *The Last Week*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2006. From pgs. 2-4.
- <sup>4</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org), *glorified*, using Strong’s Lexicon #G1392.

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