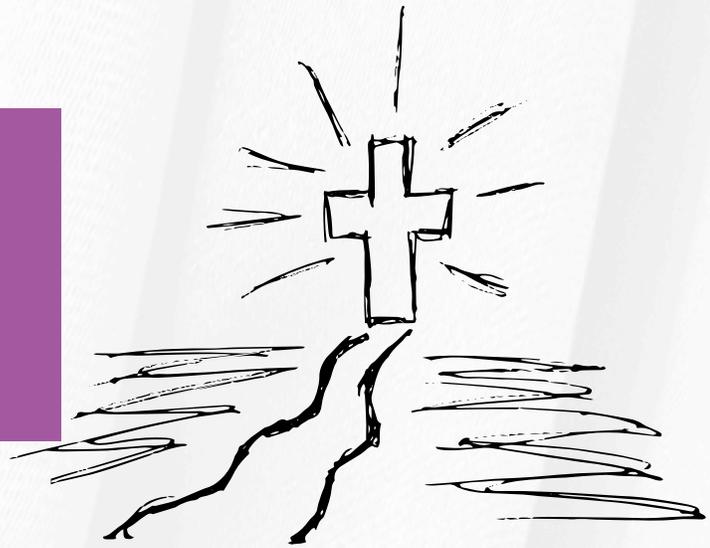


JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
March 1-7



SUNDAY, MAR 1, JOHN 13:3-9

And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What acts of love have you offered? What acts of love have you rejected?

PRAYER

With simple items and things on hand, Jesus demonstrated his humility and love for others. With only a basin, a towel, and some water, he gave his disciples a true understanding of what it means to serve others. With what I have on hand, O God, help me find ways to live in humility and service. With my pots and pans let me feed someone. With sweaters and jeans and shoes from the closet let me clothe someone. With words and voice let me comfort, let me forgive, let me encourage someone who feels lost. With open ears and an open heart help me to receive such loving acts in kind. Amen.

What's so good about lent?

"In lent we hold space for joy and sadness at the same time"

Rose Koeppe

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

MONDAY, MAR 2, JOHN 13: 21-30

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, 'Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.' The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, 'Lord, who is it?' Jesus answered, 'It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.' So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'Do quickly what you are going to do.' Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the festival'; or, that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Which of your actions have made you want to hide in the night?

PRAYER

I confess, O God, that I am sometimes Judas. I betray the principles of your Kingdom in order to prove a point, or get ahead, or force the outcome which I desire. Forgive me, O God. I confess as well, that I am also the reclining disciple. I am often thirsty for gossip. I want to know who messed up so that I can hold it over them, assure myself that I'm better than they are. I confess, O God, that in ways large and small I often cast myself from your presence and run out into the night. Forgive me, O God, and bring me back into your abiding light.

TUESDAY, MAR 3, JOHN 13: 31-38

When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, where are you going?' Jesus answered, 'Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterwards.' Peter said to him, 'Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.' Jesus answered, 'Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What love sustains you? What love do you offer?

PRAYER

Cling to the love. For the disciples, Jesus will soon be gone. The teaching will stop. The room will be silent. *Cling to the love.* The healings, the feeding, the fellowship, the clear and certain knowledge that all can be well, all of it will vanish in a few short hours. *Cling to the love.* In its place? Chaos. Sorrow. That sinking feeling you have when it all falls apart. *Cling to the love.* We cannot always follow. Sometimes we have to live amid the muck. Which is why we cling to the love which sustains, which nourishes, which reminds us that we find our true selves when we love others. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MAR 4, JOHN 14: 1-7

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

How has Jesus shown you the way? What truth has God revealed to you? What life does God call you to live?

PRAYER

Sometimes, O God, we act as though it is harder than it is. “How should I live my life?” We ask as though we don’t already know the answer: “*Live your life the way Jesus lived his.*” “But how do I gain true life?” “*You gain your life by giving it to others.*” During this season, as we seek to return our hearts and our lives to you, remind us that in all of our searching and in all of our questioning we have already found the answers in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

THURSDAY, MAR 5, JOHN 15: 1-7

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What connects you with God? How might you increase that connectivity?

PRAYER

There really isn't much that I can do on my own. I do not grow my own food. I do not make my own clothes. I did not dig my own well nor generate my own electricity. My life and all of my accomplishments (if there are any to be had) rests on the shoulders, hearts, wisdom, and work of others. And even if I only ever sat alone in a room and lived my life and worked my work, it would still all hinge on your loving grace and mercy. It would still depend on the gift of breath you have given me, on the talents and passions you have grown within me. In the same way that my life is entwined with those around me, it is also bound up in you, O God. I offer you my thanks that I am never quite alone or on my own. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

FRIDAY, MAR 6, JOHN 17: 1-5

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What do you know about God? Try finishing this sentence: God is ...

PRAYER

This understanding of eternal life seems so attainable. It feels tangible. Simply to know you, O God is to have eternal life. Right now; in this very moment. To know your precepts is to know what it means to live beyond this world. To listen and respond to your call is the same as living beyond the shackles of earthly limitations. A divine life, one that is distinct and set apart from the world and systems around it, is livable right now, this very day, if we keep ourselves connected to you. Help us O God to grow in our knowledge of you. Help us to know you the same way we know our children, our siblings, and our parents. Help us to see you the same way we see our friends and our partners. Help us to understand you the same way we understand ourselves. Help us to deepen our connection to you so that we may continue to live in eternal ways right here and right now. Amen.

SATURDAY, MAR 7, JOHN 18: 1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus replied, 'I am he.' Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, 'I am he', they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.' This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.' Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What sword may God be asking you to put away?

PRAYER

It is tempting to respond to the world using the tools of the world and not the tools of God. When Peter sees a group of people with torches and weapons, he responds in kind. It is tempting to respond to violence with more violence, to shouting with shouting of our own. When we are betrayed, we want to betray someone in turn. When we are struck, in whatever form, we often desire to do some striking of our own. But when Peter reaches for his sword, O God, he forgets all the things Jesus has been teaching him. His rage, his fear, his confusion overwhelms him and he loses track of all of the ways that Jesus has encouraged him to live differently than the world around him. Help me, O God, to respond differently. Help me to respond to hostility with empathy, to fear with hope, to rage with calm, and to betrayal with love. You've called me to live differently. Help me to do so as best as I am able. Amen.