

ST JUDE OAK CLIFF LENT 2018

A reflection cobbled together by Rev. Martin Ban, St Jude Oak Cliff.

If no one has told you today that they love you...know that we love you and more importantly, God loves you.

Hey St Juders, Lent is here....

The word "Lent" comes from the Old English word "lengten," which simply means "spring" — when the days lengthen and new life springs forth. It is a time in which we anticipate the victory of the light and life of Christ over the darkness of sin and death. It is, to borrow a phrase from C.S. Lewis, a season of a kind of, "happiness and wonder that makes you serious."

Lent is the season from Ash Wednesday thru Holy Saturday (the day prior to Easter). In total, it's 40 days- not counting the Sundays during the lenten season in which we reflect and respond daily to the mighty deeds of God in history- namely the death of Jesus for us and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Nika Spaulding, our Resident Theologian at St Jude Oak Cliff puts it this way-

"So Ash Wednesday starts our season of Lent, we use this time for fasting and feasting. We fast from many things so we can feast on Jesus. We say no to the things that would distract us from our frailty, our union with Christ, our anticipation of Easter, so we can say yes to the things that would feed us, remind us of our invitation in the life of the triune God and keep our face toward Calvary as our souls chant, Rise!"

Wednesday, February 14th Day 1

Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

Joel 2:13

In his 2013 book *Death By Living*, N.D. Wilson writes about how each human story — messy and mortal and fallen as it is — can be a unique testimony to Christ's resurrection work-

"From the compost of our efforts, God brings glory. ..By His grace, we are the water made wine. We are the dust made flesh made dust made flesh again. We are the whores made brides and the thieves made saints and the killers made apostles. We are the dead made living. We are His cross."

No life is beyond the redemptive power of the Holy Spirit. Even the ugliest, darkest, most hopeless and broken among us are not far from the wholeness and light of life in Christ."

Prayer

Lord, bring us to our knees. Quiet our hearts. Remove us from ourselves. Help us to dismiss our notions of grandeur and relinquish our litany of self-appointed rights: that we deserve jobs, freedom and low gas prices; that our social updates deserve to be paid attention to; that the world revolves around us. Remove us from ourselves Lord, and draw us closer to You. Bring us to a distance — a desert, a depth, a hunger, a practical mystery— so that what we see of ourselves isn't glamour and greatness, but only your grace. Only your righteousness. Only you. Nourish us this Lenten season. We ask you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

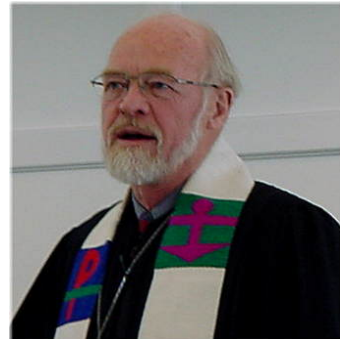
Thursday, February 15th Day 2

O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised to high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

Psalm 131:1-2

"We are surrounded by a way of life in which betterment is understood as expansion, as acquisition as fame. Everyone wants to get more – to be on top – no matter what it is the top of that's admired. There's nothing recent about the temptation. It's the oldest sin in the book. The one that got Adam tossed out of the garden and Lucifer tossed out of heaven. What is new about it is the general admiration and approval it receives."

Eugene Peterson



Prayer

Holy Father, thank you for- You. Teach me gratitude, bug me when I grumble and fill me with satisfaction when I remember your mercies. Hear me and feed me all the nourishment in Jesus. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Friday, February 16th Day 3

And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Luke 18:9-14

Prayer

O Lord my God, there is none holy as You. From the dung-hill of passions the humble is lifted up on high, while the proud-hearted suffers a grievous fall from the height of the virtues: let me flee from my evil ways. Grant me to seek humility, O Savior, and bestow upon me the portion of the Publican. Let me cast away the swollen boasting and evil folly of the Pharisee, his loathsome pride and wicked cruelty, hateful to God

As the Publican, let me beat my breast and cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner," that, like him, I may receive forgiveness. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

(Adapted from the Lenten Triodion, St Tikhon's Seminary)

FOR GOD
SO LOVED
THE
WORLD
THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON,
THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM
SHALL
NOT
PERISH
BUT
HAVE
ETERNAL
LIFE.
JOHN
3:16

Saturday, February 17th Day 4

Jesus said to him, "I Am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him."

John 14:6-7

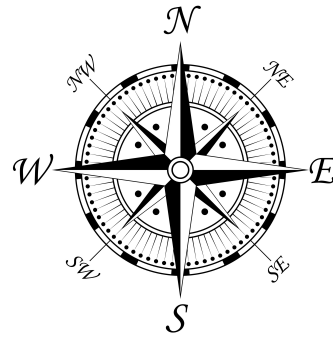
Maps

Antique maps, with curlicues of ink
As borders, framing what we know, like pages
From a book of travelers' tales: look,
Here in the margin, tiny ships at sail,
No-nonsense maps from family trips: each state
Traced out in color coded numbered highways,
A web of roads with labeled city-dots
Punctuating the route and its slow stories.
Now GPS puts me right at the centre,
A Ptolemaic shift in my perspective..
Pinned where I am, right now, somewhere, I turn
And orient myself. I have
Directions calculated, maps at hand:
Hopelessly lost till I look up at last.

Holly Ordway

Prayer

Father, guide me in Your paths, for Your name
sake. In the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen



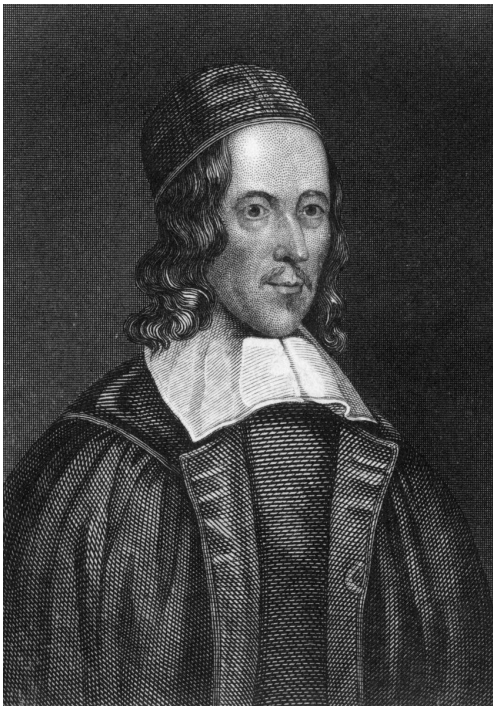
Sunday, February 18th



Monday, February 19th Day 5

And I urge you brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

I Thessalonians 5: 14-18



Prayer

Prayer the church's banquet, angel's age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth
Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tow'r,
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six-days world transposing in an hour,
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
The land of spices; something understood.

George Herbert

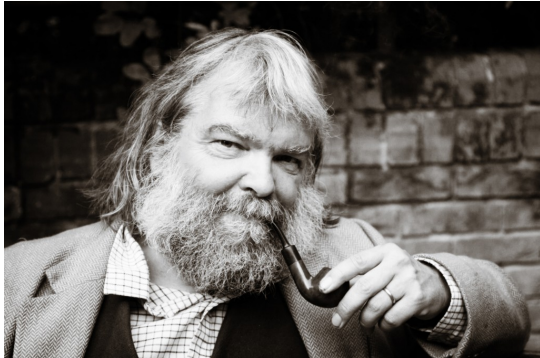
Prayer

Lord, teach us the truth- prayer changes the world. Teach us to pray. Amen

Tuesday, February 20th Day 6

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16



For God So Loved The World

The whole round world, in Greek the total *cosmos*,
Is all encompassed in this loving word;
Not just the righteous, right on, and religious,
But every one of whom you've ever heard,
And all the throng you don't know or ignore,
For everyone is precious in his sight,
Chosen and cherished, loved, redeemed before
The circling cosmos ever saw the light.
He set us in the world that we might flourish
That His beloved world might live through us
We chose instead that all of this should perish
And turned his every blessing to a curse.
And now he gives himself, as Life and Light
That we might choose in Him to set things right.

Malcolm Guite

Prayer

Holy Lord, teach me to love as You Love. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Wednesday, February 21st Day 7

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.

I Thessalonians 5:19-24

Prayer

Lord, help me eat the scriptures I've read and nourish me with all the promises of Jesus so that I can hold fast to what is good. You are good. I love you Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thursday, February 22nd Day 8

Bear one another's burden and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Galatians 6:2-3

The Uses of Sorrow

Someone I loved once gave me a box full of darkness.
It took me years to understand that this, too, was a
gift.

Mary Oliver

Prayer

Lord, bring them to me and I will carry them because You carry me. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Friday, February 23rd Day 9

Brothers, pray for us. Greet all with a holy kiss. I put you under other before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

I Thessalonians 5:25-28

Prayer

Holy God, You love me and live in me by your Holy Spirit. Give me strength and conviction to display that love to You and to others with my soul. You own me. I know that. Hear me in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Saturday, February 24th Day 10

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:14

Batter My Heart

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

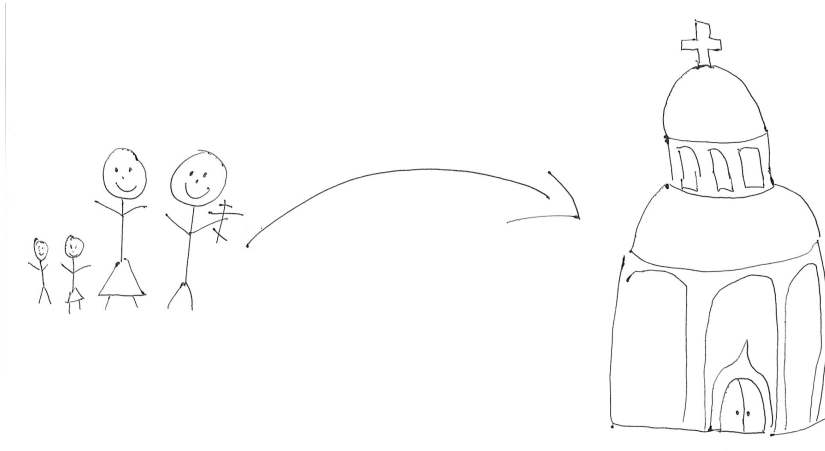
John Donne

Prayer

Holy God, take me to You, imprison me, for I, except You enthrall me, never shall be free. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Sunday, February 25th



Monday, February 26th Day 11

After this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life and we have believed and have come to know, that You are the holy one of God."

John 6:66-69

"I have a lot of faith. But I am also afraid a lot, and have no real certainty about anything. I remembered something Father Tom had told me--that the opposite of faith is not doubt, but certainty. Certainty is missing the point entirely. Faith includes noticing the mess, the emptiness and discomfort, and letting it be there until some light returns."

— Anne Lamott, *Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith*



Prayer

Father, remind me that it is not my faith that saves me or anyone. You save. Through Jesus, You redeem. You love with pure love and even when my faith is weak- You are not. Thank You dear God. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Tuesday, February 27th Day 12

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world.

Hebrews 1:1-2



“God is distant, difficult,” writes Geoffrey Hill, a contemporary religious poet whose work—distant, difficult—might be said to have grown out of the seed of that assumption. But in fact distance from God—the assumption of it—is often not the terror and scourge we make it out to be, but the very opposite: it is false comfort, for it asks nothing immediate of us, or what it asks is interior, intellectual, self-enclosed. The result is a moment of meditative communion, perhaps, or a work of art, or even—O my easy, hazy God—one more little riff on the ineffable. To believe in—to serve—

Christ, on the other hand, is quite difficult, and precisely because of how near he is to us at all times. In Seattle once, when I was twenty-one and working at some crap temp job downtown, I used to spend my lunch hours near the docks. One particular day when everything was crisp, blue, new, and even the molten men emerging from the metal with which they were working, and the bickering gulls buoyed up in gusts, and my own release from numbing office efficiency seemed to verge on some mysterious, tremendous articulation of light and time—suddenly a tattered gangrenous man staggered toward me with his arms out like a soul in hell. Modern spiritual consciousness is predicated upon the fact that God is gone, and spiritual experience, for many of us, amounts mostly to an essential, deeply felt and necessary but ultimately inchoate and transitory feeling of oneness or unity with existence. It is mystical and valuable, but distant. Christ, though, is a thorn in the brain. Christ is God crying I am here, and here not only in what exalts and completes and uplifts you, but here in what appalls, offends, and degrades you, here in what activates and exacerbates all that you would call not-God. To walk through the fog of God toward the clarity of Christ is difficult because of how unlovely, how ungodly that clarity often turns out to be.”

Christian Wiman

Prayer

Lord God, please help me recognize You when You are here. And You are here. Emmanuel. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Wednesday, February 28th Day 13

He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and received him joyfully.

Luke 19:1-6



Ah! happy day they whose hearts can break
And peace of pardon win!
How else may man make straight his plan
And cleanse his soul from Sin?
How else but through a broken heart
May Lord Christ enter in?

And he of the swollen purple throat.
And the stark and staring eyes,
Waits for the holy hands that took
The Thief to Paradise;
And a broken and a contrite heart
The Lord will not despise.

Oscar Wilde

Prayer

Lord God, forgive me for passing by so many who follow You. Show me who they are and I will welcome them too. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Lord Jesus, You walk everywhere incognito. Amen.

Thursday, March 1st Day 14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

The Coming

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look, he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted building
Cast their shadows; a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.

On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. Many people
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

RS Thomas

Friday, March 2nd Day 15

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.

I Peter 5:6-7



(Father RS Thomas riding near the church he served.....)

Prayer

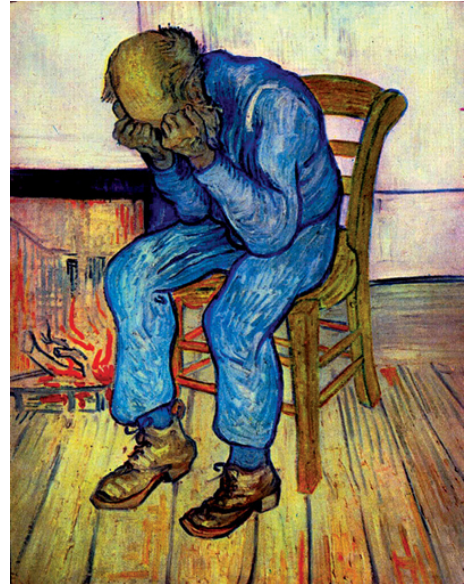
Thank You Jesus for throwing Yourself into this mess and making it Yours- making it beautiful and letting us participate in Your Kingdom renewal project. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In A Country Church

To one kneeling down no word came,
Only the wind's song, saddening the lips
Of the grave saints, rigid in glass;
Or the dry whisper of unseen wings,
Bats not angels, in the high roof.

Was he balked by silence? He kneeled long,
And saw love in a dark crown
Of thorns blazing, and a winter tree
Golden with fruit of a man's body.

RS Thomas



Prayer

Lord, give us patience on our knees so that at long last we may sense your crown of thorns blazing and watchful gaze and sweet provision for us. We pray in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Saturday, March 3rd Day 16

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you.

John 15:16

"Yes I feel it, when I am charitable, it is Jesus alone who is acting in me, and the more I am united to Him, the more also do I love....(others)..."

St. Therese of Lisieux



Prayer

Lord, thank you for choosing us to bear Your good news and the grace of Your Kingdom to the world. Thank you for including us in Your divine mission. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sunday, March 4th



Monday, March 5th Day 17

**The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Psalms 118:22-24

In the parable of the tenants, the owner of a vineyard leases his property to others and travels abroad. While away, he sends his servants to collect his share of the fruit from the land, but the tenants beat his servants and then kill them. Finally, he sends his son to collect the fruit, reasoning, "They will respect my son" (Mark 12:6). But he is wrong. They kill his son too.

Jesus explained what the parable meant by quoting Psalm 118: "Have you not read this Scripture: 'This stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" (Mark 12:10-11, cf. Matthew 21:42). In other words, God is the owner of the



vineyard. The tenants are his people. They were supposed to give him the fruit of their lives through worship and obedience. But they rejected his prophets and messengers. Finally, he sent his Son. But they rejected him too. In rebellion, they would not respect or honor him as the Son of God. Instead, they killed him. Yet Jesus was not swept away by a storm of angry and uncontrolled men. His rejection was according to the intentional plan of God — "the Lord's doing."

This is “marvelous in our eyes” because the death of Christ defeated death itself. We rejoice because God picked up Jesus from the grave and made him the cornerstone of salvation for everyone who believes. In him, therefore, we will live and never die (John. 11:25-27).

— *By The Park Forum (Bethany Jenkins)*

Prayer

Thank You Jesus for defeating death itself and giving us hope and life in Your death and resurrection. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

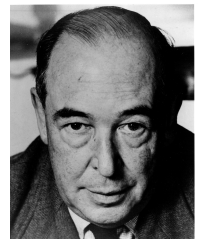
Tuesday, March 6th Day 18

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:26

No Ordinary People

"It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations -these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously – no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner – no mere tolerance, or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ vere latitat – the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself is truly hidden."



C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

Prayer

Lord, give me the grace to love my neighbor as myself. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Wednesday, March 7th Day 19

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:5-7

"Christ's self-emptying was neither a simple gesture nor a limited one. He emptied himself even to the assuming of human nature, even to accepting death, death on a cross (Philippians 2:7). Who is there that can adequately gauge the greatness of the humility, gentleness, and self-surrender, revealed by the Lord of majesty in assuming human nature, in accepting the punishment of death, the shame of the cross? But somebody will say: "Surely the Creator could have restored his original plan without all that hardship?" Yes, he could, but he chose the way of personal suffering so that man would never again have to reason to display that worst and most hateful of all vices, ingratitude. Even if God made you out of nothing, you have not been redeemed out of nothing. In six days he created all things, and among them, you. On the other hand, for a period of thirty whole years he worked your salvation in the midst of the earth. What he endured in those labors! To his bodily needs and the abuses from his enemies did he not add the mightier burden of the humiliation of the cross, and crown it all with the horror of his death? And this was indeed necessary. Man and beast you save, O Lord (Psalm 36:6). How you have multiplied your mercy, O God!"



Bernard of Clairvaux

Prayer

Lord, in this season of Lent, give us grateful hearts and remove all petty ingratitude from us. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thursday, March 8th Day 20

By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:8-10



"All the natural movements of the soul are controlled by laws analogous to those of physical gravity. Grace is the only exception. Grace fills empty spaces, but it can only enter where there is a void to receive it, and it is grace itself which makes this void. The imagination is continually at work filling up all the fissures through which grace might pass."

Simone Weil

Prayer

Holy God, take away all the muck and crud inside me. Create the necessary voids within and fill all the empty spaces in me with Your grace. the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Friday, March 9th Day 21

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is of the Lord.

Proverbs 16:33

"Do you think Friday unlucky? No, I think Friday lucky, All Christian people, whatever their lighter superstitions, have always thought Friday lucky. Otherwise they would have talked about Bad Friday instead of Good Friday."

G.K. Chesterton

Prayer

Lord, thank you for this good day. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Saturday, March 10th Day 22

For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works and my soul knows it well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Psalm 139:13-15

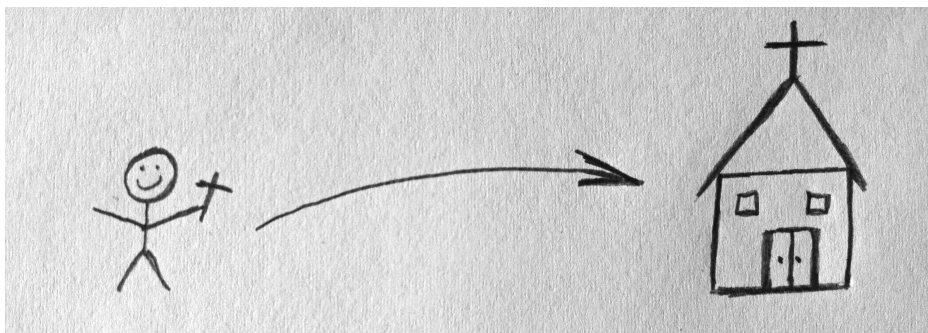
We were created for the purpose of glorifying God by living in right relationship as Jesus Christ did, by becoming holy through the power of the Spirit of God, by existing as persons in communion with God and every other creature.

(On the tombstone of Dr. Catherine Lacugna, Christian theologian)

Prayer

Thank you for Your Holy Spirit that keeps us in right relationship with you, Dear God, and others. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sunday, March 11th



Monday, March 12th Day 23

In Him we live and move and have our being. Even as some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed His offspring.'

Acts 17:28

In both the eternal and temporal existence of God, it is the nature of God to-be-for, to-be-toward, to exist as persons in communion. God initiates and sustains intimate, covenanted relationship with a people, God takes on flesh and undergoes death, God dwells in our hearts, because God lives from all eternity as self-communicating, self-giving love and communion. God incorporates all of creation into that life of communion. it is in this sense that we literally exist, we 'have our being' in God. The life of God does not belong to God alone.



Dr. Catherine Lacugna, Christian Theologian

Prayer

Thank you God for being for us and that Your life does not belong to You alone, but to us too. Bless you, gracious God. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tuesday, March 13th Day 24

Be still and know that I am God.

Psalms 46:10

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am.

Be still and know.

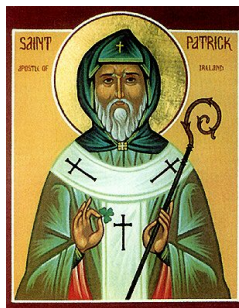
Be still.

Be.

St Patrick of Ireland

Prayer

Still my soul Lord. Amen.



Wednesday, March 14th Day 25

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, He was hungry. And the tempter came to Him and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But He answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

Matthew 4:1-4

'A sacred place is good for looking down from;
You stand above the world on holy heights,
Here on the pinnacle, above the maelstrom
Among the few, the true, unearthly lights.
Here you can breathe the thin air of perfection
And feel your kinship with the lonely star,
Above the shadow and the pale reflection,
Here you can know for certain who you are.
The world is stalled below, but you could move it
If they could know you as you are up here,
Of course they'll doubt, but here's your chance to prove it
Angels will bear you up, so have no fear....'
'I was not sent to look down from above
It's fear that sets these tests and proofs, not Love.'

Malcolm Guite

Prayer

Lord, deliver us from our temptations and feed us with the Bread of heaven. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thursday, March 15th Day 26

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw 2 brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men."

Matthew 4:18-19

"Jesus promised his disciples three things—that they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy, and in constant trouble."

G.K. Chesterton

Prayer

Thank you Lord for the honor of knowing You, following You. Give us the constant gift of absurd happiness and grant us Your presence when trouble comes. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

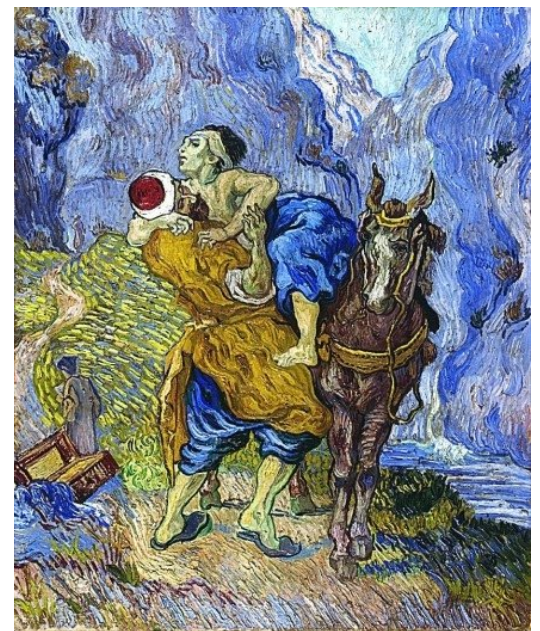
Friday, March 16th Day 27

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

Matthew 9:12-13

Just suppose that there were a great plague which affected a wide area of the world. Then some doctor in his laboratory found the remedy for this plague and made it available to everyone. There would be some who would seek the remedy. There would be others who would not. They might say, 'How do I know he has the remedy? Why should I bother? I will cure myself.' Are they not all potentially saved? It is certainly not the fault of the scientist that they are not cured. It is the fault of the people themselves. So it is with the person of Christ. He brought salvation to all men. It is up to us to find that salvation in Him.

Fulton Sheen



Prayer

Jesus, You are the Savior, the Redeemer, the Lord. Thank you for Your healing mercies. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Saturday, March 17th Day 28 (St Patrick's Day)

Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 18:3-4

Children's Song

We live in our own world
A world that is too small
For you to stoop and enter
Even on hands and knees
The adult subterfuge.
And though you probe and pry
With analytic eye,
And eavesdrop all our talk
With an amused look,
You cannot find the centre
Where we dance, where we play
Where life is still asleep
Under the closed flower,
Under the smooth shell
Of eggs in the cupped nest
That mock the faded blue
Of your remoter heaven.

R. S. Thomas



Prayer

Holy God, grant us childlike wonder and take away all childish tendencies. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Sunday, March 18th



Monday, March 19th Day 29

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:31-32

Oh stand,
Stand at the window
As tears scald and start;
You shall love your crooked neighbor
With your crooked heart.

W. H. Auden

Prayer

By Your grace, I can do it Lord. I can and will love them. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Tuesday, March 20th Day 30

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about Him, so that He got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying, "A sower went out to sow...."

Matthew 13:1-3

"We are constantly beset by the notion that we ought to perceive ourselves springing up quickly, like the seed on stony ground; show striking signs of spiritual growth. But perhaps we are only required to go on quietly, making root, growing nice and bushy; docile to the great slow rhythm of life. When we see no startling marks of our own religious progress or our usefulness to God, it is well to remember the baby in the stable and the little boy in the streets of Nazareth."

Evelyn Underhill

Prayer

Lord Jesus root me in Yourself, now in for all time. Amen.



Wednesday, March 21st Day 31

I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore, I have continued my faithfulness to you.

Jeremiah 31:3

"And the Word that had most recently come from the mouth of God was, "This is my beloved in whom I am well pleased." Identity. It's always God's first move. Before we do anything wrong and before we do anything right, God has named and claimed us as God's own. But almost immediately, other things try to tell us who we are and to whom we belong: capitalism, the weight-loss industrial complex, our parents, kids at school—they all have a go at telling us who we are. But only God can do that. Everything else is temptation."

Nadia Bolz-Weber

Prayer

God, help me believe that You have named me and claimed me for Your own. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Thursday, March 22nd Day 32

I will take you to be My people, and I will be Your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord Your God, who has brought you out from under the burden of the Egyptians.

Exodus 6:7

"The God of the Old Testament did not distance Himself from His chosen people; He participated in their struggles and made Israel's enemies His own. Israel's own transgressions grieved Him and incited Him to a terrible wrath. Ours is no aloof Lord--no Buddha beyond it all or Zeus making light of mortal travail. Among the world religions Christianity is unique in presenting a suffering God, a God who took human suffering upon Himself and in His agony gave birth to mankind's salvation."

John Updike

Prayer

Thank you for Your Incarnate participation in my life. I love you Lord. Amen.



Friday, March 23rd Day 33

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 1:15-16

Every Riven Thing

God goes, belonging to every riven thing he's made
sing his being simply by being
the thing it is:
stone and tree and sky,
man who sees and sings and wonders why

God goes. Belonging, to every riven thing he's made,
means a storm of peace.
Think of the atoms inside the stone.



Think of the man who sits alone
trying to will himself into a stillness where

God goes belonging. To every riven thing he's made
there is given one shade shaped exactly to the thing itself:
under the tree a darker tree;
under the man the only man to see

God goes belonging to every riven thing. He's made
the things that bring him near,
made the mind that makes him go.
A part of what man knows,
apart from what man knows,

God goes belonging to every riven thing he's made.

Christian Wiman

Prayer

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thank you for being Lord in every riven thing. Amen.



Saturday, March 24th Day 34

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him. Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints. For those who fear Him have no lack.

Psalm 34:8-9

"Belatedly I loved thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new, belatedly I loved thee. For see, thou wast within and I was without, and I sought thee out there. Unlovely, I rushed heedlessly among the lovely things thou hast made. Thou wast with me, but I was not with thee. These things kept me far from thee; even though they were not at all unless they were in thee. Thou didst call and cry aloud, and didst force open my deafness. Thou didst gleam and shine, and didst chase away my blindness. Thou didst breathe fragrant odors and I drew in my breath; and now I pant for thee. I tasted, and now I hunger and thirst. Thou didst touch me, and I burned for thy peace."

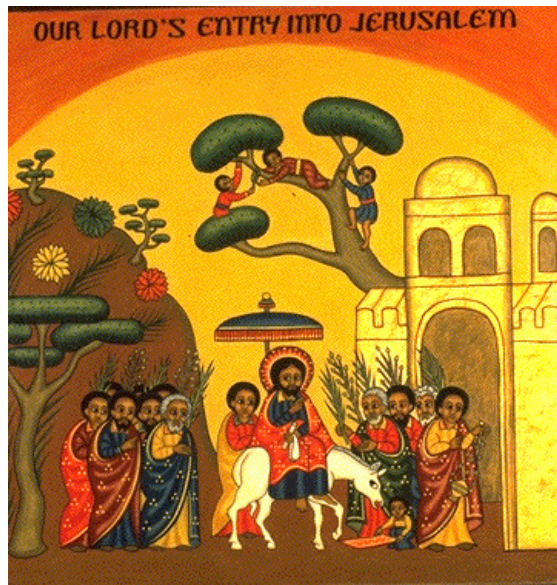
St Augustine



Prayer

Lord, give us Your grace. Not just information, but tangible, nourishing, incarnate grace. And touch us so that we burn for Your peace. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Palm Sunday, March 25th



Monday, March 26th Day 35 (Jesus cleanses the Temple)

And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And He would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And He was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations' But you have made it a den of robbers."

Mark 15-17

"What is the significance of Jesus cleansing the temple? God is now doing something that makes this system redundant. By overturning the tables, he stops the animal sacrifices. By stopping the sacrificial system, he is symbolically saying, 'This whole system is under judgment, and before too long it will stop completely, because the temple will be destroyed.'"

N. T. Wright



Prayer

Thank you Jesus for being the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Thank you for being the Temple of God who visits us and lives in us by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tuesday, March 27th Day 36 (Jesus teaches the parable of the wedding feast)

The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and he sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, See I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast." But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized the servants, treated them shamefully and killed them. The king was angry and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find." And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guest.

Matthew 22:2-10

Salvation is not by works, and the heavenly banquet is not an option. We are saved only by our acceptance of a party already in progress, and God has paid for that party at the price of his own death. And since he counts only those two things - only faith and grace - nothing else counts. Outside of the party, there is no life at all.....



He does not invite the good and snub the bad. He invites us all, while we are yet sinners; and he simply asks us to trust that invitation. And therefore because the remaining inhabitants of his kingdom, good and bad, did just that - because the working poor and the walking wounded, the bag ladies, the prostitutes, and the derelicts drinking Muscatel in doorways just said yes and came to the wedding - they are all home free.... "The wedding hall," Jesus says, "was filled with guests."

Robert Farrar Capon

Prayer

Thank you Lord that outside of Your party, there is no life at all and that only two things count- faith and grace. And that You are the supplier of both. Amen.

Wednesday, March 28th, Day 37 (The woman anoints Jesus at Bethany)

And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over His head. There were some who said to themselves indignantly. "Why was this ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her. She has done a beautiful thing to Me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good to them. But you will not always have Me. She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for burial. And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."



Mark 14:3-9

"It always happens, when people decide to worship Jesus without inhibition – to pour out their valuables, their stories, their dancing, their music, before him just the way they feel like doing – that others, looking on, find the spectacle embarrassing and distasteful. I, who have loved the formal church music of my tradition from boyhood, know only too well the temptation to look down on other, less inhibited, styles of music, which sometimes lack a certain polish but often add a certain integrity, a wholeness of spirit. Not everyone is called to pour out expensive ointment over Jesus' head; but if someone is, the rest should respect it....The second half of Jesus' comment places a startling interpretation on the woman's action. She has, he says, anointed his body for burial. She has done it ahead of time, presumably because, as Jesus knows, he will be killed in such a way that there may not be a chance for a proper anointing at the time. He is not implying that the woman has any actual knowledge of his coming fate. She has simply acted spontaneously, out of the fullness of her heart. She has, in fact, gone intuitively right to the heart of things, cutting through the male objections on the one hand, and contrasting with the male plots on the other. Not for nothing is this story sometimes held up as an example of a woman getting it right while all around her men are getting it wrong."

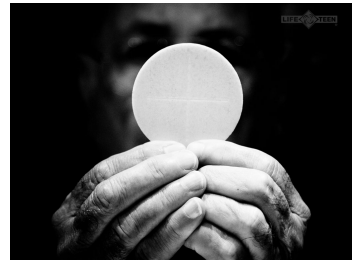
N.T. Wright

Prayer

Lord give us freedom and gumption to love You, worship You with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength. Amen.

Maundy Thursday, March 29th Day 38

And as they were eating, He took bread, and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to them and said, "Take; this is My body." And He took the cup and when he had given thanks, He gave it to them and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."



Mark 14:22-25

"The Purpose of the Eucharist lies not in the change of the bread and wine, but in the partaking of Christ, who has become our food, our life, the manifestation of the Church as the body of Christ."

Alexander Schmemmann

Prayer

Thank you Jesus for being the bread of life that gives life to the world. Feed us for Your namesake. Amen.

Good Friday, March 30th Day 39

After this, Jesus knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill scripture, "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to His mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished." And He bowed His head and gave up His Spirit.

John 19:28-30

"...we are saved by Christ alone who raises us from the dead - from the absolution of our death. We come before him at the judgement with no handwriting whatsoever against us. It's simply cheating to say you believe that and then renege on it by postulating some list of extra-rotten crimes for which Christ has to send you to hell. He, the universal Redeemer, is the only judge; as far as he's concerned, the only mandatory sentence is to life and life abundant."

Robert Farrar Capon

Prayer

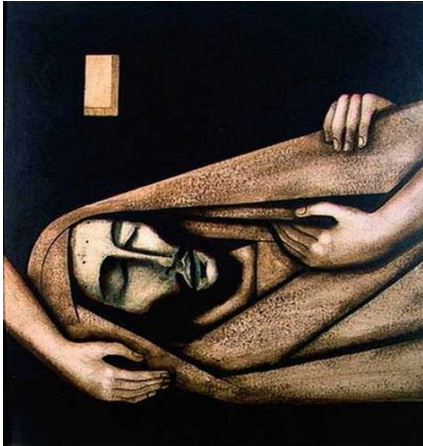
Thank you Lord that there is no handwriting whatsoever against us. It is finished. Amen.



Holy Saturday, March 31st

Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and action: and was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid Him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the day of Preparation and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with Him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Luke 23:50-56



"That was where Jesus spent Holy Saturday: in a dark hole in the ground, doing absolutely nothing. It was the Sabbath, after all. His friends had worked hard to make sure he was laid to rest before the sun went down. Then they went home to rest too, because that was what they did on Saturdays. Once it was clear that there was nothing they could do to secure their own lives or the lives of those they loved, they rested in the presence of the Maker of All Life and waited to see what would happen next...

Though Christians speak of "witnesses to the resurrection," there were no witnesses. Everyone who saw Jesus alive again saw him after. As many years as I have been listening to Easter sermons, I have never heard anyone talk about that part. Resurrection is always

announced with Easter lilies, the sound of trumpets, bright streaming light. But it did not happen that way. Whatever happened to Jesus between Saturday and Sunday, it happened in the dark, with the smell of damp stone and dug earth in the air. It happened where no one but him could talk about it later, and he did not talk about it -- at least not so anyone could explain it to anyone else....That is what Holy Saturday has taught me about being Christian. Between the great dramas of life, there is almost always a time of empty waiting -- with nothing to do and no church service to help -- a time when it is necessary to come up with your own words and see how they sound with no other sounds to cover them up. If you are willing to rest in this Sabbath, where you cannot see your hand in front of your face and none of your self-protective labors can do you one bit of good, then you may come as close to the Christ as you will ever get -- there in that quiet cave where you wait to see how the Maker of All Life will choose to come to you in the dark."

Barbara Brown Taylor

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we rest in You on this Holy Saturday. In the Triune name of God. Amen.

