

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]

WEDNESDAY OF EASTER WEEK - Day 50

HE IS OUR PEACE

Ephesians 2:14-22

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

ACCEPT RECONCILIATION AND PEACE

We are reconciled: *both groups to God in one body through the cross*. So why do so many not accept this reconciliation, this peace? The Christ has suffered, he has shown us the error of our ways. He has shown us that peace comes not with guns and swords and a heavily armed militia; but with love and mercy and forgiveness, through God's grace. And yet we still fight wars with guns and swords and a heavily armed militia, trying to muscle our way into peaceful negotiations. Jesus has shown us war does not bring peace. Fear and hatred need to be converted into security and wholeness. Craving and hoarding must be transformed through sharing and fair distribution. Jealousy and resentment need to be laid down in order to make way for peace.

I am reminded of that old song from the early 1970's, *One Tin Soldier*,^{aa} about two peoples: a mountain people and a valley people. The mountain people had a treasure and the valley people wanted it. So the valley people sent a message telling the mountain people they wanted their treasure. The valley people offered to share it, but the mountain people wanted it all. So they grabbed their weapons and killed all the mountain people. "Now they stood beside the treasure on

the mountain, dark and red; turned the stone and looked beneath it 'Peace on Earth' was all it said."

Likewise, they crucified the Christ. He hung on the cross, covered in blood "dark and red," and he forgave those who crucified him. On Resurrection Day, upon meeting his disciples in the upper room, he proclaimed "peace be upon them" and sent them out. (John 20:22) And even though division still exists between peoples, those true to his word still work to reconcile proclaiming, *he is our peace.*

PRAYER

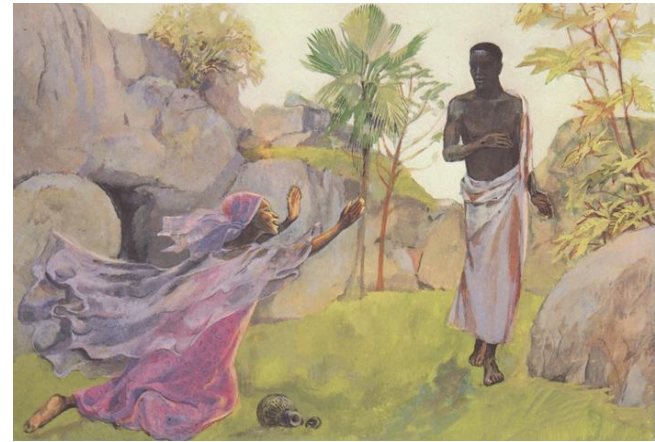
May we always seek oneness in Christ Jesus. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Seek peace in a situation that needs reconciling.

First Wednesday of Easter – Day 50

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



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

WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER HE IS OUR PEACE



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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