

Lent

2024



Welcome

Historically, Lent is a time for repentance and self-examination, for fasting, for sharing what we have with those in need, and for returning to simplicity. Through these spiritual practices, we prepare our hearts, with the Spirit's help, to behold the cross on Good Friday and to celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Like the Israelites' 40 years of wandering in the desert before entering the Promised Land, and like Jesus's 40 days of being tempted by the enemy in the desert before embarking on his public ministry, Lent is traditionally 40 days. During those 40 days, we step into our own wilderness of sorts—a wilderness of remembering our need for God and allowing him to wean us from the things that distract us from him.

The pages that follow offer a path through the wilderness of Lent. Each day's entry includes a verse drawn from the Common Lectionary, a short reflection and prompt, and a quoted prayer that you are invited to make our own. You may wish to engage this booklet with journal in hand, or simply take some quiet time to ponder each day's invitation.

May God bless your Lenten journey, renewing you as you move toward the cross and the promise of the empty tomb.

Ash Wednesday (2 · 14)

Return to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

(Joel 2:13 NLT)

Reflect: To walk with the Lord is to continually return to him, facing the reality of our sin and shortcomings and trusting in his compassion and grace. Taste his compassion and receive his grace as you lay your sin at his feet.

Pray: *God of sinners, God even of the lukewarm and slow of heart, have mercy on me!*

(Karl Rahner, 1904 - 1984)

Thursday (2 · 15)

It isn't too late. You can still return to me with all your heart... I am merciful, kind, and caring. I don't easily lose my temper, and I don't like to punish.

(Joel 2:12,14 CEV)

Reflect: When we let distance grow in our relationship with God out of neglect, or when we outright choose what we know does not please him, we may imagine him to be angry at us. But the truth is he is slow to anger, waiting to show us kindness. If you imagine God as easily angered or quick to punish, how are these words of Joel inviting you to imagine him differently?

Pray: *Lord, interpret yourself to me more and more in fullness and beauty.* (Oswald Chambers, 1874 - 1917)

Friday (2 · 16)

I'll tell you what it really means to worship the LORD. Remove the chains of prisoners who are bound unjustly. Free those who are abused! Share your food with everyone who is hungry.

(Isaiah 58:6 – 7, CEV)

Reflect: Worship isn't just words we say or sing, but how we live. How can you worship God today by caring for what he cares for—his people, his creation—and letting that care be concretely expressed, especially among the vulnerable?

Pray: *Let me bless others, serving them well in view of that promised day when, in worship and with great joy, I will lay this modest offering, and the offerings of all my other days, at your feet.*

(Ned Bustard & Douglas McKelvey)

Saturday (2 · 17)

When you give to the poor, don't let anyone know about it. Then your gift will be given in secret. Your Father knows what is done in secret and will reward you.

(Matt. 6:3 – 4, CEV)

Reflect: What good deed or kind act might God be inviting you to enter into today anonymously? Take joy in letting your good deed or kind act go unnamed, unclaimed—to the glory of God.

Pray: *Let our service this day be generous.* (Tiffany Holden & Douglas McKelvey)

Sunday (2 · 18)

From now on, when I form a cloud over the earth and the rainbow appears in the cloud, I'll remember my covenant between me and you and everything living, that never again will floodwaters destroy all life.

(Gen. 9:14 – 15, MSG)

Reflect: God has chosen to write his covenant in creation. Next time you see a rainbow, let it be a reminder that you live under God's promises. Is there another aspect of nature God would meet you in today or use to reveal something about himself to you? Be present and notice.

Pray: *Heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty, Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works, that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness. Amen.*

(Book of Common Prayer)

Monday (2 · 19)

When we obey him, every path he guides us on is fragrant with his loving-kindness and his truth.

(Ps. 25:10, TLB)

Reflect: God is able to beautify even the hard paths we find ourselves on with the fragrance of his presence. Fragrance isn't visible, just like God isn't visible. It must be perceived by a sense other than sight. If you recognize the fragrance of God on your path today, savor it, let it rub off on you, wear it, carrying the aroma of God in our world.

Pray: *Lord, help me to spread your fragrance wherever I go.* (John Henry Newman, 1801 – 1890)

Tuesday (2 · 20)

My eyes are ever looking to the Lord for help, for
he alone can rescue me.

(Ps. 25:15, TLB)

Reflect: What is a current circumstance in your life that you can't fix, manage, or accomplish on your own? God has a history of helping his people in situations beyond their ability to navigate in their own strength. Ask for his help, and focus your gaze on the One who alone can rescue.

Pray: *O LORD, please rescue me! Come quickly to help me, O LORD!* (Ps. 40:13 GNT)

Wednesday (2 · 21)

Christ also suffered.

(1 Peter 3:18a, TLB)

Reflect: Jesus was not immune to pain of all kinds—physical pain, emotional pain, relational pain, spiritual pain. Which of these kinds of pain are you most subject to right now? Tell Jesus about it, and let him show you his scars—the ones on his hands and feet, and perhaps also the ones in his heart.

Pray: *You are he whose hands are with wounds. You are he whose feet are with wounds. You are he whose blood is a trickling stream.* (Xhosa prayer, South Africa)

Thursday (2 · 22)

He died once for the sins of all us guilty sinners although he himself was innocent of any sin at any time, that he might bring us safely home to God. (1 Peter 3:18b CEV)

Reflect: God is our home. We make many places our home, but these are only pictures of our ultimate home—a true and forever home that starts the moment we find our contentment in him. Thank God for your physical dwelling place, and allow Jesus to speak to you through it, or in spite of it, about what it means to make him your true and forever home.

Pray: *Teach us, O Lord, to use this transitory life as pilgrims returning to their beloved home, that we may take what our journey requires and not think of settling in a foreign country.* (John Wesley, , 1703 - 1791)

Friday (2 · 23)

Jesus saw the Holy Spirit coming down on him like a dove. A voice spoke to him from heaven. It said, “You are my Son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you.” (Mark 1:10 - 11, NIRV)

Reflect: What sustained Jesus in the wilderness, facing harsh critics, and ultimately carrying his cross? Could it be the words, “You are my Son, and I love you”? How much we need to know the love of the Father for us! Allow yourself some

time with these words the Father also speaks over you: “You are my Son/Daughter, and I love you.”

Pray: *Let no clamor of the world drown out your voice that calls my name.* (Jennifer Trafton)

Saturday (2 · 24)

At once the Holy Spirit sent Jesus out into the desert. He was in the desert 40 days.

(Mark 1:12 - 13a, NIRV)

Reflect: Jesus did not stumble into the wilderness by accident; he was very clearly led there by the Holy Spirit, who will also, at times, lead us into hard places for reasons we have to trust are for our good. Whatever wilderness you may be experiencing, take heart that it will be for a season, not forever, and that the Spirit is with you, though he cannot be seen.

Pray: *O Lord, for faith to grow you will put me in situations where I'll need resources beyond myself. I submit to this process.* (Richard Foster)

Sunday (2 · 25)

Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide. (Gen. 22:14 GW)

Reflect: God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son, then intervened with an angel and provided an alternative sacrifice—a ram caught in a nearby thicket. What impossible situation do you or someone you know need God

to provide for today? Pray, and trust that God hears your prayer.

Pray: *Supply what I lack, O Christ. Fill my emptiness. Meet my every need. Bring to completion—in and through me—what I cannot achieve by my own effort.*
(Alicia J. Akins & Douglas McKelvey)

Monday (2 · 26)

The wise counsel GOD gives when I'm awake
is confirmed by my sleeping heart.

(Ps. 16:7, MSG)

Reflect: At night when we are falling asleep or lying awake, what is deep in our hearts is free to rise to the surface. Pay attention to what is rising in your heart during these tender, still moments. Consider talking to God about them as a child in a whisper.

Pray: *Light of the World, Come into the dark and hidden places. Be present through our silent hours.*
(David Adam)

Tuesday (2 · 27)

You, LORD, are all I have, and you give me all I need; my future is in your hands.

(Ps. 16:5, GNT)

Reflect: What concern about the future do you hold today—the near future or the distant future? Can you picture your point of concern with Jesus in the frame? Where is he in the picture, what is his posture, what is his loving gaze saying to you? Let this imaginative exercise be its own prayer.

Pray: *O God, renew us in thy love today.
For our tomorrow we have not a care;
Who blessed our yesterday will meet us there.*
(Amy Carmichael, 1867 - 1951)

Wednesday (2 · 28)

For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below.

(Rom. 8:38, GNT)

Reflect: God's love doesn't just carry us through this life, but into the next. It is the bridge we travel when we face the chasm of the unknown. Whatever fears and questions you may be holding about death—your own death or someone else's—allow yourself to trust in the through-line of God's love.

Pray: *Lord, in view of the resurrection, let our remaining days and decisions be shaped by this great truth: In life we are Christ's and in death we are Christ's. Nothing—not even our dying—can separate us from his merciful love.* (Douglas McKelvey)

Thursday (2 · 29)

Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. (Mark 8:31, NLT)

Reflect: Jesus suffered rejection, including rejection leading to death. Is there a rejection, little or large, that you are currently navigating, or one from your recent past that has not yet healed? Bring it to the One who knows, and be comforted by his compassion. As you have opportunity, extend compassion to anyone you come by suffering rejection today.

Pray: *Only you, O Christ, know how deeply this dismissal cuts into my sense of self. Remind me that in the end, no rejection awaits me in Christ.* (Allie Osborn)

Friday (3 · 1)

If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

(Mark 8:34, NLT)

Reflect: Following Jesus requires relinquishing our right to choose our own way, whether this relates to how we how we treat people, how we manage our resources, how we navigate our career, or something else. Where do you face a choice requiring you to choose between Jesus's way and your way? Ask the Lord to lead you in his way, and trust that it is higher than yours.

Pray: *Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and guide me.*

(Ps. 25:4 - 5a)

Saturday (3 · 2)

What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you?

(Mark 8:36, MSG)

Reflect: In our age, we acquire consumer goods not just to meet needs but to pass time, prop up our identity, and fill an aching hunger for more. When purchases and possessions distract us from more important things or become a false comfort, we would do well to fast from extraneous buying. Are there non-essential purchases you would do well to fast from making this coming week, or perhaps for the rest of Lent?

Pray: *O God, Be Thou exalted over my possessions.*
(A.W. Tozer, 1897 - 1963)

Sunday (3 · 3)

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

(Ex. 20:2, ESV)

Reflect: God is interested in his people not being enslaved, including to possessions, bitterness, work, debt, reputation, or false ways of thinking. Is there a way in which your relationship with one of these categories might be a kind of slavery? Talk to God about it, and allow him to begin to redirect you toward serving the purposes of love instead.

Pray: *Eternal God, help us to know you that we may truly love you, so to love you that we may fully serve*

you, whom to serve is perfect freedom. (7th or 8th century, based on a prayer by St. Augustine, 354 - 430)

Monday (3 · 4)

In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

(Ex. 20:11, ESV)

Reflect: Rest is part of God's design for our lives, and when we fail to make time for rest, we fail to reflect God, who, himself, rested. How might you arrange your day or week to ensure some rest each day, and a longer rest at week's end? Bonus question: What can you plan to incorporate into your rest to make it more fully enjoyable and restorative?

Pray: *Let me work as unto you, my Lord, with excellence. And let me rest in you, O God, with peace and trust.* (Ruth Chou Simmons & Douglas McKelvey)

Tuesday (3 · 5)

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

(Ex. 20:17, ESV)

Reflect: Coveting what another has often relates to wanting another's perceived contentedness. It speaks to a lack of trust in God not just for what we need materially, but for the joy of a

meaningful life. If you find yourself coveting something of someone else's, whether little or large, ask for God to help you choose gratitude for what you have, naming to yourself and him what you are grateful for until your focus has shifted.

Pray: *Out of my wanting and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus I come to Thee.*

(William Sleeper, 1819 – 1904)

Wednesday (3 · 6)

None of us can see our own errors;
deliver me, LORD, from hidden faults!

(Ps. 19:12 GNT)

Reflect: We are not very good judges of ourselves. We need another to gently point out what our blindspots hide. The Word does this perfectly—and perfectly lovingly—if we will take the time not just to read it, but to let it read us. Today, as a spiritual self-examination, read Deuteronomy 5:6 – 21, and ask the Spirit's help to notice one area where you fall short and need to rely on his grace to help you grow.

Pray: *Suffer me never to think that I have knowledge enough to need no teaching, wisdom enough to need no correction, humility enough to need no repentance.*

Amen. (Eric Milner-White, 1884 - 1964)

Thursday (3 · 7)

I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

(Rom. 7:18, ESV)

Reflect: The distance between our good intentions and what we actually follow through with can be vast, and we will never fully close the gap in this lifetime. But what if there were one chronic good intention you chose to follow through with today or this week? What would it be? Lean into it purposefully with God's strength.

Pray: *Today we choose you, we choose life, we choose to be with others and to be for others, thanking you for the chance to serve.* (Unknown)

Friday (3 · 8)

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

(John 2:13 NKJV)

Reflect: Jesus spent a lot of time traveling, which took many hours and days longer in ancient Israel than today. Still, getting from one place to another is a significant part of our lives, and God invites us to be thoughtful about that time. How can you steward your transition time well today?

Pray: *In all our travelling, Lord, may it be your footsteps in which we place our feet.* (John Birch)

Saturday (3 · 9)

In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. (John 2:14 - 15 ESV)

Reflect: Jesus' love for the Father's house led him to disrupt the profiteering he saw taking place there. He was not afraid to name the evil he saw. What can we learn from his example?

Pray: *Spirit of truth and judgment, give us your discernment, that we may accurately name what is evil, and know the way that leads to peace, through Jesus Christ.* (Janet Morely)

Sunday (3 · 10)

“This is the command of Cyrus, Emperor of Persia. The LORD, the God of Heaven, has made me ruler over the whole world and has given me the responsibility of building a temple for him in Jerusalem in Judah. Now, all of you who are God's people, go there, and may the LORD your God be with you.” (2 Chron. 36:23 GNT)

Reflect: After the Israelites had been exiled in Babylon for 70 years, a new empire emerged, and its leader, Cyrus, though a gentile, liberated the Jews to return to Israel, even providing for the rebuilding of the Temple, ending an era of

occupation and exile. Pray for those living in occupation and exile, and for leaders to be raised up—whether believers or not—who will serve as instruments of peace.

Pray: *God of grace and reconciliation, Let hatred be turned into love, oppression to freedom, occupation to liberation, that violent encounters may be replaced by loving embraces. Amen. (Rev. Said Ailabouni)*

Monday (3 · 11)

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

(Ps. 122:6 ESV)

Reflect: We are invited to pray for specific places by name, including Jerusalem, but not just Jerusalem. Is there a place experiencing unrest the Lord might put on your heart to pray for?—a city, a country, a neighborhood? Pray for its peace and flourishing, knowing the Lord loves this place.

Pray: *Giver of Life, who hears the cries from _____, In your mercy, break political deadlocks, let people come before power, let life be holy again. Amen. (Cafod.org)*

Tuesday (3 · 12)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph. 2:8 ESV)

Reflect: All that we have has been given; even what we have earned or accomplished has its roots in what we have received. What is an

accomplishment you might have reason to boast about? In your journal or on a piece of paper, list 5 - 10 things you were given that set the foundation for this accomplishment. When you are tempted to think or speak boastfully about your accomplishment, instead, thank God for these things that enabled you to achieve it.

Pray: *Lord, you have given me all that I have, all that I am; and I surrender all to your divine will. Give me only your love and your grace.* (St. Ignatius Loyola, 16th century)

Wednesday (3 · 13)

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

(Eph. 2:10 ESV)

Reflect: God is crafting us as a poet shapes a poem or a woodworker builds a fine table. One of his tools is the good works he has set in advance for us to walk in. Allow God to shape, build, refine you through whatever good work he has prepared for you to walk in today.

Pray: *O Christ, the Master Carpenter, Wield well your tools in the workshop of your world so that we, who come rough-hewn to your bench, may here be fashioned to a truer beauty of your hand.*

(Iona Community, Scotland)

Thursday (3 · 14)

Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. (John 6:3 NLT)

Reflect: Though Jesus created the world and is God incarnate, he stooped to sit down at the same level as the disciples. Who will you stoop down to be among at their own level today?—perhaps physically, as an adult might squat to be at the same level as a child, or perhaps in some other way God leads you in.

Pray: *Let me realize that when I am humble I am most human.* (Daniel A. Lord, SJ, 1888 - 1955)

Friday (3 · 15)

Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people.

(John 6:11, NLT)

Reflect: The loaves Jesus distributed among the people were from a young boy who offered them to Jesus to help feed the crowd. What will you offer to Jesus that he can distribute today? What is your loaf or fish that could become much more than a loaf or a fish if it were in his hands instead of our own?

Pray: *Great God of creative abundance, Grant us the courage to release to your service the gifts you have given us. Amen.* (Simon Woodman)

Saturday (3 · 16)

After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, “Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted.” So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

(John 6:12 – 13, NLT)

Reflect: After feeding the crowds through a miraculous multiplication of loaves and fish, Jesus explicitly asked that no food be wasted. He tasked his disciples with collecting and stewarding the leftovers. What does Jesus’s unwillingness to see food wasted mean to you?

Pray: *Please forgive me for wasting food, especially when so many people don’t have enough. Starting now, make me wiser and help me take better care of the food you have given me. Amen.* (Bread for the World)

Sunday (3 · 17)

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.

(Jer. 31:33 ESV)

Reflect: God has written his covenant on our hearts. Is it possible he is *still* writing it on our hearts? Read one or all of the following verses aloud slowly to yourself, allowing the Spirit to write on your heart the truth that you are held in the covenant love of the One who created you,

watches over you, and makes a way for you:

Jeremiah 29:11 – 13, Isaiah 43:1 – 3, John 14:1 – 4.

Pray: *Write your blessed Name, O Lord, upon my heart, there to remain indelibly engraved, that no prosperity, no adversity shall ever move me from your love.* (Thomas à Kempis, 15th century)

Monday (3 · 18)

Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways.

(Ps. 51:12 – 13a NIV)

Reflect: Could it be that in order to effectively bless, serve, or teach others in Kingdom ways, joy is required—the living, sustaining joy of God himself? This joy will surely teach more aptly than any lesson we could contrive. In light of whatever way you are invited to bless, serve, or teach, seek the living joy of your salvation and let that joy permeate.

Pray: *May the God of joy be with us, thrilling us with God's nearness, filling our hearts to fullness, and filling our throats with laughter and song. May our joy bring life to others.* (Anonymous)

Tuesday (3 · 19)

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

(Heb. 4:16 NIV)

Reflect: God's throne is open to us, and we are able to approach it through Jesus, our friend, who goes ahead of us and intercedes for us. As you pray, imagine yourself approaching God. Honor him as you feel led, and bring him your needs without fear or shame.

Pray: *Lord, rend the veil of our self-life from the top down as Thou didst rend the veil of the Temple. We would draw near in full assurance of faith. Amen.*

(A.W. Tozer, 1897 - 1963)

Wednesday (3 · 20)

He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. (Heb. 5:2 NIV)

Reflect: Gentleness marked Jesus's interactions with so many people, including adulterers, corrupt tax collectors, and Pharisees struggling with their faith. Might Jesus' gentleness toward these ones—and toward you—help you be gentle toward others today?

Pray: *Lord, let your gentleness toward me make me gentle toward others. Amen.* (Timothy Keller, 1950 - 2023)

Thursday (3 · 21)

Some Greeks...came to Philip...with a request.

“Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. (John 12:21 - 22 NIV)

Reflect: Some people seeking God may approach him through books, prayer, Scripture, or church. Others may first approach us, his followers, just like the Greeks in John's gospel account approached Philip. Pray that you may be ready when someone hungering for God approaches you.

Pray: *Dear Jesus, possess my being so utterly [that] I may begin to shine as you shine—so to shine as to be a light to others.* (John Henry Newman, 1801 – 1890)

Friday (3 • 22)

Anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal.

(John 12:25 MSG)

Reflect: In Jesus' economy, losing can be a kind of gaining. We have to let go of old ways of being, thinking, speaking, doing in order to experience the transformation he has for us. What old pattern are you clinging to that is keeping you from moving forward? What would it look like to hold a funeral for it and move on?

Pray: *Father, I admit to liking some of my ruts, but I know that habit patterns that seem like cozy nests from the inside, from your vantage point may be prison cells. Lord, if you have to break down any prisons of mine, then Lord, begin the process now. Amen.*

(Catherine Marshall, 1914 – 1983)

Saturday (3 · 23)

You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light.

(John 12:35, NIV)

Reflect: Wisdom teaches us to number our days, using our time well in light of its finitude. What good thing have you been meaning to do but haven't gotten around to because it seems there is never enough time? Prayerfully make a plan for when you will do this, and trust God to bless it.

Pray: *Eternal God, give me Thy grace that I may be a prudent spender of my time.* (Jeremy Caplor, 17th century)

Palm Sunday (3 · 24)

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it." (Mark 11:1 – 2 GW)

Reflect: Sometimes God's guidance in our lives comes in broad, sweeping strokes; sometimes it comes in the form of a single step without a sense of exactly how that step fits into the larger picture. Like the disciples being asked to untie the donkey at the entrance to a particular village, is God inviting you to take a small, specific step toward something larger? Trust he knows how it fits into the bigger picture.

Pray: *God, help me begin—or even begin to begin—
though I can't know how this will go.* (Kate Bowler with
Jessica Richie)

Monday (3 · 25)

My servant... will be highly exalted... He will
startle many nations. Kings will stand speechless
in his presence. (Isaiah 13:15 NLT)

Reflect: No earthly ruler or authority has ultimate
power; one day they will all stand silent and
speechless before God. When you read or hear
disturbing words by authorities in the media
today, keep in mind who will have the last word,
and take heart.

Pray: *Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!*
(Rev. 19:6 – 7 NIV)

Tuesday (3 · 26)

You must have the same attitude that Christ
Jesus had: Though he was God, he did not think
of equality with God as something to cling to.
Instead, he gave up his divine privileges and took
the humble position of a servant.

(Phil 2: 5 – 7 NLT/RSV)

Reflect: To choose to be a servant requires a
laying aside of privilege. Is there a privilege you
would lay aside today in order to serve another
person, and in doing so, serve Christ? Follow,
today, in the example of Christ, who laid aside his
heavenly privilege for the sake of love.

Pray: *Glorious and blessed God, I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will. Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you.*
(John Wesley, 1703 - 1791)

Wednesday (3 · 27)

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

(1 Cor. 1:25 NIV)

Reflect: God's ways often lead through failure, but in his kingdom, failure is always redeemed. Jesus's death on the cross seemed, by all accounts, a radical failure, but resurrection retold the story of the cross. What failure are you facing or recovering from? Can you lay it in his nail-scarred hands, trusting him to redeem it and use it for good in your life and beyond in ways you can only now begin to imagine?

Pray: *Use, O Lord, even my failures and my fears of failing to advance your purposes in my heart and in your kingdom and in this world. Amen.*

(Douglas McKelvey)

Maundy Thursday (3 · 28)

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (John 13:14 ESV)

Reflect: On the night before he died, Jesus washed his disciples' feet, showing them by example how

to serve, inviting them to imitate him in humility and love. There are many ways to wash feet. How will you be as Jesus to someone today—how will you wash someone’s feet?

Pray: *May my thoughts, words, and deeds exemplify the Humble One.* (Kevin Antlitz)

Good Friday (3 · 29)

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

(Ps. 22:14 – 15 ESV)

Reflect: Today we remember Jesus’ death—his suffering on the cross for the sake of the world. As a way of honoring his sacrifice, take some time to read John 18:28 – 19:37. To enter the story more deeply, consider reading this extended passage to yourself aloud. Allow yourself to lament alongside his mother Mary and others who bore witness to Jesus’s last hours and watched Jesus die.

Pray: *Jesus, bless me now as I see your sacrifice.*
(Kate Bowler with Jessica Richie)

Saturday (3 · 30)

Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. (John 19:39 – 40 ESV)

Reflect: The women in Jesus's inner circle who ministered to the body of Jesus after his crucifixion shared in this high privilege with Nicodemus, a Pharisee who followed Jesus clandestinely from a distance. Pray for the church to warmly make space for the doubting and the confused to seek and encounter Jesus in their own timing and way.

Pray: *All-loving Christ, Make us sensitive in listening to all who are questioning and searching. Amen.*
(Angela Ashwin)

Easter Sunday (3 · 31)

Entering the tomb, [the women] saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee."

(Mark 16:5 – 7 ESV)

Reflect: According to Mark's gospel account, the risen Jesus left some specific instructions for the disciples: They were to meet him in Galilee. In the overwhelm of the good but shocking news of the resurrection, this instruction must have been comforting and grounding. If rejoicing in the resurrection feels abstract to you today, take comfort that, though we cannot now know the details, the Lord has a plan for what his resurrection means for our lives and our world, just like he had a plan to meet up with the disciples in Galilee. Meanwhile, let us rejoice in hope as we glimpse evidence of that plan not only in the Scriptures, but in the ongoing redemptive, transformative work of God in our daily lives.

Pray: *Living God, your Son made himself known to his disciples... Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in all his redeeming work; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Church of Ireland)*

Happy Easter!



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