

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]

SATURDAY OF EASTER WEEK - Day 53

THE SONG OF ZECHARIAH

Luke 1:68-79

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has
looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from
of old, that we would be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us.
Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that
we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow
of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

ECSTASY

For almost a year, since the angel's visitation pronouncing that his aging and barren wife Elizabeth will bear a child, Zechariah has been unable to utter a sound. Now, on the eighth day after the child's birth, the day of John's circumcision, "his tongue is freed and he begins to speak, praising God." (Luke 1:64) Imagine the ecstasy of that moment, dwelling in the midst of the time of fulfillment! The very moment when you realize that while you are alive you will see the consummation of the hope of the people of Israel - a savior in the line of the house of David is dawning, and your own son John is *the* prophet spoken of

through the words of *The Prophets*, who will go before him and prepare the way. (Isaiah 40:3-5, Malachi 3:1)

And John did indeed prepare the way, and the Christ did indeed *give light to those who sat in darkness*: “the blind received their sight, the lame walked, lepers were cleansed, the deaf [were made to] hear, the dead were raised, and the poor had good news brought to them.” (Luke 7:22)

And Jesus was crucified, died, and laid in a tomb; but the Easter miracle is that he lives, and *by the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us...to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

PRAYER

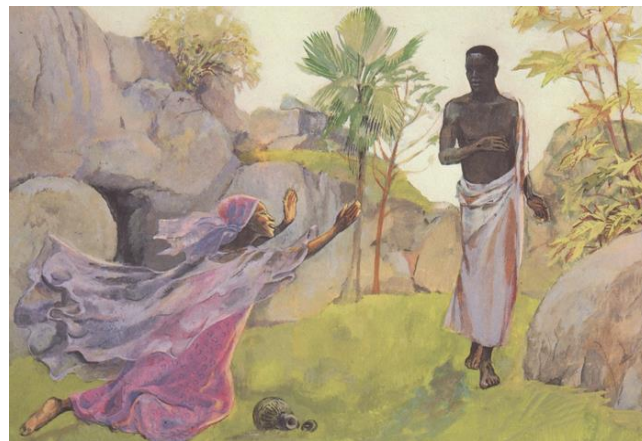
““Morning has broken like the first morning...Born of the one light Eden saw play. Praise with elation, praise every morning, God’s recreation of the new day.”” Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

How has John prepared the way for your heart to receive the peace of Christ Jesus?

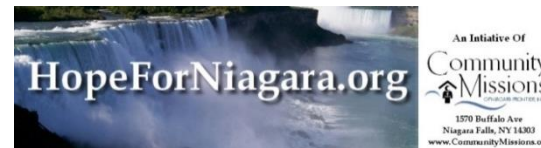
First Saturday of Easter – Day 53

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



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

SATURDAY AFTER EASTER ECSTASY



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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