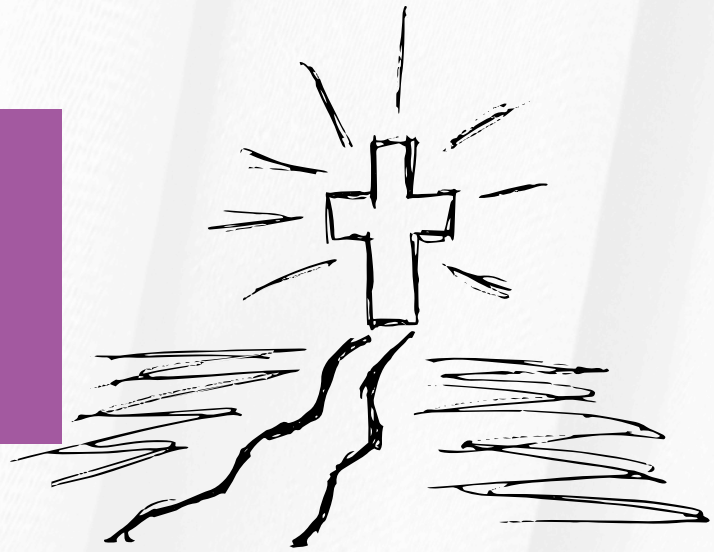


JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
February 18 - 21



WEDNESDAY, FEB 18, JOHN 10:11-18

'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Jesus says he is willing to face the wolves of sin and death to protect his sheep. Who has faced wolves on your behalf? What wolves are you willing to face for others?

PRAYER

With ashes on our brows and across our hearts, we are mindful of where the Lenten path leads. The good shepherd, the one who calls, the one who knows, the one who searches, the one who hopes when all seems lost, will lay down his life to redeem us all. He will face the wolves of fear, animosity, sin, and death to help his sheep. In this season of self-sacrifice, we ask, O God, that we might have the courage of the good shepherd, the willingness to set ourselves to the side to help others. Grant, O God, that we may be able to face down the wolves that show up at our neighbor's door. And should some wolves come our way, we ask that you provide us with some help in facing them as well. Amen.

THURSDAY, FEB 19, LUKE 15: 1-7

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable: 'Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

*Think of a time you felt lost. What or who helped you to find your way?
What joy is found in repentance?*

PRAYER

When I'm the one who needs forgiveness, grant me unending mercy. When I'm the one who judges others, grant me a kind heart. When I'm the one who is lost, help me to find a good and fruitful direction. When I'm the one who needs to be searching, give me a flashlight that never goes out. When I'm the one throwing the party, let me offer a wide invitation. When I'm the one responding to the invitation, let me be a gracious guest. And no matter what, let me always be your child, loved, forgiven, found, and known. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

FRIDAY, FEB 20, JOHN 10:22-30

At that time, the Festival of Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Think through your day. What voices do you hear? How do you choose which voices you follow and which ones you ignore?

PRAYER

Sometimes, O God, it is just easier to pretend that we didn't hear or that we didn't know it was you. It kind of makes our lives simpler if we believe that your truth has been obfuscated, hidden, or only partly revealed to us. "We'd be happy to follow," we say, "if only you would tell us plainly what to do." We willfully ignore the fact that in the scripture, in the life of Jesus, and through the lives of the saints, your voice has already been made known. We have already heard, do unto others as you'd like done to you, love God with your whole being, love your neighbor as yourself. You've spoken plainly, and we know your voice. Help us to live in response to it. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

SATURDAY, FEB 21, JOHN 10: 31-42

The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus replied, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?' The Jews answered, 'It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.' Jesus answered, 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, you are gods"? If those to whom the word of God came were called "gods"—and the scripture cannot be annulled— can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, "I am God's Son"? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.' Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands. He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing earlier, and he remained there. Many came to him, and they were saying, 'John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.' And many believed in him there.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

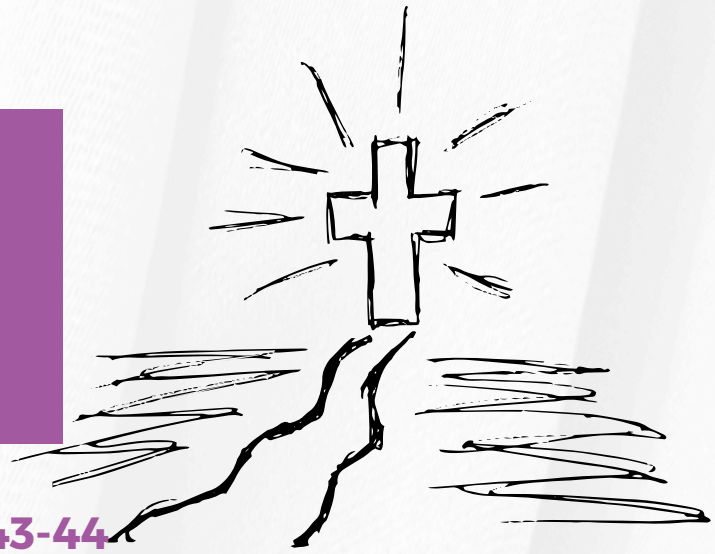
Jesus says that his works are his testimony. His works say everything he needs to say about himself. What do your works say about you? What works would you like to do more of? What works would you like to do less of?

PRAYER

My day is full of things I've done and plenty of things I've left undone (I see you, dishes). No doubt some of them meant something to someone. But how do I know which things were good and whether or not they were the good things? After all, it would be just as easy for someone to notice my moment of impatience as it would be for someone to notice my moment of compassion. Just as noticeable is my tendency toward greed as is my willingness to serve others. I'm a mixed bag, O God. I always will be. I'll try to do more good things, but until I do, magnify my more glorious moments and obscure the other things. Help me to do the things of peace, kindness, and justice while I learn to leave the works of vengeance, mistrust, and separation right where they are, undone and in a pile next to the sink. Amen.

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.

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.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

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

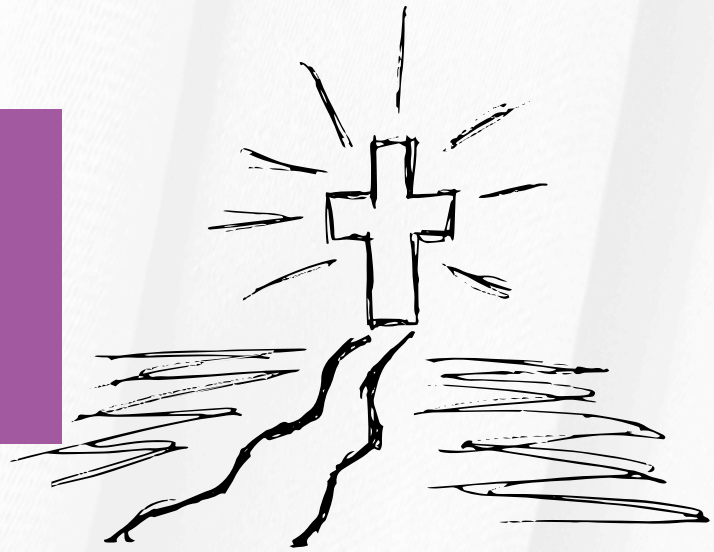
What word of God do you struggle to comprehend?

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.

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

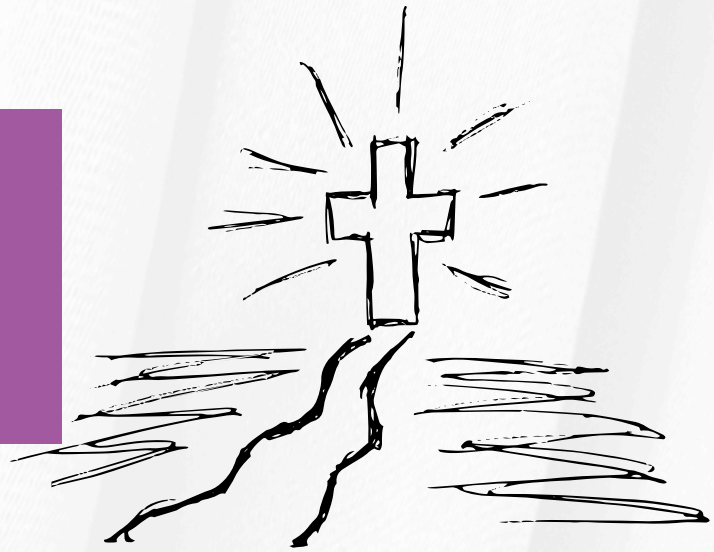
What sword may God be asking you to put away?

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.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
March 1-7



SUNDAY, MARCH 8, JOHN 18:12-18

So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing round it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

When do you follow Jesus? When do you struggle to follow his path?

PRAYER

Peter is an uncertain child on a diving board. He wants badly to take the leap and jump fully into the life of discipleship but he just can't bring himself to make the jump. Didn't he see a nice, safe ladder at the side of the shallow end earlier? Couldn't he just use that? After all, a lot less can go wrong when your feet can always touch the ground. Lord God, we want to follow Jesus but we can always get ourselves past the risk; the risk of looking foolish, the risk of saying the wrong things, the risk of losing friends or offending family. As Jesus makes his way to the cross, help us to set aside the things which keep us from jumping off the diving board and following him into the deep end of the pool. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

MONDAY, MARCH 9, PSALM 27:1-5

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me
to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes—
they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me,
yet I will be confident.

One thing I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:

to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,

to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;

he will conceal me under the cover of
his tent;

he will set me high on a rock.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What fear often covers your heart? What light can God shine upon it?

PRAYER

God of grace and courage. You know me. You know my fears and my worries. But let me name them nonetheless. For myself, I fear and worry about _____. For my family I fear and I worry about _____. For my friends and my communities I fear and worry about _____. For the past, for the future, for the world at large I fear and worry about _____. Comfort me, O God. Assure and remind me that the worst probably won't happen. And even if it does you will not abandon me. You will strengthen me. You will uphold me. Your light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it. Amen.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, ISAIAH 45:14-17

Thus says the Lord:

The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Ethiopia,
and the Sabeans, tall of stature,
shall come over to you and be yours,
they shall follow you;
they shall come over in chains and bow down to you.

They will make supplication to you, saying,
'God is with you alone, and there is no other;
there is no god besides him.'

Truly, you are a God who hides himself,
O God of Israel, the Saviour.

All of them are put to shame and confounded,
the makers of idols go in confusion together.

But Israel is saved by the Lord
with everlasting salvation;
you shall not be put to shame or confounded
to all eternity.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What idol has left you feeling confounded or empty?

PRAYER

I can understand why the makers of idols would be confused. Because, no matter how convinced we are that the things of idolatry will satisfy us, will finally give us lives of meaning, purpose, and substance, they never truly do. Riches provide no guarantee of joy. Status brings with it no promise of love. Team, nation, power, security, family; none of them are you, O God. Pull us back, O God, to where our hearts truly belong. Pull us back to you, our true source of life, the true grounding of our being. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, JOHN 14: 8-12

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Who reflects God to you?

PRAYER

Praise be to you, O God, for you are at hand. You are knowable. You are touchable. You can be heard and seen. Through the life, teachings, and actions of Jesus, we see you. Through the words of the prophets we hear your cry for justice. Through the deeds of kindness, words of peace, and open-hearted welcome of our siblings in faith, we come to know your very heart. You are not some vague mystery. You do not reside in a heaven light years away. You are here now, living and breathing in our churches, our communities, and our world. If we look, we will see you. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, JOHN 14: 13-17

I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What truths has God shown you over the years?

PRAYER

This journey to the cross is often difficult. It is filled with moments of desolation, harsh truth, and confounding doubt. Of course these things are true of our lives as well. We often encounter such moments of darkness and despair and in the midst of such lengthening shadows we find ourselves needing a guide, a host, an advocate to help us find a way through the chaos of the world and our lives. We thank you, O God, for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who keeps us in fellowship with you and one another. In this season of Lent may this advocate help us to discover the light of your grace once more. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, JOHN 14: 18-21

'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What kind of living is Jesus expecting of his followers?

PRAYER

Grant, O God, that we may not waste our living, letting it run out in pursuit of frivolities and trivialities. Strengthen us so that, inspired by Jesus, we may live in ways that are holy, distinct, and demonstrable of the love and kindness of Jesus. As he lived let us live. Encourage us to feed the hungry, welcome the outcast, and care for the vulnerable. Free us to weep with those who weep and to dance with those who dance. As his spirit is shared with us, help us to share it with others. Amen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, JOHN 14: 23-29

Jesus answered him, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

'I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

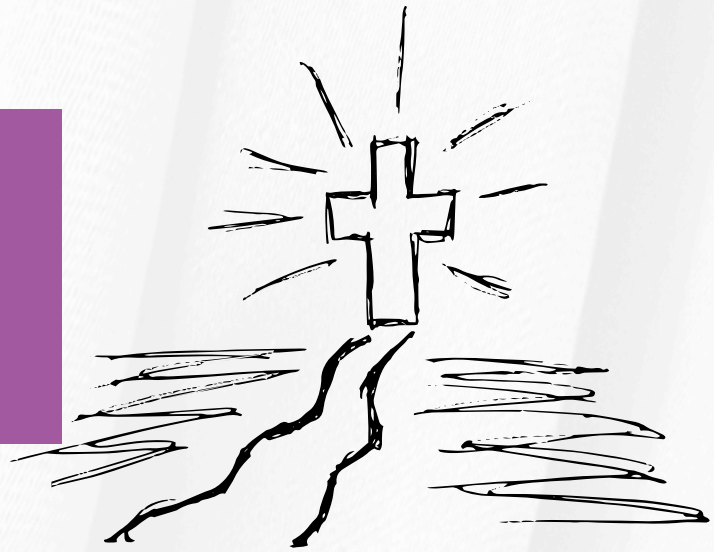
How does God sustain you in moments of challenge?

PRAYER

The Advocate is on the way. The love will be demonstrated in the future. But the peace which Jesus offers is given for the moment at hand. In the midst of an overwhelming world and in the middle of overflowing lives grant us peace; a sense of the divine working in and through and beyond all things. Our hearts will be troubled. Sometimes they need to be. In such moments give us peace. Our lives will be made topsy-turvy. When we find ourselves upside down, give us peace. Peace, O God—an abiding sense of your fundamental presence is the thing which will carry us through our frustration, anger, confusion, and exhaustion. Grant us the peace which will carry us through.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
March 15-21



SUNDAY, MARCH 15, JOHN 18:33-40

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What questions do you want to ask Jesus?

PRAYER

The questions Pilate asks are antagonistic. They are not meant to be fair. They are intended to get some sort of rise out of Jesus. If Jesus were before me, they are not the questions I would ask. But I would still have questions. *What is there beyond this life? Why don't you come and fix it all? Do you really have a plan for all of this?* I'm not sure that my questions are fair either. But I know that they are true, O God. And I know that sometimes they keep me up at night. And I know that Jesus can handle them. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

MONDAY, MARCH 15, JOHN 15:8-11

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Where does your heart abide?

PRAYER

Often, I find that a hymn has already said it better than I ever will. "Abide with me: fast falls the eventide. The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide! When other helpers fail and comforts flee, help of the helpless, O abide with me." Remind us, O God, that abiding is a two-way street. As much as we long for you to abide with us, you long for us to abide with you. No one abides alone. Is that even possible? And as much as we rejoice when you choose to dwell with us, you also rejoice when we choose to dwell within you and your commandments. Help us to choose to stay with you. Amen.

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, JOHN 15:12-17

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

How does it feel to be chosen by Christ?

PRAYER

Equals? With Christ?! Hard to believe that they had earned that. Especially since one was about to betray him, another about to deny him, and the rest were preparing themselves to hide their little lights in a room for a few days. Still, Jesus says they are servants no longer, but friends. Some friends. It is a role they will have to grow into. It is a calling they will have to learn by moving two steps forward and one step back each and every day. This is the way of it for those who desire to be Christ's friend, to be the ones who bear good fruit in the world. None of us is worthy of it. None of us can earn it. Each of us will have to learn to love others with the love we have received by moving two steps forward and one step back each and every day. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, JOHN 15: 18-21

'If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, "Servants are not greater than their master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Where do you find yourself at odds with the forces of the world?

PRAYER

Jesus was always clear: following him puts you at odds with the world around you. Economies don't tend to run on loving one another. Militaries aren't built on forgiveness. You don't gain power by giving it away. And the goal of life is to get ahead. It is not to spend your life in service to others. God, I'm not sure that the world hates us, but it does seem pretty indifferent to us. It ignores our calls for peace among the nations. It disregards our pleading for food for every stomach. It steps right around our insistence that our priority should be to care for the vulnerable among us. In the midst of such passive and active resistance, help us to carry on, to continue to follow Jesus' commands and bear as much good fruit as we can. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, JOHN 15: 22-27

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, “They hated me without a cause.”

‘When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.’

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What work of Jesus stands out in your mind?

PRAYER

We, too, O God, have seen all the things that Jesus has done. He helped a family avoid shame at the wedding in Cana. He sat with an outcast at the well in Samaria. He turned over tables, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and revived the dead. He lowered himself to wash feet and soon will lower himself even more by taking on the cross. And through it all, he has proclaimed that your love knows no bounds, that our lives must be shaped and formed in response to your unending and redeeming love. We, too, have no excuse. We have seen the works and acts of Jesus. Help us to believe. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, JOHN 16: 1-4A

'I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father or me. But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you about them.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Over what are you tripping?

PRAYER

We will not face the same challenges that the disciples faced. Due to our belief in Jesus, we will not be exorcised from our communities. We will not face trial. No one will threaten our lives. But we are no less at risk of stumbling in our attempts to follow Jesus. Only our stumbling will be caused by our refusal to forgive. We'll trip over our tendency towards greed. We'll lose our footing not because we were threatened but because we got distracted by envy or impatience or simple apathy. The disciples faced outside threats to their faith, but the biggest challenge to our own faith is often ourselves. Help us, O God, so that we don't end up putting ourselves out of the synagogue. Amen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, JOHN 16: 4B-7

'I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?" But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What fills you with sorrow? In what is God asking you to trust?

PRAYER

A quick refresher of the things Jesus has just said to them: 1. Wash one another's feet. 2. Love one another as I have loved you. 3. Keep my commandments, and you will abide with God. 4. Keep my commandments, and you will draw the ire and rebuke of the world. 5. There is even a good chance that they will kill you. 6. I'm leaving. Which, 7 is good for you, actually. That is a lot to take in. The season of Lent is a lot. As we study Jesus closely, we become intimately aware of his presence; we hang on every word and action. We rarely feel closer to him, which means that we feel the sorrow of his absence and the tragedy of his death all the more keenly. It is a season of mixed emotions filled with tender acts of love and brutal depictions of betrayal and disappointment. It is, in many ways, a reflection of our own lives, which are also filled with moments of faithfulness and of wandering. In the midst of all of this, O God, help us to cling to you and to your promises of mercy, forgiveness, and love. Help us to embrace the moments of tenderness and let them be enough to carry us through all the times of sorrow. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Holy Week 2026

3/29 Palm Sunday

Contemplative Service: 8:30 a.m. in Chapel
Traditional Service: 10:30 a.m. in Sanctuary
with kids and youth choir and bells at 10:30 a.m. service

4/2 Maundy Thursday

6 p.m. Table Fellowship & Service in Memorial Room

4/3 Good Friday

7 p.m. Service in Sanctuary

Good Friday - Easter morning

Easter Prayer Vigil in Chapel

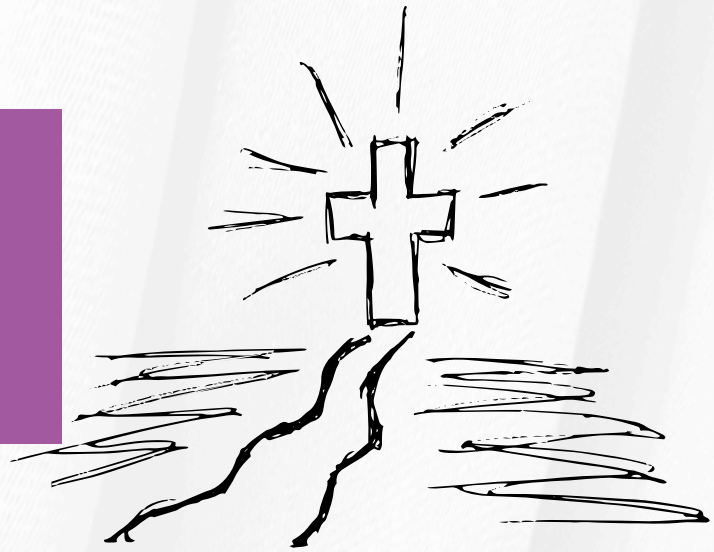
4/5 Easter Sunday

8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Services in Sanctuary
with Cathedral Brass, Chancel Choir, and Chancel Bells at both services



JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
March 22-28



SUNDAY, MARCH 22, JOHN 19:1-16

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law, he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and power to crucify you?' Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.'

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Which of these words would you shudder to hear yourself say?

PRAYER

We have to ask ourselves, O God, 'Who are we in this story?' And we are probably not Jesus. That doesn't leave us a lot of great other options. Are we Pilate, flogging the innocent and abdicating our responsibility to do what is right? Are we the religious leaders, unwilling to hear the truth and shouting out for the death of others? Are we the ones who abandon our principles in the name of safety, security, and comfort? In this season of confession, help us to be honest, O God, about who we are and what we are up to. Amen.

MONDAY, MARCH 23, JOHN 16:8-12

And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What else do you think God would say the world is wrong about?

PRAYER

Jesus is speaking here about the Spirit of Truth, the Advocate whom you sent, O God, following Jesus' ascension. Thank you, O God, for the gifts you give us to discern your ultimate Truths from the partial truths and outright lies we are so often asked to believe. Thank you for the gift of scripture that shows us your principles. Thank you for the faith and actions of those who came before us who have passed your Truth on to us. We thank you for our own reason and intellect, which help us identify the right and the wrong. Keep us, O God, in your wisdom so that we may continue to grow in you. Amen.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, JOHN 16:13-16

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me.'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What things of Jesus are still being declared? What things of Jesus need to be declared?

PRAYER

Through the mystery of faith, O God, we continue to be entwined with Jesus. Through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, the words that Jesus spoke continue to enliven our hearts and bring meaning and purpose to our lives. We rejoice to know that the things of Jesus have not been forgotten and that his message of love and service to others has not been allowed to fall silent. It has been declared from generation to generation. May we, O God, continue the declaration of the things of Jesus. May the words, "Love your God and love your neighbor," never cease to come forth from our lips and our lives. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, JOHN 16: 17-22

Then some of his disciples said to one another, ‘What does he mean by saying to us, “A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me” and “Because I am going to the Father”?’ They said, ‘What does he mean by this “a little while”? We do not know what he is talking about.’ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, ‘Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, “A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me”? Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman is in labor, she has pain because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you have pain now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.’

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What pain has God turned into joy? What defeat has God changed into celebration?

PRAYER

God, you do not promise a life free of heartbreak, disappointment, or tragedy. You promise that such pain will not last. You assure your followers that your joy runs deeper than any pain, that your peace overwhelms our chaos, and that your love is bigger than our bitterness. The disciples, in a few short hours, would know that their friend and teacher had been killed. They would fear that all of their hopes and dreams had died with them. We offer our praise that Jesus returned to them to carry them through. Remind us, as well, that in our darkness there is always your light. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, JOHN 16: 23-28

On that day, you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now, you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask, and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.

'I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father. On that day, you will ask in my name. I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father.'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Slow down, breathe, and think deeply; what does it mean that God loves you?

PRAYER

Ultimately, Jesus returns to his source. He draws himself back to you, O God. We began this season with ashes on our foreheads, having heard the words, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." We, too, will return to our source. Creatures of clay, our bodies will go back to where they came from. Our sinews, our bones, muscles, and organs will all return to the ground. But our breath, O God, our breath comes from you. It is you who animate us. It is you who makes us come alive. Through your breath, you have made us your children. And even though our bodies will return to the ground, our spirits will be drawn back to you, the true source of our being. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, JOHN 16: 29-33

His disciples said, 'Yes, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure of speech! Now we know that you know all things and do not need to have anyone question you; by this, we believe that you came from God.' Jesus answered them, 'Do you now believe? The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you so that in me you may have peace. In the world, you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What sorts of things continue to scatter Jesus' disciples?

PRAYER

I am reminded, somehow, of the end of worship. A blessing is offered. Voices are raised in unison one last time and then... the disciples scatter, each to their home, each back out into the world. When we gather together, we know very well the presence and heart of Christ, and we hope to hold on to that, to live by, until we are drawn back together once more. Of course, O God, we know we are never truly on our own, but we often feel ourselves separated from your presence and from the spirit of Christ. As we continue to move toward the cross, help us to hold on to your presence no matter how we may be scattered. Amen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, JOHN 17: 6-9

'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me, I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What, do you suppose, is Jesus asking on their behalf? What would you like for Jesus to ask on your behalf?

PRAYER

"And they have kept your word." Well, we have tried, at least. We have, O God, done our best (most of the time) to keep your word and to tend to your commandments. We have tried to be honest, to be faithful, to put our trust in you alone. We have tried to honor our neighbors and our strangers. We have striven to live in right relationship with all that is around us. We do, indeed, know that Jesus came from you. We do trust that he spoke and lived and was your Word. We have not done so perfectly, but we will try to keep to the Word you offered us. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Holy Week 2026

3/29 Palm Sunday

Contemplative Service: 8:30 a.m. in Chapel
Traditional Service: 10:30 a.m. in Sanctuary
with kids and youth choir and bells at 10:30 a.m. service

4/2 Maundy Thursday

6 p.m. Table Fellowship & Service in Memorial Room

4/3 Good Friday

7 p.m. Service in Sanctuary

Good Friday - Easter morning

Easter Prayer Vigil in Chapel

4/5 Easter Sunday

8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Services in Sanctuary
with Cathedral Brass, Chancel Choir, and Chancel Bells at both services



JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
March 29-April 4



SUNDAY, MARCH 29, JOHN 12:12-15

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!’

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

If Jesus is a different kind of king, should his subjects be a different kind of subjects?

PRAYER

We know, O God, that Jesus represents a different kind of kingdom, that Jesus asks us to pledge ourselves not to worldly principalities but to divine principles. The one who comes in your name asks us to live not by power but by humility, not by wealth but by service to others, not by vengeance but by forgiveness, and not by fear but by love. That is why his parade looks so different from all the others. As we wave our palm branches to greet this different kind of king, may we rededicate ourselves to the heavenly kingdom and not to any earthly power or principality. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

MONDAY, MARCH 30, JOHN 17:10-13

All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

What unites you with others? What unites you with God?

PRAYER

One of Jesus' many prayers for his disciples is for them to be one. His desire for us, O God, is that we be united together in the same way that the Holy Trinity is united together. He wants us to be one in heart, one in mind, and one in mission and clarity of purpose. We long for this as well, but our human nature gets in the way. We allow ourselves to be divided by pride and petty gossip. We get distracted by hubris, and proving we are right becomes more important than living our purpose. We allow our hearts to be pulled not towards one another, not towards our neighbors and our strangers but rather towards prosperity, influence, and comfort. Even as we pull ourselves apart, O God, we ask that you pull us back together. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, JOHN 17:14-19

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

How does Jesus' truth set you apart from the world around you?

PRAYER

Jesus asks us to live our lives defined by the truth of his life. This truth will sanctify us, which means that it will quite literally set us apart from the world around us. Help us, O God, to live in ways that honor the truth of Jesus' life and teaching. Help us feed the hungry and welcome the outcast. Lead us so we may nurture the vulnerable and bind up the broken. Help us to find our lives by devoting ourselves to others. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, PSALM 22:1-5

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.

Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you, our ancestors trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried, and were saved;
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

For what do you cry out?

PRAYER

We too, O God, cry out. Our sisters cry out from families shattered, split, and divided. Our brothers cry out from a world filled with violence, greed, and graft. Our neighbors cry out from hospital rooms, food lines, and lonely corners. We know, O God, that much is not right in the world. In the midst of such shadows, give us a glimpse of the light and hope of Christ. Remind us that you do save. You do redeem. You do indeed steady the feet of the faithful. We cry out, O God. Hear us and respond. Amen.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, JOHN 19: 23-30

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says,

'They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing, they cast lots.'

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour, the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

How do you keep sight of what is truly important?

PRAYER

They thought his clothes were worth more than his life. His mother was standing close enough to hear him speak, and they cast lots for his tunic. The tunic, I assume, he was wearing when he fed the hungry, chastised the greedy, healed the sick, welcomed the outcast, and washed the feet of his disciples. "A shame," they thought, "to tear such a fine garment. Never mind the man." Grant, O God, that we may never take better care of objects than we do people. May we never ignore our neighbors in the name of preserving our possessions. And may we always deal kindly with the vulnerable among us. Amen.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, JOHN 19: 31-42

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' And again, another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.'

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

Where do you find crosses in the world today?

PRAYER

In the shadow of the cross, O God, help us to face the truths we are often asked to ignore. The truth of the ash: that we are no different than all that surrounds us. The truth of the meal: that we destroy the things we love most. The truth of the garden: that we cannot face it alone. The truth of the courtroom: that we shrink when our witness is needed most. And the truth of the cross: that in polluted waters, with empty bowls, and in the rubble of hatred and violence, the powers of greed, control, and consumption continue to put Jesus to death. Amen.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, PSALM 22:6-11

But I am a worm and not human;
scorned by others and despised by the people.
All who see me mock at me;
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;
'Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!'
Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
you kept me safe on my mother's breast.
On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me, you have been my God.
Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is no one to help.

QUESTIONS FOR DAILY REFLECTION

How do you draw near to God?

PRAYER

The day of silence is here, O God: the solemn hours of quiet interlude when we must ultimately face ourselves. At the end of the season of penitence, we come ultimately to ourselves. And as we look back at the path that has led us to the cross, we must consider which pathways we travel in the world. Do we move down the path of right relationship, or do we travel the route of death? Does our living create joy or sorrow? And for whom and when? These are the questions of Lent. These are the questions we sit with while we wait for Easter Sunday, while we wonder whether we or the world really can be changed. Amen.

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