FRIDAY, January 1 *The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

Luke 2:19. *But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.*

Ps 8 | Numbers 6:22-27 | Galatians 4:4-7 or Philippians 2:5-11 | Luke 2:15-21

Mary treasuring and pondering all words she'd been hearing since her son's birth may be one of the most loaded lines in scripture. "Treasuring the words" is an interesting take. "Pondering them," even more. She treasured and pondered them, right up to the foot of the cross.

Births are almost always joyous, celebratory events. The birth of Jesus was no different, despite the chaos of a busy tax holiday and his family's status as stateless people. On this Feast of the Holy Name, I have to wonder if Mary understood just what Jesus' name would mean to so many.

Through all the days of Jesus' growing into an adult, through the terrible twos, the terrific threes, the adolescent years, Mary had this particular day and the words of the heavenly host in her mind and heart. And she must have wondered—daily—just what it all meant for her and her precious boy. As you contemplate the name of Jesus, give thanks for Mary—treasure and ponder the words of the angels anew in your own heart.

PRAY for the Dioceses of George (South Africa) and Georgia (USA)

MOVING FORWARD: *Read all of the second chapter of Luke during your quiet time today.*

SATURDAY, January 2

Hebrews 11:1. *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Ps 34 * 33 | Genesis 12:1-7 | Hebrews 11:1-12 | John 6:35-42,48-51

Faith is a word that carries a lot of baggage in the religious world. It is bandied around easily by some and carefully avoided by others. Faith comes from the Greek word *pistis*, which (I would argue) is more akin to trust.

We have faith in many things, not only God. When I get on an airplane, I am amazed at the hope we all have while sitting in our seats, about to fly 500 miles an hour in a metal tube through the sky. If we were sane, we would demand to interview our pilots before takeoff. "Did you have a good night's sleep? How are you feeling today? Do you have an extra pair of contacts, just in case?"

Instead, we have faith in the ability of the pilots to know what they are doing. We trust them. So, today, meditate on what it is to trust God, to have faith that God knows what God is doing.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lagos, Lagos Mainland, and Lagos West (all in Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: *The psalms are an excellent tool for meditating on trust. Spend some extra time with them today.*

SUNDAY, January 3 *2 Christmas*

Luke 2:51-52. *Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.*

Ps 84 or 84:1-8 | Jeremiah 31:7-14 | Ephesians 1:3-6,15-19a
Matthew 2:13-15,19-23 *or* Luke 2:41-52 *or* Matthew 2:1-12

As a youth, I stayed out way past my curfew. When I arrived in our neighborhood, I had my buddy turn off the headlights about a block away from my house. I slunk out of the car, tiptoed up the sidewalk, and gingerly opened our front door.

Just as I was about to celebrate pulling off the biggest ruse of my young life, the lights in the living room came on. Both my parents were sitting there, looking at me. My parents got up and wordlessly walked to their room, closed the door, and went to bed. I was never late again without calling.

In today's reading from Luke, Jesus is merely a twelve-year-old boy. His parents, like mine, had "great anxiety." Today, in this season of the Incarnation, meditate on the humanness of Jesus.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lahore (Pakistan), South Western Brazil, and Southeast Florida (USA)

MOVING FORWARD: *Which young person in your life reminds you of this story about Jesus? Give them a word of encouragement—and their parents, too.*

MONDAY, January 4 *[Elizabeth Ann Seton]*

John 14:12. *Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.*

Ps 85, 87 * 89:1-29 | Exodus 3:1-12 | Hebrews 11:23-31 | John 14:6-14

Born in 1774 in New York City, Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first person from the United States of America to be beatified by the Vatican. Mother Seton founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, the first order of nuns in the United States. Seton's name is on many schools and hospitals to this day. My son was born in a Seton hospital.

Mother Seton worked to educate poor children, to provide healthcare for them, and to do so in a Christian context. I think it is especially lovely that her day of remembrance is during Christmastide, the season of Incarnation because that is how Mother Seton lived her faith and saw God in Christ. She saw the face of Jesus in every person she met, and by loving them, she loved God.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lainya (South Sudan) and Southeastern Mexico

MOVING FORWARD: *Do a little research about Elizabeth Ann Seton, America's first saint!*

TUESDAY, January 5 *[Sarah, Theodora, and Syncletica of Egypt]*

John 15:4. *Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.*

Ps 2, 110:1-5(6-7) * 29, 98 | Joshua 1:1-9 | Hebrews 11:32—12:2 | John 15:1-16

The word abide is defined as "to accept or act in accordance with (a rule, decision, or recommendation)." Abiding with Jesus means more than merely accepting or agreeing to spend time with him—it means living into and out of the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus.

When Jesus asks us to "abide in his love," he is asking us to live into that love all day, every day. Sarah, Theodora, and Syncletica of Egypt were all Desert Mothers of the early Church. They receive few mentions and are often overshadowed by the Desert Fathers. However, spending time with them and studying their lives is to see tangible models of what it means to abide. They were all in.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lake Malawi, Southern Brazil, and Gippsland (Australia)

MOVING FORWARD: *What does being all in—abiding with Jesus—look like in your life?*

WEDNESDAY, January 6 *The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

Matthew 2:12. *And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.*

Ps 72:1-7,10-14 | Isaiah 60:1-6 | Ephesians 3:1-12 | Matthew 2:1-12

The Epiphany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a celebration often missed in the flurry and exhaustion of Advent and Christmas. Nevertheless, the Feast of the Epiphany is the culmination of Christmas.

The magi went home, the story says, but they went back by another way. In a sense, this is what the holy epiphany of Jesus does to all of us. We approach him via one route—and if we see Jesus for who and what he is, we leave on a different path.

We cannot go home in the same way; we have to travel differently. Whatever mission in life the magi had when they embarked on their journey to Jesus was changed forever when they arrived at his side and encountered the Son of God.

PRAY for the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia

MOVING FORWARD: *Do you remember how different your life felt after coming close to Jesus? Share that story with us by using #ForwardDayByDay.*

THURSDAY, January 7

John 2:11. *Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*

Ps 103 * 114, 115 | Isaiah 52:3-6 | Revelation 2:1-7 | John 2:1-11

Our guide in Cana told us this joke: "The wine is so bad in Cana that if Jesus were here today, he would turn the wine back into water." I am not prepared to debate the truth of that statement, but Cana, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Jericho, and Hebron are all still cities—thriving, struggling, living just as they did when this story occurred.

Indeed, the relatives of the wedding couple in this story still live in Cana. In this ordinary place with everyday people at a daily event, Jesus performed his first miracle. This miracle did not move heaven and earth or cure anyone. Jesus' work of turning water into wine simply provided something for those beautiful and beloved ordinary people to enjoy. We should all take great comfort in that.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lake Rukwa and the Southern Highlands (both in Tanzania), and Gitega (Burundi)

MOVING FORWARD: *Find a way to share a special celebratory meal or beverage with a friend you might have missed during Christmastide.*

FRIDAY, January 8

Harriet Bedell

Isaiah 59:19. *So those in the west shall fear the name of the LORD, and those in the east, his glory; for he will come like a pent-up stream that the wind of the LORD drives on.*

Ps 117, 118 * 112, 113 | Isaiah 59:15-21 | Revelation 2:8-17 | John 4:46-54

Harriet Bedell was an Episcopal deaconess, first working with the Cheyenne people in Oklahoma. Later, she continued her work with indigenous people in Alaska, where she started a school in the small village of Tanana, a town I was blessed to visit several years ago. At the time, I had no idea Harriet Bedell had anything to do with the school.

Some years before visiting Alaska, I was in Marco Island, Florida. I learned of Bedell's work there among the Seminole and Mikasuki people and the great reverence she held for the Everglades. The Mikasuki tribe of Florida gave Bedell the name Inkoshopie (woman who prays). Harriet Bedell lived to be ninety-four and never stopped working for Jesus—she never stopped riding "that pent-up stream that the wind of the Lord drives on." May we do the same.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lango (Uganda), Southern Malawi, and Glasgow & Galloway (Scotland)

MOVING FORWARD: *Spend some significant time reading along with Isaiah today.*

SATURDAY, January 9 *Julia Chester Emery*

Psalm 131:4. *O Israel, wait upon the LORD, from this time forth for evermore.*

Ps 121, 122, 123 * 131, 132 | Isaiah 63:1-5 | Revelation 2:18-29 | John 5:1-15

Julia Chester Emery served as the national secretary of the Women's Auxiliary of the Board of Missions for forty years, from 1876 to 1916. For the Episcopal Church, perhaps her most significant and longest-lasting legacy is the United Thank Offering.

The little blue boxes are one of the first church things I clearly remember and looked forward to, long before I knew who Julia Chester Emery was. But it was her idea, brought to fruition by the Women's Auxiliary, that each time you are thankful, you would drop a coin into your little box. Once a year, these offerings were all gathered together. Everything that was collected was used to fund missions of the Episcopal Church. The United Thank Offering continues to this day, annually giving more than a million dollars to mission efforts in the Episcopal Church. Julia Chester Emery gave us all a lasting way to give thanks and to do good.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Langtang (Nigeria) and Southern Nyanza (Kenya)

MOVING FORWARD: *To the glory of God and in thanks for the life of Julia Chester Emery, today, give thanks and do good.*

SUNDAY, January 10 *1 Epiphany*

Mark 1:9. *In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.*

Ps 29 | Genesis 1:1-5 | Acts 19:1-7 | Mark 1:4-11

Two distinct theologies have developed around baptism. One, I call magic, and the other, I call decision. Magic requires no real change. Magic is terrible theology. God loves the unbaptized person—and indeed everyone, entirely, now, already—no matter what we do.

The other way of approaching baptism is though a posture of decision. Baptism is a decision made by the parents of a child or by an adult deciding to be baptized themselves—to change, to be transformed, to dedicate one's life to a new cause, to abide within the household of God. This approach is not magic; it's the beginning of a new life, coming out of the water transformed, prepared to practice the eternal priesthood of all believers.

PRAY for the Diocese of Lebombo (Mozambique), Southern Ohio (USA), and Southern Philippines

MOVING FORWARD: *Spend your quiet time today reading over the Baptismal Covenant* (The Book of Common Prayer, *p. 304.*)

MONDAY, January 11

Isaiah 40:22-23. *It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.*

Ps 1,2,3 * 4, 7 | Isaiah 40:12-23 | Ephesians 1:1-14 | Mark 1:1-13

When the world seems out of control, words like the ones from our reading in Isaiah soothe me. At one time or another, all of us get a little carried away with our importance—surely with God, we must know just how important we are, how profoundly loved we are.

But there is the equal and opposite side of ourselves that we also have to hold to account—and that is just how insignificant, small, and inconsequential we are in the whole scheme of the universe. I am not sure if you can hear these words as such, but I find them to be comforting as well.

God loves us as if we were the only thing that existed in the universe, and we are also a grain of sand in God's infinite creation. Thanks be to God.

PRAY for the Diocese of Leeds (England)

MOVING FORWARD: *Today, try meditating on both your enormous worth and infinitesimal smallness.*

TUESDAY, January 12

Aelred of Rievaulx

Mark 1:28. *At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.*

Ps 5, 6 * 10, 11 | Isaiah 40:25-31 | Ephesians 1:15-23 | Mark 1:14-28

Fame spread throughout the land regarding Jesus. And yet, popularity was not at all what he had come to attain or seek. Jesus was continually saying, "This is not about me—this is about the kingdom of heaven and my Father who sent me. See that in me." Jesus sought out people who were willing to be transformed so that through them might come a new and transformed world.

Jesus' fame among the people in his community was mostly due to what he could do for them—heal, comfort, proclaim justice, and love them. Far less exciting or headline-worthy was the kind of sacrificial life he was pointing to—a new way of walking in and with the world.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Leicester (England), Southern Virginia (USA), and Gloucester (England)

MOVING FORWARD: *How is Jesus asking you to walk with and in the world today? Share it with us by using #ForwardDayByDay.*

WEDNESDAY, January 13 *Hilary of Poitiers*

Mark 1:35. *In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.*

Ps 119:1-24 * 12, 13,14 | Isaiah 41:1-16 | Ephesians 2:1-10 | Mark 1:29-45

Behind Jesus' miracles and ministry is a habit that is easy for us to miss. He always had a rhythm to his life—a balance between extreme communal work and time alone.

I admit that I struggle with following Jesus' rhythm of intense work and intentional refreshment and rest. I intuitively know that there is profound power in this rhythm. When I have engaged in this practice, the balance has moved my spirit from an intuition about how things should be to helping God make them a reality. And yet, I still struggle with embracing this rhythm. What we hear about this holy way of being and how it informed Jesus' ministry is an authoritative spiritual direction for us.

Be conscious of this today. Do the works you must, but also be alone with yourself—and with God too.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lesotho and Southwark (England)

MOVING FORWARD: *Rest is one of the steps along the Way of Love. Visit www.forwardmovement.org to find more resources for following Jesus.*

THURSDAY, January 14 *[Richard Meux Benson and Charles Gore]*

Ephesians 2:13-14. *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh, he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.*

Ps 18:1-20 * 18:21-50 | Isaiah 41:17-29 | Ephesians 2:11-22 | Mark 2:1-12

Why do we always think that building a wall is a way to make peace? Walls to keep things out (or in) are a band-aid solution, at best. Walls do nothing to address real issues of how we live together, no matter where in the world we live.

The image of walls is a powerful, universally understood symbol. But the real picture for us as Christians, the one that defies our usual human response for security, is the one so beautifully stated in this letter. Jesus' body is broken for us, broken to break down walls between us and heaven itself.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lexington (USA) and Southwell & Nottingham (England)

MOVING FORWARD: *What are the walls in your life that need breaking down? Ask Jesus to help you.*

FRIDAY, January 15

Mark 2:16. *When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"*

Ps 16, 17 * 22 | Isaiah 42:(1-9)10-17 | Ephesians 3:1-13 | Mark 2:13-22

One of the most significant concerns I have about Christianity is the way we have domesticated Jesus. In our story from Mark, the Pharisees are incredulous that Jesus eats with outcasts and sinners. Jesus is explicit: These people are who he came to eat with, and this is where he is supposed to be.

The human tendency is to lean toward exclusivity, which is what Jesus comes to change. Jesus is wherever people are hurting and searching and yearning for love and healing, which means Jesus is anywhere and everywhere—in bars and homeless camps and gated communities and exclusive private clubs and in parole board meetings and on the floor of the Stock Exchange.

When we try to make Jesus fit our ideas of who is clean and worthy, we forget that we aren't always the most acceptable people ourselves.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Liberia and Southwest Florida (USA)

MOVING FORWARD: *What is a line you need to cross to meet Jesus?*

SATURDAY, January 16

Mark 2:25. *[Jesus] said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food?"*

Ps 20, 21:1-7(8-14) * 110:1-5(6-7), 116, 117 | Isaiah 43:1-13
Ephesians 3:14-21 | Mark 2:23—3:6

Christian author Tony Campolo has a great book entitled, *Adventures in Missing the Point*. Today's lesson from Mark is such a moment in scripture.

The poor Pharisees begin to pontificate upon the law and the rules and what is "right." On the other hand, Jesus tries to reveal larger truths about the sabbath and faith. Jesus points out to them their latest adventure in missing the point.

The bulk of Mark is about the balance between worshiping, showing respect and intention, and trying to live out a vow made to honor God. We do not get to stand by and watch suffering and choose to do nothing based on a human standard or expectation. Jesus has shown us how to do better, how to get the point.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lichfield (England) and Southwestern Virginia (USA)

MOVING FORWARD: *Do you have an adventure in missing the point? Share it with us by using #ForwardDayByDay.*

1 Corinthians 6:20. *For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.*

Ps 139:1-5,12-17 | 1 Samuel 3:1-10,(11-20) | 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 | John 1:43-51

We prize freedom, so it might not exactly be good news to have Paul tell the Corinthians that their bodies are not their own. He says instead that their bodies are temples for the Holy Spirit.

So much of our spirituality seems to be outside our bodies, mystically elsewhere. Paul points us to something completely different and not ephemeral. While our bodies are earthly things, certainly fleeting and mortal, what our bodies house is the capacity to love, pray, worship—and the ability to change ourselves and the world.

While our bodies are fallible, earthly vessels, they are vital to the mission of God and our knowledge and love of God. Paul says that all of this fantastic news about what our bodies can do makes them worthy of care. Our bodies are a temple for the Holy Spirit, shared with us by God. We are worthy of attention and care from God and ourselves.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Limerick & Killaloe (Ireland) and Spokane (USA)

MOVING FORWARD: *How will you care for your body today?*

Matthew 16:16. *Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."*

Ps 23 | Acts 4:8-13 | 1 Peter 5:1-4 | Matthew 16:13-19

"Who do you say that I am?" My spiritual director gave this question to me to contemplate for a liturgical season. She was clear: "Don't try to spiritualize the question. Don't try to be abstract with it or mystical: Just look at every word and think about your answer."

Who do you say that I am? I started asking questions. "Do you want me to answer who I think Jesus is?" She said, "Go wherever it takes you." And so I did. But as I reflected, I found myself talking to myself a bit, asking the same question. Who do I say that I am? And I wondered, if I asked this question of those I work with, those I live with, what would their answer be?

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lincoln (England), Springfield (USA), and Goma (Congo)

MOVING FORWARD: *"Who do you say that I am?" is not a question we ask very often. Answer the very question Jesus asks—but think about what others would say about you.*

Mark 3:35. *Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.*

Ps 26, 28 * 36, 39 | Isaiah 44:9-20 | Ephesians 4:17-32 | Mark 3:19b-35

We have two families—the family we get and the family that we make for ourselves. Jesus points to a kinship above and beyond the reality of blood. I think the old gospel song, "Blessed Be the Tie that Binds," preaches this word, too.

What Jesus is suggesting is that there is a bloodline that runs through baptism. When we receive baptism into the Christian family, we are marked as Christ's own forever. Baptism changes our lives—who we are, who we belong to, how we will be in the world. It is an adoption service. God has loved every person all along. When we choose baptism, we say for ourselves or for those we vow to raise in the faith: We are the household of God, and we are family.

PRAY for the United Church of Bangladesh

MOVING FORWARD: *Make plans for a reunion with your family of choice.*

Ephesians 5:1-2. *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Ps 38 * 119:25-48 | Isaiah 44:24—45:7 | Ephesians 5:1-14 | Mark 4:1-20

Fabian was an unlikely pope. He wasn't even an ordained priest on the day of his election in 236 CE. According to tradition, as he stood in a crowd in Rome, a dove came and alighted upon Fabian's head. The multitude began to shout, "He is worthy, he is worthy!" Just like that, Fabian went from being a layman in the crowd to being the Vicar of Christ.

During his fourteen-year papacy, Fabian did some fantastic things. He had mostly good relations with the Roman government and was widely known for commissioning a group of deacons to record the lives of the saints. At the outset of the Diocletian Persecutions, Fabian was one of the first to be martyred for the faith.

Fabian's followers could see Jesus in his life and ministry. Fabian became an imitator of Christ, something we are all called to, even in the face of hardship and struggle.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Litoral Ecuador, Saint Albans (England), and Gombe (Nigeria)

MOVING FORWARD: *Do you know someone like Fabian? Call that person today.*

THURSDAY, January 21 *Agnes [and Cecilia] of Rome*

Mark 4:24. *And [Jesus] said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you."*

Ps 37:1-18 * 37:19-42 | Isaiah 45:5-17 | Ephesians 5:15-33 | Mark 4:21-34

Agnes and Cecilia are among only seven women, including the Virgin Mary, commemorated by name in the Canon of the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church. Agnes was twelve years old when she was martyred. Cecilia was older and married when she was put to death.

Under torture, both Agnes and Cecilia absolutely refused to worship the pagan gods and to denounce Jesus. At Agnes's namesake church in Rome, two lambs are blessed on her feast day. The lambs' wool is woven into a scarf called a pallium, which the Pope uses for the investiture of archbishops.

Agnes and Cecilia were females in a world dominated and controlled by men, and their tremendous strengths of personality and steadfast faith are models for us all.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Liverpool (England), Saint Asaph (Wales), and Grafton (Australia)

MOVING FORWARD: *Do a little research about the other women commemorated by name in the Canon of the Mass.*

FRIDAY, January 22 *Vincent of Saragossa*

Mark 4:39. *[Jesus] woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.*

Ps 31 * 35 | Isaiah 45:18-25 | Ephesians 6:1-9 | Mark 4:35-41

The first time I saw the Sea of Galilee with my own eyes, I remember thinking, "This is nothing more than a big lake!" I began to wonder about stories like this one from Mark, where great gales are reported.

I remember sitting at sunset by the sea, peaceful and serene. Then, I woke up the next morning to see a body of water I hardly recognized. Waves towered and roared.

Being a boater, I know the weather and bodies of water can change quickly and without much warning—this is how life is, too. And the point Jesus makes in this story, on that water, on that day, is the same lesson. And Jesus is with you always—in the calm and the storm.

PRAY for the Diocese of Saint Davids (Wales)

MOVING FORWARD: *Using your favorite search engine or reference book, find some maps and pictures of the Sea of Galilee in good weather and bad. Reflect upon them during your quiet time this weekend.*

Ephesians 6:24. *Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ps 30, 32 * 42, 43 | Isaiah 46:1-13 | Ephesians 6:10-24 | Mark 5:1-20

While on a sabbatical in the winter of 1865, beloved clergyman and poet Phillips Brooks arranged to be in Bethlehem. On Christmas Eve, he visited the shepherds' fields and wrote the hymn, "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

It was a tumultuous year in the United States—the Civil War came to a bloody and bitter end. Brooks's hymn of comfort and peace was deeply needed, and he knew it. Phillips Brooks was so much more than this hymn. He was one of the greatest preachers of the Church and preached a sermon as Abraham Lincoln lay in state.

Phillips Brooks was a prophet. He often said his highest aspiration was to be a great Christian and a great priest. History tells us just how well he succeeded.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Llandaff (Wales), Saint Edmundsbury & Ipswich (England), and Saint Helena (South Africa)

MOVING FORWARD: *Do a little research on Phillips Brooks and pray along with one of the prayers he wrote, "For Today," printed on the inside back cover of this book.*

Mark 1:14-15. *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."*

Ps 62:6-14 | Jonah 3:1-5, 10 | 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 | Mark 1:14-20

Some of you may know how easy it is to become lost in the New York City subway system. I got turned around down there once myself. I simply stood on the platform, staring blankly at the lighted information board.

A wonderful man from India politely asked me where I was trying to go. I told him. He looked at me and gently said, "Follow me," and he began walking. I started walking behind him, thinking all the while of my escape route if it seemed like things were turning dicey.

I finally started paying attention to his conversation toward me, telling me he knew what it was like to be confused in the subway and not know where to go. He led me to the right platform, made sure I knew my train number, and wandered off. I give thanks for this holy encounter.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lokoja (Nigeria) and Saint Mark the Evangelist (South Africa)

MOVING FORWARD: *Do you have a "Follow Me" story? Share it by using #ForwardDayByDay.*

MONDAY, January 25 *The Conversion of Paul*

Galatians 1:11-12. *For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Ps 67 | Acts 26:9-21 | Galatians 1:11-24 | Matthew 10:16-22

For Paul, a revelation from God (and his ensuing conversion) was a blinding light. Mine came while I was sitting on a mountain outcrop, overlooking the Arkansas River Valley on a brisk fall day.

As the breeze blew gently, I simply knew without a doubt that God was real and that I wanted God in my life. I have never doubted the existence of God since that moment.

The reality of the revelation grew in me, just as I was growing. The truth is that conversion keeps happening. Paul learned the same thing. Pay attention to those smaller conversion moments, small, but powerful nonetheless, moments that change and grow you.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lomega (South Sudan), Sunyani (Ghana), and Grahamstown (South Africa)

MOVING FORWARD: *Tell someone the story of your conversion.*

TUESDAY, January 26 *Timothy and Titus*

Galatians 2:10. *They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.*

Ps 45 * 47, 48 | Isaiah 48:12-21 | Galatians 1:18—2:10 | Mark 6:1-13

Today, we celebrate Timothy and Titus. It is no accident that we celebrate these two young companions of Paul on the day after we remember his conversion. I like that their day falls this way. We always have to be reminded that no chieftain, no prophet, not even a messiah, can be a leader unless someone else sees them as worth following. Celebrating Timothy and Titus is a way of celebrating all those who make progress happen.

Timothy and Titus helped Paul spread the Jesus Movement. They did little things that turned out to be significant. Timothy delivered Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, and Titus brought the second. They physically carried the Word, but they also lived it.

PRAY for the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil

MOVING FORWARD: *Who reminds you of Timothy or Titus? Find a way to thank them.*

WEDNESDAY, January 27 *John Chrysostom*

Galatians 2:19-20. *For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Ps 119:49-72 * 49, [53] | Isaiah 49:1-12 | Galatians 2:11-21 | Mark 6:13-29

Christianity is both spiritual faith and physical practice—hope and action. We choose to be a Christian, but we rarely speak about how we practice being Christian. We tend to compartmentalize our practice, taking off our faith like our church outfit and sliding it into a drawer until the next week.

When Paul says, "it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me," he is modeling the practice of faith. Hope must lead us to action. With this in mind, we might consider how to "practice" being like Jesus.

I believe some practices are baseline requirements for living out a daily relationship with Jesus and each other—Bible study, prayer, tithing, pilgrimage, and acts of service. All of them take hopeful action, today and every day.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Long Island (USA), Swansea & Brecon (Wales), and Guadalcanal (Melanesia)

MOVING FORWARD: *Memorize Galatians 2:19-20.*

THURSDAY, January 28 *Thomas Aquinas*

Mark 6:31. *[Jesus] said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.*

Ps 50 * [59, 60] or 118 | Isaiah 49:13-23 | Galatians 3:1-14 | Mark 6:30-46

Yesterday I talked about the difference between being a Christian and the practices we undertake to behave like one. Perhaps one of the most important exercises is making time for ourselves. When Jesus says to the disciples, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest awhile," he is offering them time to gather up and restore their reserves.

Without rest and refreshment, we can become useless and powerless. We need time for ourselves, which is fundamentally unselfish and even holy. As you practice life with Jesus, build in time for yourself, to center yourself, and listen for God's still small voice. God does and will speak. To hear, we have to be still and pay attention.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Los Angeles (USA) and Swaziland (Eswatini)

MOVING FORWARD: *Plan to carve out an hour of silence this weekend. Set a time and stick to it. God has something to say to you.*

FRIDAY, January 29

Psalm 40:12. *You are the LORD; do not withhold your compassion from me; let your love and your faithfulness keep me safe for ever.*

Ps 40, 54 * 51 | Isaiah 50:1-11 | Galatians 3:15-22 | Mark 6:47-56

Psalm 40 begins, "I waited patiently upon the LORD." And every time I read it, I wonder: What is it to wait patiently on the Lord? What is it to wait patiently on and for anything?

My world has not served me well in learning to wait. Even my church has not always been good about teaching patience. And yet, patience is a word that comes up so often when people are sharing their prayers. Patience comes up frequently when we talk about Lent or Advent.

Maybe songwriter Tom Petty was right, and perhaps it is the waiting that is the hardest part. I don't wait well. I don't do patience well, so doing them both together is a big push for me. And yet, if we are not waiting, then we are going, moving, doing, being, but not trusting. I am going to focus carefully on waiting patiently.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Louisiana (USA), Sydney (Australia), and Tabora (Tanzania)

MOVING FORWARD: *Who is the most patient person you know? Have a good chat with them this week.*

SATURDAY, January 30

Galatians 3:28. *There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

Ps 55 * 138, 139:1-17(18-23) | Isaiah 51:1-8 | Galatians 3:23-29 | Mark 7:1-23

Of all the verses you could pull from the Bible, this one from Galatians may be my favorite. There is a deep and abiding message to me in these words and the premise: We are all one in Jesus Christ.

I believe this to be true. I also know that we Christians struggle mightily to live out that truth. We look as divided, if not more so, than everyone else. And that is what I love about Paul's proclamation to the Galatians—the relentless hope and insistence that Jesus makes us one.

As divided as the world or the church or your family or your own heart might seem, in Jesus, it isn't so. In Jesus, we are one. May we live ever closer to that truth.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Laupula (Zambia) and Taita-Taveta (Kenya)

MOVING FORWARD: *Have you been feeling a separation you don't like? Do something about that today.*

SUNDAY, January 31 *4 Epiphany*

Mark 1:22. *They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

Ps 111 | Deuteronomy 18:15-20 | 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 | Mark 1:21-28

I recently heard the story of a Palestinian physician who lives and works in Gaza. He was trying to complete a trip that should be around six hours. With the checkpoints and border patrols, the trip ended up taking twelve hours.

As the doctor talked about the situation, my friend asked him, "What would make up a good life to you?" The physician answered, "A good life for me is making sure my neighbor has a good life." This idea is the complete expression of the world Jesus places at the center of the gospel message.

To have a good life for yourself is to ensure a good one for your neighbor. This idea is so far from the way the world seems to work right now, and yet, it is a recipe for peace. We must be expansive about who we consider our neighbors. When we make that circle more extensive, this formula can transform the world.

PRAY for the Dioceses of Lucknow (India) and Guatemala

MOVING FORWARD: *Make sure your neighbor has a good life and then have one yourself.*

PRAYERS

Second Sunday of Advent

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

—*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 211

A Collect for Guidance

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* —*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 100

For Peace Among the Nations

Almighty God our heavenly Father, guide the nations of the world into the way of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

—*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 816

About the Authors

November

Mariclair Partee Carlsen is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, and currently lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with her husband and two young daughters. She is the rector of St. Mary's Church, Hamilton Village, and the Episcopal chaplain to the University of Pennsylvania.

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January

Greg Rickel is the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia. Greg enjoys being on the water and spending time with his family.

FOR TODAY

O God: Give me strength to live another day; Let me not turn coward before its difficulties or prove recreant to its duties; Let me not lose faith in other people; Keep me sweet and sound of heart, in spite of ingratitude, treachery, or meanness; Preserve me from minding little stings or giving them; Help me to keep my heart clean, and to live so honestly and fearlessly that no outward failure can dishearten me or take away the joy of conscious integrity; Open wide the eyes of my soul that I may see good in all things; Grant me this day some new vision of thy truth; Inspire me with the spirit of joy and gladness; and make me the cup of strength to suffering souls; in the name of the strong Deliverer, our only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*—Phillips Brooks

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