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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]

**MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK - Day 41**

***DISAPPOINTMENT AND BELIEF***  
John 11:20-27

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again. In the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

***HOPE IN THE PRESENCE***

Poor Mary and Martha. They could not have known that their brother's death, and subsequent resurrection, was only a foretaste of the emotional rollercoaster that would come.

Over the last year there have been times when I have lost hope: hope in our political system or hope that life will ever get back to some kind of normal.

Martha and Mary must have lost all hope of Jesus ever coming to their aid. They had even sent a "message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.'" (John 11:3) Yet Jesus did not show up and Lazarus died. How do we handle the disappointment when those we love do not show up when we need them the most. At that moment we can feel abandoned by everyone, including God.

But we see as we read through this story that Jesus was *present* to Martha and Mary, just not *physically* present; just as Jesus is present to us even in our hopelessness. When I am utterly hopeless, I get this overwhelming sense that God is in control. There are reasons *why* God allows things to happen as they do. And even though it's painful, and even though I don't understand, it doesn't mean that God is not *still* in control.

Martha saw that Jesus was on his way. Her brother had already died, but she had not lost hope that she would see her brother again, *in*

*the resurrection.* This story lets us know that however painful life can sometimes be, Jesus is always present. Jesus has a plan: life after death. Mary and Martha may indeed have sung: “You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.” (Psalm 30:11-12)

*PRAYER*

In all things, dear Lord, “we do not lose hope, for if we hope for what we do not see we wait for it with patience.” (Romans 8:25) Help me to never lose hope in you, and to remember always that you have plan. You, O God, are in control. Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

When - in hindsight - has your faith in God been restored?

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

# Lent 2022 – Day 41

## A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



*Entry into the City* - John August Swanson

### MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK HOPE IN THE PRESENCE



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>i</sup>Invocation, *A Guide to Prayer for All God’s People*, Shawchuck and Job, Upper Room Books, p. 137.
- <sup>ii</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>iii</sup>Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan, *The Last Week*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2006. From pgs. 2-4.
- <sup>iiii</sup>[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org), glorified, using Strong’s Lexicon #G1392.

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