

SACRED READING FOR LENT 2019

The First 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 First Sunday of Lent

The Gospel: Luke 4. 1-13

¹Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ²where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' ⁴Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone."'

⁵Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' ⁸Jesus answered him, 'It is written,

"Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him."'

⁹Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you,
to protect you",

¹¹and

“On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.” ’

¹²Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” ’ ¹³When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Prayer

Jesus, reveal to me the ways that evil crawls into my life. Make me aware of my temptations and give me grace to resist them.

Monday in the First Week of Lent

The Gospel: Matthew 25. 31-46

³¹When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.”

⁴⁴Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?”

⁴⁵Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’

Prayer

Lord, help me to have compassion on the sick, the suffering, the homeless and the imprisoned. Show me what I can do to help them.

Tuesday in the First Week of Lent

The Gospel: Matthew 6. 7-15

⁷ ‘When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ ‘Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.’

Prayer

Jesus, show me where forgiveness is lacking in my life. Forgiveness can be difficult; but I know that it is the way to you. Help me to truly forgive.

Wednesday in the First Week of Lent

The Gospel: Luke 11. 29-32

²⁹When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, 'This generation is an evil generation; it asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. ³⁰For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be to this generation. ³¹The queen of the South will rise at the judgement with the people of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here! ³²The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! '

Prayer

Lord, I do not want to be part of an evil generation that challenges you and doubts you. I bow before you. Heal me and lift me up to serve you and others.

Thursday in the First Week of Lent

The Gospel: Matthew 7. 7-12

⁷Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? ¹⁰Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

¹²'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.'

Prayer

Jesus, forgive me for judging others. Forgive me my hypocrisies. I seek you; and you find me here now, ready to be with you. Turn me towards you.

Friday in the First Week of Lent

The Gospel: Matthew 5. 20-26

²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

²¹'You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder"; and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgement." ²²But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, "You fool", you will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.'

Prayer

Lord, you set moral standards that are high. Who can stand before you? Show me who may need to forgive me, and what I can do to reconcile.

Saturday in the First Week of Lent

The Gospel: Matthew 5. 43-48

⁴³'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

Prayer

Jesus, you give me an exercise in holiness, an exercise of the heart. Give me your heart as I seek to love people whom I have chosen not to love.

To ponder as we begin the Second Week of Lent

'The tempter is clever: he does not direct us immediately towards evil but towards a false good, making us believe that power and things that satiate primary needs are what is most real. In this manner, God becomes secondary; he is reduced to a means; he becomes unreal; he no longer counts; he disappears. In the decisive moments of life, we are faced with a choice: do we want to follow the 'I' or God? Do we want to follow individual interests or rather the true good?'



