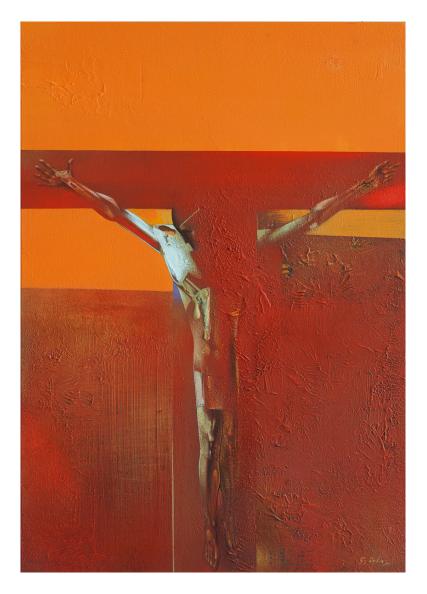
LENT





A GUIDE FOR Morning & Evening prayer

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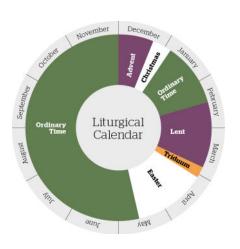
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Cover: Geiza Dyorke | Crucifix | 2020

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 with 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.

Community Practices

Worship. Adjust your schedule to participate in these additional services.

- Ash Wednesday, February 14 (5 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.)
- Maundy Thursday, March 28 (5 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.)
- Good Friday, March 29 (5 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.)
- Easter Sunrise Service, March 31
- Easter Sunday, March 31 (9 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.)

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 involves abstaining, 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 is 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.

USING THIS GUIDE

Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer follows 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. The prompt begins on page 6. Before beginning the prompt, however, flip to the page in morning prayer that corresponds to the week we're in. On that page, you'll find artwork and a reflection that will help you prepare to pray, as well as the Scripture reading for the day. For example, in the second week of Lent, you would begin with the artwork and reflection on page 9 and then flip back to page 6 to pray.

The Sacred Space prompt itself guides you through seven movements. The first four bring us to attentive, listening stillness in God's presence. This prepares us to hear and ingest his Word in the fifth movement. Then we spend time in free conversation with God in response to what he's said today in his Word, and we end by simply enjoying his presence in the conclusion.

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

Evening Prayer

Evening Prayer takes us through a cycle of different contemplative prayer practices. The word "contemplative" simply indicates attentiveness to God, a posture of expectant listening. The methods found here are useful tools in bringing us to that place before God.

During "Entering Lent" we will spend a few days in an examination of our conscience using the Ten Commandments. After that, we will cycle through three different practices, dedicating two weeks to each: *lectio divina* (using the Psalms as our reading), the Examen, and Centering Prayer. Some or all of these methods may resonate with you, and some may not. Trust this process, and stick with each method for the time given. If at the end of the season you no longer wish to pray in one of the ways given above, there is no wrong in that. However, it takes patient practice for any of these methods to bear fruit. Perhaps after two weeks with each, you may keep one or more of these methods in your tool belt of prayer, so to speak.

A final note: both Morning and Evening Prayer can stretch to meet your level of habit. No matter where you are, however, use this season to press one level further in terms of time and energy given to Scripture reading and prayer. You may wish to observe Morning Prayer alone, while Evening Prayer can be done with friends, roommates, or family.



EVERY MORNING

*Begin by spending some time with the reflection and artwork for the week on the following pages. Then return to this page and begin below.

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

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

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

The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the Word of the Lord stands forever. *Scripture readings are found at the bottom of the following pages.*

Conversation

What stirs me as I read? Am I calmed and led to patience? Is God teaching me something new? Is my conscience pricked toward repentance? I imagine Jesus sitting with me in the room, and I speak these things to him as a close friend.

Conclusion

I thank God for the moments we have spent together. If I am able, I spend some time simply enjoying him in silence.

ENTERING LENT ARTWORK & REFLECTION

The soul likes to go slow. This is because it likes to savor. ... We [Westerners] love to race to our next appointment, to get to our destination as fast as possible, to overcome all obstacles efficiently, but then we often find ourselves at a loss, restless, when we actually get where we wanted to go. Savoring eludes us.
– Robert Barron, *The Strangest Way: Walking the Christian Path*



Winslow Homer | Women Working in a Field | 1867 | American

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Ash Wednesday, 2.14 • Mark 1:1–20 Thursday, 2.15 • Mark 1:21–45 Friday, 2.16 • Mark 2:1–17 Saturday, 2.17 • Mark 1:9–15

FIRST WEEK OF LENT ARTWORK & REFLECTION

The retreat leader and spiritual director Marjorie Thompson tells the story of a conversation between an eighteenth-century priest and an elderly peasant who would sit alone for long hours in the quiet of the church. When the priest asked what he was doing, the old man simply replied, "I look at Him, He looks at me, and we are happy." – John Mark Comer, *Practicing the Way*



Julia Stankova The Anointing of Christ 2009 | Bulgarian

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 2.18 • Psalm 25:1–10 Monday, 2.19 • Mark 2:18–28 Tuesday, 2.20 • Mark 3:1–19 Wednesday, 2.21 • Mark 3:20–35 Thursday, 2.22 • Mark 4:1–20 Friday, 2.23 • Mark 4:21–41 Saturday, 2.24 • Mark 8:31–9:1

SECOND WEEK OF LENT ARTWORK & REFLECTION

We speak to God as daughters and sons, and so we speak to God as a God who has—through his own freedom—decided not to be remote, but immediate. He has decided to be our *friend*. ... Very near the heart of Christian prayer is getting over the idea that God is somewhere a very, very long way off, so that we have to shout very loudly to be heard. On the contrary: God has decided to be an intimate friend and he has decided to make us part of his family, and we always pray on that basis. — Rowan Williams, *Being Christian*



Giotto | The Mocking of Christ and Flagellation 1306 | Italian

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 2.25 • Psalm 22:22–31 Monday, 2.26 • Mark 5:1–20 Tuesday, 2.27 • Mark 5:21–43 Wednesday, 2.28 • Mark 6:1–29 Thursday, 2.29 Mark 6:30–44 Friday, 3.1 • Mark 6:45–56 Saturday, 3.2 • John 2:13–22

THIRD WEEK OF LENT ARTWORK & REFLECTION



Jesus realizes that the most restful gift he can give the tired is a new way to carry life, a fresh way to bear responsibilities. ... Realism sees that life is a succession of burdens; we cannot get away from them; thus instead of offering escape, Jesus offers equipment. ... Obedience ... will develop in us a balance and a "way" of carrying life that will give more rest than the way we have been living. – Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 3.3 • Psalm 19 Monday, 3.4 • Mark 7:1–13 Tuesday, 3.5 • Mark 7:14–23 Wednesday, 3.6 • Mark 7:24–37 Thursday, 3.7 • Mark 8:1–30 Friday, 3.8 • Mark 9:2–29 Saturday, 3.9 • John 3:14–21

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT ARTWORK & REFLECTION

Once we have the Spirit dwelling in our hearts, the measure of the giving of Christ corresponds to our own desire. For in teaching us of the indwelling of his Spirit of charity, Jesus always reminds us to ask, in order that we may receive. The Holy Spirit is the most perfect gift of the Father to men, and yet he is the one gift which the Father gives most easily. There are many lesser things that, if we ask them, may still have to be refused us. But the Holy Spirit will never be refused.

- Thomas Merton, No Man Is an Island



Ivanka Demchuk | Crucifixion | Ukrainian

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 3.10 • Psalm 107:1–3, 17–22 Monday, 3.11 • Mark 9:30–50 Tuesday, 3.12 • Mark 10:1–16 Wednesday, 3.13 • Mark 10:17–31 Thursday, 3.14 • Mark 10:32–45 Friday, 3.15 • Mark 10:46–52 Saturday, 3.16 • John 12:20–33

FIFTH WEEK OF LENT ARTWORK & REFLECTION

God walks "slowly" because he is love. If he is not love he would have gone much faster. Love has its speed. It is an inner speed. Is is a spiritual speed. It is a different kind of speed from the technological speed to which we are accustomed. It is "slow" yet it is lord over all other speeds since it is the speed of love.

- Kosuke Koyama, Three Mile an Hour God



Alfred Manessier | La montée au Calvaire (Mount Calvary) 1978 | French

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 3.17 • Psalm 119:9–16 Monday, 3.18 • Mark 11:12–25 Tuesday, 3.19 • Mark 12:1–17 Wednesday, 3.20 • Mark 12:18–27 Thursday, 3.21 • Mark 13 Friday, 3.22 • Mark 11:1–11 Saturday, 3.23 • Mark 14:1–15:47

HOLY WEEK ARTWORK & REFLECTION

Consider how the Savior and Lord of all...now refashions human nature, restoring it to its intended state. The first man [Adam] began in a paradise of delight ... but when he spurned the lone commandment which he had been given he fell under a curse and into condemnation, eating the fruit of a forbidden tree. Now, Christ becomes the fruit of a different tree [the cross] ... that he might crown our nature with his own glory. Is not this mystery profound? Must we not confess that this plan is more sublime than language can describe?

- St. Cyril of Alexandria (354-430), Commentary on Luke



Dirck Van Baburen | *Christ Crowned with Thorns* 1621–1622 | Dutch

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 3.24 • Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29 Monday, 3.25 • Mark 14:3–9 Tuesday, 3.26 • Mark 14:32–52 Wednesday, 3.27 • Mark 14:53–65 Maundy Thursday, 3.28 • Mark 14:12–26 Good Friday, 3.29 • Mark 15:1–41 Holy Saturday, 3.30 • Mark 15:42–47

EASTER WEEK ARTWORK & REFLECTION

In light of the Resurrection, we know that God's deepest intention for us is life, and life to the full. He wants death not to have the final word; he wants a renewal of the heavens and the earth. Therefore, we have to stop living in the intellectual and spiritual space of death. What if we really believed, deep down, that death did not have the final word? Would we live in such fear, in such a cramped spiritual space? Or would we see that the protection of our egos is not the number one concern of our existence?

– Bp. Robert Barron, unpublished sermon



Kelly Kruse | Geheimnis: The Glory of the City of God | American

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Easter Sunday, 3.31 • Mark 16:1–8 Monday, 4.1 • Mark 16:9–20 Tuesday, 4.2 • Mark 2:23–27 Wednesday, 4.3 • Mark 4:26–33 Thursday, 4.4 • Mark 12:28–34 Friday, 4.5 • Mark 12:41–44 Saturday, 4.6 • John 20:19–31



ENTERING LENT AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE (10 COMMANDMENTS)

We enter this season of repentance by spending a few days examining our own conscience before the Lord. The goal is not to condemn ourselves, but to bring ourselves in openness and honesty to the Lord who loves us and who forgives those who turn to him in repentance.

I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods but me.

Have I treated people, events, or things as more important than God?

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

Have I trusted in something other than God for ultimate hope, comfort, or escape from pain and sin?

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the Church, or people?

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper rest of mind and body? Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday?

Honor your father and your mother.

Do I show my parents due respect? Do I seek to maintain good communication with my parents where possible? Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have?

You shall not murder.

Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation?

You shall not commit adultery.

Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?

You shall not steal.

Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?

You shall not covet.

Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily?

FIRST WEEK OF LENT LECTIO DIVINA WITH THE PSALMS

† *Reading.* Read the psalm slowly but don't worry about "getting everything out of it." You will interact with the passage at least four times before the practice is over.

† Meditation. After reading a second time, say out loud (or internally) words and phrases that jumped out to you. Focus on these words and phrases.

† *Prayer.* After reading the psalm a third time, pray prayers based on the language of the passage. This is your opportunity to take your meditation and talk to God about it. Confess; ask for clarity; be honest. Talk to God as if you are talking to someone as you



Jakob Steinhardt, *Passage through the Red Sea* 1921 | German

sit by a fire or in a living room. Resist overly "religious" language. Use the language of the passage to let it shape your understanding of God. Express your emotions. Ask God to clarify your emotions.

† *Contemplation.* Contemplation doesn't mean "thinking about," but rather gazing at God and listening for his voice. After reading the psalm a final time, sit in 3–5 minutes of silence. You might say, "Speak God, your servant is listening." Wait on the Lord. Don't be discouraged if you don't sense something profound happening; the key is to show up.

Suggested Lenten Psalms:

Psalm 103:8–14 Psalm 51:1–12 Psalm 25:4–10 Psalm 36:5–10 Psalm 33:13–22 Psalm 91:9–16 Psalm 16:5–11

SECOND WEEK OF LENT CENTERING PRAYER (SILENCE)

Carve out a few minutes each day this week for silence and solitude. There are three main components to encountering God in silence:

† Physical Posture. Physical stillness lends itself to inner stillness. It's best to sit in a not-too-comfy chair, straight-backed, with your feet flat on the floor.

† Breath. Begin by taking a deep breath in through the diaphragm. Let it out more slowly than you took it in. Do this a few times before letting your breath return to normal.

† *The Prayer Word.* Distracting thoughts and feelings will inevitably come and go. Simply notice the distraction, and gently bring your attention back to your breathing,

silently praying a very simple word or phrase. Many throughout the centuries have turned to some form of the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," or even simply "Jesus."

The goal is simply to be still and silent in God's presence. We are not trying to "make something happen," but rather to increase our awareness of God's presence and enjoy his company.



Jusepe de Ribera Study for a Crucifixion of St. Peter 1628–30 | Spanish

THIRD WEEK OF LENT A prayer of examen

† Find a quiet place, and begin with a few moments of silence. Breathe. Notice the Holy Spirit noticing you as you review your day.

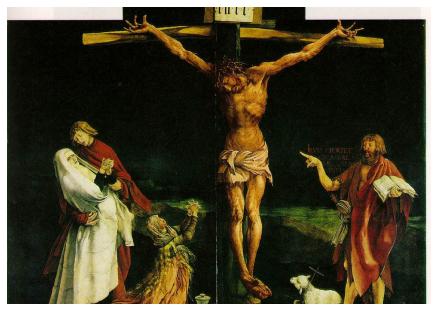
† Spend time dialoguing with the Lord over one of these prompts:

How did I experience you, Lord, through the presence, words, or actions of another person today? How did I experience you, Lord, through a weak, poor, outcast, or difficult person today? What gift did you offer me through this person?

Review each of the places I have been today. How did I experience you, God, in each place?

Recall the significant moments of today, both the high points and low points. How did I experience you, God, in each of these moments?

[†] Thank God for his presence and ask him to give you the eyes to see his presence in the days to come.



Matthias Grünewald | Isenheim Altarpiece (detail of the Crucifixion) 16th century | German

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT LECTIO DIVINA WITH THE PSALMS

† *Reading.* Read the psalm slowly but don't worry about "getting everything out of it." You will interact with the passage at least four times before the practice is over.

† Meditation. After reading a second time, say out loud (or internally) words and phrases that jumped out to you. Focus on these words and phrases.

† *Prayer.* After reading the psalm a third time, pray prayers based on the language of the passage. This is your opportunity to take your meditation and talk to God about it. Confess; ask for clarity; be honest. Talk to God as if you are talking to someone as you sit by a fire or in a living room. Resist overly "religious" language. Use the language of the passage to let it shape your understanding of God. Express your emotions. Ask God to clarify your emotions.

† *Contemplation.* Contemplation doesn't mean "thinking about," but rather gazing at God and listening for his voice. After reading the psalm a final time, sit in 3–5 minutes of silence. You might say, "Speak God, your servant is listening." Wait on the Lord. Don't be discouraged if you don't sense something profound happening; the key is to show up.

Suggested Lenten Psalms: Psalm 27:7–14; Psalm 19:7–14; Psalm 103:1–12; Psalm 122; Psalm 34:1–8; Psalm 51:10–15; Psalm 126



Jean Pucelle | The Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, The Betrayal of Christ/The Annunciation | ca. 1324-28 | French

FIFTH WEEK OF LENT CENTERING PRAYER (SILENCE)

Find a quiet place and time to begin. Recall the following pieces for guidance:

† Physical Posture. Physical stillness lends itself to inner stillness. It's best to sit in a



Khrystyna Kvyk | *Gethsemane* 2021 | Ukrainian

not-too-comfy chair, straight-backed, with your feet flat on the floor.

† Breath. The breath plays a major role in any activity that requires concentrated effort; prayer is no different. Begin by taking a deep breath in through the diaphragm. Let it out more slowly than you took it in. Do this a few times before letting your breath return to normal.

† *The Prayer Word.* Distracting thoughts and feelings will inevitably come and go.

Simply notice the distraction, and gently bring your attention back to your breathing, silently praying a

very simple word or phrase. Many throughout the centuries have turned to some form of the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," or even simply "Jesus."

HOLY WEEK A prayer of examen

† Begin with a minute or two of quiet, breathing deeply and stilling yourself internally.

[†] Ask for God's Spirit to be with you, assisting your review of the day. Turn your attention and rest in God's gracious presence with you.

† Reflect on your consolations and desolations of the day. You could ask a question. For example, "When did you feel God's presence today?" "When did you live like he was absent today?"

† (Optional) Journal your response. Keep it short and simple.

+ Express gratitude for your experience of God's presence and activity in your life.



Nicolas Poussin | The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist | 1647 | French

EASTER WEEK PRAY & CELEBRATE

† Find creative ways to celebrate this season. Just as we gave up some food or drink item during our Lenten fast, take up some other thing to enjoy during this season.

† For evening prayer, find the practice that resonated most with you (Psalms, Centering, Examen) and continue that practice this week.

Acknowledgements:

The mode of prayer used in the mornings follows Sacred Space, developed by the Irish Jesuits (sacredspace.ie).

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JESUS SAID, "I AM; AND YOU WILL SEE THE SON OF MAN SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE POWER,' AND 'COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.'"

Mark 14:62

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