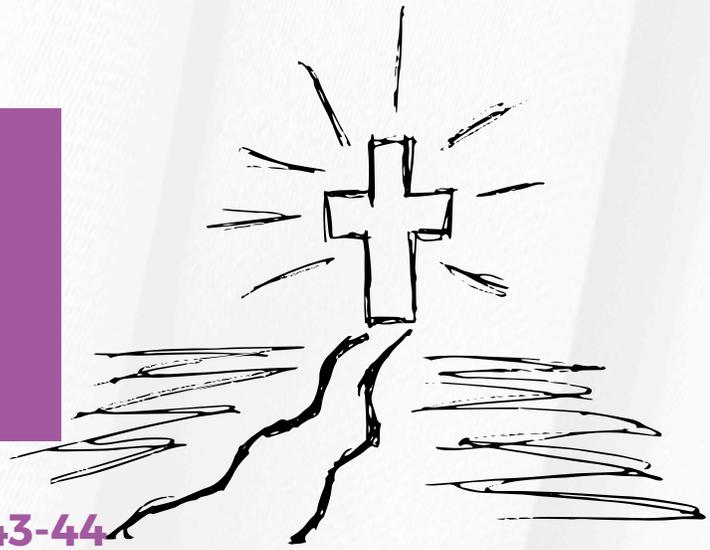


# JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers  
February 22-28



## SUNDAY, FEB 22, JOHN 11:17, 32-39, 43-44

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days... When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying? Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.'... he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

## QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

*What are you mourning these days? What moves you from tears to action?*

## PRAYER

Mourning is holy work. True grieving is a sacred act. It is a recognition that all is not well, that something is missing, that not all things are as they should be. We see, O God, that sometimes you call us to grieve and to mourn, especially in a world that is often shaped by violence, driven by corruption, and urged along by hardened hearts. We grieve for people forced to live in fear. We mourn for elders living in isolation. We cry for children who are hungry and for all those who feel lost or forgotten. It is right that we weep for those things, but do not let us remain indefinitely in our grief. Wipe away our tears, O God, and move us towards actions and words that will bring new life to the world around us. As Jesus wept and then raised Lazarus from the dead, let us also weep and then get to the work that brings aid to suffering, hope to the lost, and peace to all. Amen.

# JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

## MONDAY, FEB 23, JOHN 11: 47-56

The chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council and said, 'What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.' But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all! You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed.' He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God. So from that day on, they planned to put him to death.

Jesus therefore no longer walked about openly among the Jews, but went from there to a town called Ephraim in the region near the wilderness; and he remained there with the disciples.

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. They were looking for Jesus and were asking one another as they stood in the temple, 'What do you think? Surely he will not come to the festival, will he?'

## QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

*How do you react when you fear losing something?*

*What do you do to preserve your standing?*

## PRAYER

Very rarely do I wake up and think to myself, "I hope I get to compromise my ideals today." And yet, little by little, that is often what I do. I don't recycle the jar because washing out the peanut butter is gross. I refrain from the loving act because I fear tripping over myself in the process. I don't defend the mistreated because I don't want the ire to be directed at me. Of course, O God, I am sometimes my best self, something akin to what you call me to be. But I have to acknowledge that I don't always make that choice. Sometimes I find myself working almost accidentally for the preservation of the way things are quite simply because I fear losing what I have. I'm sorry for that. Amen.

# JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

## TUESDAY, FEB 24, JOHN 12: 1-11

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

## QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

*Where do you find rest in a restless world?*

## PRAYER

The last time Jesus was in this house, the air was stagnant and filled with the stench of death. But now, even amid the animosity and the threats of violence, and all of the conversations filled with tension and mistrust, the air is light. It is fragrant. It is filled with the scent of kindness, of generosity, of well-wishes for someone else. What a sanctuary, what a respite, what a gift of refreshment that Mary makes of this moment for Jesus. Help us, O Lord, to change the air in our lives. We may be short on nard right now, but help us to refresh the very air we breathe so that our rooms of fear may become rooms of hope, our hallways of hatred might turn into hallways of curiosity, and our vestibules of greed might become gathering spaces for compassion. Help us to breathe new air.

## WEDNESDAY, FEB 25, JOHN 12: 12-19

The next day, the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting,

‘Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—  
the King of Israel!’

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

‘Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion.

Look, your king is coming,  
sitting on a donkey’s colt!’

His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him. So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. The Pharisees then said to one another, ‘You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!’

## QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

*What would make you cry out in the street?*

*What would cause you to wave a palm branch in the air?*

## PRAYER

I can see, O God, how the Pharisees would have thought that the whole world had gone mad. I mean, look at these people! Out in the street? Waving palm branches? Shouting out that a new King of Israel has been found? Aren’t they embarrassed? Have they no shame? Don’t they know that Rome will view them as traitors? Don’t they care that the truth they claim will put them at odds with everything around them? Don’t they know the risk? But these are the things to which you often call your saints: to declare a truth that will put them at odds with the world around them with truths like, “Do unto others as you would have done unto you,” “Love your enemies,” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.” These are the things that make us stand out. If called, help us to shout them in the streets. Amen.

## THURSDAY, FEB 26, JOHN 12: 20-26, 35

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Jesus said to them, 'The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.'

## QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

*What "death" would free you to more living?*

## PRAYER

In this season of Lent, we earnestly seek to return to you and to your holy pathways. To do that as fully and as completely as we can, we may need to let ourselves die. We may need to put an end to those things that keep us from reflecting your light in the world fully. Let us die to greed so that we may rise to generosity. Let us die to hesitance so that we may rise to urgency. Let us die to suspicion so that we may rise to trust. Let us die to fear so that we may rise to love. Let us lose, O God, our self-centered lives so that we may keep the lives that bring the light of compassion, justice, and kindness into the world. Amen.

## FRIDAY, FEB 27, JOHN 12: 44-50

Then Jesus cried aloud: 'Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day, the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me.'

## QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

*Whose words do you speak? Yours or someone else's? Whose words would you like to speak?*

## PRAYER

We are thankful, O God, for the signs of Jesus. We rejoice in the words he spoke and the actions he performed, which have pointed us towards you. We thank you for the invitation to 'come and see' the glorious things of God. Through the wedding in Cana, the words with the woman at the well, the turning over of tables, the healing of many, and the instructions offered to his disciples, Jesus has shown not his own love but the love which comes from you. Thank you, O God, for the gifts you have given which have helped us to find your light in a world full of darkness. Amen.

## SATURDAY, FEB 28, ISAIAH 6: 4-10

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!'

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!' And he said, 'Go and say to this people:

"Keep listening, but do not comprehend;  
keep looking, but do not understand."

Make the minds of these people dull,  
and stop their ears,  
and shut their eyes,  
so that they may not look with their eyes,  
and listen with their ears,  
and comprehend with their minds,  
and turn and be healed.'

## QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

*What word of God do you struggle to comprehend?*

## PRAYER

I was born from ash. I am made of dust. I am finite. I am mortal. Help me to accept my limitations but not be defined by them. Though I cannot know you fully, grant that I may never stop trying to understand. Though I cannot see the way you see, grant that I may never stop searching. Though I cannot hear the whole truth of your divine word, grant that I may never stop straining to receive. I am mortal. I am finite. I am a child of the light. Amen.