

LENT

A GUIDE FOR PRAYER & READING



2022 • CHURCH OF THE
INCARNATION

Crucifixion (After the altarpiece at Tölz) | Lovis Corinth
Drypoint | 1921-22 | German

/ Introduction

The Season of Lent

Lent is a forty-day journey of preparation, self-denial, repentance, and renewal. It begins on Ash Wednesday and continues through Holy Saturday, when we await the burst of resurrection life that is Easter Sunday.

The lenten journey echoes Israel's forty years in the wilderness and Jesus' forty days of testing in the wilderness. The wilderness has a way of softening our hearts and quieting the noise outside us and within us. It's an opportunity to more deeply commune God and give our attention to Him. It isn't for the spiritually self-satisfied. Every ordinary disciple of Jesus is encouraged to set aside this time to fan the flame of God's grace in our hearts.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is an adaptation of Sacred Space, a method of prayer and Scripture reading developed by the Irish Jesuits. This way of praying creates space in our busy lives for stillness, engagement with God's Word, and honest conversation with him.

Begin on the left side of the guide. Spend a few moments with the artwork and the short poem or thought each day as a way to settle in before beginning to pray.

The right side guides you through seven movements of prayer and Scripture reading:

- We begin by offering to God the **hospitality of silence**, which allows us to prepare to commune with him.
- Next, we take a moment to recognize God's loving **presence** with us.
- We then use the **freedom** God has given us by opening ourselves to his guidance and grace.
- The next stage, **consciousness**, calls us to awareness of ourselves—our thoughts, feelings, and/or the events of the past day.
- We then read **the Word of God**. As time allows, read the passage several times, imagining the scene playing out around you, noticing what strikes you about the passage or what thoughts and emotions emerge as you read.
- This leads to **conversation** with Jesus, where we speak honestly about what is on our hearts and minds after engaging with Scripture.
- We end with the **conclusion**, which includes a Collect (set prayer) for the week. You may wish to simply sit in silence for awhile, enjoying God's peace and presence.

Note: the readings follow those set in N.T. Wright's *Lent for Everyone: Luke, Year C*. You may wish to purchase this guide as well and read it during the "Word of God" section for further inspiration.

/ Community Practices

1. **Worship.** Adjust your schedule to participate in these additional services.
 - Ash Wednesday, **March 2**
 - Maundy Thursday, **April 14**
 - Good Friday, **April 15**
 - Easter Sunrise Service, **April 17**
 - Easter Sunday, **April 17**
2. **Fasting.** In a fast, we deny ourselves the necessities of food and drink in order to experience a physical lack that points us to our fundamental need for Christ. Sundays always celebrate the resurrection, and therefore are never fast days. During Lent, we participate in two types of fasting:
 - **The Lenten Fast**, where we abstain, for the entirety of Lent, from some food or drink item we normally enjoy (such as meat, caffeine, alcohol, etc.). The low-grade hunger we feel points us daily to Jesus, the true giver of joy and satisfaction.
 - **A Total Fast**, practiced at the beginning and end of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, we fast for the entire day. The second total fast begins on the evening of Maundy Thursday until breakfast during the Easter Sunrise Service, or Holy Communion later that morning. During the total fast, we experience real hunger pains, allowing us to turn our attention to our longing and hunger for Christ.
3. **Scripture and Prayer.** During Lent, we as a church “turn up the dial” just a notch on our spiritual disciplines of prayer and Scripture reading. If your own habits have fallen by the wayside, this season provides a wonderful chance to start afresh.

This devotional can stretch to meet your level of habit. If you're just starting out, it can be done in as little as 10 minutes. Carry this guide with you to use during a break, or wake up a few minutes earlier each day to pray. A small adjustment in your routine can provide the on-ramp needed to form a lasting habit.

This devotional guides us in reading through Luke's Gospel slowly and meditatively. However, we also ought to read the Bible at a run, getting caught up in the story like we would a good novel. At some point over the course of Lent, set aside a chunk of time to read Luke's Gospel in one sitting. (It takes about two hours.)

Some of us learn better by listening than by reading. If that's true of you, the ESV provides free audio readings of the entire Bible on the ESV Bible app, as well as their website, www.esv.org.

4. **Engaging Lent with the Senses.** Many people place a cross in their home as an external reminder of Jesus' sacrifice and our call to live cross-shaped lives. When doing your devotions, lighting a candle can provide a tangible reminder that Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12) and that our prayers are a pleasing aroma in God's presence (Revelation 5:12).

Entering Lent

Ash Wed, 3.2	†	Luke 1:1–56
Thu, 3.3	†	Luke 1:57–80
Fri, 3.4	†	Luke 2:1–21
Sat, 3.5	†	Luke 4:1–13



The Temptation | J. Kirk Richards
Oil on Canvas | 1999

You all know what the third temptation of Jesus was. It was the temptation of power. "I will give you all the kingdoms of the world in their splendor;" the demon said to Jesus...What makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible? Maybe it is that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people, easier to own life than to love life.

– Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*

The Hospitality of Silence

Take a few moments to become still. Take several deep breaths in, and breathe out more slowly. Detach from hurry as you recognize God's presence with you.

The Presence of God

"Come to me, all who are burdened, and I will give you rest."
Here I am, Lord. I come to seek your presence. I long for your healing power.

Freedom

Lord God I thank you for the gift of freedom. Help me to use this gift with integrity. I am free to make choices. Help me to choose to follow you, to live in a Christian way by caring for others.

Consciousness

Sometimes I get overwhelmed by the cares of this world.
At times like these may I be aware of the comfort of your presence,
your infinite love for me.

The Word of God

The grass withers, and the flowers fade, but the Word of the Lord stands forever.
Find the reading on the opposite page. When you are ready, return here to continue.

Conversation

How is God the Spirit stirring me as I read?
Am I calmed and led to patience?
Is He teaching me something new?
Is my conscience pricked toward repentance?

Conclusion

I thank God for the moments we have spent together. If I am able, I spend some time simply enjoying him in silence. When ready, I pour my heart into this prayer:

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

– Collect for Ash Wednesday, *Book of Common Prayer*

First Week of Lent

Sun, 3.6	†	Psalm 91
Mon, 3.7	†	Luke 2:22–32
Tue, 3.8	†	Luke 3:3–6, 10–14
Wed, 3.9	†	Luke 4:14–30
Thu, 3.10	†	Luke 5:1–11
Fri, 3.11	†	Luke 6:20–27
Sat, 3.12	†	Luke 13:31–35



Parable of the Sower | Bruegel
Oil, tin | 1647-49

Christ's cross...whether we like it or not, we are involved. Our sins put him there. So, far from offering us flattery, the cross undermines our self-righteousness. We can stand before it only with a bowed head and a broken spirit. And there we remain until the Lord Jesus speaks to our hearts his word of pardon and acceptance, and we, gripped by his love and full of thanksgiving, go out into the world to live our lives in his service.

– John R.W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

The Hospitality of Silence

Take a few moments to settle the body and mind. If distracting thoughts or feelings arise, gently return your attention to your breathing and a simple prayer such as this: "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me."

The Presence of God

When I come into your presence, O Lord, I know I am in the presence of my Creator. You created me out of Love. You even know the number of hairs on my head. Your presence, O Lord, is the greatest of all.

Freedom

"I am free."

When I look at these words in writing, they seem to create in me a feeling of awe. Yes, a wonderful feeling of freedom. Thank you, God.

Consciousness

How do I find myself today?

Where am I with God? With others?

Do I have something to be grateful for? Then I give thanks.

Is there something I am sorry for? Then I ask forgiveness.

The Word of God

I read God's Word slowly, perhaps several times.

Find the reading on the opposite page. When you are ready, return here to continue.

Conversation

What feelings spring up as I pray with the Word of God?

I imagine Jesus sitting with me in the room,

and I speak these things to him as a close friend.

Conclusion

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations, and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

– Collect for the First Sunday in Lent, *Book of Common Prayer*

Second Week of Lent

Sun, 3.13	†	Psalm 27
Mon, 3.14	†	Luke 7:11-17
Tue, 3.15	†	Luke 7:18–28
Wed, 3.16	†	Luke 8:22–39
Thu, 3.17	†	Luke 8:40–56
Fri, 3.18	†	Luke 9:18–27
Sat, 3.19	†	Luke 13:1–9



Christ Reviled from Miserere | Georges Rouault
Etching and aquatint on wove paper | 1948

God did not change his mind about us on account of the cross or on any other account. He did not need to have his mind changed. He was never opposed to us. It is not his opposition to us but our opposition to him that had to be overcome, and the only way it could be overcome was from God's side, by God's initiative, from inside human flesh — the human flesh of the Son. The divine hostility, or wrath of God, has always been an aspect of his love.

– Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion*

The Hospitality of Silence

Take a few moments to become still. Take several deep breaths in, and breathe out more slowly. Detach from hurry as you recognize God's presence with you.

The Presence of God

To be present is to arrive as one is and open up to the other.
At this instant, as I arrive here, God is present waiting for me.
God always arrives before me, desiring to connect with me
even more than my most intimate friend.
I take a moment and greet my loving God.

Freedom

If God were trying to tell me something, would I know?
If God were reassuring me or challenging me, would I notice?
I ask for the grace to be free of my own preoccupations
and open to what God may be saying to me.

Consciousness

I am surrounded by your loving presence, Lord,
but I am aware of my fragility and weakness.
Thank you that I can face my shortcomings in your merciful embrace.

The Word of God

I read God's Word slowly, several times.
Find the reading on the opposite page. When you are ready, return here to continue.

Conversation

Dear Lord, help me each day to seek your presence more and more.
Fill my heart with love for you.

Conclusion

I thank God that he desires to be with me, and I thank him for his presence.
When I'm ready, I pour my heart into this prayer:

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities that may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

– Collect for the Second Sunday in Lent, *Book of Common Prayer*

Third Week of Lent

Sun, 3.20	†	Psalm 63:1–8
Mon, 3.21	†	Luke 9:57–62
Tue, 3.22	†	Luke 10:25–37
Wed, 3.23	†	Luke 11:1–8
Thu, 3.24	†	Luke 11:33–36
Fri, 3.25	†	Luke 12:22–32
Sat, 3.26	†	Luke 15:1–3, 11–32



Crossing the Red Sea | Ivanka Demchuk
Mixed technique on canvas and wood
Ukraine

As a noble wrestler, great in skill and courage, does not choose opponents for himself, lest he cause suspicion that he is fearful of some...so also, the Life of all, our Lord and Savior Christ, did not contrive death for his own body, lest he should appear fearful of some other death, but he accepted and endured on the cross that inflicted by others, especially his enemies, which they reckoned fearful and ignominious and shameful, in order that this being destroyed, he might himself be believed to be Life, and the power of death might be completely annihilated.

– St. Ignatius, *On the Incarnation*

The Hospitality of Silence

I cannot make anything happen on my own strength,
but I can prepare myself for God to speak to me.
I still myself in mind, body, and spirit.

The Presence of God

The more we call on God, the more we can feel God's presence.
Day by day we are drawn closer to the loving heart of God.

Freedom

Lord, I let go of the worries, resentments and fears
that I can sometimes hold on to so tightly.
Let me open my hands and my heart to receive freely
all the gifts that I need at this time.

Consciousness

Knowing that God loves me unconditionally, I can afford to be honest about how I am.
What are my fears and desires? What do I expect from God?
What am I willing to give to God—from my emotions and talents, thoughts and
energy? And how do I feel now? I share my feelings openly with the Lord.

The Word of God

I read today's passage slowly, repeatedly, paying attention to where the Holy Spirit
may be taking hold of me.
Find the reading on the opposite page. When you are ready, return here to continue.

Conversation

What struck me as I read?
I think of this as the Holy Spirit "highlighting" that word or phrase.
I speak to Jesus vulnerably about what stirs in me as I ruminate on today's passage.

Conclusion

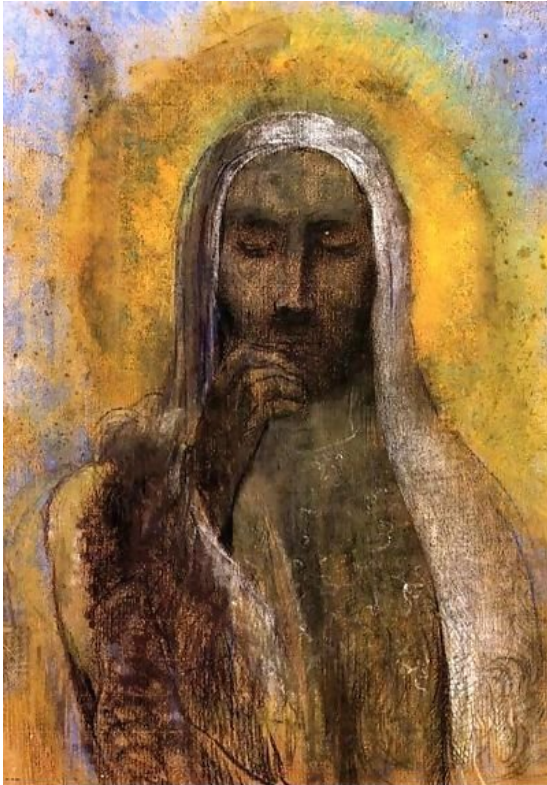
I thank God for the time we've spent together.
When I'm ready, I pour my heart into this prayer:

*Heavenly Father, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest
in you: Look with compassion upon the heartfelt desires of your servants, and purify our
disordered affections, that we may behold your eternal glory in the face of Christ Jesus;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

– Collect for the Third Sunday in Lent, *Book of Common Prayer*

Fourth Week of Lent

Sun, 3.27	†	Psalm 32
Mon, 3.28	†	Luke 12:35–59
Tue, 3.29	†	Luke 13:22–30
Wed, 3.30	†	Luke 14:25–33
Thu, 3.31	†	Luke 15:4–10
Fri, 4.1	†	Luke 16:1–12
Sat, 4.2	†	John 12:1–8



Christ in Silence
Odilon Redon
Charcoal, paper
c. 1897

Some of us believe that God is almighty,
and can do everything;
and that he is all wise,
and may do everything;
but that he is all love,
and will do everything—
there we draw back.

– Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*

The Hospitality of Silence

I quiet myself from whatever I'm bringing into this moment. I offer to God the hospitality of my silence.

The Presence of God

At any time of the day or night we can call on Jesus.
He is always waiting, listening for our call.
What a wonderful blessing.
No phone needed, no e-mails, just a whisper.

Freedom

"In these days, God taught me as a schoolteacher teaches a pupil." (St. Ignatius)
I remind myself that there are things God has to teach me yet, and I ask for the grace to hear them and let them change me.

Consciousness

How am I within myself today? Am I particularly preoccupied, down, or tired?
If so, can I resist the temptation to pile on anxious thoughts
and meet those feelings with stillness and trust?

The Word of God

"[Hurry] is deadly when dealing with a Word that holds the mystery of God"
(Mariano Magrassi). Slowly, expectantly, I read today's passage.
Find the reading on the opposite page. When you are ready, return here to continue.

Conversation

Begin to talk to Jesus about the piece of scripture you have just read.
What part of it strikes a chord in you?
Perhaps the words of a friend, or a story you have heard recently,
will slowly rise to the surface of your consciousness.
If so, does this throw light on what the scripture passage may be trying to say to you?

Conclusion

I thank God that he desires to be with me, and I thank him for his presence.
When I'm ready, I pour my heart into this prayer:

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

– Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Lent, *Book of Common Prayer*

Fifth Week of Lent

Sun, 4.3	†	Psalm 126
Mon, 4.4	†	Luke 17:11–19
Tue, 4.5	†	Luke 18:9–14
Wed, 4.6	†	Luke 19:1–10
Thu, 4.7	†	Luke 20:9–19
Fri, 4.8	†	Luke 21:7–19
Sat, 4.9	†	Luke 22:1–23:49



Sheep Behind a Fence | Chaim Soutine
Oil, canvas | c. 1940

In the Cross is salvation;
in the Cross is life;
in the Cross is protection against our enemies;
in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness;
in the Cross is strength of mind;
in the Cross is joy of spirit;
in the Cross is excellence of virtue;
in the Cross is perfection of holiness.
There is no salvation of soul, nor hope of eternal life,
save in the Cross.

– Thomas à Kempis, *The Inner Life*

The Hospitality of Silence

“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Take several slow, deep breaths. Relax in God's presence.

The Presence of God

Jesus, apart from you I can do nothing.

I take these quiet moments now to become aware of your presence with me.

Freedom

Lord you gave me life and the gift of freedom.

Through your love I exist in this world.

May I never take the gift of life for granted.

May I always respect the right to life of others.

Consciousness

When I return to my everyday tasks, remind me, Lord,
that you are always there beside me.

I need never despair.

The Word of God

“Scripture is an unfathomable world...We may venture there, but we can never say we have reached the bottom” (Mariano Magrassi). I explore today's reading slowly.

Find the reading on the opposite page. When you are ready, return here to continue.

Conversation

I speak to Jesus about what this piece of Scripture has struck in me.

Does a memory, an interaction with someone, or a feeling arise in my mind?

I explore that with Jesus, friend to friend.

Conclusion

I thank God for the time we've spent together.

When I'm ready, I pour my heart into this prayer:

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

– Collect for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, *Book of Common Prayer*

Holy Week

Sun, 4.10	†	Psalm 31:9–16
Mon, 4.11	†	Luke 22:54–65
Tue, 4.12	†	Luke 22:66–23:1
Wed, 4.13	†	Luke 23:2–25
Thu, 4.14	†	Luke 22:14–38
Fri, 4.15	†	Luke 23:26–46
Sat, 4.16	†	Luke 23:50–56



Calvary | Ilya Repin
Oil, canvas | 99 x 80 cm | 1869, Russia

A new sort of power will be let loose upon the world, and it will be the power of self-giving love. This is the heart of the revolution that was launched on Good Friday. You cannot defeat the usual sort of power by the usual sort of means. If one force overcomes another, it is still "force" that wins. Rather, at the heart of the victory of God over all the powers of the world there lies self-giving love, which, in obedience to the ancient prophetic vocation, will give its life "as a ransom for many."

– N.T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began*

The Hospitality of Silence

Allow yourself to become physically still. Then breathe in slowly and deeply, exhaling more slowly. As you inhale, silently pray “Lord Jesus Christ,” and as you exhale, silently pray “have mercy on me.” Repeat this several times.

The Presence of God

The more we call on God the more we can feel God's presence.
Day by day we are drawn closer to the loving heart of God.

Freedom

I ask the God of all grace for freedom from distractions,
afflicting thoughts and feelings,
and every hidden resistance to him held in my heart.

Consciousness

I comb through the events of the last day.
Where can I give thanks? Where should I ask for forgiveness?
For whom or what do I still need to pray for?

The Word of God

“All the words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart,
and hear with your ears” (Ezekiel 3:10).

Find the reading on the opposite page. When you are ready, return here to continue.

Conversation

Has God's Word moved me, or do I feel cold?
I turn and share my feelings, whatever they may be, with Jesus,
as if he is sitting with me now.

Conclusion

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, in your tender love for us you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon himself our nature, and to suffer death upon the Cross, giving us the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and come to share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

– Collect for Palm Sunday, *Book of Common Prayer*

Easter Week

Sun, 4.17	†	Luke 24:1–12
Mon, 4.18	†	Luke 24:13–35
Tue, 4.19	†	Luke 24:36–53
Wed, 4.20	†	Acts 1:1–11
Thu, 4.21	†	Acts 2:42–47
Fri, 4.22	†	Acts 3:1–10
Sat, 4.23	†	Acts 5:27–32



Anastasis | Unknown
Fresco in Chora Church | 11th c. | Turkey

Even if the crucifixion unveils for us the nature of God as love, if that were where the story ended, it would only serve to show us the tragedy of love: God is love, and to love like God will get you killed...But Christians do not believe this is the end of the story. Christians believe that crucified love cannot be contained in the tomb but bursts forth in that mysterious event that we call resurrection...just as the love that is God was embodied in crucified flesh, it now lives in resurrected flesh. The forces of death-dealing self-love that killed Jesus have been truly defeated by love crucified and risen.

– Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, *The Love That Is God*

The Hospitality of Silence

As you're able, sit up straight on the edge of your seat, feet flat on the floor, and breathe in through your diaphragm. Exhale slowly. When distracting thoughts arise, gently bring your attention back to this silent prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner."

The Presence of God

I pause for a moment and think of the love and the grace that God showers on me:
I am created in the image and likeness of God;
I am God's dwelling place.

Freedom

Thank you for the gift of freedom, Lord.
Grant that I may always choose to follow You.
Keep me ever mindful of your ways.
Of your love and concern for all people.

Consciousness

In the presence of my loving Creator, I look honestly at my feelings over the last day, the highs, the lows, the level ground.
Can I see where the Lord has been present?

The Word of God

I attentively read the passage, re-reading it and imagining myself in the scene.
Find the reading on the opposite page. When you are ready, return here to continue.

Conversation

I imagine the risen Lord Jesus here with me.
I speak with him openly and honestly about what I have encountered in his Word.

Conclusion

I thank God for the time we've spent together.
When I'm ready, I pour my heart into this prayer:

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may, by your life-giving Spirit, be delivered from sin and raised from death; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

– Collect for Easter Sunday, *Book of Common Prayer*



For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.
– Psalm 27:5