

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]

MONDAY OF EASTER WEEK - Day 48

NOT CONDEMNED

Romans 8:1-4, 14-17

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending this own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit...

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ - if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

WALK IN THE SPIRIT

Thomas Merton, the monk whose study on whom these Daily Reflections were inspired, carries his study through this first week of Easter. We too, must carry our study and reflections beyond the Lent and Easter event.

Merton, reflecting on the Lenten Season, says that it reminds us "all too clearly of our own powerlessness to change our lives in any way. Lent...convinces us of our sin and inflicts upon us the crushing evidence of our own nothingness."* And so Lent serves in a way as law, convicting us of our own unrighteousness and accentuating our need of a savior.

The emotional highs and lows of Holy Week mirror the highs and lows of our everyday lives. We rejoice and we despair, we have a sense of security and we fear for our very lives, we mourn and we dance. But through it all we have the assurance in the resurrected Christ that we are not condemned to death: *the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and of death*. So how does knowing that change us? Is not the whole point of Lent that we be changed; that we somehow see our own sinfulness and gain humility and patience and

have love for one another? In the coming days, let us *walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit* and let love and unity reign in our hearts. As the popular hymn proclaims: “We are one in the Spirit we are one in the Lord...And we pray that all unity will one day be restored.”** The Christ died and was raised to life that it may be so. “And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love, yes they’ll know we are Christians by our love.”**

PRAYER

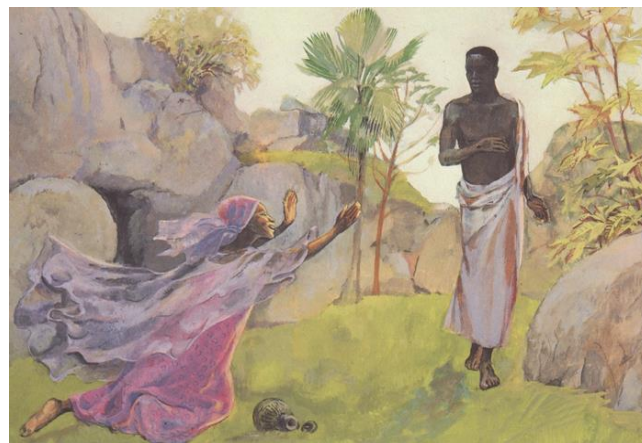
I cannot “free myself from my habitual return to fear...lack of hope...and guilt” without you. “Open my mind and heart this Easter to the reality that the Holy Spirit empowers me to free myself in truth by love and service for others. Set me free to love and serve.”^a Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Now that we are on the other side of Lent, how has this journey changed you? How has it not changed you?

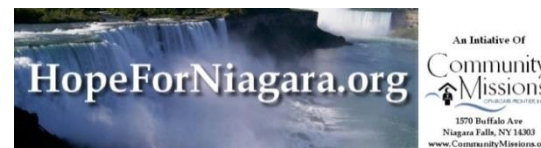
First Monday of Easter – Day 48

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Easter - Christ appears to Mary. JESUS MAFA. (1979)

EASTER MONDAY WALK IN THE SPIRIT



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.
- **Free from the Law of Lent”, *Lent & Easter, Wisdom from Thomas Merton*, Linguori Publications, p. 102.
- **They’ll Know We Are Christians By Our Love #284, *The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration*, Word Music, Waco, TX, 1986.
- ^aPrayer, *Lent & Easter, Wisdom from Thomas Merton*, Linguori Publications, p. 103.,
- ^aIbid, “The Power of Easter,” p. 104., ^aIbid, Prayer, p. 105.
- ^{aa}*One Tin Soldier*, by The Original Caste, 1971.
- ^uMorning Has Broken #145, *The United Methodist Hymnal*, The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989., ^uIbid, On Eagle’s Wings #143

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