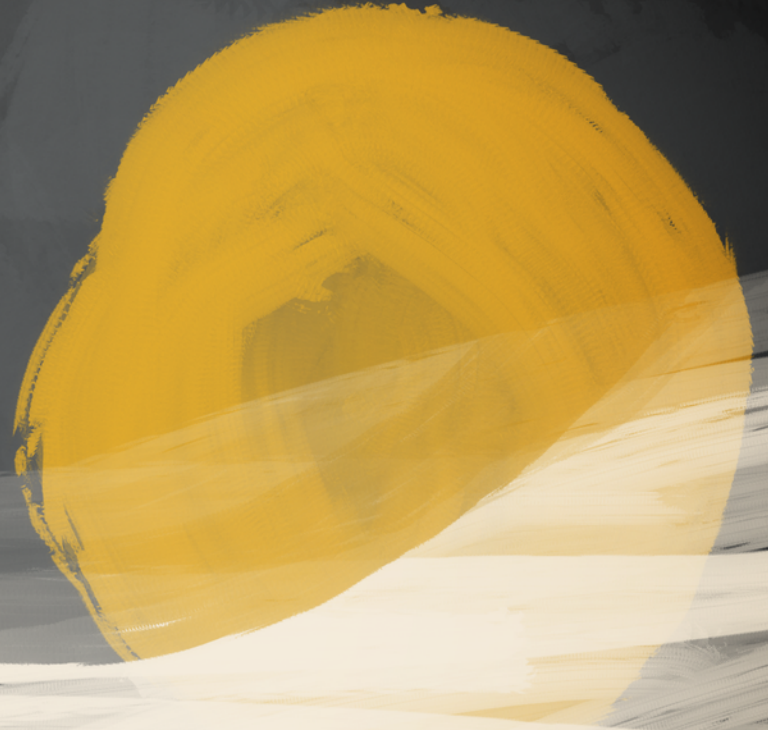


REUNION CHURCH



**PRAYER GUIDE FOR
LENT & EASTER WEEK**

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WHAT IS LENT?

In the centuries following Jesus' birth, death and resurrection over 2000 years ago, the Christian Church developed the liturgical calendar as a rhythm to remember and celebrate the Gospel message. Lent is the part of that calendar in which we prepare for the death and resurrection of Jesus. Lent occurs for over 6 weeks – beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday. You will notice Lent extends for a total of 46 days as the Sundays that fall during this time are not traditionally considered part of the season.

The Lenten narrative is marked by suffering, violence, death, and, ultimately, hope and joy in the Resurrection.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Traditionally, the Christian practice of this season is marked by some form of fasting for 40 days with breaks on Sundays. Fasting has always been a vital spiritual discipline in the Christian faith and these 40 days reflect Christ's 40 days in the wilderness prior to the start of His ministry.

Here at Reunion, we encourage you to give up something you often turn to for comfort – this could be a food or beverage item, television, social media, or something else. You can give this item up for the full 46 days, or break your fast each Sunday as Sundays are always celebrations of the Resurrection – and, therefore, feast days.

It is important to remember why we fast. We don't fast to earn God's favor. We fast to remind ourselves of our weaknesses, that we are not self-sufficient. When you desire what you gave up as well as the comfort that accompanies it, use this guide to turn to God for sustenance. We also fast to focus our hearts on the true feast – Christ's resurrection. Fasting is an opportunity to reorder our loves – it is about growing our appetite for God who alone can fully satisfy us.

The guide offers weekly liturgical prayers to open and close your devotional time as well as daily Gospel readings. Each Sunday, we pause our reading of the Gospel and turn to the Psalms. A four-movement rhythm is suggested to engage the Scriptures and commune with God. The guide begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on the Saturday after Easter.

THE FOUR MOVEMENTS SUGGESTED FOR ENGAGING SCRIPTURE IN THIS GUIDE ARE: SURRENDER, LISTEN, MEDITATE, RESPOND.

The movements suggested in this guide is just that - a suggestion. Feel free to go about your normal rhythms or to utilize a different rhythm. These rhythms are tools to help you commune with God, and they are described below.

SURRENDER to the Presence of God

Take a moment to sit still and quiet yourself - your heart and your mind. Breathe deeply and recognize that you are in the Presence of God. There is nothing you need to do to be in God's Presence. He is near. Use anything that may be helpful to you to feel and enter God's presence - this could be silence or quiet music, deep breathing, or a simple prayer word. The goal is to shut out distractions and be present and open to God and His Word.

LISTEN to the Scriptures

Read through the Scripture 1-2 times. Remember the goal is not to gain information but to experience and cultivate intimacy with God. Read slowly, and ask yourself questions about the text. Some example questions are provided below - we often find it helpful to write down thoughts surrounding these questions as they arrive.

- What does the Scripture tell me about God?
- What does the Scripture tell me about mankind?
- What does the Scripture tell me about God's heart for the people and world around me?
- What does the Scripture tell me about God's heart for me?

MEDITATE on the Scriptures

Quieting yourself and maintaining an open presence to God, revisit the passage once more. If you wrote down anything in response to the Scripture, reflect on that. If any specific words or phrases in the passage stood out, sit with and dwell on them.

RESPOND in Prayer

Talk to God about your reflections - whether it's awe or frustration, gratefulness or anger, be honest with God. The goal is to simply respond to anything God, through His Word, has revealed to you.

ASH WEDNESDAY REFLECTION: LIVING LENT BY BARBARA CAWTHORNE CRAFTON

We didn't even know what moderation was. What it felt like. We didn't just work: we inhaled our jobs, sucked them in, became them. Stayed late, brought work home – it was never enough, though, no matter how much time we put in.

We didn't just smoke: we lit up a cigarette, only to realize that we already had one going in the ashtray.

We ordered things we didn't need from the shiny catalogs that came to our houses: we ordered three times as much as we could use, and then we ordered three times as much as our children could use.

We didn't just eat: we stuffed ourselves. We had gained only three pounds since the previous year, we told ourselves. Three pounds is not a lot. We had gained about that much in each of the twenty-five years since high school. We did not do the math.

We redid living rooms in which the furniture was not worn out. We threw away clothing that was merely out of style. We drank wine when the label on our prescription said it was dangerous to use alcohol while taking this medication. "They always put that on the label," we told our children when they asked about this. We saw that they were worried. We knew it was because they loved us and needed us. How innocent they were. We hastened to reassure them: "It doesn't really hurt if you're careful."

We felt that it was important to be good to ourselves, and that this meant that it was dangerous to tell ourselves no. About anything, ever. Repression of one's desires was an unhealthy thing. I work hard, we told ourselves. I deserve a little treat. We treated ourselves every day.

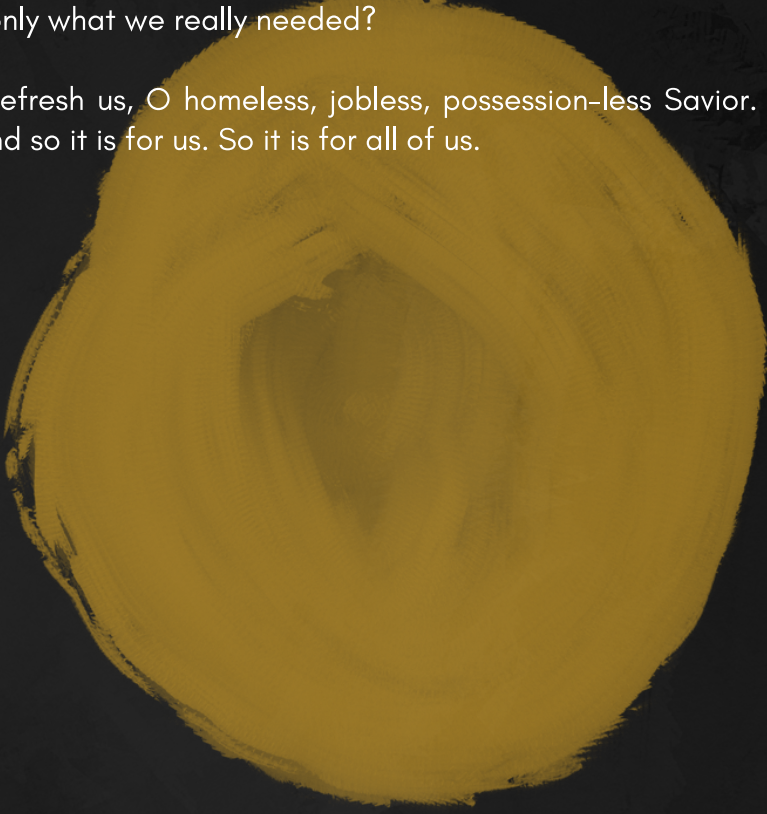
And if it was dangerous for us to want and not have, it was even more so for our children. They must never know what it is to want something and not have it immediately. It will make them bitter, we told ourselves. So we anticipated their needs and desires. We got them both the doll and the bike. If their grades were good, we got them their own telephones.

There were times, coming into the house from work or waking early when all was quiet, when we felt uneasy about the sense of entitlement that characterized all our days. When we wondered if fevered overwork and excess of appetite were not two sides of the same coin – or rather, two poles between which we madly slalomed. Probably yes, we decided at these times. Suddenly we saw it all clearly: I am driven by my creatures – my schedule, my work, my possessions, my hungers. I do not drive them; they drive me. Probably yes. Certainly yes. This is how it is. We arose and did twenty sit-ups. The next day the moment had passed; we did none.

After moments like that, we were awash in self-contempt. You are weak. Self-indulgent. You are spineless about work and about everything else. You set no limits. You will become ineffective. We bridled at that last bit, drew ourselves up to our full heights, insisted defensively on our competence, on the respect we were due because of all our hard work. We looked for others whose lives were similarly overstuffed; we found them. "This is just the way it is," we said to one another on the train, in the restaurant. "This is modern life. Maybe some people have time to measure things out by teaspoonfuls." Our voices dripped contempt for those people who had such time. We felt oddly defensive, though no one had accused us of anything. But not me. Not anyone who has a life. I have a life. I work hard. I play hard.

When did the collision between our appetites and the needs of our souls happen? Was there a heart attack? Did we get laid off from work, one of the thousands certified as extraneous? Did a beloved child become a bored stranger, a marriage fall silent and cold? Or, by some exquisite working of God's grace, did we just find the courage to look the truth in the eye and, for once, not blink? How did we come to know that we were dying a slow and unacknowledged death? And that the only way back to life was to set all our packages down and begin again, carrying with us only what we really needed?

We travail. We are heavy laden. Refresh us, O homeless, jobless, possession-less Savior. You came naked, and naked you go. And so it is for us. So it is for all of us.



Lenten Reflection originally published in Bread and Wine (2005).
<https://www.plough.com/en/topics/culture/holidays/meditations-for-lent/living-lent>

START OF LENT

OPENING PRAYER FOR THE START OF LENT

Almighty and ever living God,
you invite us deeper into your world, your people, your Lent.
May this time be one of outward focus;
seeking you in those we often ignore.
Help us live a Lent focused on freedom, generosity, and encounter.
Give us hearts hungry to serve you
and those who need what we have to give.

SURRENDER to the Presence of God

Pause to be still, quiet yourself, and breathe slowly. Become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

God is near to you because He loves you.

LISTEN to the Scriptures

As you read, remember the goal is not primarily information, but intimacy with God. Read the passage slowly, asking yourself first what the scripture says about God. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart for the people and world around you. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart towards you.

"For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself." - A.W. Tozer

READINGS FOR THE START OF LENT

- Ash Wednesday: Mark 1.1-20
- Thursday after Ash Wednesday: Mark 1.21-45
- Friday after Ash Wednesday: Mark 2.1-17
- Saturday after Ash Wednesday: Mark 1.9-15

MEDITATE on the Scriptures

Becoming aware of God's presence again, revisit the passage once more. Reflect on what the passage reveals about God and God's heart. Sit with and dwell on any words or phrases that jump out.

START OF LENT

RESPOND in Prayer

Talk to God about your reflections, whether it's awe or frustration, gratefulness or anger, be honest with God. The goal is to simply respond to anything God, through His Word, has revealed to you.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE START OF LENT

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made
and forgive the sins of all who are penitent:
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may obtain of you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

WEEK 1 OF LENT

OPENING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 1 OF LENT

Lord, surely we wait and we wait for you
You who bent down and heard our cries
You who drew us up from the pit, out of the deep mud
And set our feet upon a rock, making our steps secure
As we wait, Lord, put a new song in our mouths,
A song of praise to our God

- Prayer adapted from Psalm 40

SURRENDER to the Presence of God

Pause to be still, quiet yourself, and breathe slowly. Become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

God is near to you because He loves you.

LISTEN to the Scriptures

As you read, remember the goal is not primarily information, but intimacy with God. Read the passage slowly, asking yourself first what the scripture says about God. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart for the people and world around you. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart towards you.

"For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself." - A.W. Tozer

READINGS FOR THE WEEK 1 OF LENT

- Sunday: Psalm 32
- Monday: Mark 2.18-28
- Tuesday: Mark 3.1-19
- Wednesday: Mark 3.20-35
- Thursday: Mark 4.1-20
- Friday: Mark 4.21-41
- Saturday: Mark 8.31-38

MEDITATE on the Scriptures

Becoming aware of God's presence again, revisit the passage once more. Reflect on what the passage reveals about God and God's heart. Sit with and dwell on any words or phrases that jump out.

WEEK 1 OF LENT

RESPOND in Prayer

Talk to God about your reflections, whether it's awe or frustration, gratefulness or anger, be honest with God. The goal is to simply respond to anything God, through His Word, has revealed to you.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 1 OF LENT

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

- Collect for the First Sunday of Lent from the Book of Common Prayer

WEEK 2 OF LENT

OPENING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 2 OF LENT

Convert us anew this Lenten season, O God our Savior
And shape our lives with your word of truth
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen

SURRENDER to the Presence of God

Pause to be still, quiet yourself, and breathe slowly. Become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

God is near to you because He loves you.

LISTEN to the Scriptures

As you read, remember the goal is not primarily information, but intimacy with God. Read the passage slowly, asking yourself first what the scripture says about God. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart for the people and world around you. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart towards you.

"For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself." - A.W. Tozer

READINGS FOR THE WEEK 2 OF LENT

- Sunday: Psalm 34
- Monday: Mark 5.1-20
- Tuesday: Mark 5.21-43
- Wednesday: Mark 6.1-29
- Thursday: Mark 6.30-44
- Friday: Mark 6.45-56
- Saturday: John 2.13-22

MEDITATE on the Scriptures

Becoming aware of God's presence again, revisit the passage once more. Reflect on what the passage reveals about God and God's heart. Sit with and dwell on any words or phrases that jump out.

WEEK 2 OF LENT

RESPOND in Prayer

Talk to God about your reflections, whether it's awe or frustration, gratefulness or anger, be honest with God. The goal is to simply respond to anything God, through His Word, has revealed to you.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 2 OF LENT

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

- Collect for the Second Sunday of Lent from the Book of Common Prayer

WEEK 3 OF LENT

OPENING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 3 OF LENT

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

- *Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent from the Book of Common Prayer*

SURRENDER to the Presence of God

Pause to be still, quiet yourself, and breathe slowly. Become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

God is near to you because He loves you.

LISTEN to the Scriptures

As you read, remember the goal is not primarily information, but intimacy with God. Read the passage slowly, asking yourself first what the scripture says about God. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart for the people and world around you. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart towards you.

"For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself." - A.W. Tozer

READINGS FOR THE WEEK 3 OF LENT

- Sunday: Psalm 42.1-43.5
- Monday: Mark 7.1-13
- Tuesday: Mark 7.14-23
- Wednesday: Mark 7.24-37
- Thursday: Mark 8.1-30
- Friday: Mark 9.2-29
- Saturday: John 3.14-21

MEDITATE on the Scriptures

Becoming aware of God's presence again, revisit the passage once more. Reflect on what the passage reveals about God and God's heart. Sit with and dwell on any words or phrases that jump out.

WEEK 3 OF LENT

RESPOND in Prayer

Talk to God about your reflections, whether it's awe or frustration, gratefulness or anger, be honest with God. The goal is to simply respond to anything God, through His Word, has revealed to you.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 3 OF LENT

O my gracious Savior,
be my Healer and Redeemer,
and cast me not away.
Raise me up when you see me fallen,
 lying in sin,
since You are all-powerful,
that I may know your deeds and cry out to You:
"Before I perish completely,
 save me, O Lord."

- From Thomas Hopko, The Lenten Spring

WEEK 4 OF LENT

OPENING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 4 OF LENT

God, your glory fills the heavens
and all that you have made bears your mark.
We pray for this creation:
we ask forgiveness for the ways in which we have disfigured it;
we pray for those who cannot enjoy
the warm sun or the cool night,
those who are imprisoned or alone . . .
those who are ill or infirm . . .
those who mourn . . .
Use all of us, our hearts, our hands,
to bring your wondrous power into their lives.
Let us glorify you, O God.
Let your hymn resound in our lives.

- From the Revised Common Lectionary

SURRENDER to the Presence of God

Pause to be still, quiet yourself, and breathe slowly. Become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

God is near to you because He loves you.

LISTEN to the Scriptures

As you read, remember the goal is not primarily information, but intimacy with God. Read the passage slowly, asking yourself first what the scripture says about God. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart for the people and world around you. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart towards you.

"For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself." - A.W. Tozer

READINGS FOR THE WEEK 4 OF LENT

- Sunday: Psalm 91.1-16
- Monday: Mark 9.30-50
- Tuesday: Mark 10.1-16
- Wednesday: Mark 10.17-31
- Thursday: Mark 10.32-45
- Friday: Mark 10.46-52
- Saturday: John 12.20-33

WEEK 4 OF LENT

MEDITATE on the Scriptures

Becoming aware of God's presence again, revisit the passage once more. Reflect on what the passage reveals about God and God's heart. Sit with and dwell on any words or phrases that jump out.

RESPOND in Prayer

Talk to God about your reflections, whether it's awe or frustration, gratefulness or anger, be honest with God. The goal is to simply respond to anything God, through His Word, has revealed to you.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 4 OF LENT

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

- *Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Lent from the Book of Common Prayer*

WEEK 5 OF LENT

OPENING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 5 OF LENT

Lord, show me your ways, teach me your paths
Lead me in your truth and teach me
For you are the God of my salvation
For you, I wait all the day long
Remember your mercy, O Lord, R
emember your steadfast love
For they have been of old
Remember not the sins of my youth,
Remember not my transgressions;
According to your love, remember me,
For the sake of your goodness. Amen

- Prayer adapted from Psalm 25

SURRENDER to the Presence of God

Pause to be still, quiet yourself, and breathe slowly. Become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

God is near to you because He loves you.

LISTEN to the Scriptures

As you read, remember the goal is not primarily information, but intimacy with God. Read the passage slowly, asking yourself first what the scripture says about God. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart for the people and world around you. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart towards you.

"For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself." - A.W. Tozer

READINGS FOR THE WEEK 5 OF LENT

- Sunday: Psalm 98.1-9
- Monday: Mark 11
- Tuesday: Mark 12.1-17
- Wednesday: Mark 12.18-44
- Thursday: Mark 13
- Friday: Mark 11.1-11
- Saturday: Mark 14.1-15.47

WEEK 5 OF LENT

MEDITATE on the Scriptures

Becoming aware of God's presence again, revisit the passage once more. Reflect on what the passage reveals about God and God's heart. Sit with and dwell on any words or phrases that jump out.

RESPOND in Prayer

Talk to God about your reflections, whether it's awe or frustration, gratefulness or anger, be honest with God. The goal is to simply respond to anything God, through His Word, has revealed to you.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE WEEK 5 OF LENT

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

- *Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Lent from the Book of Common Prayer*

A POEM FOR HOLY WEEK

Those Who Carry by Anna Kamienska

Those who carry pianos
to the tenth floor wardrobes and coffins
an old man with a bundle of wood limbs beyond
the horizon
a woman with a hump of nettles
a madwoman pushing a pram
full of vodka bottles
they will all be lifted
like a gull's feather like a dry leaf
like an eggshell a scrap of newspaper

Blessed are those who carry
for they shall be lifted.

Poem published in Astonishments: Selected Poems of Anna Kamienska (2008).
<https://poem-locker.tumblr.com/post/117259058501/anna-kamienska-those-who-carry>

HOLY WEEK

OPENING PRAYER FOR HOLY WEEK

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

- *Collect for Palm Sunday from the Book of Common Prayer*

SURRENDER to the Presence of God

Pause to be still, quiet yourself, and breathe slowly. Become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

God is near to you because He loves you.

LISTEN to the Scriptures

As you read, remember the goal is not primarily information, but intimacy with God. Read the passage slowly, asking yourself first what the scripture says about God. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart for the people and world around you. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart towards you.

"For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself." - A.W. Tozer

READINGS FOR HOLY WEEK

- Palm Sunday: Psalm 110.1-7
- Monday: Mark 14.3-9
- Tuesday: Mark 14.32-52
- Wednesday: Mark 14.53-65
- Thursday: Mark 14.12-26
- Good Friday: Mark 15.1-41
- Holy Saturday: Mark 15.42-47

HOLY WEEK

MEDITATE on the Scriptures

Becoming aware of God's presence again, revisit the passage once more. Reflect on what the passage reveals about God and God's heart. Sit with and dwell on any words or phrases that jump out.

RESPOND in Prayer

Talk to God about your reflections, whether it's awe or frustration, gratefulness or anger, be honest with God. The goal is to simply respond to anything God, through His Word, has revealed to you.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR HOLY WEEK

Is not this the fast that I chose:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe him,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.
Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here I am.

- *Isaiah 58:6-9*

EASTER WEEK

OPENING PRAYER FOR EASTER WEEK

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

- *Collect for Easter Sunday from the Book of Common Prayer*

SURRENDER to the Presence of God

Pause to be still, quiet yourself, and breathe slowly. Become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

God is near to you because He loves you.

LISTEN to the Scriptures

As you read, remember the goal is not primarily information, but intimacy with God. Read the passage slowly, asking yourself first what the scripture says about God. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart for the people and world around you. Ask what the scripture says about God's heart towards you.

"For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself." - A.W. Tozer

READINGS FOR EASTER WEEK

- Sunday: Mark 16.1-8; Psalm 16.1-11
- Monday: Mark 16.9-end
- Tuesday: Mark 2.23-27
- Wednesday: Mark 4.26-33
- Thursday: Mark 12.28-34
- Friday: Mark 12.41-44
- Saturday: John 20.19-31

EASTER WEEK

MEDITATE on the Scriptures

Becoming aware of God's presence again, revisit the passage once more. Reflect on what the passage reveals about God and God's heart. Sit with and dwell on any words or phrases that jump out.

RESPOND in Prayer

Talk to God about your reflections, whether it's awe or frustration, gratefulness or anger, be honest with God. The goal is to simply respond to anything God, through His Word, has revealed to you.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR EASTER WEEK

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is error, truth;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in self-forgetting that we find;
And it is in dying to ourselves that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

- The Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi