

## Introduction To This Guide

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Let us Pray a *Prayer of Illumination*:

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**guide my vision as I engage with your sacred words.**  
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down this Holy Book and ask significant questions:  
**Why has my heart been touched by you?**  
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**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,**  
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## ASH WEDNESDAY - Day 1 A SEASON OF CELEBRATION

2 Corinthians 5:17 - 6:2

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself...So we are ambassadors for Christ...we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

### *LENT IS OUR "HOLY SPRING"*

During a time when we are steeped in the dead of Winter, the Season of Lent reminds us to prepare for the newness of Spring: "See, everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" Indeed, Lent [from *lencten* meaning: Spring] can be seen as the Church's *Holy Spring*.\* There is anticipation in this season; there is a looking forward from a time of darkness to a new light, a new hope.

*Thomas Merton, in his book Seasons of Celebration, says:*  
"Even the darkest moments of [worship] are filled with joy, and Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten fast, is a day of happiness, a Christian feast." Indeed it is a time to rejoice in our deliverance from darkness into God's marvelous light. As we begin this Season of Celebration\*, this season of remembering the Christ's journey to Jerusalem, and to the cross; let it be for us not only a time of solemn reflection but also a Season of Celebration as we move through these 40+days of Jesus journey from wilderness to resurrection glory.

### *PRAYER*

Almighty God, as we enter this most holiest of seasons, may we search our hearts, and renew our minds seeking forgiveness and reconciliation in you. Prepare our hearts, dear Lord, to be renewed in our faithfulness as we

journey with you through this Season of Lent; make it be for us a Season of Celebration and hope in your merciful grace - not only in this season - but throughout our whole lives. Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

However you choose to document your thoughts, you may begin here. It can be full sentences, short thoughts, even pictures. The question posed for each day is only a suggestion. Give your heart and mind free range. First question: In what ways do you consider Lent to be a “season of celebration”?

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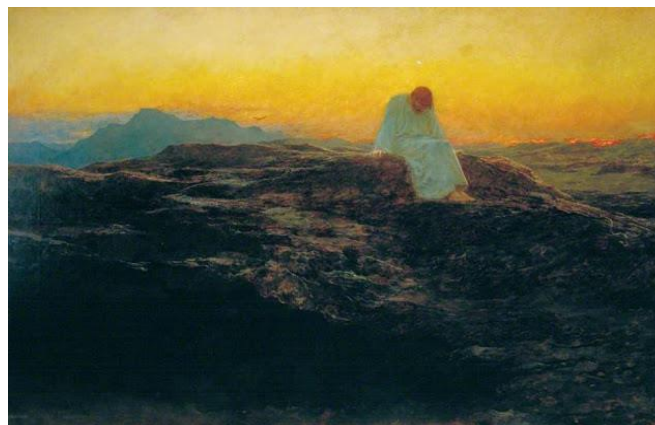
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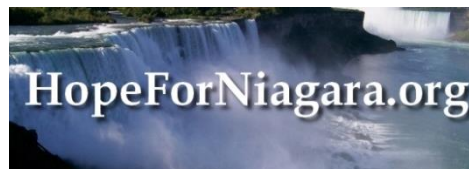
# Lent 2022 - Day 1

## A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



*The Temptation In The Wilderness* Briton Rivière (1840–1920)

### ASH WEDNESDAY A SEASON OF CELEBRATION



An Initiative Of  
**Community Missions**  
PUBLISHED BY THE B.C.C.  
1370 Buffalo Ave  
Niagara Falls, NY 14303  
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## THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY – Day 2

### *CHOOSE LIFE*

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life for you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

### *RECOMMITMENT BRINGS JOY*

Lent is a time for recommitment; and time for us to search our hearts and with joy and sorrow assess how we have - and have not - lived in faithfulness to God.

Moses reminds the Israelites that they always have a choice whether or not to love the Lord their God, who delivered them from slavery, and from the oppression of Pharaoh. They can "walk in God's ways and observe his commandments, decrees, and ordinances" and claim the blessings of the promise God gave to Abraham: fruitful land, abundant descendants, and peace among nations; or they can choose to "bow down to other gods" and perish.

Now is the time for us to choose life, but to also admit that we have not *always* chosen well. For those times when we have *not* chosen well, we express sorrow and seek forgiveness; and in our confession we recommit to "walking in God's ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances." And when we have searched our souls and repented, there is joy in the freedom of forgiveness, and restoration of the blessings and promises of God.

PRAYER

My God, you are the very ground of my being. Help me Lord, to recommit my life to you each and every day, and to immediately seek forgiveness when I err in my ways. You set obstacles before me each day. Help me turn every obstacle into blessings for your glory in your everlasting faithfulness and love. I call upon heaven and earth as witnesses today that I choose life in you, whatever obstacles my come. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

In what ways does *choosing life* change the way I currently live?

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Lent 2022 – Day 2

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



The Temptation In The Wilderness Briton Riviere (1840–1920)

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY  
CHOOSE LIFE



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## FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY – Day 3

### *FASTING BY BEING MERCIFUL*

Isaiah 58:4-6

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight,  
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today  
will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,  
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,

to undo the thongs of the yoke,

To let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

### *TRUSTING IN THE LORD'S MERCY*

We often think of Lent as a time to give up something: chocolate or smoking or another habit that needs correcting. As so *fasting and mercy* seem an odd combination, and yet according to Isaiah the two are indelibly linked. Fasting involves some form of denying self, to refrain from something. And so perhaps fasting is more than going without something. In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus discusses fasting in the context of piety, he says, "whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show other that they are fasting..." (Matt. 6:16). This sounds like the kind of fasting that Isaiah is railing against. According to Isaiah fasting as a justice concern.

Thomas Merton\* says that however you interpret *fasting*, "it is necessary that at the beginning of [a] fast, the Lord should show Himself to us in His mercy." (p. 6). How this is acted out in real life extends beyond giving up a meal or two. It is more of an exchange, denying one's self (giving up something) in order to provide another person something that they lack: like the dignity of just treatment in the case of standing up for someone who is being cast out or treated unfairly, like using what you gave up (in the case of time) to work to make laws more fair and equitable,

or even (in the case of money) giving sacrificially to a cause that matters to you. These are all ways of enmeshing fasting with mercy.

*PRAYER*

Teach me, O Lord, the ways in which I may honor you with my fast. Help me to see where injustice is prevalent. Give me the courage, strength, and wisdom to *loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke.* Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

What is one thing I can fast from this Lent to show mercy?

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# Lent 2022 – Day 3

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## SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY – Day 4 *FASTING FROM MALICIOUS SPEECH*

Isaiah 58:9b-12

If you remove the yoke from among you,  
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,  
if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness,  
and your gloom be like the noonday.  
The LORD will guide you continually,  
and satisfy your needs in parched places,  
and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters never fail.  
Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many  
generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in.

### *LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS*

Faith is a journey in which *the Lord will guide you continually*. To rely on God in a world that focuses on success and results and self fulfillment is to go *against* the mainstream of society. We read the headlines, and listen to the news, and we say, "O isn't it awful the way *those people* act, isn't it terrible that those kids are so violent, isn't it a shame that so many kids are hungry." Or we justify not giving money to beggars on the street because "they'll just use it for alcohol or drugs." Meanwhile *some people* cook up special meals for their \$1500 dogs, and lament that because of the pandemic they can't take their usual winter holiday, and others have not checked on their elderly neighbor whom they have not seen for days.

Lent is a time to ponder our priorities. As Paul said in his letter to the Corinthian churches: *I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance.* (2 Cor. 8:13-14)

And so let our *light rise in the darkness*, however God guides us; perhaps it is to *satisfy the needs of the afflicted*, or it may be to repair a broken relationship, or restore something that has been lost. Lent is a time to assess the present in order to change the future.

*PRAYER*

Open my eyes, Lord, and help me see how to serve you better. Reveal to me how I am complicit in the events that I find most horrendous. Give me the courage and strength to be involved in ways that make real and lasting change. Keep me from *pointing the finger and speaking evil*. Help me, Lord, to be part of the solution, not just a spectator to the problem. Help me to illumine your light and your love in the world. Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

Where are my own *parched places* that I need God to satisfy?

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## Lent 2022 – Day 4

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