

LENTEN DEVOTIONALS 2022

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1015 HOLMAN STREET AT MAIN | HOUSTON, TX 77004

WWW.TRINITYMIDTOWN.ORG | (713) 528-4100

Luke 10:41-42

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.

O God, give me the grace to be faithful in my actions, but indifferent to success. The only thing I ought to be concerned with is to desire you will and to quietly mediate on you even in the midst of busy and difficult times. It is up to you crown my feeble actions with such fruits as is pleasing to you and none at all, if that is what is best for me.

Fenelon, Mediations on the Heart of God
By Francois Fenelon

Reflect: One Thing Is Needful

Submitted by Norma Cooper

Faithfulness

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for not abandoning me
when I abandoned you.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for offering your hand of
love

in my darkest, most lonely moment.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for putting up with such
A stubborn soul as mine.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for loving me
more than I love myself.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for continuing to pour out
your

blessings upon me, even though I respond so poorly.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for drawing out the
goodness in

people, including me.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for repaying our sins with
your love.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for being constant and
unchanging,

amidst all the changes in the world.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for your countless blessings
on me

and on every creature in the world.

Poem by Teresa of Avila, Spain, 1515–82

WOMAN PRAYERS

MARY FORD-GRABOWSKY

Prayers by Women

Throughout History and Around the World

Submitted by Pamela Lawson

When I was a young child, the nuns would ask us what we were giving up for Lent, and each student would proudly say, "I'm giving up candy." It was the easy expected answer especially for me since we did not have funds for candy. As an adult, for whom no sweet craving goes unanswered, sugar or chocolate is the easy answer. Well, not the first three days. But how many of us utter the easy answers? In the reading from Isaiah 58:1-9a the author admonishes those who announce their Lenten sacrifice yet still oppress and belittle others. What would happen if instead of fasting from foods, we stopped behaviors that make others feel less than? We offered a smile and a prayer instead of judgment to the homeless. Or we tithed to life-sustaining programs. Perhaps we would experience the last line of Isaiah 58:9, "Then you shall call and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help and he will say, Here I Am."

Submitted by Theresa McClellan for March 4

The message is clear, yet we as a nation fail to listen. In the unasked question of how do we treat others, the Scriptures from Isaiah 58: 9-b14 are specific. "...Satisfy the needs of the afflicted." Instead of studying war, who could we be if we beat our swords into plowshares. Meaning we place our emphasis on addressing inequities. We feed and house the hungry. We care for those with mental issues. We nurture our planet and embrace growth and creativity, instead of pointing fingers and speaking untruths. The readings from Isaiah state, "The Lord God will continually guide you... You shall be called repairers of the breach, the restorers of streets to live in." On this fifth Sunday after Ash Wednesday may we all prayerfully look into our hearts and ask, what little steps can I do to become a repairer of the breach?

Submitted by Theresa McClellan for March 5

Today is my father's birthday and reminds me of how blessed I am to have had such a caring and loving father. Floyd Mervin ("Merv") Davenport born 1908, died 2005 was always there for my brother and me. Never in an intrusive way but always available to give us guidance and advise when we asked for his help. Much as our connection to God when we need his strength and guidance and we turn to him in prayer. The Bible verse from Luke 14, "On their hands they will bear you up so that you will not dash your foot against a stone", reminds me of my father's love for me and God's love for us.

Submitted by Bob Davenport for March 6

**Lenten Reflection on the New Testament Reading
for Monday, March 7**

Dear Lord,

Help me to put aside my selfish interests so I might listen and attend to the needs of others. In serving them, I serve you.

Submitted by Mary Matteucci for March 7

The discussion in my little Zoom Sunday meditation group has had me thinking about the awful evil and the awesome good in the world now. Psalm 91 reminds me that I am safe, protected by God's angels, victorious over challenges, and blessed with long life.

When I call on my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God, the answer is always love so much bigger than my problem. Often the answer comes from a spiritual teacher, those parental figures that have helped me know this truth: God loves me no matter what!

And it is my responsibility to pay that love out wherever I can. Just like a parent. Recently it was Bob's father's birthday, so it's appropriate for us to give thanks to fathers and mother/father figures that have nourished and taught us.

Submitted by Linda Davenport for March 7

“What are you giving up for Lent?”

That was a question I heard a lot growing up. We were a fairly devout Roman Catholic family. That's what one did. One gave something up, usually candy or cookies or some other sweet treat.

That may have helped my caloric consumption, but I never felt any benefit from it.

At some point in my adolescence, I talked about this with my mother who suggested what a priest had told her: instead of giving something up, take something on.

I have done that with varied success over the years, but two years ago, just before the pandemic closed everything down, I took something on that stuck through that Lent and beyond. I took on praying the Daily Office.

It's right there in the Prayer Book. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are available in Rite One and Rite Two (I use Rite One). With the Psalms and lessons, it can be said in fifteen minutes. It's a commitment of fifteen minutes twice a day. You can use the eCP app, which includes all of the Prayer Book and all the lessons and even some additional collects. The Daily Office Lectionary begins on page 934 of the Prayer Book. It's a two-year cycle. This is an even-numbered year, so we are in Year Two. In those two years, almost the entire Bible is read.

If your schedule makes it difficult on a particular day to say it yourself, many churches broadcast it on Facebook or YouTube. At Trinity, we livestream our Evening Prayer service for the underhoused population weekdays at 5:30. There are also some available as podcasts.

I can't say I have never missed saying the Office because I have skipped on occasion. I especially find I have a hard to on the weekends, but I persist.

If you feel so led, please consider taking on the Daily Office this Lent. You may find that it is a habit you don't want to break.

Submitted by John Murullo

Today's Collect asks for God's help in overcoming spiritual enemies. Which had me wondering, what exactly are spiritual enemies? I would think those would be the things that move us away from God, from feeling the presence of God or from being all that God wants us to be.

What distracts you from God?

You never hear of anyone announcing how they binge prayed or spent the weekend with the Bible. I know I've overdosed on Netflix. But is that wrong? When we demonize our releases, do we give them too much power?

Creator God, give me wisdom to get still enough to hear your will. When I stray far from you, tether my heart so my stray does not last and I remember who I am and whose I am. In this Lenten season may we ask for help in whatever we need.

Submitted by Theresa McClellan for March 10

When we want, when we need, we expect action - stat. When we pray, we want prayers answered immediately, right now, Lord. Please. But things happen in God's time and today's Psalm 27 is a good reminder to wait on the Lord.

Even when we are anxious, if we remember to lean back into God's arms and realize "God's got this," whatever this is, it does work. It lightens our load when we give it to God. And God will resolve the issue. In God's time, which is not necessarily our time.

The psalm begins, "The Lord is my light and salvation, whom shall I fear," meaning all those things weighing us down, all those worries and fears, they are not bigger than God. Because God can handle it, may we remember and believe.

Submitted by Theresa McClellan for March 11

Psalm 57:2

I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me.

God of every good and perfect gift, thank you for your guidance. You have led me to your purpose for my life. Help me to follow you obediently and without wavering.

Reflect: His Purpose for Me

Submitted by Norma Cooper

For six years I had a touring children's theatre company. One of our performances was at a pediatric hospital in Dallas. We were performing *Androcles and The Lion*.

I was playing Androcles (you can be the main character when you own the company :) At one point in the play Androcles needs help from the lion. I looked out into the audience and asked their help in calling for him. I asked them to roar!

One little boy sitting in a wheelchair on the front row let out the loudest roar! It was great. After the show one of the nurses came up to the company to thank us. She told us that the little boy had been in a bad accident and they couldn't get him to speak. The "roar" was the first sound he had made.

I think he saw Androcles needed help and for a moment that moved him passed the trauma he had experienced and he found his voice.

I think Jesus calls on us to find our voice when others are in need of help. During this Lenten season, this time of self-reflection, we should also look for opportunities to "roar"!

Submitted by Terri DiRaddo

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 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

Submitted by Tim Lawson

A Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr for our time:

Lord, we pray this day mindful of the sorry confusion of our world. Look with mercy upon this generation of your children so steeped in misery of their own contriving, so far strayed from your ways and so blinded by passions. We pray for the victims of tyranny, that they may resist oppression with courage. We pray for wicked and cruel men, whose arrogance reveals to us what the sin of our own hearts is like when it has conceived and brought forth its final fruit. We pray for ourselves who live in peace and quietness, that we may not regard our good fortune as proof of our virtue, or rest content to have our ease at the price of other men's sorrow and tribulation.

We pray for all who have some vision of your will, despite the confusions and betrayals of human sin, that they may humbly and resolutely plan for and fashion the foundations of a just peace between men, even while they seek to preserve what is fair and just among us against the threat of malignant powers.

Submitted by Andy Durham

I loved books when I was young and still do. So for my eighth birthday, my mother gave me a huge illustrated children's Bible full of pictures, stories, and psalms. I delighted in reading them, and by the time I got to the 105th Psalm, I already knew the stories of God parting the Red Sea, sending plagues, and finally death to free the enslaved people. All the innumerable ways God intervened, making a way out of no way for the Israelites and all who encountered God, were in my children's Bible.

For some folks, reading the 105th Psalm is daunting. But when you realize they are chronicling their history of God in their lives, it is fascinating and comforting, and familiar. What would it look like if you wrote your own Psalm, your history, counting all the ways God has worked in your life and in the lives of those in your line who came before you? That would be a treasure for all your generations. Your personal praise of God.

Submitted by Theresa McClellan for March 16

Psalm 143

- 1 Lord, hear my prayer, and in your faithfulness heed my supplications;
answer me in your righteousness.
- 2 Enter not into judgment with your servant, for in your sight shall no
one living be justified.
- 3 For my enemy has sought my life; he has crushed me to the ground;
he has made me live in dark places like those who are long dead.
- 4 My spirit faints within me; my heart within me is desolate.
- 5 I remember the time past; I muse upon all your deeds; I consider the
works of your hands.
- 6 I spread out my hands to you; my soul gasps to you like a thirsty land.
- 7 O Lord, make haste to answer me; my spirit fails me; do not hide your
face from me or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.
- 8 Let me hear of your loving-kindness in the morning, for I put my trust
in you; show me the road that I must walk, for I lift up my soul to
you.
- 9 Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord, for I flee to you for refuge.
- 10 Teach me to do what pleases you, for you are my God; let your good
Spirit lead me on level ground.
- 11 Revive me, O Lord, for your Name's sake; for your righteousness'
sake, bring me out of trouble.
- 12 Of your goodness, destroy my enemies and bring all my foes to
naught, for truly I am your servant.

Submitted by Pam Lawson

I'M THANKFUL EACH DAY

by P.K. Hallinan

I'm thankful each day for the blessings I see
and for all of the gifts that are given to me.

And counting the stars at the edge of the sea,
I can't help but feel they were put there for me.

I'm thankful for summers of warm golden days.
I'm thankful for autumns of orange pumpkin haze.

I'm thankful for meadows and bright colored flowers.
I'm thankful for raindrops and soft summer showers.

Each sunset is special - each sunrise is new.
Each breeze in the trees is a promise come true.

Each evening's a wonder where beauty abounds.
Each morning's a harvest of new sights and sounds.

And it's nice to know that beneath winter snow,
the blossoms of spring are beginning to grow.

I'm thankful for friends for laughing and sharing.
I'm thankful for family for loving and caring.

I'm thankful for all the kindness I see.
I'm thankful for peace and pure harmony.

My body's a present of perfect design.
My mind is a power as endless as time.

And if I ever worry that trouble is near,
I always remember there is nothing to fear.

For each hour is laden with infinite love.
Each second brings comfort and joy from above.

And I guess in the end the best thing to say,
is I'm thankful for living - I'm thankful each day!

Submitted by Carver Mathis

The Song of Hezekiah

- 1 In my despair I said, "In the noonday of my life I must depart; my unspent years are summoned to the portals of death."
- 2 And I said, "No more shall I see the Lord in the land of the living, never more look on my kind among dwellers on earth.
- 3 My house is pulled down and I am uncovered, as when a shepherd strikes his tent.
- 4 My life is rolled up like a bolt of cloth, the threads cut off from the loom.
- 5 Between sunrise and sunset my life is brought to an end; I cower and hope for the dawn.
- 6 Like a lion he has crushed all my bones; like a swallow or thrush I utter plaintive cries; I mourn like a dove.
- 7 My weary eyes look up to you; Lord, be my refuge in my affliction."
- 8 But what can I say? for he has spoken; it is he who has done this.
- 9 Slow and halting are my steps all my days, because of the bitterness of my spirit.
- 10 O Lord, I recounted all these things to you and you rescued me; when entreated, you restored my life.
- 11 I know now that my bitterness was for my good, for you held me back from the pit of destruction, you cast all my sins behind you.
- 12 The grave does not thank you nor death give you praise; nor do those at the brink of the grave hang on your promises.
- 13 It is the living, O Lord, the living who give you thanks as I do this day; and parents speak of your faithfulness to their children.
- 14 You, Lord, are my Savior; I will praise you with stringed instruments all the days of my life in the house of the Lord.

Submitted by Tim Lawson

Surrender. Today's Collect is a powerful prayer of surrender. We know we cannot do this by ourselves, God. So lay it all at God's feet because we know we cannot do it alone. Sometimes we try. We puff up and try to plow through our troubles when we really need to breathe deep and give it to God. But that requires trust and faith, and we don't exercise those muscles as much as we do self-reliance, which can open the door to vanity. So on this third Sunday in Lent, on this first day of Spring, just for today, may we give it all to God and lean not on our own understanding. And let us do it again tomorrow and see what blooms

Submitted by Theresa McClellan for March 20

How often do we have preconceived notions of what it takes to carry out what God wants us to do in our lives? We may have all these built-up expectations of complex tasks and insurmountable sacrifices, so we do nothing. Today's lesson in 2Kings 5: 1-15 shows what happens when we make assumptions. Why do we make following God so hard? When it's really simple. The message is love, but sometimes the message gets lost. How have you deferred from doing what God asks of you?

Submitted by Theresa McClellan for March 21

May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received,
 and pass on the love that has been given to you.
May you be content knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones,
 and allow you soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love.
It is there for each and every one of us.
—Therese of Lisieux

Submitted by Susan Gallagher

2 Corinthians 9:7

As every man purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or out of compulsion; for God loveth the cheerful giver.

Merciful Father in Heaven, make me conscious of the blessings you have given me. Let me serve you and be a cheerful giver. You are the source of all that I have to give, whether it is time, talents or monetary donations.

Hear My Prayer.

Reflect: Cheerful Giver

Submitted by Norma Cooper

Live Fully

Psalm 56:10

In God the Lord, whose word I praise,
in God I trust and will not be afraid,
for what can mortals do to me?

What is wanted is not that we should find ultimate
truth, nor that we should become secure,
nor that we should have ease,
nor that we should be without hurt,
but that we should live fully.
Therefore, we should not fear life,
nor anything in life,
we should not fear death,
nor anything in death,
we should live our lives in love with life.

-John McQuiston II
Always We Begin Again

Submitted by Pam Lawson

A Seed of Hope

By Theresa D. McClellan

There's a seed in you.
There's a seed in me.
Tiny drops
Where dreams release
There's a seed in you
What could that be
A seed of hope
Nurturing our dreams.

There's a place for you.
A place for me
Where tiny thoughts
Turn into dreams
A place for you
Where could this be
With seeds of hope
You can reach your dreams

The ground is hard
The road may be rough
I've got my seeds
And a God I trust
I know this road
I've traveled before
God fills my dreams
And so much more

There's a seed in you.
There's a seed in me.
Tiny drops, where dreams release
There's a seed in you
What could that be
A seed of hope
For all God wants you to be.

Submitted by Theresa McClellan for March 25

Prayer for God's Help

God, our Father, grant that whatever happens to us today we may take it to Thee.

If we shall have decisions to make,
help us to ask Thy prudence,
and grant us humility and obedience to take it
when Thou dost give it to us.

If we shall have problems to solve,
help us to ask Thy light upon them,
so that we may see a
clear way through them.

If we shall have hard and difficult things to do,
help us to ask for Thy strength,
so that we may be enabled to do the things
which we could not do ourselves.

If we shall have temptations to face,
help us to seek Thy grace,
remembering that Jesus, because He was tempted,
is able to help others who are tempted.

Help us all through today to decide everything by Thy will, and
to test everything by Thy presence, so that we may come to the
day's ending without mistakes and without regrets: Through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

–The Plain Man's Book of Prayers
William Barclay

Submitted by Pam Lawson

I Believe I Will

By Theresa D. McClellan

Will you run into the wind?

Will you seek the depth of you?

Will you listen

When your heart says

Be Still?

Will you find the joy within?

When all around is dark?

Will you take your light

And spread it all around?

Will you ask yourself

What little thing can I do?

Will you stay

When all around are through?

So I looked inside

Got still

And said

I Believe I will?

Submitted by Theresa McClellan for March 27

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

When it seemed there was no hope
I have seen your light in the eyes of a child.
When it seemed there was no joy
I have heard your delight in the voice of a friend.
When it seemed that life was stale
I have smelled the freshness of sunlight on my skin.
When all seemed emptiness
I have touched your presence in the hand of aa stranger.
When the future seemed barren
I have tasted life's moisture on the lips of another.
Thanks be to you, O God,
For your embodied love.
Open my senses to your presence
That I may love you and care for you in all things.

Reflect

Recall the events of the day and pray for the life of the world

Celtic Benediction by J Philip Newell

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

In the busyness of this day
grant me a stillness of seeing, O God.
In the conflicting voices of my heart
grant me a calmness of hearing.
Let my seeing and hearing
my words and my actions
be rooted in a silent certainty of your presence.
Let my passions for life
and the longings for justice that stir within me
be grounded in the experience of your stillness.
Let my life be rooted in the ground of your peace, O God,
Let me be rooted in the depths of your peace.

Reflect

**“You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me
wisdom in my secret heart.”**

Psalm 51:6

Celtic Benediction by J Philip Newell

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

In the morning light, O God,
may I glimpse again your image deep within me
the threads of eternal glory
woven into the fabric of every man and woman.
Again may I catch sight of the mystery of the human soul
fashioned in your likeness
deeper than knowing
more enduring than time.
And in glimpsing these threads of light
amidst the weakness and distortions of my life
let me be recalled
to the strength and beauty deep in my soul.
Let me be recalled
to the strength and beauty of your image in every living soul.

Celtic Benediction by J Philip Newell

*For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock and salvation
my fortress; I shall never be shaken.*
Psalm 62

Gracious God,
mother, father, friend, beloved:

For you alone our souls in silence wait,
for you alone are our place of safety.

You alone are our rock, our shelter and our
refuge, our ever-welcoming home.

In the stronghold of your heart and in the
enfolding embrace of your arms, we are
safe. We cannot be greatly shaken, for you
will not let us fall.

You have spoken and you speak. Open our
ears and hearts and minds to hear you, our
rock of steadfast love.

My Soul in Silence Waits
Meditations on Psalm 62
By Margaret Guenther

For Prayer and Pondering

What do I want, truly want?

What desires have I suppressed or denied? Why?

What do I love, truly love? How would I “order” these loves?

What is merely liking or attraction?

What can I let go of easily? What should I let go of? What are the loves that define and sustain me?

My Soul in Silence Waits
Meditations on Psalm 62
By Margaret Guenther

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry

Reflect: Where do you find peace?

*How long will you assail me to crush me,
all of you together,
as if you were a leaning fence,
a toppling wall?
They seek only to bring me down from
my place of honor;
lies are their chief delight.
They bless with their lips,
but in their hearts they curse.*
Psalm 62: 3-5

For Prayer and Pondering

Take some time to identify some of your inner enemy voices. How do they divert you from exercising your gifts? How might you diminish their persuasive power?

My Soul in Silence Waits
Meditations on Psalm 62
By Margaret Guenther

For Prayer and Pondering

As we enter another time of quiet and reflection, I invite you to be attentive to your images of God. What do you call God? How do you image God?

For that matter, what does God call you? Does God have a pet name for you? Or a rather stern appellation that makes you sit up straight in apprehension?

How does God image you? What does God see when God looks at you?

My Soul in Silence Waits
Meditations on Psalm 62
By Margaret Guenther

*Once God has spoken;
twice have I heard this:
that power belongs to God,
and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord.
For you repay to all
according to their work.
Psalm 62*

For Prayer and Pondering

How does God speak to you? Might you have missed hearing God's voice because it came unexpectedly, in odd and "unspiritual" times and places?

Can you believe that power and love are compatible?
Can you image a God who is simultaneously all-loving and all-powerful?

Our human loving is a pale reflection of God's love.
Is there a place for power in your loving?

We are promised God's peace – *shalom*. What does this mean to you?

My Soul in Silence Waits
Meditations on Psalm 62
By Margaret Guenther

*When I look at the heavens, the work of your hands,
The moon and the stars that you have made;
What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
Children of the earth that you care for them?
Yet you have created us a little lower than the angels,
And crowned us with glory and honour.*

Psalm 8: 3-5

Reflect

Be still and aware of God's presence within and all around

Celtic Benediction by J Philip Newell

May the light of God
Illumine the heart of my soul.
May the flame of Christ
Kindle me to love.
May the fire of the Spirit
Free me to live
This day, tonight and for ever.

Reflect

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.”

John 8: 12

What does this mean to you?

Celtic Benediction by J Philip Newell

Out of the silence at the beginning of time
you spoke the Word of life.
Out of the world's primeval darkness
you flooded the universe with light.
In the quiet of this place
in the dark of the night
I wait and watch.
In the stillness of my soul
and from its fathomless depths
the senses of my heart are awake to you.
For fresh soundings of life
for new showings of light
I search in the silence of my spirit, O God.

“You are my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?”
Psalm 27: 1

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has
not overcome it.”
John 1: 5

Reflect

Who do you fear? How do you overcome your fears?

Celtic Benediction by J Philip Newell

The Mystery of Christ

As a magnifying glass concentrates the rays of the sun into a little burning know of heat that can set fire to a dry leaf or a piece of paper, so the mystery of Christ in the Gospel concentrates the rays of God's light and fire to a point that sets fire to the spirit of man. And this is why Christ was born and lived in the world and died and returned from death and ascended to His Father in heaven: *ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur.* Through the glass of His Incarnation He concentrates the rays of His Divine Truth and Love upon us so that we feel the burn, and all mystical experience is communicated to men through the Man Christ.

For Christ God is made Man. In Him God and man are no longer separate remote from one another, but inseparable one, unconfused and yet indivisible.

Thomas Merton
New Seeds of Contemplation

Meditation

Meditation is a twofold discipline that has a twofold function.

First it is supposed to give you sufficient control over your mind and memory and will to enable you to recollect yourself and withdraw from exterior things and the business and activities and thoughts and concerns of temporal existence, and second – this is the real end of meditation – it teaches you how to become aware of the presence of God; and most of all it aims at bring you to a state of almost constant loving attention to God, and dependence on Him.

The real purpose of meditation is the: to teach a man how to work himself free of created things and temporal concerns, in which he finds only confusion and sorrow, and enter into a conscious and loving contact with God in which he is disposed to receive from God the help he knows he needs so badly, and to pay to God the praise and honor and thanksgiving and love which it has now become his joy to give.

Thomas Merton
New Seeds of Contemplation

In Psalm 91, we are told, “If you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.”

Does this mean we will not suffer pain or disaster in our lives? While that is a nice thought, I don't know if that is the message.

For some of us, when we were children, when we fell and skinned our knees, our parents hovered over us, making a big deal of the injury, sometimes keeping us in that space of pain and attention.

And for some of us, our parents told us to get up; we can still walk and play, the sting will stop. I wonder if that is the way it is when our eyes are on God.

We don't stay down; we rise to play, love, and laugh another day. Both are good parents. Sometimes we need the extra attention; sometimes, we need to know we can get up. However you see yourself as a child of God, know that God is always by your side.

Submitted by Theresa McClellan

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 116:1, 10-17

1 I love the LORD, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, *
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.

10 How shall I repay the LORD *
for all the good things he has done for me?

11 I will lift up the cup of salvation *
and call upon the Name of the LORD.

12 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people.

13 Precious in the sight of the LORD *
is the death of his servants.

14 O LORD, I am your servant; *
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.

15 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and call upon the Name of the LORD.

16 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people,

17 In the courts of the LORD's house, *
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

Submitted for April 14

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Submitted for April 15

O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16

1 In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame; *
deliver me in your righteousness.

2 Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.

3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.

4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *
for you are my tower of strength.

15 My times are in your hand; *
rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.

16 Make your face to shine upon your servant, *
and in your loving-kindness save me."

REFLECT

In you O Lord have I taken refuge . . . How do you take refuge in God?

Submitted for April 16