

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

The Gospel: Luke 5. 27-32

²⁷After this he went out and saw a tax-collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.' ²⁸And he got up, left everything, and followed him.

²⁹Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax-collectors and others sitting at the table with them. ³⁰The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax-collectors and sinners?' ³¹Jesus answered, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; ³²I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.'

Prayer

Jesus, thank you that my sins are covered by your mercy. You call me; and I come to you, in repentance.

To ponder as we begin the First Week of Lent

'In the face of so many wounds that hurt us and could lead to a hardness of heart, we are called to dive into a sea of prayer, which is the sea of the boundless love of God, in order to experience his tenderness.'



SACRED READING FOR LENT 2019

Ash Wednesday – Saturday after Ash Wednesday



LENT

... is a time to allow God to help us become holy; to help us look to the needs of others and to minister to their needs; and most of all, to grow in faith, hope and love, for these virtues are of God. They motivate us and empower us to live the Gospel.

One of the important ways Christians observe Lent is by taking up, or continuing, certain devotional or prayer practices to help them prepare to celebrate the Easter Feast with greater joy. Christians throughout the world are re-discovering a powerful, ancient form of prayer known as '**sacred reading**' (*lectio divina*). What better way to deepen one's friendship with Jesus Christ, than by prayerfully encountering him in the daily Gospel?

This Lent, 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.

Ash Wednesday

The Gospel: Matthew 6. 1-6, 16-18

¹Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.'

⁵And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.'

¹⁶And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.'

Prayer

Father, you want me to have a secret friendship with you. Help me to love and serve you for your own sake, not for appearance's sake.

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

The Gospel: Luke 9. 21-25

²¹He sternly ordered and commanded them not to tell anyone, ²²saying, 'The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.'

²³Then he said to them all, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. ²⁵What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?'

Prayer

Jesus, I don't want to gain the whole world at the expense of myself. Your cross was your glory. Show me how my cross will be my glory.

Friday after Ash Wednesday

The Gospel: Matthew 9. 14-15

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?' ¹⁵And Jesus said to them, 'The wedding-guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.'

Prayer

Lord, when I fast and pray I imitate you. Help me to fast and to pray, and to draw out of myself and enter into you. Teach me what I need to know.