

# LENT

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FOR MARRIED COUPLES

2022

MARRIAGE IN CHRIST

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Meditations by William C. Wacker.

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## Introduction

Last fall, Adella and I reread a little book, *The Case for the Psalms: Why They Are Essential*, by N.T. Wright. In it he argued that we should not simply see the Psalms as filler between the readings for the day, but as prayers that we can say and sing to celebrate the wonderous work of our God, especially in the extraordinary gift of his Son who suffered, died, and rose from the dead to save us.

With that in mind, we decided to read the whole Psalter in order. We set out to read five psalms each day (we were not always successful). We read them from two very different translations. One was the *Revised Standard Version (RSV)* and the other was a very literal translation done by Robert Alter in his *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*. It was a delightful experience.

We came to see the Psalms in a new way. We saw, as Wright pointed out,<sup>1</sup> that time is not merely cyclic but moves forward, invoking the past and anticipating the future. We noticed, not for the first time, that heaven and earth are designed to meet together, especially in the Temple. Reading the Psalms from the Christian perspective, we came to see that Jesus is uniquely the place, the person, where heaven and earth seamlessly meet together. Finally, we saw how God delights in all of his creation, and in turn, all creation gives praise to the Lord. The material world matters, and that is the foundational truth upon which our belief in the resurrection is built. Our bodies matter, and they will be raised from the dead never to die again, in the resurrection.

The Psalms take on new and wonderful meanings in light of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. The Psalms give us words and songs to celebrate the new thing that God has done in Jesus, our savior. They prepare us in a unique way to celebrate the new creation bursting into the midst of the old on Easter morning.

I decided to let the Psalms speak to us this Lent. I also envision this set of meditations, and a short selection of reflections on resurrection that we will make available after Easter, as the conclusion of the Old Testament portion of our ongoing Bible study for married couples.

## Pattern for the readings

Most of the Scripture readings are from the Catholic Lectionary for Lent. The daily readings in Lent do not change from year to year, but the Sunday readings follow a three-year cycle. We have listed all the readings for Lent of 2022, which is Year C in the lectionary cycle. This year we are reflecting on the responsorial psalm for the day. Psalms 1, 23, 27, 31, 34, 95, 103, and 105 are repeated twice, and Psalm 51 is used four times. On the days when a psalm is used for the second time, we suggest an alternate psalm, to maximize the number of psalms we can pray with this Lent.

While we will normally comment on the verses that are part of the lectionary reading for the day, we recommend that you have your favorite Bible handy and read the whole psalm for the day. It is well worth reading all of the Scriptures for the day, as the psalm often works with the other readings to tell a much fuller story.

How should you read a psalm together? You might take turns with the verses, or have one spouse read the whole psalm one day and the other spouse read the whole psalm on the next

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<sup>1</sup> For a fuller treatment, see Wright, N. T. *The Case for the Psalms* (pp. 163-164).

day. The psalms were originally meant to be sung; that might be a stretch for the average couple—I know it is for Adella and me.

### **A note about numbers and verses in the Psalms**

The numbering for the psalms follows that which is found in the Hebrew Bible, and in almost all modern English versions. Verse numbers can be confusing. Many of the psalms have introductory material that was added later by (ancient) editors. Sometimes that introduction is listed as verse one, and sometimes it is not.

### **A note about Lent**

Lent is a penitential season. It is a time for serious reflection and repentance. From the earliest days, Lent was the preparatory time for Easter. It was during this time that catechumens were instructed in the faith and prepared for Baptism on Holy Saturday. Penitents also prepared for reconciliation. The forty days of Lent invite us to spend forty days in the wilderness, preparing to renew our baptismal vows and to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus. The traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are ways in which we can begin to form new habits. They invite us to free ourselves from undue servitude to our appetites, time pressures, and money.



## Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:12–18; 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14, 17

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;  
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.  
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt  
and of my sin cleanse me.  
For I acknowledge my offense,  
and my sin is before me always:  
“Against you only have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight.”  
A clean heart create for me, O God,  
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.  
Cast me not out from your presence,  
and your Holy Spirit take not from me.  
Give me back the joy of your salvation,  
and a willing spirit sustain in me.  
O Lord, open my lips  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

### Meditation

No one knows for sure when the heading for this psalm “A Psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.” was added. But it came to be associated with King David’s adultery and the murder of her husband (2 Samuel, chapters 11–12). Our sins too come to mind as we begin Lent. We recall our sins not to be led into miserable self-deprecation and despair, but to open ourselves to the tender, compassionate, merciful love of our God. He will indeed forgive. He will wash us whiter than snow. Lent is a time when we beg God to fill us with his Holy Spirit, to rescue us from the power of sin and fill our hearts with his praise.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord’s Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 9:22-25

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 1:1–4, 6

Blessed the man who follows not  
the counsel of the wicked  
Nor walks in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the company of the insolent,  
But delights in the law of the LORD  
and meditates on his law day and night.

He is like a tree  
planted near running water,  
That yields its fruit in due season,  
and whose leaves never fade.  
Whatever he does, prospers.

Not so the wicked, not so;  
they are like chaff which the wind drives away.  
For the LORD watches over the way of the just,  
but the way of the wicked vanishes.

### Meditation

Jesus evokes the opening of this psalm in his Beatitudes: "Happy are those. . . ." or "Blessed are those. . . ." This line could also be translated as "Oh, the happiness of those who don't follow the advice of the wicked. Rather, their delight is in constantly meditating on the law of the LORD." But this meditating is not a quiet, thoughtful, interior meditating. The Hebrew word here describes making a sound. In Isaiah 31:4, this word describes the sound a young lion makes over its prey. We are invited to have the words of the law on our lips all the time, to say them over and over—out loud! When people look at us funny, we can say we are on a call! Seriously, for those of us who are immersed in the word of God, it is like being a tree in an arid land that has had the good fortune of being planted next to a stream of water. Use this Lent to experiment with keeping the word of the LORD on our lips all the time.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Friday after Ash Wednesday

Isaiah 58:1–9a; Matthew 9:14–15

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 2:7–9 NRSV (*Lectionary has Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 18–19*)

<sup>7</sup> I will tell of the decree of the LORD:

He said to me, "You are my son;  
    today I have begotten you.

<sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,  
    and the ends of the earth your possession.

<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron,  
    and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

### Meditation

While this psalm is not part of the Lenten readings, it is worth meditating on it during Lent.

In Jesus' time, to talk about the "son of God" meant to talk about the king. What was hidden by the Holy Spirit until it was revealed in the cross and Resurrection is that the King is really God's Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity. King Jesus will ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. On Good Friday he will mount his throne: a Roman cross. On Easter morning he will defeat our most pernicious enemy: death. He has come to take possession of the ends of the earth, and to smash the enemies of both God and man with an iron rod. Lent is a time when we prepare ourselves with prayer and fasting for the arrival of our King (see today's first and second readings).

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Saturday after Ash Wednesday

Isaiah 58:9b-14; Luke 5:27-32

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 86:1-6

Incline your ear, O LORD; answer me,  
for I am afflicted and poor.

Keep my life, for I am devoted to you;  
save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God.

Have mercy on me, O Lord,  
for to you I call all the day.

Gladden the soul of your servant,  
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,  
abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.

Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer  
and attend to the sound of my pleading.

### Meditation

As with all of our Lenten meditations, it is worth reading the whole psalm. For example, verse 13 talks about being rescued from Sheol, the shadowy abode of the dead. We know that the real rescue from death will happen in the resurrection. But take a moment to reflect on the second half of verse 4: "for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul." This can be translated "for to you, O Master, I lift up my very being." "Soul" here is more than the interior spiritual element of the human person. It is shorthand for everything that is me. "I lift up my soul" is a phrase that is used often in the Psalms; it means to pray, to implore, to long desperately. In Lent, we pray and long desperately for union with God, who is so kind and faithful that he would rescue us from our sin by sending his Son.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## First Sunday of Lent

Deuteronomy 26:4–10; Romans 10:8–13; Luke 4:1–13

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 91:1–2, 10, 11, 12–13, 14–15

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,  
say to the LORD, “My refuge and fortress,  
my God in whom I trust.”

No evil shall befall you,  
nor shall affliction come near your tent,  
*For to his angels he has given command about you,  
that they guard you in all your ways.*

*Upon their hands they shall bear you up,  
lest you dash your foot against a stone.*

You shall tread upon the asp and the viper;  
you shall trample down the lion and the dragon.

Because he clings to me, I will deliver him;  
I will set him on high because he acknowledges my name.  
He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;  
I will be with him in distress;  
I will deliver him and glorify him.

### Meditation

The advantage of reading the whole psalm is clearly demonstrated today. The Devil quotes the italicized lines above when he tempts Jesus to throw himself off the pinnacle of the Temple (Luke 4:9–11). Jesus responds with the words “Do not put the LORD your God to the test,” which is a quote from Deuteronomy 6:16. At this moment, Jesus may have heard echoes of Genesis 3:15: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” Jesus knew that the final battle, where he would strike down the enemies of God, was yet to come. In the meantime, he also knew, with the psalmist, that God protects those who love him, who trust in him, who honor him with their whole life.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord’s Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## First Week of Lent: Monday

Leviticus 19:1–2, 11–18; Matthew 25:31–46

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 15

The law of the LORD is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.

The decree of the LORD is trustworthy,  
giving wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing the heart.

The command of the LORD is clear,  
enlightening the eye.

The fear of the LORD is pure,  
enduring forever;

The ordinances of the LORD are true,  
all of them just.

Let the words of my mouth and the thought of my heart  
find favor before you,

O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

### Meditation

As the psalmist opens this magnificent song, we “hear,” although they have no voice (v. 4), all the parts of creation proclaiming the grandeur of God. God’s glory fills all of creation (v. 2). The sun emerges at dawn like a bridegroom from his chambers, declaring the glory of God each day (v.5). Then the psalmist shifts rather abruptly, to extol the life-sustaining power of the law of God. The law is true, it is just, and it imparts wisdom. It is more desirable than gold and sweeter than honey (v. 11). The halves of the psalm are so different that it almost looks as if the psalmist took two different poems, one about the glory of God in creation and the other about the enduring beauty and wonder of God’s law, and put them side by side in this psalm. It is as if loving and obeying the law is an important way we join creation in praising God. Moreover, it is in that law that Jesus finds the two great commandments, the second of which is related in today’s first reading: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18; see Matthew 22:36). Our Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving invite us to join the psalmist and add our voices to that of creation. “Let the words of my mouth and the thought of my heart find favor before you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.”

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord’s Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.

## First Week of Lent: Tuesday



## Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

## Reading: Psalm 34:4–5, 6–7, 16–17, 18–19

Glorify the LORD with me,

let us together extol his name.

I sought the LORD, and he answered me  
and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,  
and your faces may not blush with shame.

When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,  
and from all his distress he saved him.

The LORD has eyes for the just,  
and ears for their cry.

The LORD confronts the evildoers,  
to destroy remembrance of them from the earth.

When the just cry out, the LORD hears them,  
and from all their distress he rescues them.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;  
and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.

## Meditation

The Psalms have endured for thousands of years because they capture the complicated reality of human existence. We often find ourselves in difficult situations, sometimes alone, sometimes afraid. We grieve at the loss of a friend, a sibling, a parent, a child. The psalmist reminds us that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and he has come to rescue us. Let our Lenten disciplines draw us closer to the Lord and to the poor, to whom the Lord is especially attuned.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## First Week of Lent: Wednesday

Jonah 3:1–10; Luke 11:29–32

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 96:5–13 NAB (Lectionary has Psalm 51:3–4, 12–13, 18–19)

<sup>5</sup> For the gods of the nations all do nothing,  
    but the LORD made the heavens.

<sup>6</sup> Splendor and power go before him;  
    power and grandeur are in his holy place.

<sup>7</sup> Give to the LORD, you families of nations,  
    give to the LORD glory and might;

<sup>8</sup> give to the LORD the glory due his name!  
    Bring gifts and enter his courts;

<sup>9</sup> bow down to the LORD, splendid in holiness.  
    Tremble before God, all the earth;

<sup>10</sup> Say among the nations: The LORD is king.  
    The world will surely stand fast, never to be moved.  
    God rules the peoples with fairness.

<sup>11</sup> Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;  
    let the sea and what fills it resound;  
    <sup>12</sup> let the plains be joyful and all that is in them.

Then let all the trees of the forest rejoice

<sup>13</sup> before the LORD who comes,  
    who comes to govern the earth,

To govern the world with justice  
    and the peoples with faithfulness.

### Meditation

Not only do the “gods of the nations” do nothing, but they also have no real existence. They are, according to the Hebrew, “ungods,” or “idols.” By contrast, our God is the Creator of the good heaven and earth. It will not pass away; rather, it will be transformed in the new creation that will be inaugurated on the day of Jesus’ Resurrection. Then all will acknowledge that God, in the person of Jesus, is King! Today, let us root out all the “ungods” in our lives.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord’s Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

## Reading: Psalm 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart,  
for you have heard the words of my mouth;  
in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;

I will worship at your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name.

Because of your kindness and your truth;  
for you have made great above all things  
your name and your promise.

When I called, you answered me;  
you built up strength within me.

Your right hand saves me.

The LORD will complete what he has done for me;  
your kindness, O LORD, endures forever;  
forsake not the work of your hands.

## Meditation

In the last line of today's psalm, the prayer that the Lord not forsake the work of his hands has the force of "do not let go." We are like the clay pot in the hands of the potter trusting that he will not let go. He will take care, he will hear our prayer. In today's gospel, Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). This psalm is a song of thanksgiving, which is the only appropriate response to God's great faithfulness. Take time to join with the psalmist and give thanks to God. Give thanks for your spouse, your health, your home. Give thanks for his saving action on our behalf.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

## Reading: Psalm 130:1–2, 3–4, 5–7a, 7b,c–8

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;

LORD, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to my voice in supplication.

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,

LORD, who can stand?

But with you is forgiveness,

that you may be revered.

I trust in the LORD;

my soul trusts in his word.

My soul waits for the LORD

more than sentinels wait for the dawn.

Let Israel wait for the LORD.

For with the LORD is kindness

and with him is plenteous redemption;

And he will redeem Israel

from all their iniquities.

## Meditation

Have you ever spent a long night waiting for the sunrise and the dawn of a new and better day? Perhaps the dawn would bring good news, hope that a loved one is safe, that the medicine you are waiting for would arrive. Those last hours of waiting for the dawn are agonizing, filled with an intense longing for the first signs of light on the horizon. Just so ought we to long for the Lord's redeeming word to come to us. Our whole being waits for the Lord to bring light to the dark night of our soul. Out of the depths, perhaps even on death's doorstep, we call out. Lent reminds us that we are sinners who count on the Lord's forgiveness. As we wait and watch, we trust and hope.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## First Week of Lent: Saturday

Deuteronomy 26:16–19; Matthew 5:43–48

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 119:1–2, 4–5, 7–8

Blessed are they whose way is blameless,  
who walk in the law of the LORD.

Blessed are they who observe his decrees,  
who seek him with all their heart.

You have commanded that your precepts  
be diligently kept.

Oh, that I might be firm in the ways  
of keeping your statutes!

I will give you thanks with an upright heart,  
when I have learned your just ordinances. I will keep your statutes;  
do not utterly forsake me.

### Meditation

Once again, we sing about the happiness and blessedness of those who put their roots down deep in the word of God. We live in a world that is prone to fake news and lies. The antidote is to fill our hearts and minds with the law of the Lord. Not only should we study and learn the law of the Lord, but we must keep it, order our life according to it. Our psalm today is the opening of the longest psalm in the whole Psalter. It is worth taking time to read it out loud and let gratitude for the good law wash over us. We might even be moved to sing out in great thanks.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Pray

God, come to our assistance.

--**Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

--**As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

## Reading: Psalm 27:1, 7–8, 8–9, 13–14

The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;  
of whom should I be afraid?

Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call;  
have pity on me, and answer me.

Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks.

Your presence, O LORD, I seek.

Hide not your face from me;  
do not in anger repel your servant.

You are my helper: cast me not off.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD  
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD with courage;  
be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

## Meditation

It is fitting that today's gospel reading is about the Transfiguration. With the disciples we can rejoice that the Lord did not hide his face. We see the face of God in the person of Jesus. We see him in all his glory. Yet we live in a sometimes confusing and difficult age. The present evil age which began with the first sin is still with us, and the age to come, which was inaugurated with the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, has burst into time. This allows us to say with full confidence, "I believe that I shall see the bounty (or 'goodness') of the Lord in the land of the living." While we do see the Lord now, we long for an ever-closer union with him.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.

Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Second Week of Lent: Monday

Daniel 9:4b-10; Luke 6:36-38

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 79:8, 9, 11, 13

Remember not against us the iniquities of the past;

may your compassion quickly come to us,

for we are brought very low.

Help us, O God our savior,

because of the glory of your name;

Deliver us and pardon our sins

for your name's sake.

Let the prisoners' sighing come before you;

with your great power free those doomed to death.

Then we, your people and the sheep of your pasture,

will give thanks to you forever;

through all generations we will declare your praise.

### Meditation

During Lent we come face to face with our sin and weakness. But that is not the end of the story. We are preparing to remember and celebrate the great redeeming act of our God, in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. It is true, we were trapped, prisoners in our sinfulness—yet Jesus has rescued us from the power of sin and death. He does so because he it is his very nature to love, to rescue. His great love is on display when we live in freedom and give him thanks.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.

Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Second Week of Lent: Tuesday

Isaiah 1:10, 16–20; Matthew 23:1–12

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 50:8–9, 16b,c–17, 21, 23

“Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you,  
for your burnt offerings are before me always.

I take from your house no bullock,  
no goats out of your fold.”

“Why do you recite my statutes,  
and profess my covenant with your mouth,  
Though you hate discipline  
and cast my words behind you?”

“When you do these things, shall I be deaf to it?  
Or do you think that I am like yourself?  
I will correct you by drawing them up before your eyes.  
He that offers praise as a sacrifice glorifies me;

and to him that goes the right way I will show the salvation of God.”

### Meditation

Israel’s pagan neighbors believed that the gods actually needed the nourishment that was provided by the animals and grain that were sacrificed to them. Our God is not like that at all. He has no need for us to bring him animals or grain; they all belong to him. The sacrifices of animals and food are for our benefit. They are our acts of thanksgiving and praise. God does not need our sacrifice; we need them. We need to express our gratitude. We need to align our hearts and actions with right worship. We cannot offer sacrifice on one hand and then give free rein to our tongue to slander, lie, or malign our neighbor. God will not overlook that kind of hypocrisy. Lent is a good time to align our lives with the truth.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.

Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord’s Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Second Week of Lent: Wednesday

Jeremiah 18:18–20; Matthew 20:17–28

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 31:5–6, 14, 15–16

You will free me from the snare they set for me,  
for you are my refuge.

Into your hands I commend my spirit;  
you will redeem me, O LORD, O faithful God.

I hear the whispers of the crowd, that frighten me from every side,  
as they consult together against me, plotting to take my life.

But my trust is in you, O LORD;  
I say, “You are my God.”

In your hands is my destiny; rescue me  
from the clutches of my enemies and my persecutors.

### Meditation

This psalm was on Jesus' lips when he died. “Into your hands I commend my spirit” is a fitting prayer for all of us every day. We find ourselves always in danger from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our trust is in the Lord. The “whispers of the crowd” could very easily be the conflicting, disconcerting voices we hear on social media.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Second Week of Lent: Thursday

Jeremiah 17:5–10; Luke 16:19–31

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 8:2–10 NAB (Lectionary has Psalm 1:1–4, 6)

<sup>2</sup> O LORD, our Lord,

    how awesome is your name through all the earth!

    You have set your majesty above the heavens!

<sup>3</sup> Out of the mouths of babes and infants

    you have drawn a defense against your foes,  
    to silence enemy and avenger.

<sup>4</sup> When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers,

    the moon and stars that you set in place—

<sup>5</sup> What are humans that you are mindful of them,

    mere mortals that you care for them?

<sup>6</sup> Yet you have made them little less than a god,

    crowned them with glory and honor.

<sup>7</sup> You have given them rule over the works of your hands,

    put all things at their feet:

<sup>8</sup> All sheep and oxen,

    even the beasts of the field,

<sup>9</sup> The birds of the air, the fish of the sea,

    and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

<sup>10</sup> O LORD, our Lord,

    how awesome is your name through all the earth!

### Meditation

Get away from the light pollution of a city on a clear night. Look at the Milky Way through a pair of binoculars. It is breathtaking. Allow yourself to be overwhelmed by the vast number of stars. It is awe inspiring. Then let yourself feel small and insignificant. Finally, pray this psalm. “What are human beings, that you are mindful of them?” “What are we, so insignificant in the grand scheme of things and the vastness of the universe, that you would send your son Jesus to die for us?” Now keep in mind that God has deigned to make our marriages signs of his majestic glory and the mystery of the Trinity itself. O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name, and mysterious your ways.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.

Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Second Week of Lent: Friday

Genesis 37:3–4, 12–13a, 17b–28a; Matthew 21:33–43, 45–46

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 105:16–17, 18–19, 20–21

When the LORD called down a famine on the land  
and ruined the crop that sustained them,  
He sent a man before them,  
Joseph, sold as a slave.  
They had weighed him down with fetters,  
and he was bound with chains,  
Till his prediction came to pass  
and the word of the LORD proved him true.  
The king sent and released him,  
the ruler of the peoples set him free.  
He made him lord of his house  
and ruler of all his possessions.

### Meditation

This is the story of Joseph's going into Egypt—sold by his brothers into slavery. But God in his mysterious way used that hideous betrayal of love to rescue his people when a terrible famine descended on their land. It was all part of the great story of God's rescue of Israel, so that one day the King of Israel could rescue all humankind. It must have been nearly impossible for Joseph to see how things would turn out in the bitter early days of slavery. Sometimes it is like that for us too. Sometimes we lose the things we most desperately want and need: jobs, friends, health, possessions. At those times we can sing this psalm in the hope that we too will see how the mysterious work of God unfolds.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Second Week of Lent: Saturday

Micah 7:14–15, 18–20; Luke 15:1–3, 11–32

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 89:2–3, 4–5, 27, 29

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever;  
through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness,  
For you have said, “My kindness is established forever”;  
in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

“I have made a covenant with my chosen one,

I have sworn to David my servant:

Forever will I confirm your posterity  
and establish your throne for all generations.”

“He shall say of me, ‘You are my father

my God, the Rock, my savior.’

Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him,

and my covenant with him stands firm.”

### Meditation

The first half of this psalm, verses 1–38, contains the marvelous promises that there will be a descendant of David on the throne. The psalm takes a dark turn at verse 39, and it appears that the promise has been compromised. The king has been rejected and scorned; the throne is unoccupied. Over the generations, Israel continued to sing both halves of the psalm, knowing that one day God would make good on his promise. Then in the most unexpected way, the true King, from the line of David, rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. He ascended the most unlikely of thrones on Good Friday. On Easter morning he proved that the covenant that God made so long ago had been fulfilled. His covenant does indeed stand firm, forever!

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Third Week of Lent: Sunday

Exodus 3:1–8, 13–15; 1 Cor 10:1–6, 10–12; Luke 13:1–9

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 103: 1–2, 3–4, 6–7, 8, 11

Bless the LORD, O my soul;  
and all my being, bless his holy name.  
Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits.  
He pardons all your iniquities,  
heals all your ills,  
He redeems your life from destruction,  
crowns you with kindness and compassion.  
The LORD secures justice  
and the rights of all the oppressed.  
He has made known his ways to Moses,  
and his deeds to the children of Israel.  
Merciful and gracious is the LORD,  
slow to anger and abounding in kindness.  
For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him.

### Meditation

We are weak and frail. We are sinners, all of us. Social media is full of examples of the worst of our instincts. But the Lord is not like us. He is merciful and gracious. Sometimes we are quick to be angry, especially when we have been slighted, but he is slow to anger and rich in kindness. We can be unjust, but all that he does is just. What is our response to such great love and kindness? To praise him with everything that makes us a person. The Hebrew words that are translated as “my soul” and “my being” are literally “my whole being” and “everything that is within me.” Let us join with the psalmist and offer a sacrifice of praise with everything that makes us who we are, our whole being.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Third Week of Lent: Monday

2 Kings 5:1–15a; Luke 4:24–30

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4

As the hind longs for the running waters,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.  
Athirst is my soul for God, the living God.  
When shall I go and behold the face of God?  
Send forth your light and your fidelity;  
they shall lead me on  
And bring me to your holy mountain,  
to your dwelling-place.  
Then will I go in to the altar of God,  
the God of my gladness and joy;  
Then will I give you thanks upon the harp,  
O God, my God!

### Meditation

Have you ever worked really hard in the hot sun? Were you drenched with sweat? Were you really thirsty? Do you remember how good a cool glass of water tasted in that moment? Was there ever a time when you couldn't get that glass of water right away? Do you remember how badly you wanted to quench your thirst? The Psalms often speak of the great longing we have for God as if it were a longing for that drink of water on a hot, dusty day. What is the drink of water that quenches the thirst for God? For the psalmist, it was going to the temple where he could see the face of God and give praise and thanksgiving at his holy altar. Praise be to God that we only have to turn to Jesus to see the actual face of God. He is the sum and source of all our hopes. He is the one who is that cool glass of water for our soul.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Third Week of Lent: Tuesday

Daniel 3:25, 34–43; Matthew 18:21–35

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Psalm 25:4–5a,b, 6, 7b,c, 8–9

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;

teach me your paths,

Guide me in your truth and teach me,

for you are God my savior.

Remember that your compassion, O LORD,

and your kindness are from of old.

In your kindness remember me,

because of your goodness, O LORD.

Good and upright is the LORD;

thus he shows sinners the way.

He guides the humble to justice,

he teaches the humble his way.

### Meditation

It is always worthwhile to read the whole psalm. The first verses of this psalm set the request of the psalmist for divine guidance in a context. He prays, “I wait for you, O LORD; I lift up my soul<sup>2</sup> to my God. In you I trust; do not let me be disgraced; do not let my enemies gloat over me.<sup>3</sup> No one is disgraced who waits for you, but only those who lightly break faith.” Faith requires that we remember that the world judges by vastly different standards than does the Lord. We know, in faith, that God will win in the end, that he will bring about justice and rescue us—but there are days when, faith is hard, and all the external signs are pointing in the wrong direction. Faith requires that even in those circumstances, when the wicked seem to be winning and are gloating over us, that we hang on to our confidence in the Lord who is our Savior. We must be like Jesus, who trusted his Father to the end, even on the cross.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Third Week of Lent: Wednesday

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Matthew 5:17–19

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20

Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem;  
praise your God, O Zion.

For he has strengthened the bars of your gates;  
he has blessed your children within you.

He sends forth his command to the earth;  
swiftly runs his word!

He spreads snow like wool;  
frost he strews like ashes.

He has proclaimed his word to Jacob,  
his statutes and his ordinances to Israel.

He has not done thus for any other nation;  
his ordinances he has not made known to them.

### Meditation

Most scholars believe that this psalm was composed in the fifth century B.C., after Jerusalem had been rebuilt following their return from the Babylonian Exile in 537 B.C. Their gates had been strengthened and their numbers were growing. But their rescue had nothing to do with their own efforts. It was because God had acted. He had given them his word, his good law. No other nation had been favored in that way. Now think about how God has again acted to rescue all of us from the exile of sin and death. He has sent his word, his Son, to redeem us. Now his unmerited favor is made manifest not only to Israel, but to all who would but receive his great love.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Third Week of Lent: Thursday

Jeremiah 7:23–28; Luke 11:14B–23

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;  
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.  
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;  
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.  
Come, let us bow down in worship;  
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.  
For he is our God,  
and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.  
Oh, that today you would hear his voice:  
“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah  
as in the day of Massah in the desert,  
Where your fathers tempted me;  
they tested me though they had seen my works.”

### Meditation

The Church encourages us to pray this psalm daily. Two reasons for making this psalm part of our daily routine come to mind. First it reminds us to be grateful and full of praise for God's creative power and his saving deeds. Second, the ominous note sounded in verses 7 and 8, “Oh, that today you would hear his voice and harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah.” reminds us that the rebellion in the desert which is recounted in Exodus 17 and again in Numbers 20 is never far from our own hearts. The warning in today's first reading from Jeremiah 7 will be echoed and amplified by Jesus in the last week before his Passion (see Luke 19:46). Today and every day, let us sing this psalm to keep ourselves centered on the Lord who is our savior.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Third Week of Lent: Friday

Annunciation; Isaiah 7:10–14; 8:10, Hebrews 10:4–10, Luke 1:26–38

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Psalm 40:7–8a, 8b–9, 10, 11

Sacrifice or oblation you wished not,  
but ears open to obedience you gave me.

Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;  
then said I, “Behold I come.”

“In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,  
To do your will, O my God, is my delight,  
and your law is within my heart!”

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;  
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.

Your justice I kept not hid within my heart;  
your faithfulness and your salvation I have spoken of;  
I have made no secret of your kindness and your truth  
in the vast assembly.

### Meditation

One of the most consistent themes in the prophets is that our external pious practices must reflect an interior disposition of obedience and humility. Now, in the middle of Lent, we reflect on the Annunciation. Mary must have prayed this psalm regularly. The words “To do your will, O my God, is my delight,” came out in her response to the Angel Gabriel, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” Our worship must involve an obedient heart. See the example of Mary.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.  
Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Third Week of Lent: Saturday

Hosea 6:1-6; Luke 18:9-14

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 128:1-6 NRSV (*Lectionary has Psalm 51:3-4, 18-21*)

Happy is everyone who fears the LORD,  
    who walks in his ways.

<sup>2</sup> You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;  
    you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.

<sup>3</sup> Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;  
    your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

<sup>4</sup> Thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD bless you from Zion.

    May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

<sup>6</sup> May you see your children's children.  
    Peace be upon Israel!

### Meditation

The opening of this psalm echoes the opening of Psalm 1. It celebrates the great blessing of walking in the way of the Lord. In this case it celebrates one of the great blessings of marriage, that of being co-creators with God. It expresses the joy of being in tune with creation, in tune with God's plan and purpose for men and women, males and females (see Genesis 1:27). The couple that begets life is a living icon of God the creator. At the heart of this psalm are a father and mother whose love for each other begets children. Having a family is a risk of love that requires faith. It requires great generosity on the part of parents. So we pray with the psalmist, "May the LORD bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you see your children's children.

Peace be upon Israel!"

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.

Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fourth Week of Lent: Sunday

Joshua 5:9, 10–12; 2 Cor 5:17–21; Luke 15:1–3, 11–32

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Ps 34:2–3, 4–5, 6–7

I will bless the LORD at all times;  
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.

Let my soul glory in the LORD;  
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

Glorify the LORD with me,  
let us together extol his name.

I sought the LORD, and he answered me  
and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,  
and your faces may not blush with shame.

When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,  
and from all his distress he saved him.

### Meditation

I can imagine that the prodigal son sang this psalm in the quiet of the days following the overwhelming and unexpected welcome he received from his father. He sought out his father and was delivered from his greatest fears. I'm sure he sang with great joy, "I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears." We have been delivered by our Lord in the same way. Let our gratitude be expressed in action this Lent. Remember that we are the hands and feet of Christ who hears the cry of the poor, just as he heard our cry for salvation.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fourth Week of Lent: Monday

Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12a, 13b

I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew me clear  
and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.

O LORD, you brought me up from the nether world;  
you preserved me from among those going down into the pit.  
Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones,  
and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger lasts but a moment;  
a lifetime, his good will.

At nightfall, weeping enters in,  
but with the dawn, rejoicing.

"Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me;  
O LORD, be my helper."

You changed my mourning into dancing;  
O LORD, my God, forever will I give you thanks.

### Meditation

Today's readings promise a new creation in Isaiah and tell of a child brought back from the brink of death. The psalmist is proclaiming that God has brought him back from the pit, from death. The great enemy of humanity is death. We are preparing for the most dramatic moment in human history, the moment when God himself will defeat our greatest enemy and rescue us from death. The psalmist could only hope for a longer life; he could only hope and believe that God would somehow change our mourning into dancing. In Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection, that which could only be hoped for burst into human history. Our greatest enemy, death, was defeated when Jesus rose from the dead never to die again. We know that the dawn is upon us. Let us rejoice.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fourth Week of Lent: Tuesday

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; John 5:1-3a, 5-16

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9

God is our refuge and our strength,  
an ever-present help in distress.

Therefore we fear not, though the earth be shaken  
and mountains plunge into the depths of the sea.

There is a stream whose runlets gladden the city of God,  
the holy dwelling of the Most High.

God is in its midst; it shall not be disturbed;  
God will help it at the break of dawn.

The LORD of hosts is with us;  
our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

Come! behold the deeds of the LORD,  
the astounding things he has wrought on earth.

### Meditation

The psalmist sang, "There is a stream whose runlets gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High." As Jesus hung dead on the cross, a Roman lance pierced his side. Water flowed from that wound, like the water that flowed from the Temple in Ezekiel 47. It is the living water that flows from the throne of God in Revelation 22:1. It is the water that flowed over us at Baptism. It is the very life of God that is poured into us. The psalmist sang, "God is in its midst; the Lord of hosts is with us." When Jesus healed the man who had been lame for 38 years (John 5: 5), he was making the last lines of today's psalm visible: "Come! Behold the deeds of the Lord, the astounding things he has wrought on earth."

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fourth Week of Lent: Wednesday

Isaiah 49:8–15; John 5:17–30

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 145:8–9, 13c,d, 14, 17–18

The LORD is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and of great kindness.

The LORD is good to all  
and compassionate toward all his works.

The LORD is faithful in all his words  
and holy in all his works.

The LORD lifts up all who are falling  
and raises up all who are bowed down.

The LORD is just in all his ways  
and holy in all his works.

The LORD is near to all who call upon him,  
to all who call upon him in truth.

### Meditation

In this penitential season, where we become aware of our shortcomings and sins, it is very important to sing this whole psalm. Our God, the Lord of all, is gracious, slow to anger, merciful, kind, good, compassionate, faithful, holy, just, and near to us when we call. He watches over all living creatures. What is the response to such a God as ours? We are to join in the great chorus of all creation. The Lord provides food for every living thing and watches over them with love. It is his love that keeps all things in existence. If he were to forget us, we would cease to exist. Let our hearts overflow with gratitude and sing, “I will extol you, my God and king; I will bless your name forever.<sup>2</sup> Every day I will bless you; I will praise your name forever.<sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD and worthy of high praise; God's grandeur is beyond understanding.<sup>4</sup> One generation praises your deeds to the next and proclaims your mighty works.<sup>5</sup> They speak of the splendor of your majestic glory, tell of your wonderful deeds” (Psalm 145:1–5).

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fourth Week of Lent: Thursday

Exodus 32:7-14; John 5:31-47

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 106:19-20, 21-22, 23

Our fathers made a calf in Horeb  
and adored a molten image;  
They exchanged their glory  
for the image of a grass-eating bullock.  
They forgot the God who had saved them,  
who had done great deeds in Egypt,  
Wondrous deeds in the land of Ham,  
terrible things at the Red Sea.  
Then he spoke of exterminating them,  
but Moses, his chosen one,  
Withstood him in the breach  
to turn back his destructive wrath.

### Meditation

If we immerse ourselves in the prayers and worldview of the psalmists, we see how real they are. The sacred authors never pulled any punches or sugar-coated the dark side of the salvation story. The story of the rebellion can be and often is our story. How often do we forget how the Lord has rescued us? How often have we failed to tell ourselves, our children, and each other the wondrous ways of the Lord? What is remarkable is that the Lord raised up for us a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15) to stand in the breach and rescue us from the effects of sin and death. In Lent we strip away any lingering illusion of self-righteousness. We repent and we rejoice in the great mercy and love that we sang about yesterday.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fourth Week of Lent: Friday

Wisdom 2:1a, 12–22; John 7:1–2, 10, 25–30

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 34:17–18, 19–20, 21, 23

The LORD confronts the evildoers,  
to destroy remembrance of them from the earth.  
When the just cry out, the LORD hears them,  
and from all their distress he rescues them.  
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;  
and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.  
Many are the troubles of the just man,  
but out of them all the LORD delivers him.  
He watches over all his bones  
not one of them shall be broken.  
The LORD redeems the lives of his servants;  
no one incurs guilt who takes refuge in him.

### Meditation

It often took days to die on the cross, and the Jewish officials did not want the condemned men to hang on their crosses on this very holy Sabbath. To hasten death the soldiers would break the legs of the condemned, and they would die quickly. But when they came to Jesus, the soldiers saw that he was already dead, so they did not break his legs. John tells us that this was to fulfill this passage: “He watches over all his bones, not one of them shall be broken.” (See John 19:36.) This is much more than a random proof text. It is intended to call the whole psalm to mind. And as difficult as it must have been to sing this psalm on the day of the crucifixion, and to believe that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted, Easter morning proved that the Lord redeemed the life of his Servant. Indeed, now “no one incurs guilt who takes refuge in him.”

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord’s Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fourth Week of Lent: Saturday

Jeremiah 11:18–20; John 7:40–53

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Psalm 7:2–3, 9b,c, 10, 11–12

O LORD, my God, in you I take refuge;  
save me from all my pursuers and rescue me,  
Lest I become like the lion's prey,  
to be torn to pieces, with no one to rescue me.  
Do me justice, O LORD, because I am just,  
and because of the innocence that is mine.  
Let the malice of the wicked come to an end,  
but sustain the just,  
O searcher of heart and soul, O just God.  
A shield before me is God,  
who saves the upright of heart;  
A just judge is God,  
a God who punishes day by day.

### Meditation

The speaker has taken refuge in God's sanctuary and begs the Lord to rescue him from his enemies who have falsely accused him of wrongdoing. In verses 4–6 (not in our text), he takes an oath to prove his innocence. He says, "if I am at fault in this, if there is guilt on my hands,<sup>5</sup> If I have repaid my friend with evil—I spared even those who hated me without cause—<sup>6</sup> Then let my enemy pursue and overtake me, trample my life to the ground, and leave me dishonored in the dust." So often all we have is our belief that God will hear our cry and bring about justice. With confidence we can also sing with the psalmist the last verse of the psalm (v. 18): "I praise the justice of the LORD; I celebrate the name of the LORD Most High."

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fifth Week of Lent: Sunday

Isaiah 43:16–21; Phil 3:8–14; John 8:1–11

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 126:1–2, 2–3, 4–5, 6

When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,  
we were like men dreaming.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with rejoicing.

Then they said among the nations,  
“The LORD has done great things for them.”

The LORD has done great things for us;  
we are glad indeed.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,  
like the torrents in the southern desert.

Those that sow in tears  
shall reap rejoicing.

Although they go forth weeping,  
carrying the seed to be sown,

They shall come back rejoicing,  
carrying their sheaves.

### Meditation

It is worth praying and singing out loud today's psalm after listening to all of today's readings. Isaiah recounts the Exodus and points to a new, even more miraculous Exodus to come; St. Paul sings of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord; and the gospel recounts the marvelous and merciful encounter of Jesus with the woman caught in adultery. This psalm originally celebrated the restoration of Jerusalem after the terrible disaster of exile. But it captures the experience of all of us who have known the tender, merciful forgiveness of our God in the person of Jesus. Sing this psalm, meditate on it, let its truth seep into our bones.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fifth Week of Lent: Monday

Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; John 8:12-20

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 23:1-6

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

    In verdant pastures he gives me repose;

Beside restful waters he leads me;

    he refreshes my soul.

He guides me in right paths

    for his name's sake.

Even though I walk in the dark valley

    I fear no evil; for you are at my side

With your rod and your staff

    that give me courage.

You spread the table before me

    in the sight of my foes;

You anoint my head with oil;

    my cup overflows.

Only goodness and kindness follow me

    all the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

    for years to come.

### Meditation

One of the small pleasures of reading the psalms one after another is to see how the sorrow and pain of Psalm 22, which will be sung on Palm Sunday, is followed by the soothing verses of Psalm 23, which is followed by the shouts of praise to the King of glory in Psalm 24. It is not purely academic to notice that. Rather, it is to believe that the whole range of human experience, including fear, sorrow, and joy, is part of the concern and care of our great shepherd. The Lord, Yahweh, the great "I AM," is the shepherd who treats us with such care. Jesus, in a most remarkable speech mere months before his Passion and Death, said, "I AM the good shepherd." (See John 10:11.) The context of this famous psalm is not just the Psalter. No, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm resonates through the whole of the Bible and culminates in the great gift of God, Jesus who is our Lord.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fifth Week of Lent: Tuesday

Numbers 21:4–9; John 8:21–30

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Psalm 102:2–3, 16–18, 19–21

O LORD, hear my prayer,  
and let my cry come to you.  
Hide not your face from me  
in the day of my distress.  
Incline your ear to me;  
in the day when I call, answer me speedily.  
The nations shall revere your name, O LORD,  
and all the kings of the earth your glory,  
When the LORD has rebuilt Zion  
and appeared in his glory;  
When he has regarded the prayer of the destitute,  
and not despised their prayer.  
Let this be written for the generation to come,  
and let his future creatures praise the LORD:  
“The LORD looked down from his holy height,  
from heaven he beheld the earth,  
To hear the groaning of the prisoners,  
to release those doomed to die.”

### Meditation

It is worth reading the whole psalm today. In his great suffering the psalmist is keenly aware of the shortness of life: “For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn away as in a furnace” (v. 4). And “My days are like a lengthening shadow; I wither like the grass” (v. 12). His lament is both personal and for the nation. He has hope for its eventual rebuilding. His statement that the Lord looked down from the holy heights and heard the groaning of those doomed to die is particularly poignant. We, all of us, were doomed to die until the Lord, in the person of Jesus, took our sins upon himself and rescued us from death.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord’s Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fifth Week of Lent: Wednesday

Daniel 3:14–20, 91–92, 95; John 8:31–42

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56

“Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers,  
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever;  
And blessed is your holy and glorious name,  
praiseworthy and exalted above all for all ages.”

“Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory,  
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.”

“Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom,  
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.”

“Blessed are you who look into the depths  
from your throne upon the cherubim;  
praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.”

“Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven,  
praiseworthy and glorious forever.”

### Meditation

The young men refused to worship the golden statue set up by King Nebuchadnezzar and chose rather to be thrown into flames that rose nearly 75 feet above the furnace. It was so hot that it burnt the Chaldeans standing nearby. But the young men were not harmed. An angel of the Lord went down into the furnace with Azariah and his companions and drove the fiery flames out of the furnace. The inside of the furnace felt as if a dew-laden breeze were blowing through it. (See Daniel 3:46–50). This was the song they sang in the midst of the blazing fire. We are closer now to the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord. While our struggles don’t often resemble being thrown into a fiery furnace, they are real and call for us to trust in the Lord. Let us echo the song of the young men and praise our God, who is about to undergo the most horrific sacrifice for our sake. “Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.”

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord’s Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fifth Week of Lent: Thursday

Genesis 17:3–9; John 8:51–59

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 105:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Look to the LORD in his strength;  
seek to serve him constantly.

Recall the wondrous deeds that he has wrought,  
his portents, and the judgments he has uttered.

You descendants of Abraham, his servants,  
sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!

He, the LORD, is our God;  
throughout the earth his judgments prevail.

He remembers forever his covenant  
which he made binding for a thousand generations—

Which he entered into with Abraham  
and by his oath to Isaac.

### Meditation

This psalm is a celebration of God's choice of Abraham and his family. The psalmist challenges all of us, who are all descendants of Abraham, to recall the wonderful deeds the Lord has wrought in our lives. We are to make this recounting a celebration of our own story, for we too were chosen. "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you" (John 15:16). God is faithful to his covenant. He was faithful to Abraham; he is faithful to us.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fifth Week of Lent: Friday

Jeremiah 20:10–13; John 10:31–42

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 18:2–3a, 3b,c, 4, 5–6, 7

I love you, O LORD, my strength,  
O LORD, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.  
My God, my rock of refuge,  
my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!  
Praised be the LORD, I exclaim,  
and I am safe from my enemies.  
The breakers of death surged round about me,  
the destroying floods overwhelmed me;  
The cords of the nether world enmeshed me,  
the snares of death overtook me.  
In my distress I called upon the LORD  
and cried out to my God;  
From his temple he heard my voice,  
and my cry to him reached his ears.

### Meditation

There are no direct references to resurrection in the psalms. However, a couple of days ago, we sang with Psalm 102 that the Lord hears the sound of our cry. In Jesus we know that the cords of the nether world or the snares of death will not ultimately hold us, because Jesus has destroyed death, our great enemy. With the psalmist, we can sing with our whole hearts, “Praised be the LORD, I am safe from my enemy!”

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Fifth Week of Lent: Saturday

Ezekiel 37:21–28; John 11:45–56

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Jeremiah 31:10, 11, 12a,b,c,d, 13

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
proclaim it on distant isles, and say:  
He who scattered Israel, now gathers them together,  
he guards them as a shepherd his flock.  
The LORD shall ransom Jacob,  
he shall redeem him from the hand of his conqueror.  
Shouting, they shall mount the heights of Zion,  
they shall come streaming to the LORD's blessings:  
The grain, the wine, and the oil,  
the sheep and the oxen.  
Then the virgins shall make merry and dance,  
and young men and old as well.  
I will turn their mourning into joy,  
I will console and gladden them after their sorrows.

### Meditation

As we come closer to the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, we embrace the ancient hope of Israel that is so marvelously proclaimed by the prophet Jeremiah in today's psalm. The day of the Lord is approaching. The day when God turns our mourning into joy is at hand. Even now, in the puzzling overlap of ages that we talked about on the second Sunday of Lent, we are still surrounded by suffering, death, and sorrow. Yet we can rejoice that the glorious day of the Lord has burst into this world. Jesus' victory is real. His gift of the Holy Spirit is real. We can live as if the Lord has ransomed us from sin and death. Because he has.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Palm Sunday

**Isaiah 50:4–7; Philippians 2:6–11; Procession: Luke 19:28–40;  
Passion: Luke 22:14–23:56**

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 22:8–9, 17–18, 19–20, 23–24

All who see me scoff at me;  
they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:  
“He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,  
let him rescue him, if he loves him.”  
Indeed, many dogs surround me,  
a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;  
They have pierced my hands and my feet;  
I can count all my bones.  
They divide my garments among them,  
and for my vesture they cast lots.  
But you, O LORD, be not far from me;  
O my help, hasten to aid me.  
I will proclaim your name to my brethren;  
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:  
“You who fear the LORD, praise him;  
all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;  
revere him, all you descendants of Israel!”

### Meditation

The opening line of this psalm was on Jesus' lips as he hung on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). As they describe the Passion, the gospel writers allude to this psalm or quote it several times. "So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be," in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled (that says): "They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots." This is what the soldiers actually did (John 19:24). John the evangelist also tells us, "For this happened so that the scripture passage might be fulfilled: "Not a bone of it will be broken."<sup>37</sup> And again another passage says: "They will look upon him whom they have pierced" (John 19:36–37).

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Monday of Holy Week

Isaiah 42:1–7; John 12:1–11

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 27:1, 2, 3, 13–14

The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;  
of whom should I be afraid?

When evildoers come at me  
to devour my flesh,

My foes and my enemies  
themselves stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart will not fear;

Though war be waged upon me,  
even then will I trust.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD  
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD with courage;  
be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

### Meditation

Today's gospel concludes with the Jews plotting to kill both Jesus and Lazarus, whom he had just restored to life after being dead for three days. We know where the story is going. It almost seems wrong to sing this psalm and to ask, "Of whom should I be afraid?" All of Jesus' foes are lined up against him. They are about to do their worst. They will kill him. Yet, Jesus believed and trusted that on the other side of this terrible moment, the words of this psalm would come true. He believed that he would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. His resurrection gives us hope that even in the midst of our suffering and brokenness, we can wait for the Lord with courage. We know that we too will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Tuesday of Holy Week

Isaiah 49:1–6; John 13:21–33, 36–38

### Pray

God, come to our assistance.

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 71:1–2, 3–4a, 5a,b, 6a,b, 15, 17

In you, O LORD, I take refuge;

let me never be put to shame.

In your justice rescue me, and deliver me;

incline your ear to me, and save me.

Be my rock of refuge,

a stronghold to give me safety,

for you are my rock and my fortress.

O my God, rescue me from the hand of the wicked.

For you are my hope, O LORD;

my trust, O God, from my youth.

On you I depend from birth;

from my mother's womb you are my strength.

My mouth shall declare your justice,

day by day your salvation.

O God, you have taught me from my youth,

and till the present I proclaim your wondrous deeds.

### Meditation

"For you are my hope, O LORD; my trust, O God, from my youth. On you I depend from birth; from my mother's womb you are my strength" (v. 5). Hope and trust go hand in hand. Hope allows us to act as if we know that everything will turn out for the best if we but trust in the Lord. Hope allows us to act, even when everything seems to be going in the wrong direction. Hope throws open the dark doors of the future and gives us the strength to live human life in a way that is free from fear. We can be confident that in the Lord all things will work together for good (see Romans 8:24–28).

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

## Reading: Psalm 69:8–10, 21–22, 31, 33–34

For your sake I bear insult,  
and shame covers my face.

I have become an outcast to my brothers,  
a stranger to my mother's sons,  
because zeal for your house consumes me,  
and the insults of those who blaspheme you fall upon me.

Insult has broken my heart, and I am weak,  
I looked for sympathy, but there was none;  
for consolers, not one could I find.

Rather they put gall in my food,  
and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

I will praise the name of God in song,  
and I will glorify him with thanksgiving:

"See, you lowly ones, and be glad;  
you who seek God, may your hearts revive!

For the LORD hears the poor,  
and his own who are in bonds he spurns not."

## Meditation

This psalm opens up with a plea: "Save me, God, for the waters have reached my neck. I have sunk into the mire of the deep, where there is no foothold. I have gone down to the watery depths; the flood overwhelms me" (Psalm 69:2–3). Jesus looked for sympathy, he looked for someone to comfort him. But disfigured by his torturers, cast out and rejected by his own people he is now hanging on the instrument of Roman "justice." As the end was fast approaching, "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" (John 19:28–30).

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Holy Thursday

Exodus 12:1–8, 11–14; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; John 13:1–15

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 116:12–13, 15 , 16b,c, 17–18

How shall I make a return to the LORD

for all the good he has done for me?

The cup of salvation I will take up,  
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

Precious in the eyes of the LORD  
is the death of his faithful ones.

I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;  
you have loosed my bonds.

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,  
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

My vows to the LORD I will pay  
in the presence of all his people.

### Meditation

As with many of the psalms this Lent, it is well worth reading this whole psalm. Imagine Jesus “caught in the cords of death, seized by the snares of Sheol and in great agony (v. 3). But even now, in this hour of anguish, he is not only taking up the cup of salvation, but offering it to us. It is the cup of his very own blood. At the Last Supper he offered as a sacrifice of thanksgiving his own body and blood. Now at each Eucharist, we participate in that same meal. We take up the cup of salvation and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Hebrews 4:14–16; 5:7–9; John 18:1–19:42

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 31:2, 6, 12–13, 15–16, 17, 25

In you, O LORD, I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame.

In your justice rescue me.

Into your hands I commend my spirit;  
you will redeem me, O LORD, O faithful God.

For all my foes I am an object of reproach,  
a laughingstock to my neighbors, and a dread to my friends;  
they who see me abroad flee from me.

I am forgotten like the unremembered dead;

I am like a dish that is broken.

But my trust is in you, O LORD;

I say, "You are my God.

In your hands is my destiny; rescue me  
from the clutches of my enemies and my persecutors."

Let your face shine upon your servant;

save me in your kindness.

Take courage and be stouthearted,  
all you who hope in the LORD.

### Meditation

Jesus was like the dish that is broken. He was abandoned, scorned, and ridiculed. To the end he lived out this psalm. He trusted his Father; he trusted that on the other side of this tremendous suffering, his Father would rescue him somehow. And with his last breath he quoted this psalm. "Into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:36).

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.  
Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Holy Saturday, Easter Vigil

Genesis 1:1– 2:2; Genesis 22:1–18; Exodus 14:15–15:1; Isaiah 54:5–14;  
Isaiah 55:1–11; Baruch 3:9–15, 32–4:4; Ezekiel 26:16–17a, 18–28; Rom  
6:3–11; Matthew 28:1–10

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 104:1–2, 5–6, 10, 12, 13–14, 24, 35

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

    O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!

    You are clothed with majesty and glory,  
        robed in light as with a cloak.

    You fixed the earth upon its foundation,  
        not to be moved forever;

    with the ocean, as with a garment, you covered it;  
        above the mountains the waters stood.

    You send forth springs into the watercourses  
        that wind among the mountains.

    Beside them the birds of heaven dwell;  
        among the branches they send forth their song.

    You water the mountains from your palace;  
        the earth is replete with the fruit of your works.

    You raise grass for the cattle,  
        and vegetation for man's use,  
        Producing bread from the earth.

    How manifold are your works, O LORD!  
        In wisdom you have wrought them all—  
        the earth is full of your creatures.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

### Meditation

This is a great hymn of creation and new creation. Creation will not be destroyed; rather, it will be transformed. All creation is longing for the fulfillment of the promise made on Easter. Matter matters! Our bodies matter. Resurrection is a celebration of creation. St. Paul will say in Romans 8:19–21: “For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God;<sup>20</sup> for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope<sup>21</sup> that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.” Now with the psalmist we sing, “Bless the LORD, O my soul!”

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Easter Morning!

Acts 10:34a, 37–43; Col 3:1–4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b–8; John 20:1–9

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Psalm 118:1–2, 16–17, 22–23

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his mercy endures forever.

Let the house of Israel say,

“His mercy endures forever.”

“The right hand of the LORD has struck with power;  
the right hand of the LORD is exalted.

I shall not die, but live,  
and declare the works of the LORD.”

The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.

By the LORD has this been done;  
it is wonderful in our eyes.

### Meditation

I shall not die but live! It is Easter morning. The right hand of the Lord has struck with power and defeated death, our great enemy. He is risen and never more will he die. This is the victory of our God. He has come to rescue his people. Rejected, Jesus has become the cornerstone of the new Temple. As we rejoice that the tomb is empty and then encounter the risen Jesus, let us sing this song with a full voice. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Alleluia! He is risen!!!

**Quiet reflection:** Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

**Prayers and Intentions:** As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

**Lord's Prayer:** Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.

***Celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior!***