

# SACRED READING FOR LENT 2019

*The Fifth Week of Lent*



# LENT

Christians throughout the world are re-discovering a powerful, ancient form of prayer known as 'sacred reading' (*lectio divina*). This Lent, what better way to deepen one's friendship with Jesus Christ, than by prayerfully encountering him in the daily Gospel?

We are invited to experience sacred reading for ourselves as we are guided by the Holy Spirit. There are four steps to *lectio divina*: **reading** (taking in the Bible passage slowly and carefully), **meditation** (pondering about the meaning of the passage), **prayer** (interceding for ourselves and for others, as we are led) and **contemplation** (listening to God in silence). Those who engage with the Gospels in this manner often find that the Lord speaks to them in intimate and surprising ways.

This booklet (and the ones that will follow it) will take us on a personal prayer journey with Jesus from Ash Wednesday through the end of Holy Week.

## The Fifth Sunday of Lent

### The Gospel: John 12. 1-8

<sup>1</sup>Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup>There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. <sup>3</sup>Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' <sup>6</sup> (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

### Prayer

**Lord, in washing your feet, Mary points to your washing of the disciples' feet. Help me to follow your and Mary's example as I boldly give of myself in love.**

## Monday in the Fifth Week of Lent

### The Gospel: John 8. 1-11

<sup>1</sup>Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup>Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. <sup>3</sup>The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, <sup>4</sup>they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. <sup>5</sup>Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' <sup>6</sup>They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup>When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' <sup>8</sup>And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup>When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup>Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' <sup>11</sup>She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

### Prayer

**Jesus, there is meaning here for me as a judge and for me as a sinner. Let me take this to heart when I am prone to judge and when I am tempted to sin.**

## Tuesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

### The Gospel: John 8. 21-30

<sup>21</sup>Again he said to them, 'I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.' <sup>22</sup>Then the Jews said, 'Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, "Where I am going, you cannot come"?' <sup>23</sup>He said to them, 'You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup>I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.' <sup>25</sup>They said to him, 'Who are you?' Jesus said to them, 'Why do I speak to you at all?' <sup>26</sup>I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.' <sup>27</sup>They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father.

<sup>28</sup>So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realise that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. <sup>29</sup>And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.' <sup>30</sup>As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

## Prayer

**Lord, you transformed the shame of crucifixion into glory, salvation and life. I believe in you and choose you. I receive the salvation that you give me today.**

## Wednesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

### The Gospel: John 8. 31-42

<sup>31</sup>Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' <sup>33</sup>They answered him, 'We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, "You will be made free"?''

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup>The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there for ever. <sup>36</sup>So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup>I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. <sup>38</sup>I declare what I have seen in the Father's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father.'

<sup>39</sup>They answered him, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did, <sup>40</sup>but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup>You are indeed doing what your father does.' They said to him, 'We are not illegitimate children; we have one father, God himself.' <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me.'

## Prayer

**Jesus, I seek to do my part to continue in your word. Teach me the truth, all that you have for me, and make me free to do God's will, as you did.**

## Thursday in the Fifth Week of Lent

### The Gospel: John 8. 51-59

<sup>51</sup>'Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.'<sup>52</sup>The Jews said to him, 'Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, "Whoever keeps my word will never taste death."<sup>53</sup>Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?'<sup>54</sup>Jesus answered, 'If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, "He is our God",<sup>55</sup>though you do not know him. But I know him; if I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word.<sup>56</sup>Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.'<sup>57</sup>Then the Jews said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?'<sup>58</sup>Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.'<sup>59</sup>So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

### Prayer

**Lord, help me to understand, believe and keep your word. Let me walk in your word today, for my good and for the good of others.**

## Friday in the Fifth Week of Lent

### The Gospel: John 10. 31-42

<sup>31</sup>The Jews took up stones again to stone him.<sup>32</sup>Jesus replied, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?'<sup>33</sup>The Jews answered, 'It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.'<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered, 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, you are gods"?'<sup>35</sup>If those to whom the word of God came were called "gods" – and the scripture cannot be annulled –<sup>36</sup>can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, "I am God's Son"?'<sup>37</sup>If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me.<sup>38</sup>But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.'<sup>39</sup>Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands.

<sup>40</sup>He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptising earlier, and he remained there. <sup>41</sup>Many came to him, and they were saying, 'John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.' <sup>42</sup>And many believed in him there.

## Prayer

**Jesus, I thank the Father for sending you. Sometimes I am frustrated that I cannot do more. Show me ways I can reflect your light and your love.**

## Saturday in the Fifth Week of Lent

### The Gospel: John 11. 45-57

<sup>45</sup>Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. <sup>46</sup>But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what he had done. <sup>47</sup>So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council, and said, 'What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. <sup>48</sup>If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.' <sup>49</sup>But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all! <sup>50</sup>You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed.' <sup>51</sup>He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, <sup>52</sup>and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God. <sup>53</sup>So from that day on they planned to put him to death.

<sup>54</sup>Jesus therefore no longer walked about openly among the Jews, but went from there to a town called Ephraim in the region near the wilderness; and he remained there with the disciples.

<sup>55</sup>Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup>They were looking for Jesus and were asking one another as they stood in the temple, 'What do you think? Surely he will not come to the festival, will he?' <sup>57</sup>Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where Jesus was should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

## Prayer

**Lord, in raising Lazarus from the dead you challenged the way people know and approach God. I invite you to be my very source of life.**

## To ponder as we begin Holy Week

'The life of faith is a journey. Journeying is an art, because if we are always in a hurry, we get tired and do not arrive at our journey's goal. If we stop, we do not go forward and we also miss the goal. Journeying is precisely the art of looking toward the horizon, thinking where we want to go, but also enduring the fatigue of the journey. Walking in community, with friends and with those who love us: this is what helps us. It helps us to arrive precisely at the goal, that 'place' where we are supposed to arrive.'

