



Lenten Manual
2021

There are two parts to this introduction.

The FIRST part is a sermon by Leo the Great (400 – 461 AD, also called Pope Leo I) exhorting Christians to observe the season of Lent with earnestness and explaining why it is both necessary and beneficial.

The SECOND part is an explanation of how this devotional manual is laid out with guidelines and suggestions on ways to use it.

Leo the Great First sermon on Lent. (Sermon 39)

I. The benefits of abstinence shown by the example of the Hebrews

In former days, when the people of the Hebrews and all the tribes of Israel were oppressed for their scandalous sins by the grievous tyranny of the Philistines, in order that they might be able to overcome their enemies, as the sacred story declares, they restored their powers of mind and body by the injunction of a fast. For they understood that they had deserved that hard and wretched subjection for their neglect of GOD's commands, and evil ways, and that it was in vain for them to strive with arms unless they had first withstood their sin. Therefore abstaining from food and drink, they applied the discipline of strict correction to themselves, and in order to conquer their foes, first conquered the allurements of the palate in themselves. And thus it came about that their fierce enemies and cruel taskmasters yielded to them when fasting, whom they had held in subjection when full. And so we too, dearly-beloved, who are set in the midst of many oppositions and conflicts, may be cured by a little carefulness, if only we will use the same means. For our case is almost the same as theirs, seeing that, as they were attacked by foes in the flesh so are we chiefly by spiritual enemies. And if we can conquer them by GOD's grace enabling us to correct our ways, the strength of our bodily enemies also will give way before us, and by our self-amendment we shall weaken those who were rendered formidable to us, not by their own merits but by our shortcomings.

II. Use Lent to vanquish the enemy, and be thus preparing for Eastertide

Accordingly, dearly-beloved, that we may be able to overcome all our enemies, let us seek Divine aid by the observance of the heavenly bidding, knowing that we cannot otherwise prevail against our adversaries, unless we prevail against our own selves. For we have many encounters with our own selves: the flesh desires one thing against the spirit, and the spirit another thing against the flesh. And in this disagreement, if the desires of the body be stronger, the mind will disgracefully lose its proper dignity, and it will be most disastrous for that to serve which ought to have ruled. But if the mind, being subject to its Ruler, and delighting in gifts from above, shall have trampled under foot the allurements of earthly pleasure, and shall not have allowed sin to reign in its mortal body⁵, reason will maintain a well-ordered supremacy, and its strongholds no strategy of spiritual wickednesses will cast down: because man has then only true peace and true freedom when the flesh is ruled by the judgment of the mind, and the mind is directed by the will of

GOD. And although this state of preparedness, dearly-beloved, should always be maintained that our ever-watchful foes may be overcome by unceasing diligence, yet now it must be the more anxiously sought for and the more zealously cultivated when the designs of our subtle foes themselves are conducted with keener craft than ever. For knowing that the most hallowed days of Lent are now at hand, in the keeping of which all past slothfulnesses are chastised, all negligences atoned for, they direct all the force of their spite on this one thing, that they who intend to celebrate the LORD'S holy Passover may be found unclean in some matter, and that cause of offence may arise where propitiation ought to have been obtained.

III. Fights are necessary to prove our Faith

As we approach then, dearly-beloved, the beginning of Lent, which is a time for the more careful serving of the LORD, because we are, as it were, entering on a kind of contest in good works, let us prepare our souls for fighting with temptations, and understand that the more zealous we are for our salvation, the more determined must be the assaults of our opponents. But "stronger is He that is in us than He that is against us," and through Him are we powerful in whose strength we rely: because it was for this that the LORD allowed Himself to be tempted by the tempter, that we might be taught by His example as well as fortified by His aid. For He conquered the adversary, as ye have heard, by quotations from the law, not by actual strength, that by this very thing He might do greater honour to man, and inflict a greater punishment on the adversary by conquering the enemy of the human race not now as GOD but as Man. He fought then, therefore, that we too might fight thereafter: He conquered that we too might likewise conquer. For there are no works of power, dearly-beloved, without the trials of temptations, there is no faith without proof, no contest without a foe, no victory without conflict. This life of ours is in the midst of snares, in the midst of battles; if we do not wish to be deceived, we must watch: if we want to overcome, we must fight. And therefore the most wise Solomon says, "My son in approaching the service of GOD prepare thy soul for temptation." For He being a man full of the wisdom of GOD, and knowing that the pursuit of religion involves laborious struggles, foreseeing too the danger of the fight, forewarned the intending combatant; lest haply, if the tempter came upon him in his ignorance, he might find him unready and wound him unawares.

IV. The Christian's armour is both for defence and for attack

So, dearly-beloved, let us who instructed in Divine learning come wittingly to the present contest and strife, hear the Apostle when he says, "for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this dark world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things," and let us not forget that these our enemies feel it is against them all is done that we strive to do for our salvation, and that by the very fact of our seeking after some good thing we are challenging our foes. For this is an old-standing quarrel between us and them fostered by the devil's ill-will, so that they are tortured by our being justified, because they have fallen from those good things to which we, GOD helping us, are advancing. If, therefore, we are raised, they are prostrated: if we are strengthened, they are weakened. Our cures are their blows, because they are wounded by our wounds' cure. "Stand, therefore," dearly-beloved, as the Apostle says, "having the loins of your mind girt in truth, and your feet shod in the preparation of the gospel of peace, in all things taking the shield of faith in which ye may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the evil one, and put on the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit,

which is the Word of GOD." See, dearly-beloved, with what mighty weapons, with what impregnable defences we are armed by our Leader, who is famous for His many triumphs, the unconquered Master of the Christian warfare. He has girt our loins with the belt of chastity, He has shod our feet with the bonds of peace: because the unbelted soldier is quickly vanquished by the suggester of immodesty, and he that is unshod is easily bitten by the serpent. He has given the shield of faith for the protection of our whole body; on our head has He set the helmet of salvation; our right hand has He furnished with a sword, that is with the word of Truth: that the spiritual warrior may not only be safe from wounds, but also may have strength to wound his assailant.

V. Abstinence not only from food but from other evil desires, especially from wrath, is required in Lent

Relying, therefore, dearly-beloved, on these arms, let us enter actively and fearlessly on the contest set before us: so that in this fasting struggle we may not rest satisfied with only this end, that we should think abstinence from food alone desirable. For it is not enough that the substance of our flesh should be reduced, if the strength of the soul be not also developed. When the outer man is somewhat subdued, let the inner man be somewhat refreshed; and when bodily excess is denied to our flesh, let our mind be invigorated by spiritual delights. Let every Christian scrutinise himself, and search severely into his inmost heart: let him see that no discord cling there, no wrong desire be harboured. Let chasteness drive incontinence far away; let the light of truth dispel the shades of deception; let the swellings of pride subside; let wrath yield to reason; let the darts of ill-treatment be shattered, and the chidings of the tongue be bridled; let thoughts of revenge fall through, and injuries be given over to oblivion. In fine, let "every plant which the heavenly Father hath not planted be removed by the roots." For then only are the seeds of virtue well nourished in us, when every foreign germ is uprooted from the field of wheat. If any one, therefore, has been fired by the desire for vengeance against another, so that he has given him up to prison or bound him with chains, let him make haste to forgive not only the innocent, but also one who seems worthy of punishment, that he may with confidence make use of the clause in the LORD's prayer and say, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." Which petition the LORD marks with peculiar emphasis, as if the efficacy of the whole rested on this condition, by saying, "For if ye forgive men their sins, your Father which is in heaven also will forgive you: but if ye forgive not men, neither will your Father forgive you your Sins."

VI. The right use of Lent will lead to a happy participation in Easter

Accordingly, dearly-beloved, being mindful of our weakness, because we easily fall into all kinds of faults, let us by no means neglect this special remedy and most effectual healing of our wounds. Let us remit, that we may have remission: let us grant the pardon which we crave: let us not be eager to be revenged when we pray to be forgiven. Let us not pass over the groans of the poor with deaf ear, but with prompt kindness bestow our mercy on the needy, that we may deserve to find mercy in the judgment. And he that, aided by GOD's grace, shall strain every nerve after this perfection, will keep this holy fast faithfully; free from the leaven of the old wickedness, in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, he will reach the

blessed Passover, and by newness of life will worthily rejoice in the mystery of man's reformation through Christ our LORD, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.¹

¹ Leo the Great. (1895). *Sermons*. In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, pp. 152–154). New York: Christian Literature Company.

II. Explanation & Guidelines

LAYOUT

In the first section of this manual is a simple guide for daily devotions. It provides a few options for you to choose from to fit your mood and available time. Doing one of these will only take 10-15 minutes. If you have more time, you can of course do all of them. Otherwise, you can use the alternate options at a later date, as suits you. It is better to do less to fit the time comfortably rather than rushing through everything.

Each day offers a simple 'method' of Bible reading and a prayer. The readings are from the three-year lectionary for (Year B). There is always a Psalm, an Old Testament and a New Testament reading. You may use them all at once, split them to do at points in the day, or just focus on one or two. If you join us for Morning Prayer at 8 am we follow the two-year lectionary, so the readings are different.

On each day there is also a suggestion for a spiritual exercise. These are all in the second section. Obviously, again, if you do not have time on any given day, you may use them whenever it suits you, and in whatever order fits your circumstances.

GUIDELINES

The goal of this manual is to provide help and guidance for anyone who wants to grow closer to God. Never lose sight of this goal. Do not make the manual into another burden added to your day, nor let it limit you. Remember, it is fine not to do everything each day, and it is fine to use the guide for much longer than 40 days.

There is a simple guide for considering what the Bible reading/s may be saying. It is to help you hear what God might be saying. There is also a devotional reading excerpt from the writings and sermons of the church fathers (church leaders from the first six centuries). It is helpful to get a perspective on God and the Christian life from another time, place and context to challenge our own ideas and practices. They may be bit uncomfortable (remember these men changed the world in spite of fierce opposition).

The purpose of providing a prayer each day is following Jesus' example of modelling. When the disciples asked him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1) he taught them the Lord's Prayer and not principles of prayer (Luke 11:2-4, Matt 6:9-14). The prayers also model a Biblical approach to God – e.g. 2 Chron 7:14, Eccles. 5:2, Matt. 6:5-8, James 4:3. (There are many ways to pray that are not Christian!).

On the days when your spirit is downcast, and it takes discipline to meet with God, let this guide carry you along. On days when your heart is soft and your motivation to seek God is high, feel free to explore beyond what is provided into additional readings, spiritual exercises, acts of service and personal prayers.

There are suggested activities for each day of the week. Do them as suits you.

III. Additional Resources

OTHER GUIDES & APPS

Besides what is presented in this book there are many devotional guides, apps and studies for Lent and for daily devotions. Some examples are:

1. N.T.Wright has daily devotions in a series “Lent for Everyone” available on Amazon and from other booksellers.
2. The Jesuit order in Ireland has a website with daily devotions. Go to www.sacredspace.ie
3. Choose a book by a Christian author (or more than one) and read it daily
4. There are apps like “Daily Prayer” and “iPray” that can be installed free.

DAILY PRAYER

If you need the encouragement and accountability of meeting with others for Bible reading and prayer join us on weekdays for Morning Prayer and/or Compline.

- Morning Prayer – 8.00 am Monday to Friday. Zoom link is on the website
- Compline – 9.00 pm Monday to Friday. Zoom link is on the website.

LECTIO DIVINA

There will be a weekly zoom Lectio Divina (meditative reading of scripture) on Fridays at 12.30pm for about 30 minutes. The link is on the website.

A simple guide to Lectio is provided in section 2 at the end. Consider doing the exercise yourself on one of the passages (or a part of one) you read in the previous few days.

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 38; Daniel 9:3-6, 17-19; 1 Timothy 6:6-19

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Brueggemann, W. (2010). Prayers for a privileged people. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Marked by Ashes

Ruler of the Night, Guarantor of the Day...

This day—a gift from you.

This day—like none other you have ever given,
or we have ever received.

This Wednesday dazzles us with gift and newness and possibility.

This Wednesday burdens us with the tasks of the day,
for we are already halfway home
 halfway back to committees and memos,
 halfway back to calls and appointments,
 halfway on to next Sunday,
 halfway back, half frazzled, half expectant,
 half turned toward you, half rather not.

This Wednesday is a long way from Ash Wednesday,
but all our Wednesdays are marked by ashes—
 we begin this day with that taste of ash in our mouth:
 of failed hope and broken promises,
 of forgotten children and frightened women,
 of more war casualties, more violence, more cynicism;
we ourselves are ashes to ashes,
 dust to dust;
we can taste our mortality as we roll the ash around
 on our tongues.

We are able to ponder our ashness with
some confidence, only because our every Wednesday of ashes
anticipates your Easter victory over that dry, flaky taste
of death.

On this Wednesday, we submit our ashen way to you—
you Easter parade of newness.
Before the sun sets, take our Wednesday and Easter us,
Easter us to joy and energy and courage and freedom;
Easter us that we may be fearless for your truth.
Come here and Easter our Wednesday with
mercy and justice and peace and generosity.

We pray as we wait for the Risen One who comes soon.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Second Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 40)

I. Progress and improvement always possible

Although, dearly-beloved, as the Easter festival approaches, the very recurrence of the season points out to us the Lenten fast, yet our words also must add their exhortations which, the LORD helping us, may be not useless to the active nor irksome to the devout. For since the idea of these days demands the increase of all our religious performances, there is no one, I am sure, that does not feel glad at being incited to good works. For though our nature which, so long as we are mortal, will be changeable, is advancing to the highest pursuits of virtue, yet always has the possibility of falling back, so has it always the possibility of advancing. And this is the true justness of the perfect that they should never assume themselves to be perfect, lest flagging in the purpose of their yet unfinished journey, they should fall into the danger of failure, through giving up the desire for progress.

And, therefore, because none of us, dearly-beloved, is so perfect and holy as not to be able to be more perfect and more holy, let us all together, without difference of rank, without distinction of desert, with pious eagerness pursue our race from what we have attained to what we yet aspire to, and make some needful additions to our regular devotions. For he that is not more attentive than usual to religion in these days, is shown at other times to be not attentive enough.²

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

² Leo the Great. (1895). *Sermons*. In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 154). New York: Christian Literature Company.

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Sunday | Attend the gathered worship service (i.e. come to church ☺) |
| Monday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Tuesday | Listen to the suggested worship songs (starts on page 169) |
| Wednesday | Choose a Spiritual Exercise and do it or plan it (see page 172) |
| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 77; Jeremiah 2:14-32; John 4:1-26

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for not abandoning me when I abandoned you.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for offering your hand of love in my darkest, most lonely moment

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for putting up with such a stubborn soul as mine.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for loving me more than I love myself.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for continuing to pour out your blessing upon me, even though I respond so poorly....

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for repaying our sin with your love.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for being constant and unchanging, amidst all the changes of the world.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for your countless blessings on me and on all your creatures. Amen.

TERESA OF Ávila, Spanish nun (1515–1582)

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Second Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 40)

II. Satan seeks to supply his numerous losses by fresh gains

Hence the reading of the Apostle's proclamation has sounded opportunely in our ears, saying, "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." For what is more accepted than this time, what more suitable to salvation than these days, in which war is proclaimed against vices and progress is made in all virtues? Thou hadst indeed always to keep watch, O Christian soul, against the enemy of thy salvation, lest any spot should be exposed to the tempter's snares: but now greater wariness and keener prudence must be employed by thee when that same foe of thine rages with fiercer hatred. For now in all

the world the power of his ancient sway is taken from him, and the countless vessels of captivity are rescued from his grasp. The people of all nations and of all tongues are breaking away from their cruel plunderer, and now no race of men is found that does not struggle against the tyrant's laws, while through all the borders of the earth many thousands of thousands are being prepared to be reborn in Christ⁵: and as the birth of a new creature draws near, spiritual wickedness is being driven out by those who were possessed by it. The blasphemous fury of the despoiled foe frets, therefore, and seeks new gains because it has lost its ancient right. Unwearied and ever-wakeful, he snatches at any sheep he finds straying carelessly from the sacred folds, intent on leading them over the steeps of pleasure and down the slopes of luxury into the abodes of death. And so he inflames their wrath, feeds their hatreds, whets their desires, mocks at their continence, arouses their gluttony.³

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?

³ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 154). New York: Christian Literature Company.

- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 3, 7; Jeremiah 3:6-22; John 4:27-42

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
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PRAYER

Intercession

2 Peter 1:16

Lord,
 we pray for the world;
 the hurt and pain,
 the suffering and loss,
 the deceit and the despair,
 the success and the failure,
 that are recorded every day.
 Each report of robbery and violence,
 every story of delight and disaster,
 touches the lives of the famous
 and impacts the days of the unknown.

silence

Lord, we pray for your world,
 that Christ may reign here.⁴

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Second Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 40)

III. The twofold nature of Christ shown at the Temptation

For whom would he not dare to try, who did not keep from his treacherous attempts even on our LORD Jesus Christ? For, as the story of the Gospel has disclosed, when our Saviour, Who was true GOD, that He

⁴ Clowes, D. (2020). [500 prayers for the christian year](#). Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook.

might show Himself true Man also, and banish all wicked and erroneous opinions, after the fast of 40 days and nights, had experienced the hunger of human weakness, the devil, rejoicing at having found in Him a sign of passible and mortal nature, in order to test the power which he feared, said, "If Thou art the Son of GOD, command that these stones become bread." Doubtless the Almighty could do this, and it was easy that at the Creator's command a creature of any kind should change into the form that it was commanded: just as when He willed it, in the marriage feast, He changed the water into wine: but here it better agreed with His purposes of salvation that His haughty foe's cunning should be vanquished by the LORD, not in the power of His Godhead, but by the mystery of His humiliation. At length, when the devil had been put to flight and the tempter baffled in all his arts, angels came to the LORD and ministered to Him, that He being true Man and true GOD, His Manhood might be unsullied by those crafty questions, and His Godhead displayed by those holy ministrations. And so let the sons and disciples of the devil be confounded, who, being filled with the poison of vipers, deceive the simple, denying in Christ the presence of both true natures, whilst they rob either His Godhead of Manhood, or His Manhood of Godhead, although both falsehoods are destroyed by a twofold and simultaneous proof: for by His bodily hunger His perfect Manhood was shown, and by the attendant angels His perfect Godhead.⁵

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⁵ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 155). New York: Christian Literature Company.

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
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Lectionary Readings: Psalm 71; Jeremiah 4:1-18; John 4:43-54

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PRAYER

Brueggemann, W. (2010). [Prayers for a privileged people](#). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

The Pulse of Anxiety at a G-8 Conference

We loved the pageant of government!

We watched while power strutted
and patriotism blossomed.

We remembered that “all men are created equal”
(and wondered about those not men).

We heard cadences of “liberty and justice for all,”
but noticed there was more talk
about liberty than about justice.

We listened yet again to the
sounds of terror and fear and threat,
and imagined in this “theatre of self-confidence”
that we could somehow make ourselves
safe and unafraid.

Except, of course, the world is a dangerous place,
and we have the uneasy feeling that the good
world we have treasured is slipping through
our fingers,
and we feel the pulse of anxiety,
and have waves of doubt about our official rhetoric—
not because we are disloyal or unpatriotic,
but because we suspect that the big rhetoric

does not get close enough to the scars of reality.

We pause away from the ceremony,
remember our baptism,
and hear yet again your Lordly,
“Do not fear.”

We hear your assurance amid our anxiety.
We pray now for freedom to trust your promise,
to turn away in the quiet of the vexed night,
away from our missiles and our weapons
and our violence,
away from our global influence
and control,
away from our strut of superpower,
in order to hear the fragile voice of the Easter Christ,
“Peace I leave with you,
my peace I give to you.”

We hunch that if we trust that good word, we will be
less afraid,
less anxious,
less inclined to brutality,
and less anxious,
therefore more neighborly.

Loom large among us that we may be this day our best selves.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Second Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 40)

IV. The fast should not end with abstinence from food, but lead to good deeds

Therefore, dearly-beloved, seeing that, as we are taught by our Redeemer’s precept, “man lives not in bread alone, but in every word of GOD,” and it is right that Christian people, whatever the amount of their abstinence, should rather desire to satisfy themselves with the “Word of GOD” than with bodily food, let us with ready devotion and eager faith enter upon the celebration of the solemn fast, not with barren abstinence from food, which is often imposed on us by weakness of body, or the disease of avarice, but in bountiful benevolence: that in truth we may be of those of whom the very Truth speaks, “blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Let works of piety, therefore, be our delight, and let us be filled with those kinds of food which feed us for eternity. Let us rejoice in the replenishment of the poor, whom our bounty has satisfied. Let us delight in the clothing of those whose

nakedness we have covered with needful raiment. Let our humaneness be felt by the sick in their illnesses, by the weakly in their infirmities, by the exiles in their hardships, by the orphans in their destitution, and by solitary widows in their sadness: in the helping of whom there is no one that cannot carry out some amount of benevolence. For no one's income is small, whose heart is big: and the measure of one's mercy and goodness does not depend on the size of one's means. Wealth of goodwill is never rightly lacking, even in a slender purse. Doubtless the expenditure of the rich is greater, and that of the poor smaller, but there is no difference in the fruit of their works, where the purpose of the workers is the same.⁶

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Wednesday | Choose a Spiritual Exercise and do it or plan it (see page 172) |
| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

⁶ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 155). New York: Christian Literature Company.

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 77; Exodus 34:1-10 ; Romans 10:8b-13

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Barth, K. (2008). Fifty Prayers. (D. C. Stassen, Trans.) (First edition). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press. [26]

Lord, our God, our Father in Jesus Christ, your Son, and our brother,
 we thank you that everything is as we have now again attempted to say and hear.
 We are sorry that so often we have been blind and deaf to the light of your Word.
 And we are sorry for all of the sin in our lives that this has caused.
 And because we know well that without you we would be continually lost,
 we ask that you not cease to touch us with your Holy Spirit,
 to awaken us, and to make us alert, humble, and brave.
 We do not ask this for each one of us individually, but we ask this for one another,
 all those who are in this house, for all prisoners in the world,
 for all who are suffering or ill in body or spirit,
 for the homeless and the downtrodden,
 and also for all those whose concerns and needs are hidden from us, but not from you.
 We ask this also for those close to us, for all parents, teachers, and students,
 for the people who hold positions of responsibility in the state,
 the administration, and the court,
 and for the preachers and ministers of your gospel.
 Help them and all of us to bear what must be borne;
 but also, above all, to think, say, and do what is right;
 to believe, to love, and to hope in the great riches that you will give to them and to us. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Second Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 40)

V. And still further it should lead to personal amendment and domestic harmony

But, beloved, in this opportunity for the virtues' exercise there are also other notable crowns, to be won by no dispersing abroad of granaries, by no disbursement of money, if wantonness is repelled, if drunkenness is abandoned, and the lusts of the flesh tamed by the laws of chastity: if hatreds pass into affection, if enmities be turned into peace, if meekness extinguishes wrath, if gentleness forgives wrongs, if in fine the conduct of master and of slaves is so well ordered that the rule of the one is milder, and the discipline of the other is more complete. It is by such observances then, dearly-beloved, that GOD'S mercy will be gained, the charge of sin wiped out, and the adorable Easter festival devoutly kept. And this the pious Emperors of the Roman world have long guarded with holy observance; for in honour of the LORD'S Passion and Resurrection they bend their lofty power, and relaxing the severity of their decrees set free many of their prisoners: so that on the days when the world is saved by the Divine mercy, their clemency, which is modelled on the Heavenly goodness, may be zealously followed by us. Let Christian peoples then imitate their princes, and be incited to forbearance in their homes by these royal examples. For it is not right that private laws should be severer than public. Let faults be forgiven, let bonds be loosed offences wiped out, designs of vengeance fall through, that the holy festival through the Divine and human grace may find all happy, all innocent: through our LORD Jesus Christ Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth GOD for endless ages of ages. Amen.⁷

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

⁷ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, pp. 155–156). New York: Christian Literature Company.

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 10, 11; Jeremiah 4:19-31; John 5:1-18

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Barth, K. (2008). *Fifty Prayers*. (D. C. Stassen, Trans.) (First edition). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press. [2]

Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for the eternal, living, saving Word that in Jesus you have spoken and continue to speak to us human beings.

Do not allow us to hear it only in a cursory fashion and to be too lazy to obey it.

Do not let us fall, but remain near each one of us with your comfort, and between each of us and our fellow human beings with your peace.

Let dawn continue to break a little in our hearts, in this institution, at home with those who are dear to us, in this city, in our nation, and throughout the whole earth.

You know the errors and misdeeds that make our current situation once again so dark and dangerous on all sides.

Let a fresh wind blow through it, that might at least scatter the thickest fog from the heads of those who rule this world,

but also from the heads of the peoples who permit themselves to be ruled, and above all from the heads of those who make public opinion.

And have mercy on all of those who are sick in body and in spirit,

the many for whom life is suffering,

those who are lost and confused through their own or others' fault,

those who have no human friends or helpers.

Show our youth also what true freedom and genuine joy are,

and do not leave the old and the dying

without the hope of the resurrection and eternal life.

But you are the first, who are concerned about our sorrows,

and you are the only one who can turn them to good.

We thus can and want only to lift our eyes up toward you.

Our help comes from you, who made heaven and earth.

Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Fourth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 42)

I. The Lenten fast an opportunity for restoring our purity

In proposing to preach this most holy and important fast to you, dearly beloved, how shall I begin more fitly than by quoting the words of the Apostle, in whom Christ Himself was speaking, and by reminding you of what we have read: "behold, now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation." For though there are no seasons which are not full of Divine blessings, and though access is ever open to us to GOD's mercy through His grace, yet now all men's minds should be moved with greater zeal to spiritual progress, and animated by larger confidence, when the return of the day, on which we were redeemed, invites us to all the duties of godliness: that we may keep the super-excellent mystery of the LORD'S passion with bodies and hearts purified. These great mysteries do indeed require from us such unflagging devotion and unwearied reverence that we should remain in GOD'S sight always the same, as we ought to be found on the Easter feast itself. But because few have this constancy, and, because so long as the stricter observance is relaxed in consideration of the frailty of the flesh, and so long as one's interests extend over all the various actions of this life, even pious hearts must get some soils from the dust of the world, the Divine Providence has with great beneficence taken care that the discipline of the forty days should heal us and restore the purity of our minds, during which the faults of other times might be redeemed by pious acts and removed by chaste fasting.⁸

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

⁸ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 156). New York: Christian Literature Company.

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

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- What was life-giving today?
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- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 44; Jeremiah 5:1-19; John 5:19-29

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Barth, K. (2008). Fifty Prayers. (D. C. Stassen, Trans.) (First edition). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press. [10]

Lord our God, when we are afraid, do not permit us to doubt!

When we are disappointed, let us not become bitter!

When we have fallen, do not leave us lying down!

When we have come to the end of our understanding and our powers, do not leave us to die!

No, let us then feel your nearness and your love, that you have promised

To those whose hearts are humble and broken, and who fear your Word.

Your Son has come to all people, just as he has come to all who bear heavy burdens.

Because we are all so burdened, he was born in the manger, and he died on the cross.

Lord, awaken us all and keep us all awake to this knowledge and to this confession.

And now, we think of all of the darkness and suffering in this time of ours,

of the many errors and misunderstandings with which we struggle,

of all of the hardship that so many must carry without comfort,

of all of the great dangers with which the world is threatened,

without any clue as to how to deal with them.

We think of the physically and the mentally ill, the poor, the downtrodden,

the oppressed, those who are suffering unjustly,

of the children who have no parents, or who have no good parents.

We also think of all who are called to help as much as people can help:

the leaders of our nation and of all other nations, the judges and officials,

the teachers and educators, those who write books and newspapers,

the doctors and nurses in the hospitals,

and those who proclaim your Word in the different churches and communities both near and

far.

We think of all of these with the prayer that the light of Christ might shine on them

and on us far more brightly than before,

so that they and we may be helped.
All of this in the name of the Savior,
in whom you have already answered us and will continually answer us.
Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Fourth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 42)

II. Lent must be used for removing all our defilements, and of good works there must be no stint

As we are therefore, dearly-beloved, about to enter on those mystic days which are dedicated to the benefits of fasting, let us take care to obey the Apostle's precepts, cleansing "ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit:" that by controlling the struggles that go on between our two natures, the spirit which, if it is under the guidance of GOD, should be the governor of the body, may uphold the dignity of its rule: so that we may give no offence to any, nor be subject to the chidings of reprovers. For we shall be rightly attacked with rebukes, and through our fault ungodly tongues will arm themselves to do harm to religion, if the conduct of those that fast is at variance with the standard of perfect purity. For our fast does not consist chiefly of mere abstinence from food, nor are dainties withdrawn from our bodily appetites with profit, unless the mind is recalled from wrong-doing and the tongue restrained from slandering. This is a time of gentleness and long-suffering, of peace and tranquillity: when all the pollutions of vice are to be eradicated and continuance of virtue is to be attained by us. Now let godly minds boldly accustom themselves to forgive faults, to pass over insults, and to forget wrongs. Now let the faithful spirit train himself with the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, that through honour and dishonour, through ill repute and good repute, the conscience may be undisturbed in unwavering uprightness, not puffed up by praise and not wearied out by revilings. The self-restraint of the religious should not be gloomy, but sincere; no murmurs of complaint should be heard from those who are never without the consolation of holy joys. The decrease of worldly means should not be feared in the practice of works of mercy. Christian poverty is always rich, because what it has is more than what it has not. Nor does the poor man fear to labour in this world, to whom it is given to possess all things in the LORD of all things. Therefore those who do the things which are good must have no manner of fear lest the power of doing should fail them; since in the gospel the widow's devotion is extolled in the case of her two mites, and voluntary bounty gets its reward for a cup of cold water. For the measure of our charitableness is fixed by the sincerity of our feelings, and he that shows mercy on others will never want for mercy himself. The holy widow of Sarepta discovered this, who offered the blessed Elias in the time of famine one day's food, which was all she had, and putting the prophet's hunger before her own needs, ungrudgingly gave up a handful of corn and a little oil⁴. But she did not lose what she gave in all faith, and in the vessels emptied by her godly bounty a source of new plenty arose, that the fulness of her substance might not be diminished by the holy purpose to which she had put it, because she had never dreaded being brought to want.⁹

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

⁹ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, pp. 156–157). New York: Christian Literature Company.

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EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 6, 17; Jeremiah 5:20-31; John 5:30-47

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Barth, K. (2008). *Fifty Prayers*. (D. C. Stassen, Trans.) (First edition). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press. [16]

Lord, our God, dear Father, you have loved the world,
in that you sent your only begotten Son, so that all who believe in him will not perish, but have eternal
life.

Write this on our hearts and minds now, and enlighten our understanding
that in his death, the old person in each of us is also dead,
and that in his resurrection, the new person is born in each of us.

Teach us to believe and in faith to go from death to life.

You loved us first. Do not leave us in lovelessness, in indecisiveness, and in the cold.

We ask that you empower your community everywhere,
and that you preserve and renew it,

that it may joyfully and clearly proclaim your name, your will, and your kingdom.

We ask that among our time's troubled humanity

you make living and fruitful the free witness of the old, which must pass,
and of the new, which must grow.

We ask that all those who rule may be advised, may decide, and may act responsibly before you.

We ask that you bless the mission to the unbelievers,
the education of the youth, and the care of all the oppressed and suffering
through the presence and the light of your Spirit.

We ask for comfort and help for all the sick, the prisoners, the abandoned, and the confused.

We ask that each one of us may be mindful of your eternal faithfulness for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Fourth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 42)

III. As with the saviour, so with us, the devil tries to make our very piety its own snare

But, dearly-beloved, doubt not that the devil, who is the opponent of all virtues, is jealous of these good desires, to which we are confident you are prompted of your own selves, and that to this end he is arming the force of his malice in order to make your very piety its own snare, and endeavouring to overcome by boastfulness those whom he could not defeat by distrustfulness. For the vice of pride is a near neighbour to good deeds, and arrogance ever lies in wait hard by virtue: because it is hard for him that lives praise-worthily not to be caught by man's praise unless, as it is written, "he that glorieth, glorieth in the LORD." Whose intentions would that most naughty enemy not dare to attack? whose fasting would he not seek to break down? seeing that, as has been shown in the reading of the Gospel², he did not restrain his wiles even against the Saviour of the world Himself. For being exceedingly afraid of His fast, which lasted 40 days and nights, he wished most cunningly to discover whether this power of abstinence was given Him or His very own: for he need not fear the defeat of all his treacherous designs, if Christ were throughout subject to the same conditions as He is in body. And so he first craftily examined whether He were Himself the Creator of all things, such that He could change the natures of material things as He pleased: secondly, whether under the form of human flesh the Godhead lay concealed, to Whom it was easy to make the air His chariot, and convey His earthly limbs through space. But when the LORD preferred to resist him by the uprightness of His true Manhood, than to display the power of His Godhead, to this he turns the craftiness of his third design, that he might tempt by the lust of empire Him in Whom the signs of Divine power had failed, and entice Him to the worship of himself by promising the kingdoms of the world. But the devil's cleverness was rendered foolish by GOD's wisdom, so that the proud foe was bound by that which he had formerly bound, and did not fear to assail Him Whom it behoved to be slain for the world.¹⁰

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

¹⁰ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 157). New York: Christian Literature Company.

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

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- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 42, 43; Jeremiah 6:9-21; John 6:1-15

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Barth, K. (2008). Fifty Prayers. (D. C. Stassen, Trans.) (First edition). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press. [36]

Lord, our God, this is your inconceivable glory,
that we may call on you in this fashion:

Lord, our God, our Creator, our Father, our Savior;
that you know and love all of us,
and that you want to be recognized and loved by us;
that all of our ways are seen and ruled by you;
that we all come from you and may return to you.

And now we spread everything out before you:

our cares, that you may care for us;
our fears, that you may quiet them;
our hopes and desires, that not our will, but your good will may be done;
our sins, that you may forgive them;
our thoughts and yearnings, that you may cleanse them;
our entire life in this time,
that you may guide it toward the resurrection of all flesh and eternal life.

Before you, we remember all who are present in this house,
as well as those all over the world who are being held prisoner.

Be with our relatives at home,
with all of the poor, the sick, the distressed, and the dejected!

Enlighten the thoughts and rule the deeds of all those
who are responsible for justice, order, and peace,
in our own nation and in all nations!

Let day break, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Fourth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 42)

IV. The perverse turn even their fasting into sin

This adversary's wiles then let us beware of, not only in the enticements of the palate, but also in our purpose of abstinence. For he who knew how to bring death upon mankind by means of food, knows also how to harm us through our very fasting, and using the Manichæans as his tools, as he once drove men to take what was forbidden, so in the opposite direction he prompts them to avoid what is allowed. It is indeed a helpful observance, which accustoms one to scanty diet, and checks the appetite for dainties: but woe to the dogmatizing of those whose very fasting is turned to sin. For they condemn the creature's nature to the Creator's injury, and maintain that they are defiled by eating those things of which they contend the devil, not GOD, is the author: although absolutely nothing that exists is evil, nor is anything in nature included in the actually bad. For the good Creator made all things good and the Maker of the universe is one, "Who made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them." Of which whatever is granted to man for food and drink, is holy and clean after its kind. But if it is taken with immoderate greed, it is the excess that disgraces the eaters and drinkers, not the nature of the food or drink that defiles them. "For all things," as the Apostle says, "are clean to the clean. But to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is clean, but their mind and conscience is defiled⁵."¹¹

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Wednesday | Choose a Spiritual Exercise and do it or plan it (see page 172) |
| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

¹¹ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 157). New York: Christian Literature Company.

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 22; Jeremiah 6:22-30; John 6:16-27

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Barth, K. (2008). Fifty Prayers. (D. C. Stassen, Trans.) (First edition). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press. [40]

Lord, our God, you have promised us and instructed us
that we may be cheerful in our work,
because you have done all things well,
because you forgive all our sins,
and because you want to crown us on that day of all days with grace and mercy.

So let us live from this your Word!

We have no other comfort.

But your Word is our eternal comfort.

Teach us, that we may continually learn to be content with it alone!

We ask that you would remain with your church, both here and everywhere.

We pray especially for the church that is tempted, persecuted, and oppressed, and for your embattled people, Israel, all over the world.

We pray for the authorities in our nation, in our city, and all over the world,
that you may give them clever, patient, and brave thoughts,
that justice, peace, freedom, and faithfulness may return.

We pray for our university, for all of its teachers and students.

The fear of you is the beginning of wisdom.

Do not take away the light that you once wanted to kindle among us,
and that you have preserved for so long,

not because we deserve it, but because of your mercy.

We pray for all who have a hard struggle for daily bread.

We pray for our youth, for all who are sick and dying,
for all who have strayed or are imprisoned, for all who are worried or sad.

Lord, accept your people in grace, help us, and bless your inheritance!

We thank you that we may come before you with all of this

and that we may be certain that you have already heard us.
Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Fourth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 42)

V. Be reasonable and seasonable in your fasting

But ye, dearly-beloved, the holy offspring of the catholic Mother, who have been taught in the school of Truth by GOD'S Spirit, moderate your liberty with due reasonableness, knowing that it is good to abstain even from things lawful, and at seasons of greater strictness to distinguish one food from another with a view to giving up the use of some kinds, not to condemning their nature. And so be not infected with the error of those who are corrupted merely by their own ordinances, "serving the creature rather than the Creator," and offering a foolish abstinence to the service of the lights of heaven: seeing that they have chosen to fast on the first and second days of the week in honour of the sun and moon, proving themselves in this one instance of their perverseness twice disloyal to GOD, twice blasphemous, by setting up their fast not only in worship of the stars but also in contempt of the LORD'S Resurrection. For they reject the mystery of man's salvation and refuse to believe that Christ our Lord in the true flesh of our nature was truly born, truly suffered, was truly buried and was truly raised. And in consequence, condemn the day of our rejoicing by the gloom of their fasting. And since to conceal their infidelity they dare to be present at our meetings, at the Communion of the Mysteries they bring themselves sometimes, in order to ensure their concealment, to receive Christ's Body with unworthy lips, though they altogether refuse to drink the Blood of our Redemption. And this we make known to you, holy brethren, that men of this sort may be detected by you by these signs, and that they whose impious pretences have been discovered may be driven from the society of the saints by priestly authority. For of such the blessed Apostle Paul in his foresight warns GOD'S Church, saying: "but we beseech you, brethren, that ye observe those who make discussions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye learnt and turn away from them. For such persons serve not Christ the LORD but their own belly, and by sweet words and fair speeches beguile the hearts of the innocent."¹²

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Wednesday | Choose a Spiritual Exercise and do it or plan it (see page 172) |

¹² Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, pp. 157–158). New York: Christian Literature Company.

| | |
|----------|---|
| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 59, 63; Jeremiah 7:1-20; John 6:27-40

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Barth, K. (2008). Fifty Prayers. (D. C. Stassen, Trans.) (First edition). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press. [44]

Dear heavenly Father, we thank you.

And now, let it happen and be true in our hearts, speech, and actions,
that we praise you and agree with you day by day,

on this day, tomorrow, and the day after, in the power of your Holy Spirit.

Bear with and sustain us henceforth, each one of us.

We all need it, each in our own special way.

Be and remain the God who is our help, for us,

for all who are here in this house, and for all our relatives near and far!

But also be and remain the same above and within the confusing and confused, oppressing and oppressed
human actions and events of our days!

Say and show to all that they are not lost to you,

but that they also cannot run away from you!

Show yourself everywhere as the Lord of the pious and the godless,

the clever and the foolish, the healthy and the sick;

also as the Lord of our poor church, Protestant, Catholic, and all others;

as the Lord of good and bad governments,

of the well-nourished and the malnourished people;

especially as the Lord of those people today who think that they must speak and write either good or not-so-good things;

as the Lord of protection for all of us, to whom we are able to commend ourselves,

but also as the Lord of judgment for all of us, to whom we are responsible,

at the final judgment and already today.

Great, holy, and merciful God, we yearn for your ultimate revelation,

in which it will be clear to all that the whole created world and all of history,

all people and their life stories were, are, and will be in your gracious and strict hand.

We thank you that we may look forward to this revelation.
All of this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ,
in whom you have loved, chosen, and called us from eternity.
Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Fourth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 42)

VI. Make your fasting a reality by amendment in your lives

Being therefore, dearly-beloved, fully instructed by these admonitions of ours, which we have often repeated in your ears in protest against abominable error, enter upon the holy days of Lent with godly devoutness, and prepare yourselves to win GOD'S mercy by your own works of mercy. Quench your anger, wipe out enmities, cherish unity, and vie with one another in the offices of true humility. Rule your slaves and those who are put under you with fairness, let none of them be tortured by imprisonment or chains. Forego vengeance, forgive offences: exchange severity for gentleness, indignation for meekness, discord for peace. Let all men find us self-restrained, peaceable, kind: that our fastings may be acceptable to GOD. For in a word to Him we offer the sacrifice of true abstinence and true godliness, when we keep ourselves from all evil: the Almighty GOD helping us through all, to Whom with the Son and Holy Spirit belongs one Godhead and one Majesty, for ever and ever. Amen.¹³

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

¹³ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 158). New York: Christian Literature Company.

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Isaiah 51:1-11; Galatians 3:1-9, 23-29

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Evans, T. (2021). Prayers for knowing God (pp. 12–13). Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Thanksgiving

Thank You, God, for remaining true and holy. Thank You that, in a world of ongoing degradation of what is moral and pure, You have not changed. You have not diminished Yourself in any way. You have upheld Your holiness amid the cacophony of a broken culture.

Thank You for standing strong in what is right, pure, and holy. Thank You for never wavering, losing it, or misleading those who follow You. Thank You for giving me insight to discern what true holiness looks like and how holiness affects decisions and behavior. Only in my growing and deepening relationship with You will I find the path to personal holiness that will lead me into a life of blessing and favor, according to Your Word (Matthew 5:8).

Supplication

God, Your Word urges me to pursue holiness because You are holy (1 Peter 1:16). According to Your wisdom and Word, guide me into a lifestyle that cultivates holiness both internally and externally in all I do and say. Let my words be few unless they reflect this character of Yours—holiness. Let what I do be done out of a heart that seeks to know You more and aspires to align my ways under Yours.

I ask that Your Helper, the Holy Spirit, nourish, feed, develop, and grow this part of the seed planted in me, which is able to guard and protect my soul from foolish choices (James 1:21). As the angel flew to Isaiah with a coal taken from the fire with tongs to purify Isaiah's lips, let Your Spirit purify and make clean what needs to be purified and cleaned within me (Isaiah 6:6).

In Jesus' name, I pray this prayer asking to know You more through Your holiness. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eighth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 46)

I. Lent must be kept not only by avoiding bodily impurity but also by avoiding errors of thought and faith

We know indeed, dearly-beloved, your devotion to be so warm that in the fasting, which is the forerunner of the LORD'S Easter, many of you will have forestalled our exhortations. But because the right practice of abstinence is needful not only to the mortification of the flesh but also to the purification of the mind, we desire your observance to be so complete that, as you cut down the pleasures that belong to the lusts of the flesh, so you should banish the errors that proceed from the imaginations of the heart. For he whose heart is polluted with no misbelief prepares himself with true and reasonable purification for the Paschal Feast, in which all the mysteries of our religion meet together. For, as the Apostle says, that "all that is not of faith is sin," the fasting of those will be unprofitable and vain, whom the father of lying deceives with his delusions, and who are not fed by Christ's true flesh. As then we must with the whole heart obey the Divine commands and sound doctrine, so we must use all foresight in abstaining from wicked imaginations. For the mind then only keeps holy and spiritual fast when it rejects the food of error and the poison of falsehood, which our crafty and wily foe plies us with more treacherously now, when by the very return of the venerable Festival, the whole church generally is admonished to understand the mysteries of its salvation. For he is the true confessor and worshipper of Christ's resurrection, who is not confused about His passion, nor deceived about His bodily nativity. For some are so ashamed of the Gospel of the Cross of Christ, as to impudently nullify the punishment which He underwent for the world's redemption, and have denied the very nature of true flesh in the LORD, not understanding how the impossible and unchangeable Deity of GOD'S Word could have so far condescended for man's salvation, as by His power not to lose His own properties, and in His mercy to take on Him ours. And so in Christ, there is a twofold form but one person, and the Son of GOD, who is at the same time Son of Man, is one LORD, accepting the condition of a slave by the design of loving-kindness, not by the law of necessity, because by His power He became humble, by His power passible, by His power mortal; that for the destruction of the tyranny of sin and death, the weak nature in Him might be capable of punishment, and the strong nature not lose aught of its glory.¹⁴

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |

¹⁴ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, pp. 158–159). New York: Christian Literature Company.

Friday Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173)
Saturday Space. Try to relax and have some time off.

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 26, 32; Jeremiah 7:21-34; John 6:41-51

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Evans, T. (2021). Prayers for knowing God (pp. 12–13). Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Thanksgiving

Heavenly Father, thank You for the abundant supply of Your grace. Thank You for loving me so much that Your grace is available to me at all times. Thank You for Your presence in my life, which reminds me of the constant gift of grace. Grace fills the gaps where I'm lacking, enabling me to fully maximize my potential and purpose for Your kingdom agenda on earth. Thank You for gifting me with spiritual gifts I can tap into because of Your grace. Thank You that Your grace is greater than all of my sin.

Supplication

God, I want to know all that You have preordained for Your grace to accomplish in my life. I don't want to fall short of Your grace in any way. Give me wisdom and insight for how to align myself under Your rule in such a manner that will unlock the power of grace in my life.

Show me how to benefit from this enormous gift. Make me not only a mouthpiece for Your Word and Your values but also a conduit for delivering Your grace to those who need it. May I reflect the grace You have shown me in how I treat others, and I ask that all my words be seasoned with this greatest of gifts, Your grace (Colossians 4:6).

In Jesus' name, I pray this prayer in my quest to know Your grace more completely.

Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eighth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 46)

II. All the actions of Christ reveal the presence of the twofold nature

And so, dearly-beloved, when in reading or hearing the Gospel you find certain things in our LORD Jesus Christ subjected to injuries and certain things illumined by miracles, in such a way that in the same Person now the Humanity appears, and now the Divinity shines out, do not put down any of these things to a delusion, as if in Christ there is either Manhood alone or Godhead alone, but believe both faithfully, worship both right humbly; so that in the union of the Word and the Flesh there may be no separation, and the bodily proofs may not seem delusive, because the divine signs were evident in Jesus. The attestations to both natures in Him are true and abundant, and by the depth of the Divine purpose all concur to this end, that the inviolable Word not being separated from the passible flesh, the Godhead may be understood as in all things partaker with the flesh and the flesh with the Godhead. And, therefore, must the Christian mind that would eschew lies and be the disciple of truth, use the Gospel-story confidently, and, as if still in company with the Apostles themselves, distinguish what is visibly done by the LORD, now by the spiritual understanding and now by the bodily organs of sight. Assign to the man that He is born a boy of a woman: assign to GOD that His mother's virginity is not harmed, either by conception or by bearing. Recognize "the form of a slave" enwrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, but acknowledge that it was the LORD's form that was announced by angels, "proclaimed by the elements," adored by the wise men. Understand it of His humanity that he did not avoid the marriage feast: confess it Divine that he turned water into wine. Let your own feelings explain to you why He shed tears over a dead friend: let His Divine power be realized, when that same friend, after mouldering in the grave four days, is brought to life and raised only by the command of His voice. To make clay with spittle and earth was a work of the body: but to anoint therewith and enlighten the eyes of the blind is an undoubted mark of that power which had reserved for the revelation of its glory that which it had not allowed to the early part of His natural life. It is truly human to relieve bodily fatigue with rest in sleep: but it is truly Divine to quell the violence of raging storms by a rebuking command. To set food before the hungry denotes human kindness and a philanthropic spirit: but with five loaves and two fishes to satisfy 5,000 men, besides women and children, who would dare deny that to be the work of Deity? a Deity which, by the co-operation of the functions of true flesh, showed not only itself in Manhood, but also Manhood in itself; for the old, original wounds in man's nature could not be healed, except by the Word of GOD taking to Himself flesh from the Virgin's womb, whereby in one and the same Person flesh and the Word co-existed.¹⁵

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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¹⁵ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 159). New York: Christian Literature Company.

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| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 50; Jeremiah 8:1-15; John 6:52-59

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Evans, T. (2021). Prayers for knowing God (pp. 12–13). Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Thanksgiving

Father, thank You for Your love. Thank You for Your ability to turn things around through Your redemptive power. You can create a U-turn where it looks like I've become lost. You can break the chains that bind me. Thank You for knowing I am but dust and yet taking that reality into consideration with Your love (Psalm 103:14). You are mindful of me and willing to redeem me because of Your great awareness of my limitations combined with Your great love.

I also give You thanks for Your strength—strength that covers me when the enemy seeks to come at me with a storm. Strength that hides me in the shelter of Your wings (Psalm 91:4). Strength that shows me the path to take (Psalm 25:4).

Thank You for all of these things You use to redeem me and restore me to a right relationship with You.

Supplication

God, show me how to let go of my shame and regret as You have done in redeeming me. You have wiped away my sins like a cloud, and yet I still hold on to the aftereffects of my sin. Show me how to love myself as fully and compassionately as You do. Your redeeming power has brought me hope; but let me not cut short that hope in failing to walk fully in what Your redemption has allowed.

I want to hold up my head in the confidence that redemption supplies. Help me not cut short the manifestation of Your will in my life due to a failure of mine to embrace, receive, and maximize Your redemptive power. I want to know the heart of love You have for me that has allowed You to show me so much mercy, grace, compassion, and redemption. I want to know You more.

In the name of Jesus, I pray this prayer, asking to know You more through Your redemptive power in my life.

Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eighth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 46)

III. Hold fast to the statements of the Creed

This belief in the LORD's Incarnation, dearly-beloved, through which the whole Church is Christ's body, hold firm with heart unshaken and abstain from all the lies of heretics, and remember that your works of mercy will only then profit you, and your strict continence only then bear fruit, when your minds are unsoiled by any defilement from wrong opinions. Cast away the arguments of this world's wisdom, for GOD hates them, and none can arrive by them at the knowledge of the Truth, and keep fixed in your mind that which you say in the Creed. Believe the Son of GOD to be co-eternal with the Father by Whom all things were made and without Whom nothing was made, born also according to the flesh at the end of the times. Believe Him to have been in the body crucified, dead, raised up, and lifted above the heights of heavenly powers, set on the Father's right hand, about to come in the same flesh in which He ascended, to judge the living and the dead. For this is what the Apostle proclaims to all the faithful, saying: "if ye be risen with Christ seek the things which are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of GOD. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in GOD. For when Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."¹⁶

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

¹⁶ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 159). New York: Christian Literature Company.

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

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- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 35; Jeremiah 8:18 – 9:11; John 6:60-71

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Evans, T. (2021). Prayers for knowing God (pp. 12–13). Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Thanksgiving

Father, thank You that Your faithfulness isn't dependent on my obedience to You or even on my faith. Thank You that You remain faithful and true even when I forget how faithful You are and give in to worry.

You were faithful to Peter when he stepped out onto the sea. Even though he took his eyes off You and began to sink, You reached out Your hand in faithfulness to lift him from his certain demise. I know I can depend on You always because of Your faithfulness. Thank You for Your great love, which gives me all I need each day.

Supplication

God, I want to honor You with my faith in Your faithfulness. I want to please You with how I respond to difficulties and trials that come my way. I ask that You strengthen my faith and embolden my trust in You so I can bring You glory in all I do and say.

I ask for greater faith in Your faithfulness. I ask for a greater awareness of Your loving hand. I look to You to supply me with all I need, according to Your great faithfulness. Let the light of Your love and faithfulness shine brightly on me, lifting me out of the darkness of despair and into the light of Your love.

In the great name of Jesus Christ, I pray all these things concerning Your great faithfulness.
Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eighth Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 46)

IV. Use Lent for general improvement in the whole round of Christian duties

Relying, therefore, dearly-beloved, on so great a promise, be heavenly not only in hope, but also in conduct. And though our minds must at all times be set on holiness of mind and body, yet now during these 40 days of fasting bestir yourselves to yet more active works of piety, not only in the distribution of alms, which are very effectual in attesting reform, but also in forgiving offences, and in being merciful to those accused of wrongdoing, that the condition which GOD has laid down between Himself and us may not be against us when we pray. For when we say, in accordance with the LORD'S teaching, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors," we ought with the whole heart to carry out what we say. For then only will what we ask in the next clause come to pass, that we be not led into temptation and freed from all evils³: through our LORD Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.¹⁷

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Monday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
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| Wednesday | Choose a Spiritual Exercise and do it or plan it (see page 172) |
| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

¹⁷ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, pp. 159–160). New York: Christian Literature Company.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 34; Jeremiah 9:12-24; John 7:1-13

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Evans, T. (2021). Prayers for knowing God (pp. 12–13). Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Thanksgiving

God, thank You that I don't have the weight of the world on my shoulders. That would be too much for me to bear. Thank You that I don't need to be the one to solve every riddle or defeat every foe. That is Your role as the Sovereign over all. Thank You that Your mercy allows room for my fragility of heart and that You guard and protect me even when I'm undeserving.

Thank You that You know the way I'll take and will see me through it to the end. I love You and thank You for Your tender mercies, which are evident in the midst of Your sovereign role over all. Help me thank You more frequently as I recognize You as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Supplication

God, I desire to know You more intimately in this area of Your sovereign role. I desire to see Your hand move mountains and defeat the enemy who raises his ugly head against Your rule.

Show Yourself strong in my life, God, that I may know Your strength and sovereignty all the more. Make my feet walk along the paths that are firm, and rescue me from any dangers the enemy sends my way. I know that in Your sovereign rule, any threat the enemy makes toward me is wiped away in a moment. You reach down to overturn his plans for destruction in my life and in the lives of those who call You King and Savior.

In Jesus' name, I pray this prayer acknowledging Your sovereign rule over all.

Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eleventh Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 49)

I. The Lenten fast is incumbent on all alike

On all days and seasons, indeed, dearly-beloved, some marks of the Divine goodness are set, and no part of the year is destitute of sacred mysteries, in order that, so long as proofs of our salvation meet us on all sides, we may the more eagerly accept the never-ceasing calls of GOD's mercy. But all that is bestowed on the restoration of human souls in the divers works and gifts of grace is put before us more clearly and abundantly now, when no isolated portions of the Faith are to be celebrated, but the whole together. For as the Easter festival approaches, the greatest and most binding of fasts is kept, and its observance is imposed on all the faithful without exception; because no one is so holy that he ought not to be holier, nor so devout that he might not be devouter. For who, that is set in the uncertainty of this life, can be found either exempt from temptation, or free from fault? Who is there who would not wish for additions to his virtue, or removal of his vice? seeing that adversity does us harm, and prosperity spoils us, and it is equally dangerous not to have what we want at all, and to have it in the fullest measure. There is a trap in the fulness of riches, a trap in the straits of poverty. The one lifts us up in pride, the other incites us to complaint. Health tries us, sickness tries us, so long as the one fosters carelessness and the other sadness. There is a snare in security, a snare in fear; and it matters not whether the mind which is given over to earthly thoughts, is taken up with pleasures or with cares; for it is equally unhealthy to languish under empty delights, or to labour under racking anxiety.¹⁸

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?

¹⁸ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 160). New York: Christian Literature Company.

- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 40, 41; Jeremiah 10:1-16; John 7:14-24

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Evans, T. (2021). Prayers for knowing God (pp. 12–13). Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Thanksgiving

Thank You, God, for being so powerful in all that You do. Thank You that, despite knowing Your purposes will stand, You still allow me to take part in the planning and preparation for Your plans to be carried out. You don't have to include me, but You have given me free will to see how I will respond—either by aligning myself under You or choosing my own way.

The lessons I learn are difficult, but I want to thank You for the opportunity to learn them. Each one teaches me I need to trust You all the more, because You know what You are doing and Your purposes will stand throughout all generations.

Supplication

Father, give me the grace to see through my own ego and motives so I can surrender more fully to the purposes You have already created to stand. Humble my heart to such a degree that I can rest in knowing that You have everything under control.

I want to honor You with what I do, but I often get in the way by choosing my will over Your revealed plan. I ask for a greater awareness and discernment between my thoughts and Your purposes so I can choose more wisely from the start. I want to live as a kingdom disciple who carries out Your will for Your glory, for others' good, and for my good as well.

In the loving name of Jesus, I pray all of these things in recognition of how Your plans and purposes will forever stand.

Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eleventh Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 49)

II. The broad road is crowded, the narrow way of salvation nearly empty

And thus is perfectly fulfilled that assurance of the Truth, by which we learn that “narrow and steep is the way that leads to life;” and whilst the breadth of the way that leads to death is crowded with a large company, the steps are few of those that tread the path of safety. And wherefore is the left road more thronged than the right, save that the multitude is prone to wordly joys and carnal goods? And although that which it desires is short-lived and uncertain, yet men endure toil more willingly for the lust of pleasure than for love of virtue. Thus while those who crave things visible are unnumbered, those who prefer the eternal to the temporal are hardly to be found. And, therefore, seeing that the blessed Apostle Paul says, “the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal⁵,” the path of virtue lies hid and in concealment, to a certain extent, since “by hope we were saved,” and true faith loves that above all things, which it attains to without any intervention of the flesh. A great work and toil it is then to keep our wayward heart from all sin, and, with the numberless allurements of pleasure to ensnare it on all sides, not to let the vigour of the mind give way to any attack. Who “toucheth pitch, and is not defiled thereby⁷?” who is not weakened by the flesh? who is not begrimed by the dust? who, lastly, is of such purity as not to be polluted by those things without which one cannot live? For the Divine teaching commands by the Apostle’s mouth that “they who have wives” should “be as though they had none: and those that weep as though they wept not; and those that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy as though they possessed not; and those that use this world as though they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away.” Blessed, therefore, is the mind that passes the time of its pilgrimage in chaste sobriety, and loiters not in the things through which it has to walk, so that, as a stranger rather than the possessor of its earthly abode, it may not be wanting in human affections, and yet rest on the Divine promises.¹⁹

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

¹⁹ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, pp. 160–161). New York: Christian Literature Company.

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 3, 25; Jeremiah 10:17-24; John 7:25-36

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Evans, T. (2021). Prayers for knowing God (pp. 12–13). Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Thanksgiving

God, thank You for Your heart that seeks to heal. Thank You for the kindness and compassion of who You truly are. Thank You that I know I can trust You to listen to me when I'm hurting and that I can trust that You will be there for me when no one else seems to be. Thank You that You hear the prayers I pray, even the ones I don't fully voice. Rather, Your Spirit interprets my groaning to You in such a way that opens the windows of heaven so that Your loving heart can revive and restore me.

Thank You that You are over all, that You see all, and that You care for all.

Supplication

God, I want to know Your comforting care on a regular basis. I ask You to revive my spirit where it has become jaded or shut down. Reach into my heart and restore the passion and love that once grew there so well but have become dormant over time and through difficulties. Revive me, God, with a heart that seeks after You to know You fully and with great enthusiasm. Restore me with a willing spirit that I might do Your works and will in my life, not out of compulsion but because of pure joy and love.

Will You guide me into a greater intimacy with You, God, so that I can know and experience the full healing strength of Your love?

In Jesus' name, I pray this prayer, asking to more closely know Your heart of restoring care.

Amen.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eleventh Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 49)

III. Satan is incited to fresh efforts at this season of the year

And, dearly-beloved, no season requires and bestows this fortitude more than the present, when by the observance of a special strictness a habit is acquired which must be persevered in. For it is well known to you that this is the time when throughout the world the devil waxes furious, and the Christian army has to combat him, and any that have grown lukewarm and slothful, or that are absorbed in worldly cares, must now be furnished with spiritual armour and their ardour kindled for the fray by the heavenly trumpet, inasmuch as he, through whose envy death came into the world, is now consumed with the strongest jealousy and now tortured with the greatest vexation. For he sees² whole tribes of the human race brought in afresh to the adoption of GOD's sons and the offspring of the New Birth multiplied through the virgin fertility of the Church. He sees himself robbed of all his tyrannic power, and driven from the hearts of those he once possessed, while from either sex thousands of the old, the young, the middle-aged are snatched away from him, and no one is debarred by sin either of his own or original, where justification is not paid for deserts, but simply given as a free gift. He sees, too, those that have lapsed, and have been deceived by his treacherous snares, washed in the tears of penitence and, by the Apostle's key unlocking the gates of mercy, admitted to the benefit of reconciliation. He feels, moreover, that the day of the LORD'S Passion is at hand, and that he is crushed by the power of that cross which in Christ, Who was free from all debt of sin, was the world's ransom and not the penalty of sin.²⁰

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?

²⁰ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 161). New York: Christian Literature Company.

- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 18:1-25; Jeremiah 38; Philippians 1:1-26

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Lord, I know Who You are and I am so grateful that Your majesty is
displayed in heaven and in the entire universe.

I know that You see from Your vantage point all of the issues in my life and
all of the matters of this world.

You have a view that no one here has.

You see the beginning of the parade and the end of it all at the same time.

Lord, You are in heaven and I am on earth.

I worship Your majesty this day.

And yet at the same time, God, You are my Father. I cannot completely
understand all of that, and I know that I never will. But to know that
You are my Father is such a comfort to me....

You are gracious and kind. You remember that we are dust. You forgive and
You encourage, and I want that to be true of me as well.

Dear God, thank You for being my Father.

DAVID JEREMIAH, American pastor (1946–present day) [PGA, 89]

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eleventh Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 49)

IV. Self-examination by the standard of GOD's commands the right occupation in Lent

And so, tha the malice of the fretting foe may effect nothing by its rage, a keener devotion must be
awaked to the performance of the Divine commands, in order that we may enter on the season, when all
the mysteries of the Divine mercy meet together, with preparedness both of mind and body, invoking the
guidance and help of GOD, that we may be strong to fulfil all things through Him, without Whom we can do
nothing. For the injunction is laid on us, in order that we may seek the aid of Him Who lays it. Nor must any

one excuse himself by reason of his weakness, since He Who has granted the will, also gives the power, as the blessed Apostle James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of GOD, Who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." Which of the faithful does not know what virtues he ought to cultivate, and what vices to fight against? Who is so partial or so unskilled a judge of his own conscience as not to know what ought to be removed, and what ought to be developed? Surely no one is so devoid of reason as not to understand the character of his mode of life, or not to know the secrets of his heart. Let him not then please himself in everything, nor judge himself according to the delights of the flesh, but place his every habit in the scale of the Divine commands, where, some things being ordered to be done and others forbidden, he can examine himself in a true balance by weighing the actions of his life according to this standard. For the designing mercy of GOD⁵ has set up the brightest mirror in His commandments, wherein a man may see his mind's face and realize its conformity or dissimilarity to GOD's image: with the specific purpose that, at least, during the days of our Redemption and Restoration, we may throw off awhile our carnal cares and restless occupations, and betake ourselves from earthly matters to heavenly.²¹

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

²¹ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 161). New York: Christian Literature Company.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 5, 7; Jeremiah 11:1-17; John 7:37-52

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Most merciful God, order my day so that I may know what you want me to do, and then help me to do it.

Let me not be elated by success or depressed by failure. I want only to take pleasure in what pleases you, and only to grieve at what displeases you.

For the sake of your love I would willingly forgo all temporal comforts.

May all the joys in which you have no part weary me.

May all the work which you do not prompt be tedious to me.

Let my thoughts frequently turn to you, that I may be

obedient to you without complaint,

patient without grumbling,

cheerful without self-indulgence,

contrite without dejections,

and serious without solemnity.

Let me hold you in awe without feeling terrified of you, and let me be an example to others without any trace of pride.

THOMAS AQUINAS, Italian theologian (1225–1274) [BHE, 72 PD]

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eleventh Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 49)

V. Forgiveness of our own sins requires that we should forgive others

But because, as it is written, “in many things we all stumble,” let the feeling of mercy be first aroused and the faults of others against us be forgotten; that we may not violate by any love of revenge that most

holy compact, to which we bind ourselves in the LORD's prayer, and when we say "forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors," let us not be hard in forgiving, because we must be possessed either with the desire for revenge, or with the leniency of gentleness, and for man, who is ever exposed to the dangers of temptations, it is more to be desired that his own faults should not need punishment than that he should get the faults of others punished. And what is more suitable to the Christian faith than that not only in the Church, but also in all men's homes, there should be forgiveness of sins? Let threats be laid aside; let bonds be loosed, for he who will not loose them will bind himself with them much more disastrously. For whatsoever one man resolves upon against another, he decrees against himself by his own terms. Whereas "blessed are the merciful, for GOD shall have mercy on them:" and He is just and kind in His judgments, allowing some to be in the power of others to this end, that under fair government may be preserved both the profitableness of discipline and the kindness of clemency, and that no one should dare to refuse that pardon to another's shortcomings, which he wishes to receive for his own.²²

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
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- What made God seem nearer?

²² Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, pp. 161–162). New York: Christian Literature Company.

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
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End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 6, 9; Jeremiah 11:18 – 12:6; John 7:53 – 8:11

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

I love You, Father, because You first loved me and sent Your Son to atone for my sins. And I stand amazed that Jesus, who by nature had always been God, did not cling to His rights as Your equal ... that He laid aside all His privileges, to be born as a human being ... that He totally humbled Himself, submitting to the death of a common criminal, enduring infinite humiliation and pain ... that on the cross You laid on Him the compressed weight of all my sin and guilt and shame, of all my griefs and sorrows, and He became sin for me, dying the death I deserved.

And how much I praise You that it was impossible for death to hold Him in its power ... that You raised Him from the dead to be my Savior, to make me righteous in Your sight ... that He is able to save me completely, for He lives forever and prays for me, and for all of us who have come to You through Him. I glorify You, my Father, with gratefulness and joy.

And I bow at the feet of Him who was dead, and is now alive forever and ever. I exalt Him, I yield myself to Him, for He is worthy of the total response of my entire being.

RUTH MYERS, American missionary (1928–2010) [EGA, 46–47]

DEVOTIONAL READING

Leo the Great, Eleventh Sermon on Lent. (Sermon 49)

VI. Reconciliation between enemies and almsgiving are also Lenten duties

Furthermore, as the LORD says, that “the peacemakers are blessed, because they shall be called sons of GOD,” let all discords and enmities be laid aside, and let no one think to have a share in the Paschal feast that has neglected to restore brotherly peace. For with the Father on high, he that is not in charity with the brethren, will not be reckoned in the number of His sons. Furthermore, in the distribution of alms and care of the poor, let our Christian fast-times be fat and abound; and let each bestow on the weak and destitute those dainties which he denies himself. Let pains be taken that all may bless GOD with one mouth, and let

him that gives some portion of his substance understand that he is a minister of the Divine mercy; for GOD has placed the cause of the poor in the hand of the liberal man; that the sins which are washed away either by the waters of baptism, or the tears of repentance, may be also blotted out by almsgiving; for the Scripture says, "As water extinguisheth fire, so alms extinguisheth sin." Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.²³

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Wednesday | Choose a Spiritual Exercise and do it or plan it (see page 172) |
| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

²³ Leo the Great. (1895). [Sermons](#). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), C. L. Feltoe (Trans.), *Leo the Great, Gregory the Great* (Vol. 12a, p. 162). New York: Christian Literature Company.

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 38; Jeremiah 13:1-11; John 8:12-30

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Help me, Lord, to see You are about me. You are my hope.

In my laying down and rising, in my travelling and arriving

Help me, Lord, to see You are about me. You are my hope.

In my sorrow and enjoyment, in my work and unemployment

Help me, Lord, to see You are about me. You are my hope.

In my health and in my sickness, in my strength and in my weakness

Help me, Lord, to see You are about me. You are my hope.

In my peacefulness and strife, in my going from this life

Help me, Lord, to see You are about me. You are my hope.

In my achievement and its waning, in my losing or my gaining

Help me, Lord, to see You are about me. You are my hope.

Help me, Lord, to see You are about me. You are my peace.

Help me, Lord, to see You are about me. You are my life.

CELTIC PRAYER, "Help Me Lord" [PL, 6 –7]

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Ambrose (340-397 AD, Bishop of Milan), Sermon on the Third Sunday in Lent.

I. ST AMBROSE, BISHOP AND DOCTOR

On Lent

1. Give thanks, Brethren to the Divine Mercy Which has brought you safely half-way through the season of Lent. For this favour they give praise to God, thankfully and with devotion, who in these days have striven to live in the manner in which they were instructed at the beginning of Lent; that is, those who, coming with

eagerness to the Church, have sought with sighs and tears, in daily fasting and almsdeeds, to obtain the forgiveness of their sins.

2. They however who have neglected this duty, that is to say, those who have not fasted daily, or given alms, or those who were indifferent or unmoved in prayer, they have no reason to rejoice, but cause rather, unhappy that they are, for mourning. Yet let them not mourn as if they had no hope; for He Who could give back sight to the man blind from birth (Jn. 9:1), can likewise change those who now are lukewarm and indifferent into souls fervent and zealous in His service, if with their whole heart they desire to be converted unto Him.

Let such persons therefore, that is, those living in uncleanness of heart, or those who cherish hatred in their hearts against another, or those who take unjustly what belongs to another, or cling inordinately to what is theirs, let such persons acknowledge their own blindness of heart, and let them draw near to the Divine Physician that they may be restored to sight.²⁴

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

²⁴ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 2, pp. 82–83). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 56, 57; Jeremiah 14; John 8:31-47

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Father God, Free me:

From the unbelief in the truth that the only way to You is through Jesus Christ;

From the distaste of stating Your truth about this one way;

From the timidity that worries more about what others will think of me;

From the fear of rejection;

From the isolation that keeps me far from those who are far from You;

From the veiled eyes that no longer see the need around me;

From the uncertainty about my words and my credibility;

From the selfishness that doesn't want to invest the time or energy in other people's lives;

From the spiritualization that says it isn't my calling or my season;

From the grand plan that tries to share with hundreds while ignoring the one before me;

From the indifference that affirms truth but doesn't act;

From the busyness that dominates my life with non-essential things;

From the good and legitimate things that dominate my time; and

Replace these emotions and realities, I pray, with a passionate love of one beggar pointing another to where bread may be found. Amen.

KURT BJORKLUND, American minister (1968–present day)

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Ambrose (340-397 AD, Bishop of Milan), Sermon on the Third Sunday in Lent.

[Part 2]

3. Would that you might seek the medicine of the soul when you have sinned, as you seek that of the body when you are ill in the flesh. Who now in this so great assembly were he condemned, not to be put to death, but to be deprived of his sight only, would not give all he possessed to escape the danger? And if you so fear the death of the flesh, why do you not fear more the death of the spirit, especially since the pains of death, that is, of the body, are but of an hour, whilst the death of the soul, that is, its punishment and its grieving, has no end? And if you love the eyes of your body, that you soon will lose in death, why do you not love those eyes of the soul by which you may see your Lord and your God for ever?

4. Labour therefore, Beloved Children in the Lord, labour while it is yet day; for as Christ Our Lord says, The night cometh, when no man can work (Jn. 9:4). Daytime is this present life; night is death, and the time that follows death. If after this life there is no more freedom to work, as The Truth tells us, why then does every man not labour while yet there is time; that is, while he yet lives in this world?

Be fearful, Brethren, of this death, of which the Saviour says: The night cometh, when no man can work. All those who now work evil are without fear of this death, and because of this when they depart from this life they shall encounter everlasting death. Labour while yet ye live, and particularly in these days; fasting from dainty fare, withholding yourselves at all time from evil works. For those that abstain from food, but do not withhold themselves from wickedness, are like to the devil, who while he eats not, yet never ceases from evildoing. And lastly, you must know that what you deny yourself in fasting, you must give to heaven in the poor.

5. Fulfil in work, Brethren, the lesson of this day's sermon; lest there come upon you the chastisement of the Jews. For they said to the blind man: Be thou his disciple (Jn. 9:28). What does being a disciple of Christ mean if not to be an imitator of His compassion, and a follower of His truth and humility? But they said this meaning to curse the man. Instead it is a truly great blessing, to which may you also attain, by His grace Who liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen.²⁵

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

²⁵ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 2, pp. 83–84). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 22; Jeremiah 15:10-21; John 8:48-59

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Who is like you, Jesus, sweet Jesus?

- You are the light of those who are spiritually lost.
- You are the life of those who are spiritually dead.
- You are the liberation of those who are imprisoned by guilt.
- You are the glory of those who hate themselves.
- You are the guardian of those who are paralyzed by fear.
- You are the guide of those who are bewildered by falsehood.
- You are the peace of those who are in turmoil.
- You are the prince of those who yearn to be led.
- You are the priest of those who seek the truth.

JOHANN FREYLINGHAUSEN, German pietist (1670–1739) [BHE, 135 PD]

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Ambrose (340-397 AD, Bishop of Milan), Sermon 1 on the First Sunday in Lent.

I. ST AMBROSE, BISHOP AND DOCTOR

The Acceptable Time

1. Behold, Dearly Beloved, the sacred days are drawing near, the acceptable time, of which it is written: Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2). And so you must be more earnest in prayer and in almsgiving, in fasting and in watching. He that till now has given alms, in these days let him give more; for as water quenqueth a flaming fire, so does almsgiving wipe out sin (Eccles. 3:22). He that till now fasted and prayed, let him fast and pray still more: for there are certain sins which are not cast out, except by prayer and fasting (Mt. 17:20).

Should anyone cherish anger towards another, let him forgive from his heart. Should anyone take unjustly what belongs to another, let him restore it; and if not fourfold, at least that which he has taken; if he desires God to be merciful to himself (Lk. 19:8). And though a Christian should abstain at all times from cursings and revilings, from oaths, from excessive laughter, and from idle words, he must do this especially in these holy days, which are set apart so that, during these forty days, he may by penance wipe out the sins of the whole year.

2. Let you believe, and believe firmly, that if in these days you have made a thorough confession of your sins, and done penance as we have told you, you shall receive from Our Most Merciful Lord the pardon of all your offences; as did the Ninivites, who earned deliverance from their afflictions by doing penance in sackcloth and ashes (Jn. 3). So you also, following their example, if you cry out with all your heart to the Lord, you will invoke His Mercy on you, so that serene and joyful you will celebrate the day of the Lord's Resurrection, and, thus blessed, you will after this life cross over to your heavenly home, by the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.²⁶

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

²⁶ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 2, p. 13). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 31; Jeremiah 16:10 – 17:4; John 9:1-17

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
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- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

This day is Your gift to me; I take it, Lord, from Your hand, and thank You for the wonder of it.

God, may I see Your presence in this Your day, every day and every way....

All that I am, Lord, I place into Your hands.

All that I do, Lord, I place into Your hands.

Everything I work for, I place into Your hands.

Everything I hope for, I place into Your hands.

The troubles that weary me, I place into Your hands.

The thoughts that disturb me, I place into Your hands.

I place into Your hands, Lord, the choices that I face.

Guard me from choosing the way perilous of which the end is heart-pain and the secret tear.

Rich in counsel, show us the way that is plain and safe.

May I feel Your presence at the heart of my desire, and so know it for Your desire for me....

Help me to find my happiness in my acceptance of what is Your purpose for me:

In friendly eyes, in work well done,

In quietness born of trust,

And, most of all, in the awareness of Your presence in my spirit.

OSWALD OF NORTHUMBRIA, Celtic monk (605–642) [CDP, 155 –57 PD]

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Cyril (376-444 AD, Patriarch of Alexandria), Sermon on the First Sunday in Lent.

[Part 1]

IV. ST CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, BISHOP AND DOCTOR

The Preparation for the Pasch

1. Behold! This wondrous and most profitable time of our Pasch is now approaching, when, after we have shaken off the oppressive burthen of our sins, we shall freely take upon us the saving yoke of the Divine Word come down from heaven; and taught by the mild and salutary words of Emmanuel, we shall no longer labour or be burthened. And coming together in the churches in common joyfulness let us lift up our voices in holy harmony, and give humble thanks to Christ the Saviour of all men, Who has cleansed us of the ancient stain that clung to us from of old, from our first parent's sin, and let us cry out what was so truly said in times past: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13).

Since we were because of the evil will of the devil sent forth from Paradise and its joy, and heard because of the just anger of God that sorrowful decree: Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return (Gen. 3:19), and since we were caught in the snare of that diabolical tyranny, unhappy that we were, we dared not raise our eyes to heaven for mercy. Where was the way of salvation for those who longed for it? What means of pardon was there for those who had broken the command of the Lord? There was only the clemency of God: the mercy and compassion that belong to that unseen and unutterable majesty.²⁷

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?

²⁷ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 2, pp. 25–26). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 27; 1 Samuel 16:1-13 ; John 9:1-25

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Bjorklund, K. (2011). Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for not abandoning me when I
abandoned you.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for offering your hand of love in my
darkest, most lonely moment

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for putting up with such a stubborn soul
as mine.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for loving me more than I love myself.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for continuing to pour out your blessing
upon me, even though I respond so poorly....

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for repaying our sin with your love.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for being constant and unchanging, amidst all the changes of the world.

May you be blessed forever, Lord, for your countless blessings on me and on all your creatures.

TERESA OF Ávila, Spanish nun (1515–1582) [BHE, 126 PD]

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Cyril (376-444 AD, Patriarch of Alexandria), Sermon on the First Sunday in Lent.

[Part 2]

So therefore He sent His Son as our Saviour and Redeemer, Who alone had power to free mankind from the hands of the devil. And with infinite kindness and goodness the Only Begotten Son of the Father, equal to Him in power and majesty, Co-Eternal with Him Who had begotten Him, Creator and Artificer of heaven and earth, of angels and of men, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6), took upon Himself our likeness, made in all things as we are, sin alone excepted,

that through Himself He might redeem us all, and bring us to God the Father freed from all defilement and stain.

For this purpose He suffered hunger, and fasted for a certain time, that He might be for us the beginning of our salvation, and the model of a blameless life. So let us also make fasting the prelude of our holy celebrations. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:8). And should we keep ourselves pure and chaste, steadfastly adhering to a way of life that pleases God, we shall as not unprofitable servants hear in due time these words: Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many (Mt. 25:23). For the fruits of their fasting shall not fail for those who hope in Him. Nor will they ever hear those dreadful words that were spoken to the Jews: Not such a fast have I chosen, saith the Lord. For thus he denounces them in the words of Isaias, and most justly: You fast, and with your fist you strike the humble. What is your fasting to me? (Is. 58:4: Septuagint).

It is required of us therefore that our life should be good in all ways; that fasting is but added to our own clear and joyful virtue, the sure means of immortality, the worthy pledge of the kingdom of heaven, and the strong and unshakeable foundation of eternal life. And because of this it becomes us that: Cleansing ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit, we perfect our sanctification in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1). And so with confidence and without fear we then shall stand before the Tribunal of Christ, clothed in shining garments, and cry out to Him: Behold we come to thee: for thou art the Lord our God (Jer. 3:22).²⁸

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?

²⁸ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 2, p. 26). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 70, 77; Jeremiah 17:5-18; John 9:18-41

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Prayer for God's Mercy

Ephesians 2:4-5

'But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.'

Our great and gracious God,

We thank you that no one need despair of your mercy.

We thank you for the perfect sufficiency of the atonement made by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We thank you that it is his blood that cleanses from all sin,

And that he is able to save completely all who come to you by him.

And we pray that those who are troubled with a sense of their sin,

And who perhaps fear that there is no love in your heart for them,

We pray that they may be sovereignly and graciously drawn to the Saviour, and may experience, this very day, the blessedness of having their sins forgiven.

We pray, too, for the many who have no concern for their souls, that it would please you to send the Holy Spirit to awaken them,

to show them their need,

to bring them face to face with the reality of what they are in the sight of God,

and of the need that is theirs to come in lowly penitence to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that we who, by grace, have had our hearts opened to the Lord Jesus Christ and his love,

that we, this day, and all our days,

would enjoy an ever deeper fellowship with him.

We thank you for that mysterious and wonderful union that there is between the Saviour and his people;

And we pray, Lord Jesus, that by virtue of that mysterious and wonderful contact that you have with our souls,

You would mould our wills to your own will;

That you would grant to us the same mind that you have that we may think as you think,
look at everything from your perspective;
and that you would so influence our emotions that the love, the joy, and the peace that are in your
heart, would be in ours also.

We ask it for your glory's sake.

Amen.²⁹

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Cyril (376-444 AD, Patriarch of Alexandria), Sermon on the First Sunday in Lent.

[Part 3]

2. And when the people of Israel did not confess this, they heard once more the voice of God, speaking through the voice of Isaiah: Woe to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a wicked seed, ungracious children! They have forsaken the Lord, they have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel, they are gone away backwards. For what shall I strike you more, you that increase transgression? (Is. 1:4). They were indifferent to the wonders wrought by the Saviour; and neither did they receive with awe the divine testimonies He wrought; on the contrary they insulted Him, declaring that, This man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils (Mt. 12:24).

O God-hating madness! O monstrous impiety! They have not known nor understood: they walk on in darkness; they go astray from the least to the greatest of them (Ps. 81:5). If you know not what is written of Him, if you understand not the testimonies of the holy prophets, why do you boast, setting yourselves up as the custodians of the Law? When have you seen that fulfilled which was prophesied of old? Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free? (Is. 35:5, 6). Will you forever remain hoping that Emmanuel will come? And looking for the things that you have seen fulfilled? Does nothing of all that you see move you to wonder? Rather you seek to cover up what is known and proclaimed to all. Will you keep on shutting your eyes and closing your ears to the wonders Christ has wrought? For your contradictions have you been sorely repaid! For now you possess no more the outward tokens of your beliefs; without fatherland, without altar, you wander scattered everywhere upon the face of the earth.³⁰

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

Sunday Attend the gathered worship service (i.e. come to church ☺)

²⁹ Campbell, D., & Leone, S. (2010). *Heart Cries to Heaven: A Book of Prayers* (First Edition, pp. 84–85). Leominster: Day One.

³⁰ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*. (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 2, pp. 26–27). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

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| Monday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
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| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 54, 79; Jeremiah 18:1-12; John 10:1-10

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Prayer for Burdened Hearts
1 Peter 5:7b 'He cares for you.'

Lord,

We pray for your blessing upon our own work here,

And we thank you for the many opportunities that are ours.

We pray that your blessing would be upon all the teaching and proclamation—
that it would be blessed to those that are already saved,
and would come with saving power to those that are not.

We remember, Lord, those who are in special need.

You know there are many situations that are upon our hearts that concern us.

You know the sadness that is in hearts because of
concerns that parents have over children,
children over parents.

You know where there is anxiety because of work situations.

We come to you as always as a burdened people.

We pray that you will minister to us

And that we will have grace to cast all our cares upon you.

We pray that your blessing would be upon us as we come to your Word.

We thank you for that Word and pray that it may come to every heart
—every heart—

with power this day.

We implore the aid of the Spirit to that end, and we look to you to do great things in fulfilment of your purpose.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord we ask these things.

Amen.³¹

³¹ Campbell, D., & Leone, S. (2010). *Heart Cries to Heaven: A Book of Prayers* (First Edition, pp. 82–83). Leominster: Day One.

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Cyril (376-444 AD, Patriarch of Alexandria), Sermon on the First Sunday in Lent.

[Part 4]

Hear ye then one among you who has still retained a right judgement, that which Baruch proclaimed: How happeneth, O Israel, that thou art in thy enemies' land? Thou art grown old in a strange country, thou art defiled with the dead: thou art counted with them that go down into hell. Thou hast forsaken the fountains of wisdom (Bar. 3:10–12). You have no answer to what has been said against you. You have no longer the power of plain speech: even to Truth itself you answer with sophisms. Listen then to what was fittingly said by the Just Judge of all men: Behold all you that kindle a fire, walk in the light of the fire, and in the flames which you have kindled (Is. 50:11).

You have placed upon a Cross the Lord of glory and the Maker of the Universe; and you thought that Life could, by you, be shrouded in death. You have not known, neither have you understood, that immortality which was prepared for the nature of man. Yet this Our Lord Jesus Christ went down to hell, and defeating it, He commanded as their Lord those who were in bonds: Go forth; and to those who were in darkness: Reveal yourselves (Is. 59:9: Septuagint). And on the third day He returned to life, leaving the abode of the dead, and then, rejoicing in what He had accomplished, commanded His Disciples: Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Mt. 28:19).

Profiting then by such teachers, let us resolve to be obedient to them alone, and to be subject to them; and being instructed by them in truth, and having also the perfect teaching of the divine Scriptures, let us, in the words of Moses, cry out to Our Redeemer and Saviour: Who is like to Thee among the strong, O Lord? Who is like to thee, glorious in holiness? (Ex. 15:11). And again: Who is as Thee, taking away iniquity, and overlooking injustice? (Deut. 34:7: Septuagint).³²

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

³² Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 2, p. 27). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 63, 90; Jeremiah 18:13-23; John 10:11-21

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Prayer for God's Grace

Mary Anne S. Deck, 1813–1902

'Saviour, I come to thee; O Lamb of God, I pray, Cleanse me and save me, Cleanse me and save me,
Wash all my sins away.'

We thank you, our great and gracious God,

For the provisions of the gospel;

For your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ;

For the blood that cleanses from all sin;

For the fountain that has been opened for sin and uncleanness.

Give us grace that we might wash and be cleansed:

That we might come to him in all our filthiness—

And be robed in the beautiful robe of his spotless, stainless righteousness—

Be acquitted and stand before you justified—

And know the Holy Spirit work in the very depth of our being to make us inwardly clean.

Lord, we pray, that you will so work in the hearts of our children, our young people, and those adults here
who are not yet saved—

That they will not harden their hearts against this appeal,

But will come as you have invited.

We ask it for Jesus' sake.

Amen.³³

³³ Campbell, D., & Leone, S. (2010). *Heart Cries to Heaven: A Book of Prayers* (First Edition, p. 69). Leominster: Day One.

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Cyril (376-444 AD, Patriarch of Alexandria), Sermon on the First Sunday in Lent.

[Part 5]

Let no imposter therefore seduce you from the true faith. Let us tread the royal way, turning neither to the left nor to the right. Let us preserve our faith intact, untarnished by deceit, or by heretical contention; following always in the way of the true service of God. Let us confess the Consubstantial Trinity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. For this the Holy Scriptures have given us from above. Let us proclaim the Lord Who became man for us, born of the Virgin Mary Mother of God. Let us say to Him in the words of the Scriptures: My lord and My God (Jn. 20:28).

Thus putting our lives in order, and cleansing ourselves of the stains of our former sins by an upright and devout manner of living, purified and without blemish, blameless and without reproof, let us show the tenderness of a father to the orphaned, let us bestow on the widow care such as becomes the sanctified; and in a word let us love our neighbour, and drive out from our own soul every iniquity.

Let us shelter in our homes the needy and the homeless, so that sharing with the poor that which God has given us for our own lives, clothing the naked, and in general adorning ourselves with everything that is pleasing to God, we may be able to come to the joy of the good things He has promised us.

Beginning the holy Quadragesima on the nineteenth of February, the week of the saving Pasch on the twenty-fourth of the month of March, we shall bring to an end our fast on the twenty-ninth day of the same month of March, at the close of the evening, according to the evangelical proclamation, celebrating then the festival, at the rising dawn of the Lord's Day on the thirtieth of the same month, and then going on thereafter to the seven weeks of the holy Pentecost.

In this way we shall come to inherit the kingdom of heaven in Christ Jesus Our Lord, through Whom and with Whom, may there be glory and honour to the Father, for ever and ever. Amen.³⁴

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

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| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

³⁴ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 2, p. 28). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 53, 86; Jeremiah 19:1-13; John 10:22-42

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

The Mystery of Providence

Psalm 130:5

'I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope.'

We would remember before you, gracious God,

Those who are struggling this day with the mystery of your providence,
Who are perplexed because of the things that have befallen them,
Things that they know you have ordained for them.

Were we to see with your eyes and know with your thoughts, how profoundly at rest we would be! But we are finite creatures and our faith is often weak and when the darkness closes in around us, how easily we can lose our way, and find ourselves a prey to all kinds of fears, perplexities, and doubts.

Have compassion, we pray, upon your people and strengthen their faith.

You know those who are grappling with the mystery of sickness,
those that are grappling with the sorrow of death,
others facing fresh outbursts of persecution,
yet others coping with financial loss,
and problems in their family,
with the mystery of unanswered prayer,
and so we could go on.

How we thank you that your great, generous, and all-loving heart goes out to every one of your people, the whole world over with a depth and richness and perfection of understanding that we cannot fathom.

We thank you for the assurances of your Word,

For the solid foundation for our faith that is given to us in the revelation there
of your character,
your purposes,
your promises,

and your ways.

Give your people grace to wait for you—

To rest quietly in yourself—

To be assured that all things work together for good to those who love you—

that you are the God who does all things well, and that when your purposes are consummated, and we see the end from the beginning, we will be able to say from our hearts, 'You have done all things well.'

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.³⁵

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Gregory the Great (540-604 AD), Sermon on the Gospel, First Sunday in Advent.

IV. ST GREGORY: ON THE GOSPEL

Given to the People in the Basilica of the Holy Apostle Peter (Homily 1)

1. Our Lord and Redeemer, desiring to find us prepared, warns us of the evils that are to accompany the end of the world, so that He may keep us from the love of it. He makes known the disasters that will herald its approaching end, so that should we be unwilling to serve God in times of tranquillity, we may, made fearful by these happenings, at least be anxious concerning the judgment now at hand.

For a little prior to this passage of the holy Gospel which you, my Brethren, have just heard, the Lord forewarned us, saying: Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be great earthquakes in divers places, and pestilences, and famines (Lk. 21:10). Then having said certain other things in between, He adds this warning which you have just now heard: There will be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves. From among all these things we now see that some have already come to pass; the others that now fill us with dread are to come in the future.

For we behold nation rising against nation, and their distress prevails upon the earth, more now in these our times than we have read of in history. You are aware how frequently we have heard from other parts of the world that earthquakes have devastated innumerable cities. Pestilences we suffer without ceasing. Signs in the sun and moon and stars we have not yet clearly beheld: but that these are not far off we gather from the alteration of the heavens.

Just as before Italy was given over to be smitten by the heathen sword, we beheld fiery hosts in the sky, and saw him glittering there who was afterwards to shed the blood of humanity. Extraordinary confusion of the waves has not yet risen. But since much that was foretold has happened, we cannot doubt that the events which remain shall come in time, for the witness of what has been fulfilled is the pledge of that which is to follow.³⁶

³⁵ Campbell, D., & Leone, S. (2010). *Heart Cries to Heaven: A Book of Prayers* (First Edition, pp. 74–75). Leominster: Day One.

³⁶ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*. (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 17). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 25, 147:1-12; Isaiah 11:1-10 ; Matthew 13:54-58

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
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What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

(When the evangelist D.L. Moody came to Britain in the last century, he was asked if he would do something for the miserably poor. 'Yes,' he said, 'and I hope also to do something for the miserably rich.')

Lord, in these prosperous times many are unhappy,
 not because they have too little but because they have too much.
 They have too much of this world's goods,
 too little of the things of spiritual value.
 In the eyes of men they are wealthy; in your eyes they are bankrupt.
 Their purses are full but their souls are empty.
 Give them, O Lord, and give us all, a proper sense of values
 And a right understanding of the worth and worthlessness of money
 in the light of the world to come.

Make us ever eager, Lord, to share the good things that you give us.
 Grant us such a measure of your Spirit
 that we may find more joy in giving than in getting.
 Make us ready to give cheerfully without grudging,
 secretly without praise,
 and in sincerity without looking for gratitude;
 for Jesus Christ's sake.

John Hunter³⁷

³⁷ Colquhoun, F. (Ed.). (1989). [Prayers for Today](#) (p. 27). London: Triangle; SPCK.

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Gregory the Great (540-604 AD), Sermon on the Gospel, First Sunday in Advent.

2. We tell you these things, dearest Brethren, in order that your souls may awaken to an eagerness for security, and lest you become torpid in a security that is false, and become lax through ignorance of Christian truth, but rather that you may become solicitous, and that anxiety may strengthen you in doing good, reflecting on this which the voice of the Redeemer added: Men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of the heavens shall be moved.

Whom else does the Lord call by the name of Powers of heaven unless the Angels, the Archangels, the Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, and Powers, who at the Coming of the Just Judge will then appear visibly to our eyes, to the end that they may sternly exact an account of that which the Invisible Lawgiver now patiently suffers? Whereunto is added: And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty; as though He were openly to say: they shall see Him come in power and majesty to Whom, Present in lowliness, they turned a deaf ear, and so the more sharply will they then feel His severity, the more they now refuse to humble their hearts before His patience.³⁸

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

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EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?

³⁸ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, pp. 17–18). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 32; Jeremiah 20:7-18; John 11:17-27

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Prayer for Light in a Dark and Fallen World

Romans 3:23 '... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.'

Lord, we confess that we are part of a fallen world.

We stand chargeable with sin along with every other human being,

And we know that things in that regard are no different today than they were when the Apostle wrote his letter to the Romans.

But we thank you, most gracious God, that into this scene of darkness and rebellion, and in the very midst of so many expressions of your righteous wrath, there came Jesus and with him the good news of a righteousness from God.

We thank you for that righteousness and for the good news that proclaims it to others and offers it freely to all.

We would by faith take hold of that righteousness ourselves that we too might be justified.

We pray that all over the world today in the darkest places

the light of the gospel would shine

and would bring not only intellectual

understanding of the truth,

but a heartfelt experience of that truth.

Almighty God, we ask that you will work on a massive scale today, drawing thousands and tens of thousands into the kingdom.

We know that you are able,

And we pray that for your glory's sake you will do it.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we ask these things.

Amen.³⁹

³⁹ Campbell, D., & Leone, S. (2010). *Heart Cries to Heaven: A Book of Prayers* (First Edition, pp. 44–45). Leominster: Day One.

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Gregory the Great (540-604 AD), Sermon on the Gospel, First Sunday in Advent.

3. Since these words were directed at the reprobate, He then turns to speak words of comfort to the elect. For He says: When these things come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand. It is as if the Truth openly warns His Elect by saying: when the evils of this world mount up, when dread of the judgment is shown even by the trembling powers, lift up your heads, that is, be joyful in your hearts, because the world, of which you are not friends, is drawing to its end; the redemption you have been seeking is coming close. In Scripture the head is often used for the soul, because as the members are ruled by the head, so thoughts are governed by the soul. To lift up your heads therefore means to raise the heart to the joys of the heavenly fatherland.

They, therefore, who love God, are bidden to be glad, and to rejoice, because of the end of the world; since soon they will meet Him Whom they love, and that is passing away which they have never loved. Far be it then from any of the faithful who desire to see God that they should grieve over the stricken world, which we must know will end in these catastrophes. For it is written: Whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God (Jas. 4:4). Who therefore does not rejoice at the approaching end of the world, testifies that he is its friend, and by this he is revealed as an enemy of God.

But let this be far from the faithful, far from the hearts of those who believe through their faith that there is another life, and who love it in very deed. Let them grieve over the ruin of the world who have planted the roots of their hearts deep in the love of it, who neither look for the life to come, nor are even aware that it is. But we who have learned of the joys of our heavenly home must hasten to it as speedily as we may. We should desire to go there with all haste, and to arrive by the shortest way. And with what miseries does not the world urge us forward? What sorrow, what misfortune is there, that does not press upon us? What is this mortal life but a way? And what folly would it be, let you carefully consider, to be weary with the fatigue of the way, and yet not eager to finish the journey!

That the world is to be trodden on, and despised, Our Redeemer then teaches us, by a timely similitude: Behold the fig tree and all the trees: when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh. So you also when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. This is as if he were openly to say: as from the fruit on the trees you know that summer is near, so from the ruin of the world you may know that the kingdom of God is likewise near. From which it may be truly gathered that the fruit of the world is ruin. To this end it arises, that it may fall. To this end it germinates, that whatever it has brought forth from seed will be consumed in disaster. But happily is the Kingdom of God compared to summer, because then the clouds of our sadness will pass away, and the days, of our life shall be resplendent in the glory of the eternal Sun.⁴⁰

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES EACH DAY

⁴⁰ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, pp. 18–19). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

All the resources for these activities are in part 2. They are all listed here with the suggested day of the week because you should work out your own rhythm and do them at a different time and in a different order if that is better for you.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Sunday | Attend the gathered worship service (i.e. come to church ☺) |
| Monday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Tuesday | Listen to the suggested worship songs (starts on page 169) |
| Wednesday | Choose a Spiritual Exercise and do it or plan it (see page 172) |
| Thursday | Readings from selected books (starts on page 141) |
| Friday | Get the story behind a favourite hymn & listen to it (starts on page 173) |
| Saturday | Space. Try to relax and have some time off. |

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 107:1-22; Exodus 24:3-8 ; Hebrews 12:18-29

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Praise to the God of Forgiving Love

Micah 7:18-19

'Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry for ever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.'

Lord, what an amazing thing it is that we human beings, the human race that has so offended and grieved you, should yet have in you a God who is ever so ready to pardon.

What a marvellous thing it is that if we will but turn from our sins and seek your face and implore your forgiveness, you will forgive!

Though our sins should be of the very worst kind and multiplied beyond number,
 Yet you will take those sins,
 tread them underfoot,
 and hurl them into the depths of the seas.

We thank you for the experience that so many of us have had of this gracious forgiveness,

And we thank you for the ongoing experience that we have had of it as, day after day, we have come to you with fresh sin, and when confessed, you have forgiven.

We would worship you, the gracious God,
 who, through the cross of Calvary,
 made provision for our cleansing.

We would ask that at the outset of our worship there would be in our hearts lifted to you,

Confession,
 Repentance,

The imploring of your forgiveness,

And the experience again through Jesus' blood of the washing away of our guilt.

Grant it so that we may come in the joy of reconciliation,

in the joy of fresh forgiveness,

in the joy of knowing that you are a God who now through Christ smiles upon us in forgiving love.

Hear us and bless this hour of worship.

We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.⁴¹

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Gregory the Great (540-604 AD), Sermon on the Gospel, First Sunday in Advent.

4. All this is confirmed under a mighty pledge, when the sentence is added in which He says: Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away, till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass. Nothing of this world is more durable than the heavens and the earth, and nothing in the order of nature passes away more quickly than speech. Words, as long as they are incomplete, are not yet words. Once completed, they cease utterly to be; because they cannot be perfected save in their own passing away. Therefore He says: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass. As if he were openly to say: all that seems to you enduring and unchangeable, is not enduring and without change in eternity. And everything of mine that seems to pass away, is enduring and without change: because my speech, that passes away, utters thoughts (sententiae manentes) which endure for ever.⁴²

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

⁴¹ Campbell, D., & Leone, S. (2010). *Heart Cries to Heaven: A Book of Prayers* (First Edition, pp. 20–21). Leominster: Day One.

⁴² Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*. (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 19). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 73, 121; Jeremiah 21:1-10; John 11:28-44

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

The Lord is Good

Psalm 34:8–10

'Taste and see that the LORD is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.

The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.'

Lord, so many of us have tasted and experienced for ourselves just how good you are because you have heard our cries for mercy.

You have delivered us from evil;

You have saved so many of us from our sins.

We know you as the God who is good to undeserving sinners, the God who is good continually to his beloved people.

We know that in a broad sense, we have all, regardless of our spiritual state, experienced so much of your goodness, but we do ask that those of us who know you as good to us in Christ would drink more deeply of that goodness today as you, through him, pour into our lives further spiritual blessing, and we pray that there may be others who would taste of that goodness for the first time today.

May they come to know you as God in Christ

Who reaches out to the lost,

Who through the cross has provided for our salvation,

And who now invites us to come to your beloved Son that in him we might be justified.

Do draw near to us, our gracious, good, and loving God;

Bless us with your presence,

And the work of the Spirit in our hearts to stir us up to worship you with fervency and joy and to give us humble and teachable hearts that we might receive believingly and obediently your Word.

Forgive us, we pray, for our sins.

Cleanse us through Jesus' blood from all unrighteousness.

And give us grace to glory in you.

Through Jesus we pray.

Amen.⁴³

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Gregory the Great (540-604 AD), Sermon on the Gospel, First Sunday in Advent.

5. See, my Brethren, already we begin to perceive something of that of which we have been hearing. The world is oppressed by new and ever-increasing miseries. How many survive of the innumerable multitude of men you may see, yet each day new scourges beset them, sudden disasters fall on them, new and unheard of disasters arise. Just as the body in youth is vigorous, the heart strong and steady, the shoulders upright, and the lungs vigorous, but in old age the figure is no longer upright, the shrunken neck is bowed, the chest labours with frequent sighs, strength fails us, and the speaker is impeded by a faltering breath. Although feebleness is yet absent, yet infirmity in our bodily senses is now our normal state of health. So in its early years, the world flourished as in its pristine strength, vigorous to propagate the offspring of mankind, blooming in the health of its bodies, fat with the richness of life. Now it is falling into its own old age, and, as if near to death, is oppressed with growing miseries.

Do not then, my Brethren, love that which you know cannot endure. Keep before your minds the apostolic counsels wherein we are admonished: Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him (1 Jn. 2:15). The day before yesterday, Brethren, you heard that an ancient plantation was uprooted by a sudden storm, that houses were destroyed, churches razed to their foundations. How many were there, safe and well on the previous evening, who believed that in the morning they would fulfil some task, yet that very night were they of a sudden overtaken, caught in the trap of this disaster?⁴⁴

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

⁴³ Campbell, D., & Leone, S. (2010). *Heart Cries to Heaven: A Book of Prayers* (First Edition, pp. 10–11). Leominster: Day One.

⁴⁴ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*. (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 19). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 35, 123; Jeremiah 22:1-5, 13-19; John 11:45-57

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Father, I thank You for the people in my life who seem to bring more pain than joy, for I believe You have let our paths cross for important reasons. Thank You for the good things You want to do in my life through the things that bother me (their irritating habits? Their moodiness? Their unloving ways? Their demands? Their insensitivity? Their unrealistic expectations?). I'm grateful that You are with me, to meet my needs when others—even those close to me—fail to do so. I'm so glad that You are also within me, working to make me more like Jesus, more patient, more gentle, more loving, through the very things I dislike.

Thank You too that You love these people, and that Your love is adequate to meet their needs and to transform their lives, however willful or unwise they may sometimes be. Thank You that You care for them deeply, and that each of them has the potential of being a vast reservoir from which You could receive eternal pleasure. And so, though I may not feel grateful, I give thanks for them by faith, trusting Your goodness, Your wisdom, Your power, and Your love for them as well as for me.

And I praise You that I need not fret about these people, or be envious, or mull over angry thoughts to prove I'm right. Thank You that by Your power I can receive them as You receive me: just as I am, warts and wrinkles and hang-ups and all ... that I can choose not to judge them, but to forgive them ... to cancel any debts I feel they owe me—any apologies, any obligations ... that through Your grace, I can choose to wipe clean any slate of grievances I have within me, and to view these people with a heart that says, "You no longer owe me a thing." Thank You for Your Spirit who empowers me, so that I can do them good.

RUTH MYERS, American missionary (1928–2010) [EGA, 88 –89]⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Gregory the Great (540-604 AD), Sermon on the Gospel, First Sunday in Advent.

6. But we must carefully keep in mind that in the doing of these things it is the Invisible Judge that moves the breath of the faintest breeze, that awakens the storm from even one small cloud, or razes the foundations of so many buildings. But what shall happen when the Judge shall visibly appear, and when His anger burns against the wicked, if we cannot now endure His wrath when he inflicts upon us the least tempest? Before the face of His wrath what flesh shall stand, if He it is that moves the wind, and shakes the earth, incites the storms, and lays low so many buildings? Paul reflecting on this severity of the Judge to come, says to us: It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31). The psalmist gives voice to the same reflection: God shall come openly, Our God, He shall not be silent, and round about shall be a mighty tempest (Ps. 49:3). Tempest and fire shall accompany the severity of this justice, because the tempest shall search out those whom the fire will burn.

Beloved Brethren, keep that day before your eyes, and then whatsoever may seem burthensome will become light in comparison. Of that day is it said by the mouth of the prophet: The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and exceeding swift; the voice of the day of the Lord is bitter, the mighty man shall there meet with tribulation. That day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds, a day of trumpet and alarm (Soph. 1:14–16). Of this day the Lord has spoken by the mouth of the prophet Aggeus (Ag. 2:22): Once again and I shall move not alone earth, but heaven.

Behold, as we have said, He moves the tempest, and the earth cannot endure it. What will it do when He moves the heavens? What can we say of the terrors we now see, except that they are but heralds of the wrath to come? And let us keep in mind that these present afflictions are as far below the last tribulations, as is the person of the herald below the majesty of the judge he precedes. Reflect with all your mind upon this day, my dearest Brethren. Remedy what is now defective in your present life. Amend your ways. Conquer evil temptations by standing firm against them. Repent with tears of the sins you have committed. For the more you make ready against the severity of His justice by serving Him in fear, the more serenely shall you behold the Coming of that Eternal Judge, Who with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth, world without end. Amen.⁴⁶

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?

⁴⁶ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 20). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 55, 124; Jeremiah 22:20 – 23:8; John 12:1-11

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

For our insensitivity to your creation, for vandalism and violence, for crassness and carelessness,

Forgive us, O Lord.

For hardness and hatred, for cruelty and callousness,

Forgive us, O Lord.

For greed and gracelessness, for indifference and ignorance,

Forgive us, O Lord.

For disrespect and drabness, for lack of sense and laziness,

Forgive us, O Lord.

Grace and goodness,

Love and liveliness,

Give us, O Lord.

Calm and carefulness,

Generosity and goodness,

Give us, O Lord.

Peace and prosperity,

Hope and healthiness,

Give us, O Lord.

Strength and security,

Employment and enjoyment,

Give us, O Lord.

“O Lord, Forgive and Give”;

a CELTIC PRAYER [PL, 86 –87]⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Bjorklund, K. (2011). [*Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Maximus (380-465 AD, Bishop of Turin), Sermon for the Third Sunday of Advent

III. ST MAXIMUS: ON THE PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S COMING

1. Last Sunday I spoke, I trust fully and sufficiently, of how, prepared and becomingly adorned, we should greet the Natal Day of the Lord, and observe in a worthy manner the coming festival. To observe the festival I repeat, so that though the day's solemnity may pass, the joy of its sanctifying grace may abide. For this is the special grace of the Lord's Birth Day, that while it goes on to all who in the future will receive it, it still remains with the devout souls to whom it was already given. Let us then be made clean in holiness, clothed in modesty, worthy in heart; and the nearer we approach the festival, the more circumspectly let us walk.

2. If women who have the care of a home will on certain days wash with water the garments that are soiled, should we not also make ready our souls for the Birth Day of the Lord, cleansing with our tears the stains of our conscience. And they, should they find the garments so soiled and stained, that they cannot be made clean with water alone, add to the water the softening of oil and the acrimony of soap. We likewise, should we have committed sins that are not washed away by repentance alone, let us add the oil of almsgiving and the bitterness of fasting.

There is no sin so grave that abstinence will not cleanse, that almsgiving will not blot out. For, as the Holy Prophet says: as water puts out fire, so the giving of alms extinguishes sin (Ecclus. 3:30). Great then is the power of almsgiving, which cools the glowing mass of our burning sins as from the fountain of its own good will, and puts out the fires of evil as with the waters of its own generosity; so that God, though offended by us, though provoked by our iniquities, is compelled to free him, because of alms, whom He had decreed to punish because of sin.

For in a manner we do violence to Him, when He is forced by our actions to change His own decree, and against the one and the same person to be moved first by the sternness of a judge, and then by the tender affection of a father. For God is the Father of the Just. He is the Judge of sinners. The Lord is therefore compelled by our good works to bestow His mercy on us, as He has Himself declared in the Holy Gospel; From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away (Mt. 11:12). Let us examine the meaning of these words.⁴⁸

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?

⁴⁸ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, pp. 63–64). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 111, 113; 1 Samuel 2:1-10 ; Romans 5:12-21

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Take me often from the tumult of things into Thy presence.

There show me what I am, and what Thou hast purposed me to be.
Then hide me from Thy tears....

The will of God be done by us
The law of God be kept by us
Our evil will controlled by us
Our sharp tongue checked by us
Quick forgiveness offered by us
Speedy repentance made by us
Temptation sternly shunned by us
Blessed death welcomed by us ...
God's highest praise sung by us.

Christ, You are the truth; You are the light.
You are the Keeper of the treasure we seek so blindly.
My soul's desire is to see the face of God and to rest in His house.
My soul's desire is to study the Scriptures and to learn the ways of God.
My soul's desire is to be freed from all fear and sadness, and to share Christ's risen life.
My soul's desire is to imitate my King, and to sing His purpose always....

Dear Lord, You alone know what my soul truly desires,
And You alone can satisfy those desires....
My times are in Thy hand, my times are in Thy hand.

HILD OF WHITBY, English monk (614–680) [CDP, 168 –70 PD]⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Bjorklund, K. (2011). [*Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Maximus (380-465 AD, Bishop of Turin), Sermon for the Third Sunday of Advent

3. The kingdom of heaven is none other than Christ the Lord Who reigns on high. The phrase, to suffer violence, originally meant the action whereby something vague and indefinite was made more concrete by constant action. From the time therefore that John the Baptist announced the coming of the Saviour, from there the kingdom of heaven, which had for so long been fluid and undefined in the mind of the Jewish people, began, from the steadfast faith of those who believed, to become more definite, and all that former insubstantiality of the kingdom began, by reason of the frequency of his preaching, to take concrete form. So undefined was this kingdom to the Jews, that it passed over to the Gentiles; so fluid was it, that it flowed out among all peoples.

Now however it is compacted together, by the mass of those who believe, so that it remains firm and defined for ever, as the Scripture says: and of His Kingdom there shall be no end (Lk. 1:33). We are therefore, in a manner, making this kingdom defined, and we do violence against it, as the Gospel lesson says: and the violent bear it away. We do violence, I say, against the Lord, not by compelling, but by weeping; not provoking Him by insults, but by pleading with tears of repentance; not by blaspheming in pride, but by grieving in humility, O Blessed violence! Which is not repelled with indignation, but forgiven in mercy. Blessed violence, I repeat, which stirs up goodness in the one who suffers this violence, and brings reward to the one who inflicts it. An assault is made, and no one complains of injury; violence is suffered, and respect for order is increased. He that used most violence against Christ, is by Christ esteemed the most devoted.

Let us attack the Lord on the way, because He is the Way (Jn. 14:6), and after the manner of robbers let us despoil Him of His goods; let us take from Him His kingdom, His treasures and His life. But He is so rich and so generous that He will not resist us, and when He has given us all that is His, He still possesses all things. Let us assault Him, I say, not with sword, or staff, or stone, but with mildness, with good works, with chastity.⁵⁰

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?

⁵⁰ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, pp. 64–65). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 22, 126; Jeremiah 24; John 12:20-36a

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Lord, when I have nothing;

Help me to give even what I do not have.

Lord, when I feel nothing,

Help me not to be jealous, that You may use me to touch others' hearts.

Lord, when I am weary;

Help me to remember that You have been weary, too.

Lord, when I need refreshing,

Help me to refresh others and to forget about my own needs.

Lord, when I can't see the way ahead,

Help me not to get in the way of those who can.

Lord, when I am disappointed,

Help me not to bring disappointment to others.

Lord, when I have no one to help me,

Help me to trust in You.

Lord, when I can't see You, yet You see me—

Help me to remember that.

Lord, though I am not worthy to receive You,

[Only] say the word and I shall be healed.

HUGH BARNEY, Celtic monk (unknown era) [CDP, 714 PD]⁵¹

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Maximus (380-465 AD, Bishop of Turin), Sermon for the Third Sunday of Advent

⁵¹ Bjorklund, K. (2011). [*Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

4. These are the weapons of our Faith, by means of which we wage war. That we may use these weapons we must however do violence to ourselves. We must drive out vice from our own members, that we may attain to the rewards of virtue. For we must first rule in our own hearts, before we can seize the kingdom of heaven. The Gospel says: and the violent bear it away. We are therefore thieves; thieves seize that which belongs to others. I can see that this is truly so. The Church has stolen Christ from the Synagogue; and, by doing violence, has seized the kingdom for another people. For the Saviour, sent under the Law, born under the Law, reared according to the Law, being neglected by the Jews, was seized by the Gentiles. He was lost by the Priests, and was found by sinners; as He Himself has said: Publicans and sinners shall go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you (Mt. 21:32). We are therefore thieves.⁵²

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

⁵² Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 65). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 23, 127; Jeremiah 25:1-14; John 12:36b-50

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Father, how marvellously generous you are to your children!

The benefits you shower upon us every day are more than we can count
and far more than we deserve.

For all you give us make us truly grateful; and teach us in turn to be generous
not only in our giving but also in our thinking and judging
and in all our human relationships;
for your goodness and mercy's sake.

Father, in your presence we remember not only your goodness but also our ingratitude.

We have taken your gifts for granted and used them selfishly.

We have thought too much about our own needs, too little about the needs of others.

We have remembered our troubles and forgotten our blessings.

In your mercy forgive us and make us more thankful,
for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.⁵³

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Maximus (380-465 AD, Bishop of Turin), Sermon for the Third Sunday of Advent

5. Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing from what source we descend. For it is written of our patriarch Benjamin: a ravenous wolf (Gen. 49:27). For he seized what was not his. So likewise we, as children of a ravenous wolf, have by our own effort carried off the Shepherd of another flock, as He Himself has said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel (Mt. 11:14). Christ then is carried off, when, rejected by the Jews, He is praised by the Gentiles. He is carried off, when, slain by the Jews, He was buried by us. He was carried off by the watching Apostles, and lost by the sleeping

⁵³ Colquhoun, F. (Ed.). (1989). *Prayers for Today* (p. 28). London: Triangle; SPCK.

Pharisees; for even in their lying they confessed Him, when after His Resurrection they placed guards at His sepulchre, saying: His Disciples came by night, and stole him away when we were asleep (Mt. 28:13).

Whence, mystically, we are to understand, that all who sleep lose Christ, and the vigilant find Him; and so the Apostle says: Rise thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead; and Christ will enlighten thee (Eph. 5:14). You see then that he is as one dead, who so sleeps that he does not guard the Saviour: so too the Pharisees being as it were dead could not keep watch over the Living. So, Brethren, let us not sleep, but keep watch about Our Lord and Saviour, to make sure with unceasing vigil that no one shall steal Him from the sepulchre of our hearts, lest we may have to say at some time: they came while we were sleeping and stole Him away. For we have enemies who will try to steal Christ from our hearts, should we lapse into sleep. So with unceasing watch let us keep Him within the sepulchre of our souls; there let Him rest; there let Him sleep; there when He wills, let Him rise again.⁵⁴

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

⁵⁴ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 65). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 61, 62; Zechariah 9:9-12 ; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

I pray you would give me a heart for those ... who, for whatever reason, are not in the mainstream of life.

For those who lie crumpled and cast aside.

For those who are forgotten and ignored.

For those who are in some way blinded to the fullness of life.

Help me not to turn a deaf ear when they call out.

Help me to stop, regardless of what the crowd may say.

Help me to give them my undivided attention.

Help me to give myself to them as you did—to show mercy, to do what I can.

Although I may not be able to loose them from their chains or free them from their separate prisons,

Help me to visit faithfully so they may know that someone cares;

Help me to bring a meal so they may be nourished;

Help me to say a kind word so they may be encouraged;

Help me to give a gentle touch so they may be comforted; ...

Help me to lend a listening ear so their stories may be heard.

Help me whenever, wherever, and however I can to bring light to someone who sits in darkness.

KEN GIRE, American writer (1950–present day)[MWS, 272 –73]⁵⁵

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Maximus (380-465 AD, Bishop of Turin), Sermon for the Third Sunday of Advent

⁵⁵ Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

6. Therefore, Brethren, let us who are about to greet the Birth Day of the Lord clean our consciences from all defilement; and let us prepare for ourselves, not silken garments, but precious works. Elegant garments may adorn the body, but they do not adorn the conscience; unless you consider it more decorous, to go about elegant in dress and defiled in mind. That the clothing of the outward man may in all ways be becoming, let us first make worthy the dispositions of the interior man; that our bodily adornment may be the more perfect, let us wash away all spiritual stain.

It is of little profit to be well clothed, and stained with crime. Where the conscience is darkened, the whole person is under shadow. But we have the means whereby we may wash the stains of our consciences; as it is written: give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you (Lk. 11:41). Good is the precept of almsgiving, whereby we work with our own hands (1 Thess. 4:11), and are made clean in heart, by the mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth world without end, Amen.⁵⁶

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

⁵⁶ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 66). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 41; Lamentations 1:1-12a ; Luke 22:1-23

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

I pray, O God, that I may know you,

that I may love you,
so that I may rejoice in you.

And if I cannot do this to the full in this life, at least let me go forward from day to day until that joy comes to fullness.

Let the knowledge of you go forward in me here, and there let it be made full.

Let love for you increase, and there let it be full, so that here my joy may be great in hope and there it may be full in reality.

O Lord, through your Son, you command us—rather, you counsel us—to ask, and you promise that we shall receive, that our joy may be full.

O Lord, I ask what you counsel through our wonderful Counselor.

Let me receive what you promise through your truth, that my joy may be full.

Meanwhile, let my mind meditate upon it, let my tongue speak of it.

Let my heart love it, let my tongue discourse upon it.

Let my soul hunger for it, let my flesh thirst for it, let my whole being desire it, until I enter into the joy of my Lord,

who is the triune and one God, blessed forever. Amen.

ANSELM, Italian monk (1033–1109) [PFG, 118 PD]⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Bjorklund, K. (2011). [*Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Augustine (354-430 AD, Bishop of Hippo), Sermon for the Second Sunday in Epiphany

IV. ST AUGUSTINE, BISHOP AND DOCTOR

Christ in His Mystical Body

1. Christ's humility is the remedy of man's pride. You know, Brethren, for as believers in Christ you have learned this, and we in our preaching have continually reminded you of it, that the remedy of man's pride is the humility of Christ. For man would not have fallen, had he not fallen through pride. For pride, as Scripture says, is the beginning of all sin (Ecclus. 10:15). To undo the beginning of sin, there had to be a beginning of grace. So if pride is the beginning of sin, whence could pride's swelling be healed, had God not deigned to become lowly? Let man be ashamed to be proud; since God Himself has become humble.

For when it is said to a man that he be humble, he becomes scornful; and when he is injured, he is urged by pride to seek vengeance. For scorning submissiveness, men only desire revenge: as if another's punishment could bring anyone profit. Being offended then, and having suffered injury, he seeks to be revenged; he seeks ease for his own hurt in another's pain, and acquires only a greater affliction. And therefore has the Lord Christ deigned to become lowly, showing us the way, if we but deign to walk by it.⁵⁸

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

⁵⁸ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 273). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 27; Lamentations 3:1-18 ; Luke 22:24-53

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

God, why do I call impossible what You call possible?

Why do I call unforgivable what You have forgiven?

Why do I compromise with what You call sin?

How I need to know Your heart, and reach out in Your love and wisdom to others.

It's easy to love the people who are standing hard and fast, pressing on to meet that higher calling.

But the ones who might be struggling, we tend to judge too harshly and refuse to try to catch them when they're falling.

We put people into boxes and we draw our hard conclusions when they do the things we know they should not do.

We sometimes write them off as hopeless and we throw them to the dogs.

Our compassion and forgiveness sometimes seem in short supply.

We can love them and forgive them when their sin does not exceed our own, for we too have been down bumpy roads before.

But when they commit offences outside the boundaries we have set, we judge them in a word and we turn them out, and we close the door.

CHUCK GIRARD, Celtic author (unknown era) [CDP, 307 –308 PD]⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Augustine (354-430 AD, Bishop of Hippo), Sermon for the Second Sunday in Epiphany

2. Why Christ being hungry, made not bread from stone, as He made wine from water at the wedding feast. See how among other things the Son of the Virgin came to a wedding: He that with the Father made marriage. As the first woman, through whom sin came, was made without woman from man, so the Man, through whom sin was destroyed, was made without man from a woman. We fell because of the first; through the second we rise again. And what did He do at the marriage feast? He made wine from water. What power could be greater? Yet He Who did this suffered hunger. He Who made wine from water could have made bread from stones. The power was the same.

But then it was the devil tempted Him, and so Christ did not make it. For as you know that when the Lord was tempted, this the devil suggested to Him. For He was hungry: for to this also had he lowered Himself, because this too was part of His humiliation. For the Bread has hungered, the Way was lost, Our Healing was wounded, and Life died. When therefore He was hungry the tempter, as you know, said to Him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread (Mt. 4:3). And He answered the tempter, to teach you how to answer the tempter. For so the leader fights, that he may give an example to the soldiers. What did He answer? Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. And He did not make bread from stones, as He well could Who made wine from water.

For by the same power could He make bread from stone, but He did not, that He might spurn the solicitation of the tempter. For the tempter is not overcome unless he be despised. And when the tempter, the devil, was defeated, the angels came and ministered to Him (Mt. 4). He therefore Who could do so much, why has He done this but not that? Read, recall rather, what you have just heard, when He wrought this sign, that is, made water into wine: what did the Evangelist also say? And His Disciples believed in Him. Was the devil then ready to believe?⁶⁰

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

⁶⁰ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, pp. 273–274). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 102; Jeremiah 11:18-20; Luke 22:54-71

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

Help us to spread your fragrance everywhere we go.

Flood our souls with your spirit and life.

Penetrate and possess our whole being so utterly that our lives may only be a radiance of yours.

Shine through us and be so in us that every soul we come in contact with may feel your presence in our soul.

Let them look up and see no longer us but only Jesus.

Stay with us and then we shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be light to others.

The light, O Jesus, will be all from you.

None of it will be ours.

It will be you shining on others through us.

Let us thus praise you in the way you love best by shining on those around us.

MOTHER TERESA, Albanian nun (1910–1997) [GSG, 49]⁶¹

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Augustine (354-430 AD, Bishop of Hippo), Sermon for the Second Sunday in Epiphany

3. Christ in His humility is the way to heaven. He then Who could do such things was hungry, He thirsted, He was weary, He slept; He was seized, beaten, and put to death. This is His way: walk by humility, that you may come to life eternal. Christ as God is the land towards which we are going: Christ as man is the way by which we go. To Him we go: by Him we go. Should we be afraid that we shall go astray? He departed not from the Father: He came to us. Nursed at the breast, He holds the world in His

⁶¹ Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

hand. He lay in the manger, yet He had care for His angels. God and Man: the same is God Who is Man; the same is Man Who is God. But He is not God in that whereby He is Man. He is God because He is the Word: Man, because the Word was made flesh. He is God, in remaining God: He is Man, by assuming the flesh of man; by taking on Himself what He was not, not by losing what He was.

And so having suffered in His lowliness, having died, and been buried, He has risen again, and ascended into Heaven, and there He abides; sitting at the Right Hand of the Father: but here on earth He is destitute, in His poor. Yesterday also I placed this reflection before Your Charity, in the previous sermon, because of that which He said to Nathaniel: Greater things than these shalt thou see. I say to you that you shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man (Jn. 1:51). And we examined the meaning of these words, and spoke to you at some length. Do we need to repeat the same today? Those of you who were present will remember: nevertheless I shall recall it briefly to your minds.⁶²

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

⁶² Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 274). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 42, 43; Leviticus 16:2-24 ; Luke 23:1-25

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Here, Lord, I abandon myself to thee.

I have tried in every way I could think of to manage myself,
and to make myself what I know I ought to be,
but have always failed.

Now I give it up to thee.

Do thou take entire possession of me.

Work in me all the good pleasure of thy will.

Mold and fashion me into such a vessel as seemeth good to thee.

I leave myself in thy hands, and I believe thou wilt according to thy promise,
make me into a vessel unto thy own honor....

I lay off every other burden, my health, my reputation, my Christian work,
my houses, my children, my business, my servants, everything,
in short, all that concerns me, whether inward or outward.

HANNAH WHITALL SMITH, American author (1832–1911) [GMO, 359 PD]⁶³

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Augustine (354-430 AD, Bishop of Hippo), Sermon for the Second Sunday in Epiphany

4. Christ is above and below. Christ is rich and poor. He would not have said: Ascending to the Son of Man, unless He were above: nor would He say: Descending to the Son of Man, unless He were below. He is above, and He is below. Above in Himself: below in His members. Whence also that voice that spoke to Saul: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? He would not have said, Saul, Saul, unless that He were above.

⁶³ Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

But Saul was not persecuting Him above. He that was above would not have said: Why 134racting thou Me, unless He were also below.

Fear Christ above: acknowledge Him here below. Possess Christ the bountiful Giver above: acknowledge Him here below, among the needy. There He is Rich: here He is poor. That He is poor here below He has left us word: I was hungry, I was thirsty, naked, a stranger, I was in prison. To some He said: You ministered to me. To some He said: You ministered not to me (Mt. 24:35, 45). See, we have shown you that Christ is poor: that Christ is rich, is there anyone who does not know? And this is part of His richness: that He changed water into wine. As God He is rich: as Man He is poor. As a rich man He has already ascended into Heaven: yet here a poor man He hungers, He is thirsty, He is naked.⁶⁴

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
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- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

⁶⁴ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, pp. 274–275). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 69; Genesis 22:1-18 ; Hebrews 10:1-10

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Father, You giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,

You sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
to added affliction You addeth Your mercy,
to multiplied trials Your multiplied peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
when our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
when we reach the end of our hoarded resources,

Father Your full giving is only begun.

Your love has no limit,
Your grace has no measure;
Your power no boundary known unto men;
for out of Your infinite riches in Jesus,
You giveth and giveth and giveth again.

ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT, American poet (1866–1932) [PD]⁶⁵

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Augustine (354-430 AD, Bishop of Hippo), Sermon for the Second Sunday in Epiphany

5. Every man is poor, and a beggar of God. You, what are you? Rich or poor? Many say to me: I am poor, and they speak the truth. But I distinguish a poverty that possesses something, and a poverty that has nothing. Someone has much, both of silver and gold. Oh would that he might believe himself poor!

⁶⁵ Bjorklund, K. (2011). [*Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

He proclaims that he is poor, if he acknowledges the poor around him. Who so? Because however much you, whosoever you are, possess, you are a beggar of God. I shall prove it to you, from the hour of prayer.

You pray for something. How are you not poor who beg? And more, you ask for bread. For do you not say: Give us our daily bread? You who beg for daily bread, are you rich or poor? Yet Christ says to you: Give Me of that which I gave to you. For when you came hither, what did you bring with you? You brought nothing here; you take nothing thence. Wherefore then do you not give Me of what is Mine? For you have abundance, but the poor man is in need.

Recall your birth: you were both born naked. So you also were born naked. Here you have found many things: did you bring anything with you? I ask for what is Mine. Give, and I will repay. I have been a bountiful Giver; make me quickly your Debtor. I said: I have been to you a bountiful Giver, make me your Debtor; I say more: Let you be my moneylender. Give me but a little, and I shall return thee much. Give me things of the earth, I will repay in heavenly things. Give me the things of the present, I will return thee eternal. I shall return thee to thyself, when I shall return thee to Me. Amen.⁶⁶

EVENING

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

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- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
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⁶⁶ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, p. 275). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 142; Hosea 6:1-6 ; John 2:18-22

FOR REFLECTION:

- INWARD: Are there truths about yourself? (Heart, Mind, Attitudes, Behaviours, ...)
- OUTWARD: What do you learn about people (Friends, Strangers, Family, ...)?
- UPWARD: Are there things you learn about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
- DOWNWARD: Are there lessons for daily life (Promises, Warnings, Examples, ...)?

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

PRAYER

Great God of overflowing grace, move our hearts to pray for Your
saving power among the nations.

Burden us with the plight of people who have no access to the gospel.

Grant us to pray big, global, God-sized, Bible saturated prayers.

Don't let us lose sight of the one lost sheep nearby.

But, O Father, give us a passion for Your worldwide purpose to call Your
sheep from every people on the earth.

For the glory of Christ, and in His name we pray. Amen.

JOHN PIPER, American pastor (1946–present day) [PBW, 14]⁶⁷

DEVOTIONAL READING

St Patrick (died 432 AD, Bishop and Evangelist of Ireland), Sermon for Advent

IV. ST PATRICK, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR SERMON FOR ADVENT

(From the Book of the Three Habitations)

Three are the abodes subject to the Almighty Hand of God; that on high, that in the depths, and that which is between; of which the first is named the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of heaven, the lowest is called hell, and the middle abode is the present world, or this earth. Of these abodes the two extremes are wholly opposed, the one against the other; and between them is no bond of any kind. And indeed what fellowship hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial? (2 Cor. 6:14) But the middle abode has many resemblances to the two extremes.

⁶⁷ Bjorklund, K. (2011). *Prayers for today: a yearlong journey of devotional prayer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Whence it has light and darkness, cold and heat, it has pain and it has sound health, sadness and joy, love and hate, good as well as bad, just and unjust, servants and masters, servitude and dominion, hunger and satiety, life and death, and endless such similarities. Of all which the one half has likeness unto heaven, the other unto hell. For the commingling together of good and evil belongs to this world, but in the Kingdom of God there are none evil, but all are good; in hell none are good, but all are evil. And either place is filled from the middle abode.

For of the people of this middle world, some are raised to heaven; others are borne down into hell. Like are joined to like, that is, the good are joined to the good, the evil to the evil; just men are joined to the just angels, and sinful men to the angels that have sinned; the servants of God are united to God; the servants of the devil are united with the devil; the Blessed are invited to possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; and the Accursed are cast down into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:34, 41).

The Joys of the Kingdom of God no man can tell, nor even conceive or understand, while he is yet clothed in the flesh; for they are greater and more wondrous than they are imagined or conceived to be. Whence it is written: that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him (1 Cor. 2:9). For the Kingdom of God is greater than all report, better than all praise of it, more manifold than all knowledge, more perfect than every conceivable glory. The miseries of hell, as they truly are, no tongue can tell; no mind conceive; for in their reality they are far more dreadful than they are thought to be.

And likewise the Kingdom of God is so full of light, and peace, and charity, and wisdom, and glory, and honesty, and sweetness, and loving kindness, and every unspeakable and unutterable good, that it can neither be described nor envisioned by the mind. But the abode of hell is so full of darkness, of discord, of hate, of folly, of unhappiness, of pain, of burning heat, of thirst, of inextinguishable fire, of sadness, of unending punishment, and of every indescribable evil that neither can it be told nor yet conceived by man.

The citizens of heaven are the just and the angels, whose King is Almighty God; the people of hell are evil men and the demons, whose prince is the Devil. The Just are filled with the vision of the holy people of God and of the angels, and, above all, by the Vision of God Himself. The evil and the impious are tormented by the sight of the damned, and the demons, and, above all, by the sight of the Devil himself.

In the Kingdom of God nothing is desired that may not be found: but in hell, nothing is found that is desired. In the Kingdom of God is nothing that does not delight and satisfy; while in that deep lake of unending misery nothing is seen, nothing is felt, which does not displease, which does not torment

In the Kingdom of God every good abounds and there is nothing of evil; in the prison of hell every evil abounds and there is nothing of good. In the kingdom of heaven no one who is unworthy is received; but no one worthy, no just one, is brought down to hell. In the eternal Kingdom there shall be life without death, truth without any falsehood, and happiness without shadow of unrest or change, in Christ Jesus Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth world without end, Amen.⁶⁸

EVENING

⁶⁸ Toal, M. F. (Ed.). (2000). [*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*](#). (M. F. Toal, Trans.) (Vol. 1, pp. 44–45). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

Take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to consider:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

- What was life-giving today?
- When/where did you sense God's presence and work?
- What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?
- What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

- What was life-draining today?
- When/where did you feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?
- Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

End the day with the Lord's Prayer.
(It is printed on the last page of the manual).

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RISEN

1.

Glimm, F. X. (1947). The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp. In F. X. Glimm, J. M.-F. Marique, & G. G. Walsh (Trans.), *The Apostolic Fathers* (Vol. 1, pp. 151–163). Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. POLYCARP

THE CHURCH OF GOD dwelling as a pilgrim at Smyrna to the Church of God in pilgrimage at Philomelium and to all the congregations of the Holy and Catholic Church in every place. May the mercy and peace and love of God the Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied.

Chapter 1

1 We write to you, brethren, the details concerning the martyrs and blessed Polycarp, who, by his martyrdom, as by a seal, put an end to the persecution. For almost all the recent events occurred that the Lord might show us a martyrdom on the Gospel model. For, like the Lord, he waited to be betrayed, that we might become his imitators, not regarding ourselves alone, but also our neighbors. For it is a sign of real and steadfast love not to desire to save oneself alone, but to save also all the brethren.

Chapter 2

1 Those martyrdoms are blessed and noble, then, which take place according to the will of God, for we must be careful to ascribe to God the power over all occurrences. For everyone surely marvels at their nobility and patience and love of the Lord. 2 For, when they were so torn by whips that the structure of their flesh was visible even to the inner veins and arteries, they endured, so that even the bystanders pitied them and wept; while some of them attained such a degree of heroism that they neither groaned nor cried, thus showing all of us that at the time of their torture the noble martyrs of Christ were absent from the flesh, or rather that the Lord stood by and spoke to them. 3 Because they kept in mind the grace of Christ, they despised the tortures of the world, thus purchasing eternal life at the price of a single hour. And the fire of their savage torturers was cool to them; for they kept before their eyes the escape from eternal and unquenchable fire, and with the eyes of their heart they looked up to the good things which are stored up for those who have persevered, 'which neither ear hath heard nor eye hath seen, nor hath it entered into the heart of man.' This they were shown by the Lord, for they were no longer men, but already angels. 4 In the same way, also, those condemned to the beasts endured terrible tortures. With sharp shells spread out under them they were beaten with a variety of other kinds of torments, to see, if possible, whether the tempter might bring them to a denial by continued torture. For the devil schemed in many ways against them.

Chapter 3

1 But, thanks to God, against none did the tempter prevail. For, the most noble Germanicus gave them strength in their fear by his own endurance, and his fight against the wild beasts was outstanding. For, as

the Proconsul tried to persuade him with the plea that he have pity on his youth, he forcibly dragged the beast upon himself, in the desire to be released the quicker from this unjust and lawless life. 2 So, after this, the whole crowd, amazed at the nobility of the God-loving and God-fearing race of Christians, shouted out: 'Down with the atheists; let Polycarp be found.'

Chapter 4

1 However, there was one, Quintus by name, a Phrygian recently arrived from Phrygia, who at the sight of the beasts became a coward. He was the one who had forced himself and some others to come forward voluntarily. The Proconsul persuaded him with many pleas to take the oath and to offer sacrifice. For this reason, therefore, brethren, we do not approve those who give themselves up, because the Gospel does not teach us this.

Chapter 5

1 Now, when the most admirable Polycarp first heard of this, he was not disturbed, but desired to stay in the city. However, the majority persuaded him to leave quietly, so he went out secretly to a farm not a great distance from the city and, remaining with a few friends, night and day he did nothing but pray for all his people and for all the Churches throughout the world, as was his custom at all times. 2 And, as he prayed, he fell into an ecstasy three days before his arrest, and he saw the pillow under him burning with fire, and, turning to those who were with him he said: 'I must be burned alive.'

Chapter 6

1 And, as the searchers continued after him, he went to another farm, where the searchers immediately stopped. But, not finding him, they seized two slave boys, of whom one turned informer after being tortured. 2 For, it was not really possible for him to remain hidden, since those who betrayed him were of his own household. Then the police captain called Herod—that is the very name he had—hastened to bring him to the stadium so that, becoming a partaker of Christ, he might fulfill his special destiny, and his betrayers should suffer the punishment of Judas.

Chapter 7

1 So they brought the little boy along and on Friday, about supper time, the police and horsemen with their usual arms came out as if against a bandit. And late in the evening they converged on Polycarp and found him resting in an upper room. Though it was still in his power to get away to another locality, he did not wish to, saying: 'The will of God be done.'² 2 Accordingly, when he heard they were there, he went down and conversed with them. However, the bystanders marveled at his age and his firmness, and wondered why there was such urgency to arrest such an old man. At once he had a table set for them to eat and drink at that hour, as much as they wished, while for himself he requested to be given an hour to pray without interference. 3 They agreed. So he stood and prayed, so filled with the grace of God that for two hours he could not hold his peace, to the admiration of the listeners. Many even regretted that they had proceeded against such a venerable old man.

Chapter 8

1 When finally he concluded his prayer, after remembering all who had at any time come his way—small folk and great folk, distinguished and undistinguished, and the whole Catholic Church throughout the world—the time for departure came. So they placed him on an ass, and brought him into the city on a great Sabbath. 2 The captain of police, Herod, and his father Nicetas met him, and took him into their own carriage and seated at his side, tried to persuade him, saying: ‘But what harm is there in saying, “Caesar is Lord,” and in offering incense, and so forth, to be saved? At first he did not answer, but, when they persisted, he said: ‘I am not going to do what you advise me.’ 3 On failing to convince him, they spoke threateningly to him and made him descend so quickly that he bruised his shin as he got down from the carriage. Without even turning around, as though he had suffered nothing, he continued on his way eagerly and speedily, and was led into the stadium. The uproar in the stadium was such that nobody could be heard at all.

Chapter 9

1 Upon Polycarp’s entrance into the arena there came a voice from heaven, ‘Be brave, Polycarp, and act like a man.’ No one saw the speaker, but our people who were present heard the voice. 2 Finally, when he was brought forward, the Proconsul asked him if he were Polycarp; when he admitted it, he tried to persuade him to a denial of the faith, saying: ‘Have regard for your age,’ and other suggestions such as they usually make: ‘Swear by the genius of Caesar; change your mind and say, “Away with the atheists!”’ Then Polycarp, with solemn countenance, gazed on the whole crowd of lawless pagans in the stadium, waved his hand at them, groaned, looked up to heaven, and said: ‘Away with the atheists!’ 3 As the Proconsul urged him and said: ‘Take the oath and I release you; revile Christ,’ Polycarp said: ‘Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?’

Chapter 10

1 As he further insisted and said: ‘Swear by the genius of Caesar,’ Polycarp replied: ‘If you vainly imagine that I will swear by the genius [fortune] of Caesar, as you say, and pretend not to know who I am, let me tell you plainly: I am a Christian. But if you desire to learn the teaching of Christianity, grant a day and a hearing. 2 The Proconsul said: ‘Persuade the people.’ But Polycarp said: ‘So far as you are concerned, I should have judged you to be worthy of a discussion; for we have been taught to give honor, as is proper, to rulers and authorities appointed by God, provided it does not harm us; but I do not esteem these people worthy of making a defense before them.’

Chapter 11

1 The Proconsul said: ‘I have wild animals; to them will I throw you, unless you change your mind.’ But he said: ‘Call them, for change of mind from better to worse is a change not allowed us; but it is good to change from wickedness to justice.’ 2 Again he said to him: ‘If you scorn the wild beasts, I will have you burned by fire, unless you repent.’ But Polycarp said: ‘You threaten the fire that burns for an hour and in a little while is quenched; for you do not know the fire of the future judgment and of eternal punishment, the fire reserved for the wicked. But why do you delay? Come, do as you wish.’

Chapter 12

1 While making these and other remarks besides, he was filled with courage and joy. His countenance was filled with grace, so that not only did it not droop in anxiety at the remarks addressed to him, but the Proconsul, on the contrary, in amazement sent his own herald into the middle of the arena to announce three times: 'Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian.' 2 After this proclamation by the herald, the whole mob of pagans and Jews living in Smyrna shouted out with uncontrollable anger and in a loud voice: 'This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who has taught many not to sacrifice and not to adore.' With these cries and shouts they demanded of Philip the Asiarch that he let loose a lion on Polycarp. However, he said that this was not legal, since he had closed the 'Sports.' 3 Then they decided to shout out unanimously to have Polycarp burned alive. For the vision revealed to him on the pillow had to be fulfilled (when he saw it burning as he prayed, and he turned and spoke prophetically to the faithful with him, 'I must be burned alive').

Chapter 13

1 This happened with indescribable speed. The crowds gathered and collected wood and faggots from the shops and baths, the Jews in particular, as is usual with them, lending zealous assistance in this. 2 But, when the pyre was ready, he took off his upper garments, loosened his belt, and tried to take his shoes off, also, a thing he did not do in the past, because the faithful were always eager each to be the first to touch his flesh. For he had been treated with every regard on account of his holy life even before his grey hair appeared. 3 Immediately, the instruments prepared for the fire were laid around him; and, as they were ready also to nail him, he said: 'Leave me as I am, for He who gives me power to endure the fire will grant me also to remain in the flames unmoved, even without the security which nails give you.'

Chapter 14

1 Accordingly, they did not nail him, but tied him. So he put his hands behind his back and was bound like a ram marked for sacrifice out of a great flock, a holocaust prepared and acceptable to God. As he looked up to heaven, he said: 'Lord God Almighty, Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of Thee, God of the angels and powers, of the whole creation and of the whole race of the righteous who live in Thy sight, 2 I bless Thee, for having made me worthy of this day and hour; I bless Thee, because I may have a part, along with the martyrs, in the chalice of Thy Christ, "unto resurrection in eternal life." ' resurrection both of soul and body in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. May I be received today as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, among those who are in Thy presence, as Thou hast prepared and foretold and fulfilled, God who art faithful and true. For this and for all benefits I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, through whom be to Thee with Him and the Holy Spirit glory, now and for all the ages to come. Amen.'

Chapter 15

1 When he had uttered the Amen and finished his prayer, the men in charge of the fire lighted it. As a great flame flashed out, we saw a miracle, that is, those of us to whom it was granted to see. Yes! And we were preserved to report to others what happened. 2 For the fire took the shape of an arch, like a ship's sail filled with wind, and stood around the body of the martyr; and he was there in the midst, not like flesh

burning, but like bread being baked, or gold and silver being purified in a furnace. And we also perceived a fragrant odor such as the scent of incense or the scent of some other costly spices.

Chapter 16

1 Finally, the lawless men, seeing that his body could not be consumed by fire, ordered an executioner to approach and stab him with a dagger. When he had done this, there came out much blood, so that the fire was extinguished, and the whole crowd marveled that there was such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect. 2 For the most glorious Polycarp certainly was one of the elect, an apostolic and prophetic teacher among our contemporaries and bishop of the Catholic Church in Smyrna; and every word which proceeded from his lips has been fulfilled and will be fulfilled.

Chapter 17

1 But the jealous and envious evil one, the adversary of the race of the just, saw the greatness of his martyrdom and his irreproachable life from the beginning; he saw also that he was crowned with a crown of immortality and had won an inestimable prize. So he took measures that his poor body should not be taken away by us, although many desired to do this and to touch his holy flesh. 2 So he put up Nicetas the father of Herod, and the brother of Alce, to request the Governor not to surrender his body, 'Lest,' it was said, 'they might abandon the crucified one and begin to worship this man.' They said this at the suggestion and instigation of the Jews who also watched as we were going to take the body from the fire. For they did not know that we can never abandon the innocent Christ who suffered on behalf of sinners for the salvation of those in this world who have been saved, and we cannot worship any other. 3 For we worship Him as the Son of God, while we love the martyrs as disciples and imitators of the Lord, for their insuperable affection for their own King and Teacher. With them may we also be made companions and fellow disciples.

Chapter 18

1 On seeing the quarrel stirred up by the Jews, the centurion put the body in the middle, as was their custom, and burned it. 2 And so, afterwards, we took up his bones, more valuable than precious stones and finer than gold, and put them in a proper place. 3 There, as far as we were able, the Lord will permit us to meet together in gladness and joy and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom, both in memory of those who fought the fight and for the training and preparation of those who will fight.

Chapter 19

1 These are the details concerning the Blessed Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom in Smyrna, together with eleven others from Philadelphia. But he alone is especially commemorated by everybody, and he is spoken of in every place, even by the heathen. For he proved himself not only a famous teacher, but also a notable martyr, whose martyrdom all desire to imitate, since it was on the model of the Gospel of Christ. 2 Having overcome the unjust ruler by his endurance and thus having gained the crown of immortality, he rejoices with the Apostles and all the just saints and is glorifying God, the Father Almighty, and blessing our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of our souls and helmsman of our bodies, the Shepherd of the Catholic Church throughout the world.

Chapter 20

1 You requested, it is true, that the details should be explained to you at length, but, for the present, we have set down a summary by our brother Marcianus. So when you have this information, send the letter to the brethren further on, that they also may glorify the Lord, who makes a choice from His own servants. 2 Now, to Him who is able to bring us all by His grace and goodness to His eternal kingdom, through His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, be glory, honor, power and greatness for ever. Greet all the saints. They who are with us greet you, and Evarestus who wrote the letter and his whole house.

Chapter 21

1 The Blessed Polycarp was martyred on the second day of the first part of the month Xanthicus, the seventh day before the calends of March, a great Sabbath, at the eighth hour. He was arrested by Herod, when Philip of Tralles was high priest and Statius Quadratus proconsul. But Jesus Christ rules forever; to Him be the glory, honor, majesty, eternal dominion, from generation to generation. Amen.

Chapter 22

1 God grant you health, brethren, as you march in the word according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With Him be glory to God and the Holy Spirit for the salvation of His holy elect. Even as the blessed Polycarp suffered martyrdom, may it be allowed us in his footsteps to be found in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

2 Gaius copied this from the account of Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp. And he lived with Irenaeus.

3 And I, Socrates, wrote it out in Corinth from the copies of Gaius. Grace be to you all.

4 And I, Pionius, after search for it, wrote it out again from the former copies, because the blessed Polycarp showed it to me in a vision, as I will explain in the following. I have collected it now when it is almost worn out by age, that the Lord Jesus Christ may gather me also with His elect into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

[Instead of the three preceding paragraphs (22.2–4) the Moscow manuscript shows the following:]

2 Gaius copied these things from among the papers of Irenaeus, and he also had lived with Irenaeus, who had been a disciple of the holy Polycarp. 3 For this Irenaeus, being at Rome at the time of the martyrdom of the bishop Polycarp, was a teacher of many. Of him there are many excellent and correct writings extant, in which he mentions Polycarp, saying that he was his teacher. He ably refuted every heresy, and handed on the ecclesiastical and catholic rule just as he had received it from the saint.² 4 And he also says this: When Marcion, after whom the Marcionites are named, once met Saint Polycarp and said to him, 'Recognize us, Polycarp,' his answer was: 'I recognize you, yes, I recognize the eldest son of Satan.'⁵ 5 And this is also recorded in the writing of Irenaeus, that on the very day and hour that Polycarp was martyred in Smyrna and Irenaeus was in the city of Rome, he heard a voice as of a trumpet saying: 'Polycarp is martyred.'

6 From these papers of Irenaeus, then, as stated above, Gaius made a copy, and from the copy of Gaius, Isocrates made one in Corinth.

7 And I, Pionius, again wrote it out from the copies of Isocrates, after search for it according to a revelation of the holy Polycarp. I gathered it together when it was almost worn out by age, that the Lord Jesus Christ may gather me also with His elect into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

2.

Hauerwas, S. (2011). Naming God. *In Working with Words: On Learning to Speak Christian* (pp. 79–83). Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.

Naming God

A Sermon for the Church of the Incarnation
Dallas, Texas. March 6, 2010

Exodus 3:1–15. Psalm 103:1–11. 1 Corinthians 10:1–13. Luke 13:1–9

“God is whoever raised Jesus from the dead, having before raised Israel from Egypt” is the hallmark sentence of Robert Jenson’s *Systematic Theology*. This elegantly simple but dauntingly deep sentence took Jenson a lifetime of theological reflection to write. To write such a sentence requires that the grammar of our faith discipline our presumption that we know what we say when we say “God.” For it turns out that we are most likely to take God’s name in vain when we assume we can know what we say when we say “God.”

One of the ironies of the recent spate of books defending atheism is the confidence the “new atheists” seem to have in knowing which God it is they are sure does not exist. They seem to have forgotten that one of the crimes Romans associated with Christians, a crime that often meant their death, was that Christians were atheist. The Romans were tolerant. All they wanted was for the Christians to acknowledge there were many gods, but Christians were determined atheist. Christians were atheist because they assumed the primary problem was not atheism but idolatry. Idolatry, moreover, has everything to do with knowing how to use God’s name.

Augustine in *The City of God* even argues that the reason the Roman Empire has fallen on hard times is due to their worship of corrupt gods. He assumed rightly that there is a direct correlation between the worship of God, the character of our lives, and politics. According to Augustine, Rome fell because the people of Rome became corrupt by emulating the corruption of their gods. Needless to say, Augustine’s account of idolatry was not well received by the Romans.

So depending on which god or gods the new atheists think they are denying they might discover that Christians are not unsympathetic with their atheism. For example, I suspect we should not be surprised in a culture that puts on its money “In God We Trust” atheists might be led to think it is interesting and perhaps even useful to deny such a god exists. It does not seem to occur to atheists, however, that the vague god that some seem to confuse with trust in our money cannot be the same God who raised Jesus from the dead having before raised Israel from Egypt.

Which is a reminder that the word “god” can be very misleading particularly for those that worship the One who raised Jesus from the dead and Israel from Egypt. For the word “god,” and it is not clear that “god” is a name, can invite us to confuse the One who raised Jesus from the dead with the assumption by many that “god” is the designation many use to think something had to start it all and that must mean when all is said and done that there is “more” to life than this. Those who believe in such a “more” often agree with the new atheists that there is little evidence that such a “more” exists, but they nonetheless refuse to deny its possibility. Yet they assume that such a “more” has many names, for to think otherwise is to risk intolerance.

Our text for today makes clear, however, that naming God matters. God asks Moses to bring his people, the descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, out of captivity in Egypt. God, who seems to have been reading Jenson's Systematic Theology, says that Moses should tell the Israelites that Moses has been sent to Israel by the God of their ancestors, that is, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But Moses, whose knowledge of Egypt means he senses that escaping from Egypt is going to be a risky business, knows that those who he is asked to rescue will want to know more. They will want to know God's name. God responds with the now classical identifying phrase, "I am who I am."

"I am who I am," or as some have translated, "I will be present to whom I will be present," has been a rich resource for Christian theologians and philosophers to reflect on the metaphysics of God's existence. For example, Aquinas argues that only in God are existence and essence inseparable. Put in more colloquial terms that means only God can act without loss. For Christians it is, therefore, never a question about God's existence, but rather what it means for all that is not God to exist.

"I am who I am," may be a helpful metaphysical response, but it is not a name. At best, as philosophers like to say, "I am who I am" is a grammatical remark that suggests that God is known by what God does. "I am who I am," therefore, is but another way to say you know all you need to know by knowing that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is as if God is saying to Moses "Tell them not to worry. Just as I have been there for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob so I will be there for you." In effect God is saying "trust me."

We, like the people of Israel, would like to think we get to name God. By naming God we think we can get the kind of God we need. We can make "the more" that must have started it all after our own image. But God refuses to let Israel or us assume that we can name the One who will raise Israel from Egypt. Only God can name God. That, moreover, is what God does. "God also said to Moses, Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations." God's name is YHWH, but it is a name that Israel could not say.

The name it turns out is a holy reality sharing as it does in God's holiness. To know God's name is to know God. As Karl Barth observes, " 'I am that I am' can scarcely mean anything else than just I am He whose name proper no one can repeat is significant enough; but the revealed name itself by its wording is to recall also and precisely the hiddenness of the revealed God."

The burning bush that is not consumed wonderfully displays God's unrelenting desire to have us know him, but to so know God requires the acknowledgment we cannot know God. Moses could not help but be drawn to the fiery bush. How could the bush be on fire yet not consumed? He drew near, but the Lord called to Moses, named Moses, out of the burning bush telling him he was on holy ground. He was to remove his sandals and come no closer. Moses did as he was told hiding his face fearing to look on God.

For if God is God how could we hope to stand before God, how could we hope to see God face to face, and live? The burning bush was not consumed, but we cannot imagine that confronted by this God we could see God and live. Israel knew that there was no greater gift than to be given God's name, but that gift was a frightening reality that threatened to consume her. Israel, who would be tempted by the idolatrous presumption she possessed God's name, rightly never forgot she could not say God's name. Israel could not possess God because God possess Israel.

But we are Christians. We believe we have been given God's name. We believe we can say the name of God. Paul in his letter to the Philippians tells us:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

Who, though he was in the form
of God,
did not regard equality of God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And found in human form,
He humbled himself
And became obedient to the point of
Death—
Even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under
the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:5–11)

The fire that burned but did not consume the bush is Jesus Christ. Just as the fire did not consume the bush so our God has come to us by becoming one of us. Yet the humanity of the one he became was not replaced or destroyed. Rather our God is incarnate. Our God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There has never been a time that God has not been Trinity. The God that came to Moses in the burning bush, the God who called Moses to deliver his people, the God who gave Moses his name, is Trinity. Only this God can be very God and very man.

The God we worship is not a vague, “the more.” The God we worship is not “the biggest thing around.” The God we worship is not “something had to start it.” The God we worship is not a God that insures that we will somehow get out of life alive. The God we worship, as our passage from Luke makes clear, is not a God whose ways correspond to our presumptions about how God should be God. That God has come near to us in Christ does not mean that God is less than God. God is God and we are not.

Yet we believe that the God we worship has made his name known. We believe we have been given the happy task of making his name known. We believe we can make his name known because the God we worship is nearer to us than we are to ourselves—a frightening reality that gives us life. We believe that in this meal of bread and wine, just as Jesus is fully God and fully man, this bread and this wine will through the work of the Spirit become for us the body and blood of Christ.

To come to this meal is to stand before the burning bush. But we are not told to come no closer. Rather we are invited to eat this body and drink this blood and by so doing we are consumed by what we consume. So consumed we are made through the Holy Spirit God’s witnesses that the world may know the fire that is Jesus Christ.

God is whoever raised Jesus from the dead, having before raised Israel from Egypt. There is no God but this God. Blessed be his name.

3.

Peterson, E. H. (2012). *A long obedience in the same direction: discipleship in an instant society*. Westmont, IL: IVP Books.

Joy

“We Laughed, We Sang”

It seemed like a dream, too good to be true,
when GOD returned Zion’s exiles.
We laughed, we sang,
we couldn’t believe our good fortune.
‘We were the talk of the nations—
“GOD was wonderful to them!”
GOD was wonderful to us;
we are one happy people.
And now, GOD, do it again—
bring rains to our drought-stricken lives
So those who planted their crops in despair
will shout hurrahs at the harvest,
So those who went off with heavy hearts
will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.

Psalm 126

I have read that during the process of canonization
the Catholic Church demands proof of joy in the candidate,
and although I have not been able to track down chapter and verse
I like the suggestion that dourness is not a sacred attribute.

Phyllis McGinley

Ellen Glasgow, in her autobiography, tells of her father who was a Presbyterian elder, full of rectitude and rigid with duty: “He was entirely unselfish, and in his long life he never committed a pleasure.”^[1] Peter Jay, in a political column in the Baltimore Sun, described the sober intensity and personal austerities of one of our Maryland politicians and then threw in this line: “He dresses like a Presbyterian.”

I know there are Christians, so-called, who never crack a smile and who can’t abide a joke, and I suppose Presbyterians contribute their quota. But I don’t meet very many of them. The stereotype as such

is a big lie created, presumably, by the devil. One of the delightful discoveries along the way of Christian discipleship is how much enjoyment there is, how much laughter you hear, how much sheer fun you find.

In Phyllis McGinley's delightful book *Saint-Watching* there is this story: "Martin Luther's close friend was Philipp Melanchthon, author of the Augsburg Confession. Melanchthon was a cool man where Luther was fervid, a scholar as opposed to a doer, and he continued to live like a monk even after he had joined the German Reformation. . . . One day Luther lost patience with Melanchthon's virtuous reserve. 'For heaven's sake,' he roared, 'why don't you go out and sin a little? God deserves to have something to forgive you for!'"^[2]

A Consequence, Not a Requirement

"We laughed, we sang, we couldn't believe our good fortune." That is the authentic Christian note, a sign of those who are on the way of salvation. Joy is characteristic of Christian pilgrimage. It is the second in Paul's list of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). It is the first of Jesus' signs in the Gospel of John (turning water into wine). It was said of the Hasid Levi-Yitzhak of Berdichev: "His smiles were fraught with greater meaning than his sermons."^[3] The same thing can be said of much of the Bible: its smiles carry more meaning than its sermons.

This is not to say that joy is a moral requirement for Christian living. Some of us experience events that are full of sadness and pain. Some of us descend to low points in our lives when joy seems to have permanently departed. We must not in such circumstances or during such times say, "Well, that's the final proof that I am not a good Christian. Christians are supposed to have their mouths filled with laughter and tongues with shouts of joy; and I don't. I'm not joyful, therefore I must not be a Christian."

Joy is not a requirement of Christian discipleship, it is a consequence. It is not what we have to acquire in order to experience life in Christ; it is what comes to us when we are walking in the way of faith and obedience.

We come to God (and to the revelation of God's ways) because none of us have it within ourselves, except momentarily, to be joyous. Joy is a product of abundance; it is the overflow of vitality. It is life working together harmoniously. It is exuberance. Inadequate sinners as we are, none of us can manage that for very long.

We try to get it through entertainment. We pay someone to make jokes, tell stories, perform dramatic actions, sing songs. We buy the vitality of another's imagination to divert and enliven our own poor lives. The enormous entertainment industry in America is a sign of the depletion of joy in our culture. Society is a bored, gluttonous king employing a court jester to divert it after an overindulgent meal. But that kind of joy never penetrates our lives, never changes our basic constitution. The effects are extremely temporary—a few minutes, a few hours, a few days at most. When we run out of money, the joy trickles away. We cannot make ourselves joyful. Joy cannot be commanded, purchased or arranged.

But there is something we can do. We can decide to live in response to the abundance of God and not under the dictatorship of our own poor needs. We can decide to live in the environment of a living God and not our own dying selves. We can decide to center ourselves in the God who generously gives and not in our own egos which greedily grab. One of the certain consequences of such a life is joy, the kind expressed in Psalm 126.

Joy: Past, Present, Future

The center sentence in the psalm is “We are one happy people” (v. 3). The words on one side of that center (vv. 1-2) are in the past tense, the words on the other side (vv. 4-6) in the future tense. Present gladness has past and future. It is not an ephemeral emotion. It is not a spurt of good feelings that comes when the weather and the stock market are both right on the same day.

The background for joy is only alluded to here, but the words trigger vast memories: “when God returned Israel’s exiles. We laughed, we sang. . . . We were the talk of the nations—‘God was wonderful to them!’ God was wonderful to us; we are one happy people.” What happened that was so “wonderful”? On nearly any page of the Bible we find the allusions and stories. There is the story of God’s people in a long, apparently interminable servitude under the shadows of the Egyptian pyramids and the lash of harsh masters. And then, suddenly and without warning, it was over. One day they were making “bricks without straw” and the next they were running up the far slopes of the Red Sea, shouting the great song “I’m singing my heart out to God—what a victory! He pitched horse and rider into the sea! God is my strength. God is my song. And, yes! God is my salvation. This is the kind of god I have—I’m telling the world! This is the god of my father—I’m raising the roof!” (Ex 15:1-2).

We turn over a few pages and find the story of David. There were years of wilderness guerrilla warfare against the Philistines, a perilous existence with moody, manic King Saul, and all that painful groping and praying through the guilt of murder and adultery; then in his old age he was chased from his throne by his own son and forced to set up a government in exile. And, at the end, his song. It begins with gratitude: “God is bedrock under my feet, the castle in which I live, my rescuing knight”; it ends in confidence, “Live God! Blessing from my rock!” In the center there is a rocket burst of joy: “I’m ablaze with your light. . . . I vault the high fences” (2 Sam 22:2, 47, 29-30).

We turn a few more pages and find the terrible story of Babylonian captivity. Israel experienced the worst that can come to any of us: rape in the streets, cannibalism in the kitchens, neighbors reduced to bestiality, a six-hundred-mile forced march across a desert, the taunting mockeries of captors. And then, incredibly—joy. Beginning with the low, gentle words, “Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak softly and tenderly to Jerusalem, but also firmly and boldly, that she has served her sentence, that her sin is taken care of—forgiven!” (Is 40:1-2). And then the swelling reassurances of help: “When you’re in over your head, I’ll be there with you. . . . Don’t be afraid, I’m with you” (Is 43:2-5). The sounds combine and surge to a proclamation: “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messengers bringing good news. . . . Voices! Listen! Your scouts are shouting, thunderclap shouts, shouting in joyful unison” (52:7-8). The gratitude and gladness build and soar. There is a sea-change into joy.

“It seemed like a dream, too good to be true, when God returned Israel’s exiles.” Each act of God was an impossible miracle. There was no way it could have happened, and it did happen. “It seemed like a dream, too good to be true.” We nurture these memories of laughter, these shouts of joy. We fill our minds with the stories of God’s acts. Joy has a history. Joy is the verified, repeated experience of those involved in what God is doing. It is as real as a date in history, as solid as a stratum of rock in Palestine. Joy is nurtured by living in such a history, building on such a foundation.

Joyful Expectation

The other side of “we are one happy people”—verses 4-6—is in the future tense. Joy is nurtured by anticipation. If the joy-producing acts of God are characteristic of our past as God’s people, they will also be characteristic of our future as his people. There is no reason to suppose that God will arbitrarily change his

way of working with us. What we have known of him, we will know of him. Just as joy builds on the past, it borrows from the future. It expects certain things to happen.

Two images fix the hope: The first is “bring rains to our drought-stricken lives.” The Negeb, the south of Israel, is a vast desert. The watercourses of the Negeb are a network of ditches cut into the soil by wind and rain erosion. For most of the year they are baked dry under the sun, but a sudden rain makes the desert ablaze with blossoms. Our lives are like that—drought-stricken—and then, suddenly, the long years of barren waiting are interrupted by God’s invasion of grace.

The second image is “So those who planted their crops in despair will shout hurrahs at the harvest, / So those who went off with heavy hearts will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.” The hard work of sowing seed in what looks like perfectly empty earth has, as every farmer knows, a time of harvest. All suffering, all pain, all emptiness, all disappointment is seed: sow it in God and he will, finally, bring a crop of joy from it.

It is clear in Psalm 126 that the one who wrote it and those who sang it were no strangers to the dark side of things. They carried the painful memory of exile in their bones and the scars of oppression on their backs. They knew the deserts of the heart and the nights of weeping. They knew what it meant to sow in tears.

One of the most interesting and remarkable things Christians learn is that laughter does not exclude weeping. Christian joy is not an escape from sorrow. Pain and hardship still come, but they are unable to drive out the happiness of the redeemed.

A common but futile strategy for achieving joy is trying to eliminate things that hurt: get rid of pain by numbing the nerve ends, get rid of insecurity by eliminating risks, get rid of disappointment by depersonalizing your relationships. And then try to lighten the boredom of such a life by buying joy in the form of vacations and entertainment. There isn’t a hint of that in Psalm 126.

Laughter is a result of living in the midst of God’s great works (“when God returned Israel’s exiles we laughed, we sang”). Enjoyment is not an escape from boredom but a plunge by faith into God’s work (“those who went off with heavy hearts will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing”). There is plenty of suffering on both sides, past and future. The joy comes because God knows how to wipe away tears, and, in his resurrection work, create the smile of new life. Joy is what God gives, not what we work up. Laughter is the delight that things are working together for good to those who love God, not the giggles that betray the nervousness of a precarious defense system. The joy that develops in the Christian way of discipleship is an overflow of spirits that comes from feeling good not about yourself but about God. We find that his ways are dependable, his promises sure.

This joy is not dependent on our good luck in escaping hardship. It is not dependent on our good health and avoidance of pain. Christian joy is actual in the midst of pain, suffering, loneliness and misfortune. St. Paul is our most convincing witness to this. He is always, in one way or another, shouting out his joy. The shouts are tympanic, resonating through every movement of his life: “We continue to shout our praise even when we’re hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. . . . We sing and shout our praises to God through Jesus, the Messiah!” (Rom 5:3-5, 11). That is the fulfillment of the prayer “And now, GOD, do it again—bring rains to our drought-stricken lives.”

And then out of his prison cell we hear Paul’s trumpeting conclusion to his Philippian letter: “Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you’re on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could

show up any minute!” (Phil 4:4-5). There is no grim Greek Stoicism in that; it is a robust Welsh hymn, striding from sorrow into song. It is the end result of the hope: “So those who went off with heavy hearts will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.” The witness is repeated over and over again, through the generations, and has scattered representatives in every community of Christians.

The psalm does not give us this joy as a package or as a formula, but there are some things it does do. It shows up the tinniness of the world’s joy and affirms the solidity of God’s joy. It reminds us of the accelerating costs and diminishing returns of those who pursue pleasure as a path toward joy. It introduces us to the way of discipleship, which has consequences in joy. It encourages us in the way of faith to both experience and share joy. It tells the story of God’s acts, which put laughter into people’s mouths and shouts on their tongues. It repeats the promises of a God who accompanies his wandering, weeping children until they arrive home, exuberant, “with armloads of blessing.” It announces the existence of a people who assemble to worship God and disperse to live to God’s glory, whose lives are bordered on one side by a memory of God’s acts and the other by hope in God’s promises, and who along with whatever else is happening are able to say, at the center, “We are one happy people.”

4.

Pentecost, J. Dwight. (2001). *Designed to be like Him: understanding God's plan for fellowship, conduct, conflict, and maturity* (pp. 276–283). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

STEPS TO MATURITY

Hebrews 6:1–12

AFTER PRESENTING A CONTRAST between the mature Christian and the immature Christian (Heb. 5:11–14), the apostle proceeds to give instructions that will lead a man out of babyhood into spiritual maturity (Heb. 6:1–12). Notice, first of all, that the apostle, in writing to these believers, placed upon them a responsibility to progress in the Christian life. While no man comes to maturity apart from the grace of God, apart from the operation of the Holy Spirit, responsibility for growth is placed upon believers. As we have discovered in previous studies, unless the believer presents himself as a living sacrifice, unless the believer presents his members as instruments unto holiness and righteousness unto God he will not progress toward maturity. The apostle is emphasizing in Hebrews 6 the human side of going on to maturity. God places responsibility upon His child to grow out of infancy to maturity. Because of results of the fall and the effects of sin, it often is true that because of birth defects some people will never come to adulthood, or maturity. But in the family of God there are no birth defects, no congenital deformities, to prevent those born of God from coming to maturity. Everyone born into the family of God is born with the capacity to progress out of infancy into maturity in Christ. The apostle recognized that, and to those who were in danger of returning to the old things in order to escape persecution, he gave an exhortation reminding them that God had placed a responsibility upon them to go on to maturity.

PROGRESSION ESSENTIAL

When the apostle used the word that is translated “perfection” in our English text, he was not speaking about sinless perfection in the sense of an inability to sin. Rather, the word perfection means “maturity,” or “adulthood.” In these verses the apostle gave several clues to enable the child of God to progress out of infancy to maturity. The first is related to the area of knowledge. The apostle exhorted those to whom he wrote to go on to perfection. How? By “leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ.” Now what does the apostle mean? The phrase is a rather difficult one to translate. It may be paraphrased this way, “Leave the elementary teaching concerning the doctrines upon which your life has been based.” The apostle is telling them to leave the milk. The first principles, or the elementary doctrines, were doctrines that Christianity had in common with Judaism. There were certain basic principles that those Jews held because they were trained in the Old Testament. But if they continued only in those things that Judaism had in common with Christianity, they would never move on to maturity.

Of the elementary principles mentioned by the apostle, the first is repentance from dead works. Because these people had accepted Christ, they had repudiated animal sacrifices as having any value before God. They had learned the fact that animal sacrifices are meaningless before God. But they had to go beyond this milk truth if they were to go on to maturity.

“Faith toward God” is also in the realm of elementary truth. We recognize that a man is related to God by faith, but if he stops after he has grasped that simple principle, he will never go on to a meat diet of the Word.

These believers were also to leave the “doctrine of baptisms,” or of washings (the ceremonial cleansings that rendered something acceptable to God) and the “laying on of hands,” which had in view the Jewish ordinances of identification. Other “milk” truths included “the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment” as taught in the Old Testament.

We might sum up what the apostle said in this way: “If you, in your Christian experience, dwell only on those elementary teachings that you have heard from childhood out of the Old Testament, you will never progress out of babyhood.” They had come to the place where they should have left those basic principles to go on to the meat of the Word.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

In our previous study we contrasted milk and meat. We pointed out that we cannot designate some doctrines as milk doctrines and other doctrines as meat doctrines. The difference between milk and meat is not in the area of divine truth, but in the depth of divine truth to which one can go. You might conclude that the doctrines of salvation are milk, and doctrines of prophecy are meat. That is a false classification, because there are unplumbed depths in the doctrines of salvation that no one has yet understood because man cannot go that deep into the mind and heart of God. Salvation has its milk and its meat. Every other area of doctrine has both its milk and its meat.

When the apostle says that believers must go on and leave the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ, he is indicating that maturity is inseparably united to knowledge of divine truth. It is impossible for a man to be mature who does not know the truth of the Scriptures. Apart from a knowledge of the Word, one will remain in spiritual babyhood, no matter how long he has been saved.

The Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of knowledge of the word of God in Romans 10:17, where he said, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” A man cannot believe something of which he is ignorant. A man has to have some fact to believe. The Word of God gives us facts to accept, and when we believe, we accept the facts of the Word of God because God reveals them as divine truth. Thus faith is related to knowledge. Paul, writing in 2 Timothy 4:1–2, gives a charge to a young pastor, “I charge thee therefore before God, ... preach the word.” Why was Timothy charged to preach the Word? Because the Word would bring these believers out of infancy to maturity in their Christian experience. Paul says, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season [always in the Word]; reprove, rebuke, exhort [that is, reprove with the Word, rebuke with the Word, exhort with the Word] with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” And Paul warns Timothy that when he begins to set the table, there will be some who will come and look at the beefsteak that is put there, and will ask, “Where is my milk?” They don’t want the meat of the Word. Nevertheless, Timothy is to keep on preaching the Word, rebuking with the Word, exhorting with the Word, because it is the Word that will bring men to maturity. It is our earnest conviction that apart from being steeped in the Word of God, a person cannot go on to maturity in the Christian life. When a Christian so saturates himself with the Word that a pertinent verse of Scripture flashes into his mind in any situation, he is in the process of growing out of infancy into maturity. Now, we do not deny that putting yourself under the teaching of the Word of God in a church and Sunday school where the Word of God is taught is an aid to maturity. But that is not the key to maturity. The key is

to study the Word yourself, to digest it, to assimilate it for yourself. Then it becomes your own. Many of the best sermon-listeners and sermon-tasters you ever knew are still spiritual babies. It isn't until we get into the Scriptures ourselves, and let the Scriptures get into us that we get into the meat stage of spiritual development. If you would come to maturity in the things of Christ, you must follow some plan of systematic Bible study. The apostle's first clue to progress from spiritual babyhood to spiritual maturity is that we must leave the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ and go into the depths of divine truth.

GOOD WORKS

In verses 9 and 10 the apostle gave a second clue to spiritual progress when he said, "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." The apostle indicated that the good works done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ gave evidence that these people were saved people. The good works that believers do are not only evidences of salvation but are a means of bringing a person toward maturity. If one would go on to maturity, the Word which he has taken in must be worked out in practical living. An illustration of this is found in 1 John 3:17, where the Apostle John poses this question: If a Christian sees his brother in need and shuts up his bowels of compassion against helping him, how is the love of God perfected in him? John says that if you can see a brother in material need and you have the means to help him but don't help him, then the love of God is not perfected in you. You have not come to maturity in love. The Word of God received by the child of God must be translated into action. There must be an outworking of the inwrought Word. That is what the apostle has in mind when he refers, in Hebrews 6:10, to the "labour of love" which those believers showed toward Christ's name in ministering to the saints. When a child of God who has been well taught in the Word of God sees a need and responds to that need, he is manifesting growth, he is developing in maturity.

On the other hand, to see a need and not respond to it is an evidence of immaturity. For instance, if my young daughter walks through the den in our house and sees a newspaper carelessly thrown in the middle of the floor and walks over it instead of picking it up, she is showing immaturity. I wouldn't expect my wife to manifest such immaturity. If one of my daughters walks past an unmade bed without any response to that unmade bed, it is a sign of immaturity. But if she stops and makes up that bed, I may well conclude that she is making some progress toward maturity. You see, a response to a need manifests one's degree of maturity.

Maturity is also related to one's dependence or independence. If a mother has to say to a daughter, "Will you please clean up that mess?" the daughter is immature. But if, without any prompting from without, she begins to clean up the mess, this is a sign of development. Some Christians reveal that they are babes because they cannot use the Word by themselves. They have to be prompted in every action. Others can use the Word without any promptings from without. Christians will begin to make progress toward maturity as they do good to all the saints. Being able to apply the Word by responding to a need is one means of coming to maturity.

PATIENCE

In verses 11 and 12 we find another clue to spiritual maturity given by the apostle: "We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not

slothful [or lazy], but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” What these two verses imply is that there can be no maturity apart from a passage of time. The apostle referred to the time element in verse 12 of chapter 5 when he said, “Ye ought to be teachers, [but] ye have need that one teach you again.” In coming to maturity we need patience. For instance, in bringing up our children, we have no right to expect them to act beyond their years. What we expect of a seventeen-year-old will be quite different from what we expect from a nine-year-old, because each is in a different stage of development. Thus the apostle emphasizes the need of patience. We must not be indifferent or lazy concerning our growth, but we must be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. The promise we seek to have fulfilled in our lives is maturity, conformity to Christ. We will not be made like Him overnight. This life, this growth, this process demands constant cultivation day after day, week after week, year after year. There is no end to the process of maturing in spiritual things. The one who has been a believer fifty years has before him yet unpossessed land, just as the one who has been a believer for five years, or five months, has before him unpossessed land. What the apostle is pointing out is that we never can sit back in complacency and self-satisfaction and say, “I have arrived. I am mature.” We must beware of becoming slothful. We need patience and diligence as we aim for constant growth and development in our lives.

THE DANGER OF FAILURE

This chapter contains a passage which, perhaps more than any other passage in the New Testament, has perplexed believers. The author writes, “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Is the apostle teaching that if a man has been saved and then commits a sin he loses his salvation and can never be saved again? God forbid! That denies the whole divine revelation. What is the apostle saying? These verses which contain the most sober warning to the child of God found anywhere in the Word of God, have to do with the danger of not progressing to maturity. The apostle is showing us, from the divine viewpoint, how serious it is for a man not to heed the exhortation, “Let us go on unto perfection.” How serious it is for a man to continue as a milk-fed baby when he should be going on to maturity! God desires not only to save us but also to bring us to the position of adult sons in His family. It is a most serious thing not to fulfil God’s purposes for us, and for this reason the apostle warns those who have been saved but who have not progressed to maturity or are retrogressing. He says, to summarize his argument, it is impossible to erase the record of failure and immaturity by losing our salvation and being saved all over again. If we could lose our salvation, being saved a second time would erase all previous failure. But this we cannot do. Suppose I live my Christian life for twenty-five years as a spiritual babe—in slothfulness, indifference, carelessness—on a milk diet. At the end of that time I realize that my record is one of prolonged infancy, and I want to erase that record. How can I do it? If I could lose my salvation and then get saved over again, all that record of failure and continued infancy would be blotted out. That would be a convenient way to eliminate it, wouldn’t it? The apostle says that such is impossible. A person, by falling away, cannot erase the record of his failure. His record must stand, and he must face it at the judgment seat of Christ. We must exercise care over our spiritual diet, over our spiritual growth, for it is impossible, by any means, to remove the record of failure. God has made us responsible for growth, and at the judgment seat of Christ we will be examined in reference to our growth.

The last words that Peter penned to those who would read his epistles were the words, “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” Grow in grace! That is your responsibility, child of God. The means are provided, but you will never grow unless you diligently appropriate what God has provided. Are you growing? Are you any stronger today than you were yesterday? Do you know more of your Lord today than you knew yesterday? If not, you need to heed these words: “Let us ... go on to maturity.”

5.

Thomas, R. L. (2002). *Who am I?: The Christian Hunger for Self-Identity* (pp. 167–177). Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications.

Chapter 13

REPLACING OLD CONCEPTS AND HABITS

Ephesians 4:17–24

¹⁷Therefore I say and solemnly affirm in the Lord, that you no longer walk as also the Gentiles do, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸being darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts, ¹⁹who, having become callous, have given themselves to sensuality for the working of every kind of impurity in covetousness. ²⁰You, however, did not learn Christ that way, ²¹if indeed you heard Him and were taught in Him—as the truth is in Jesus—²²that you put off with regard to your former way of life your old man, who is being corrupted according to the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and that you put on the new man who has been created according to God in righteousness and holiness of truth.

This survey of New Testament portions deals with how a Christian should think of himself. One passage that deserves special attention is Ephesians 4:17–24, because the eight verses contain eleven words that pertain to the mind and its functioning. The translation of the passage on the opposite page has those ‘thinking’ words emphasized to show the passage’s attention to mental processes.

The words ‘mind’ (vv. 17, 23), ‘understanding’ (v. 18), and ‘ignorance’ (v. 18) obviously relate to how a person thinks. So do the verbs ‘learn’ (v. 20), ‘heard’ (v. 21) and ‘taught’ (v. 21). In biblical terminology the nouns ‘hearts’ (v. 18) and ‘truth’ (vv. 21, 24) entail activity of the mind too. The nature of the problem in becoming ‘callous’ (v. 19) is a malfunction of one’s mental capacities. This passage of Scripture clearly relates to thinking processes before and after conversion.

The paragraph is relevant to our present study not only because of the frequency of words pertaining to the mind, but also because it gives specific attention to how a Christian is to think of himself.

Ephesians 4:17–24 and its surroundings

The book of Ephesians begins with three chapters of doctrinal teaching about the believer’s position in Christ. These three chapters describe the spiritual resources available to Christians, closing with lengthy sections regarding unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church. Chapter 4 begins the practical portion of the epistle emphasizing the obligation of readers to keep the unity of the Spirit. The paragraph in 4:17–24 draws a logical conclusion based on the discussion of unity and mutual dependence among members of the body of Christ in 4:4–16. Since members serve one another in a spirit of love, thereby producing growth in the body (4:11–16), changes in lifestyle reflecting their relationship to Christ are necessary to expedite that growth. Believers need to cease patterning their lives after Gentile thought and behavior as they were accustomed to doing before converting to Christ (4:17–19) and adopt the opposite mentality and life-

standards that are characteristically Christian (4:20–24). Love and mutual concern for one another can come in no other way than through vessels who have turned from a decadent life to one that is fruitful.

With the turn-around in intellectual comprehension commanded in 4:17–24, Christians can then clean up particular bad habits that were plaguing the readers of Ephesians (Eph. 4:25 ff.). A proper view of self can remedy problem areas of life such as lying (4:25) and stealing (4:28). Only as a person puts his mind into action along the lines advocated in 4:17–24 can he hope for success in achieving holiness of character that pleases the Lord and has a positive impact on fellow-Christians.

Two contrasting conditions

Christians in Asia to whom Paul wrote these words had a background in raw heathendom. ‘Vanity of mind’ (v. 17) expresses an emptiness in grasping the real issues of life, an emptiness that had characterized their pre-Christian days and affected the way they lived. A ‘darkening of understanding’ (v. 18) depicts their blindness that kept them from being able to learn about such realities. ‘Alienated from the life of God’ (v. 18) refers to the spiritual death that characterized their condition because of blindness. ‘Ignorance’ (v. 18) and ‘hardness of heart’ (v. 18) were twin conditions that kept them from obtaining the life of God. Because they were ‘callous’ or insensitive (v. 19) to spiritual matters, they gave themselves to sensuality in producing every kind of uncleanness in covetousness (v. 19). To say the least, such a use of the mind resulting in that kind of behavior is unbecoming to a member of the body of Christ. More specifically in the present context of Ephesians, that kind of living could do nothing to promote growth and unity in the body. Its effect on the body would be utterly devastating. It would destroy rather than build up. That’s why Paul urges and places them under oath—‘Therefore I say and solemnly affirm in the Lord’ (v. 17a)—so to speak, that they terminate that kind of thinking with its resultant behavior.

He reminds them that they did not learn Christ that way (v. 20). During three years in Ephesus, Paul did not have personal contact with every Christian in the province of Asia, but he assumes that they had heard Christ and been taught in matters related to Him (v. 21). When he spoke of hearing Christ, he clearly meant hearing Christ’s representatives. None of these readers had sat under Christ’s ministry in person, but in being taught by Paul and other Christian leaders, they had their minds saturated with ‘the truth in Jesus’ (v. 21). Verses 22–24 proceed to define three parts of the lessons they had been taught: a putting off (v. 22), a renewing (v. 23), and a putting on (v. 24).

Some have taken verses 22–24 to refer to what happened at the time of the readers’ conversion. In trusting Christ for salvation, they had already put off the old man and put on the new man. The ethical commands that begin at verse 25 allegedly find their basis in the positional truths stated in verses 22 and 24. If the putting off and putting on referred to here occurred in connection with initial salvation, they correspond to the uses of similar verbs in Colossians 3:9–10, where Paul wrote, ‘Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his practices, and have put on the new man who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.’ The readers in Colosse had already put off the old man and put on the new man. That was to serve as an incentive for them to stop lying to each other. Colossians 3:9–10 refers to a positional change at the time of conversion.

Ephesians 4:22–24 has a setting different from the Colossians passage, however, one that is best taken as expressing an ethical responsibility rather than positional truth. The putting off and putting on in this case carry the force of commands to be obeyed. Paul commands the readers to change their thoughts from the Gentile mold and conform them to Christian norms. In making that change, they will be able to fulfill

Christian duties that pertain to external behavior toward others (see Eph. 4:25 ff.). This is the practical side of the positional truth expressed in Colossians 3:9–10.

Verses 22–24 in Ephesians 4 express an obligation to be met by the readers who, though already converted, apparently were continuing to live like the Gentiles around them. Teaching they had received as Christians had already directed them to make that change. Paul's need to reiterate that teaching implies that they had not yet complied: '[you] were taught in Him ... that you put off with regard to your former way of life your old man ... and that you be renewed in the spirit of your minds and that you put on the new man....' The Greek verb tenses behind 'put off' and 'put on' indicate a decisive break with the past. The tense behind 'be renewed' depicts an ongoing process. Paraphrasing verses 22–24, we may picture the action thus: 'you ought to put off the old man once for all, continue being renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man once for all.' The need among the readers was to resolve within themselves to put off the old man right now and to put on the new man right now, and to continue that train of thought about themselves from the point of this initial decision into the indefinite future.

The old and the new

The old man of whom Paul speaks in verse 22 is the same old man of whom he spoke in Romans 6:6. That man was crucified with Christ and is no longer alive. That is positional truth which the believer must keep on reckoning as true in his day-by-day experience (Rom. 6:11). That is the death aspect of the death-life paradox. That is the mental perspective involved in putting off the old man in Ephesians 4:22. To put him off, we must look upon the person who existed prior to conversion as having died with Christ. Ephesians 4:17–19 describes how that old man thought and acted. He was thoroughly Gentile in his whole being and outlook.

Verse 22 describes the old man's ongoing deterioration even after the new man comes into existence: he is being corrupted according to the lusts of deceit. As long as a regenerated person continues in this world, his old man is getting worse and worse. That is why we must take him off as we would shed a layer of clothing. Failure to do so inevitably results in a degraded Christian life that can only go downhill ethically.

The new man is the one who has been raised with Christ when He arose from the dead. He is Christ living in us (see Gal. 2:20), the one who enables us to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). We should consider ourselves alive to God because of our union with Christ in His resurrection (Rom. 6:11). That is the life aspect of the death-life paradox. That is a life of walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), being led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:18), and living in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). That kind of life is freed from the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16) that so characterized life among the Gentiles.

Replacing the 'old-man' way of thinking with the 'new-man' way of thinking was then to become a regular pattern of living through the renewal of the spirit of a Christian's mind. We can claim the enablement of the Holy Spirit to help us to continue thinking this way. We must remain constantly aware of the potential danger of allowing the old man to rise and regain control of our thinking. We consistently aspire to the potentially high caliber of life attainable while the new man remains experientially in place. Our minds need an incessant renewal along these lines. Otherwise, we will fall back into Gentile patterns of thought.

D. M. Lloyd-Jones has expressed our responsibility this way:

We are no longer what we were, and the first thing we have to do is to tell ourselves just that! The whole art of Christian living is to know how to talk to yourself.... You start your day by telling yourself, Now I am the new man, I am no longer the old man; my old man has been crucified with Christ, my old

man is dead, finished with, he is non-existent; I am no longer what I was.... You start the new day by saying that to yourself. It will not be said to you, it will not happen automatically.

When the Apostle tells us to put off the old man and put on the new man, he is not calling for a mechanical conformity, but asking us to put into practice an intelligent change. That is his reason for speaking of being renewed in the spirit of your mind in between the 'putting off' and the 'putting on.' ... If the spirit of our mind is changed and is renewed, we shall be thinking in such a way that we shall put off the old man, and will put on the new man.

That is the experiential side of the positional truth regarding our old man and our new man. In position we already have dispensed with the old man and put on the new. The tension that we live with is to realize that concerted effort in controlling our thoughts is necessary to activate this position in our everyday practice. Successful Christian living begins in a Christian's possessing a proper perception of himself, the perception of the ever-present danger of lapsing back into the habits of the old man and the ever-present potential of appropriating the higher life for which the new man stands. We must neglect neither the putting off (or death with Christ) of the old man nor the putting on (or resurrection with Christ) of the new man. Both must be objects of conscious apprehension at all times.

Comparison with contemporary teaching about self-image

Contemporary attention to a person's self-image is dominantly man-centered, with only passing notice given to how God enters into an adequate view of oneself. An example of such man-centeredness is David C. Needham's *Birthright—Christian, Do You Know Who You Are?*

Needham's definition of sin is 'the expression of man's struggle with the meaning of his existence while missing life from God. It is all the varieties of ways man deals with and expresses his alienation from his Creator as he encounters the inescapable issue of meaning.... The essence of sin, then, cannot be separated from the issue of meaning.' In other words, sin is primarily a human problem in wrestling with meaning, God being a background consideration in that struggle.

Here lies a basic flaw in Needham's system. The essence of sin bears no relationship to man's search for meaning. Ephesians 4:17 speaks of the vanity of the Gentile mind which equates to meaninglessness, aimlessness, or futility. The person without God is not searching for meaning, because he has no purpose such as one who is searching for meaning has. Emptiness and vanity are the core of his thoughts. Sin does not relate to the problem of meaning. It is rather man's quest to be independent of God as indicated in 1 John 3:4b: 'sin is lawlessness.'

Needham claims to have discovered the true meaning of life, thereby eliminating sin, when he denies a distinction between a Christian's position and his experience. A Christian is a saint, not just positionally or judicially, but actually, he says. He even goes to the extreme of relieving Christians of any obligation to obey Romans 6:11, a command to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God (pp. 45, 54, 133). He applies the term 'rationalization' to the act of making Christian-living benefits of Christ's death and resurrection contingent on human faith (p. 237). Yet Paul's writings are full of admonitions to Christians to become in their practice what God's calling has made them in position (e.g., 1 Cor. 5:7).

In taking such a position, Needham rejects the ongoing existence of the old man in the life of a regenerated person, believing that the New Testament never exhorts a Christian to put off the old man. From his perspective, only the new man exists in a Christian, that new man constituting his essential,

deepest nature. That furnishes Needham the basis for advocating that Christians should have a positive image of themselves.⁷

Along the way Needham denies the imperative force of Ephesians 4:22–24, but he does so without giving close attention to the context in which those words occur. He is wrong in his position on this issue as he is about the new man being the total essence of a Christian's essential, deepest nature. He is also wrong in denying the potential continuing effect of the old man on the life of a Christian. With Needham's concept of oneself, a Christian becomes an easy prey for the old man who is still resident within his being. Unless a Christian reckons with the imminent danger of that old man coming to life to dominate his decisions, a believer becomes a vulnerable target for falling back into the Gentile habits that Paul so specifically forbids.

Ridding oneself of the old by replacing with the new

The practical half of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians begins with his plea for unity, more specifically for mutual concern and love in building the body of Christ (4:1–16). Recognizing hindrances to that type of progress, he commanded his readers to desist from ways connected with their Gentile past and to pick up ways they had been taught through their Christian instructors (4:17–24).

Their former Gentile condition was a glaring contrast with then Christian life they had begun, both in thought and in action. To turn their lives around entailed beginning to think differently about themselves. Implied in their Christian approach was the putting off or the reckoning as dead the persons they were before receiving Christ and the putting on or the reckoning as alive the new persons they have become in Christ.

That approach to self-concept differs radically from secular and most allegedly Christian approaches to self-image. The latter are ultimately man-centered, leaving God as a background fixture. The Christian approach takes God at His Word and advocates an ongoing consciousness of the need to keep putting off the old man and putting on the new man.

The human mind is a marvelous creation. It is capable of marvelous achievements. Through applying its capabilities to earning money, some have amassed huge fortunes. Bill Gates in his building of the Microsoft empire is an example of this use of the mind. Applying the mind's capabilities in another way, Cameron Townsend started a Bible-translation movement that has grown into a huge work known as Wycliffe Bible Translators. More basic and more important than either of these uses of the mind, however, is the application of the mind to maintaining the biblical view of oneself. When a person can gear his mind to remembering the death of his old man and the resurrection of his new man with Christ, he has achieved God's primary goal and will have his maximum output in helping build the body of Christ.

One of the great leaders in the church of east Africa illustrates the realization of this potential of the human mind. His background lay in African tribal warfare of the worst kind. He had scars all over his body from injuries suffered in battles with other tribes. He was the embodiment of raw heathendom. He received the gospel and became a believer in Christ. He began training his mind in the Scriptures by submitting himself to Christian teachers. He went to the United States for additional training at the institution where I was teaching, earned a terminal degree from another institution, and returned to his homeland to involve himself in reaching his own countrymen with the gospel. He rose rapidly into the leadership of his denomination and has become a powerful force in building the body of Christ in that part of the world. He left his Gentile ways of thinking behind and put on the new man who was raised from the dead with Christ. God can accomplish much through His children who gear their minds to think right thoughts about themselves.

WORSHIP SONGS

Into the Deep – Citipointe Worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8vym4gtcEM>

As you come to listen to this song ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the worship, may his presence wash over you as you enter into worship.

*When my hands stretch out towards the sky
You never let me run dry
When I dive into the depths of You
My heart is made anew
Jesus, in You*

*When my hands stretch out towards the sky
You never let me run dry
When I dive into the depths of You
My heart is made anew
Jesus, in You*

*Your love is a flood
And I'm caught in the current
Of Your living waters
It's Your love, it's Your love
Your presence is a flood*

*And I'm caught in the wonder
You have taken me over
You have won my heart, yeah
(You have won my heart)*

*Into the deep I will go with You
Submerge my feet to my head in all of You
As Your presence falls
I am drowned in Your love
Immerse me, immerse me
Into the deep I will go with You
Submerge my feet to my head in all of You
As Your presence falls
I am drowned in Your love
Immerse me, immerse me*

Some questions to ponder as you listen:

1. What does it mean to dive into the depths of Christ?
2. Where does your heart need to be made new?
3. Ask the Lord's presence to fall on you.

I Am Loved – Mack Brock

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OmYhgvwQa8>

As you spend time listening to this worship song ask the Lord to speak to your heart.

[Mack Brock – I am Loved](#)

Just as I am
You welcome me
With open arms

How can this be
My guilt is undone
My past is untethered

I leave it behind
And run to my Father
There is no disappointment in Your eyes
There is no shame there is only pride
I am loved
Father, I'm loved by You
So unreserved
Your heart for me
My fear is gone
I am set free
There's nothing to hide
There's nothing to measure
'Cause I am Your child
And that's all that matters

There is no disappointment in Your eyes
There is no shame there is only pride

I am loved
Father, I'm loved by You
There is no distance in Your embrace
Over and over again You say
I am loved
Father, I'm loved by You
I am loved
Father, I'm loved by You

You are changing everything
You are changing everything
I believe it
I receive it
You are changing everything
You are...

Be Thou My Vision – Celtic Worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiukM6WHQEQ>

*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light*

*Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I thy true son
Thou in me dwelling and I with thee one*

*Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and thou only first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art*

*High King of heaven, my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all*

May this hymn be your prayer.

Your Great Name – Scott Neale

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZZxjUBsHuE>

Lost are saved find their way
At the sound of your great name

All condemned feel no shame
At the sound of your great name

Every fear has no place
At the sound of your great name
The enemy: he has to leave
At the sound of your great name

Jesus
Worthy is the Lamb
That was slain for us
Son of God and Man
You are high and lifted up
And all the world will praise your great name

All the weak find their strength
At the sound of your great name
Hungry souls receive grace
At the sound of your great name

The fatherless: they find their rest

At the sound of your great name
The sick are healed and the dead are raised
At the sound of your great name

Jesus
Worthy is the Lamb
That was slain for us
Son of God and Man
You are high and lifted up
And all the world will praise your great name
Your great name

Redeemer, My Healer, Lord Almighty
My Savior, Defender, You are My King
Redeemer, My Healer, Lord Almighty
My Savior, Defender, You are My King

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus

What a Friend We Have in Jesus – sung by Alan Jackson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znWu2HCJ92c>

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
And what a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer

Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Below is a sample list of many of the most common spiritual practices that help us walk with God and overcome our sinful tendencies and weaknesses. A very brief 'definition' is given for each one as a guide, while acknowledging that each has many facets and nuances.

- Solitude – Intentionally setting aside an extended time to be alone
- Gratitude – Acknowledging, with thanks, the blessings you have
- Self-Examination – An honest look at the good & the bad in your life & character
- Prayer – Intimate conversation with God (Speaking & Listening)
- Fasting – An intentional period of abstinence from food (or ??)
- Simplicity – Removing something from your life (possession, activity, etc)
- Fellowship – Deliberately building a deeper relationship with others
- Journaling – Writing thoughts, events, prayers, concerns down before God
- Purity – Abstaining from unrighteous thoughts and deeds
- Stewardship – Giving money, time, attention to advancing God’s kingdom
- Obedience – Doing something the Lord has brought to your attention
- Study – Intellectual effort expended to know God and his ways better
- Detachment – Letting go of something that is inappropriately important
- Sleep – An adequate rhythm of sleep to remain alert & composed
- Margin – Creating space between things to avoid rush and stress
- Generosity – Putting money, time & effort into blessing someone else
- Hospitality – Inviting others into your home, providing and caring for them
- Leisure – Creating space to relax (e.g. walk on the beach, read, etc)
- Balance – Reviewing priorities: are they in the right order & emphasis
- Evangelism – Sharing what God is doing and has done for you with others
- Meditation – Investing your brain power to explore important truths
- Contemplation – Dwelling in the discoveries you make about God & life
- Confession – Admitting where you are falling short of God’s call
- Silence – Intentionally avoiding noise, particularly talking
- Celebration – Rejoicing in the goodness of God and the blessings he gives

Obviously, we should be practicing most of these all the time. However, for the purposes of Lent, choose to act on one or more in a specific way. E.g. practice “obedience” by acting on one thing that God has laid on your heart; practice “simplicity” by making one change to remove something from your life; perform one act of hospitality or generosity beyond what is usual for you; and so on.

1.

Come, Thou Fount

Author—Robert Robinson, 1735–1790

Composer—John Wyeth, 1770–1858

Tune Name—“Nettleton”

Meter—87.87 Doubled

Scripture Reference—1 Samuel 7:12

O Lord, Thou art my God: I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thy name; for Thou hast done wonderful things; Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

Isaiah 25:1

Robert Robinson was born of lowly parents in Swaffham, Norfolk, England, on September 27, 1735. His father died when Robert was eight, and at the age of fourteen he was sent by his mother to London to learn the barbering trade. Here for the next few years he was associated with a notorious gang of hoodlums and lived a debauched life. At the age of seventeen he attended a meeting where George Whitefield was preaching. Robinson and his friends went for the purpose of “scoffing at the poor, deluded Methodists.” However, Whitefield’s strong evangelistic preaching so impressed young Robinson that he was converted to Christ. Several years later he felt called to preach and entered the ministry of the Methodist Church. Subsequently, he left the Methodist Church when he moved to Cambridge and became a Baptist pastor. Here he became known as an able theologian through his writing of many theological works as well as several hymns.

This hymn text, written when Robinson was only twenty-three years of age, contains an interesting expression in the second stanza, “Here I raise mine Ebenezer—Hither by Thy help I’m come.” This language is taken from 1 Samuel 7:12, where the Ebenezer is a symbol of God’s faithfulness. An expression in the third verse, “Prone to wander—Lord, I feel it—Prone to leave the God I love,” seems to have been prophetic of Robinson’s later years, as once again his life became characterized by lapses into sin, unstableness, and an involvement with the doctrines of Unitarianism.

The story is told that Robinson was one day riding a stagecoach when he noticed a woman deeply engrossed with a hymn book. During an ensuing conversation the lady turned to Robinson and asked what he thought of the hymn she was humming. Robinson burst into tears and said, “Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then.”

The tune, “Nettleton,” was named for the Rev. Asahel Nettleton, noted American evangelist of the early eighteenth century. Its composer, John Wyeth, born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 31,

1770, was a printer and lay musician. This hymn first appeared in his hymnal, *Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Songs*, published in 1813.

This hymn can be used effectively with other tunes of the same 87.87 Doubled Meter.⁶⁹

*Come Thou fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it
Mount of Thy redeeming love*

*Oh, that day when freed from sinning
I shall see Thy lovely face
Clothed then in blood washed linen
How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace
Come my Lord, no longer tarry
Take my ransomed soul away
Send Thine angels now to carry
Me to realms of endless days*

Here I raise my Ebenezer
Here by Thy great help I've come
And I hope by Thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home
Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God
He to rescue me from danger
Interposed His precious blood*

*Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be
Let Thy goodness like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to Thee
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, oh take and seal it
Seal it for Thy courts above*

[“Ebenezer” (Heb) Stones erected for remembrance in the Old Testament.]

2.

33 How Great Thou Art!

English Words by Stuart K. Hine (1899–1989)

Music Arrangement by Stuart K. Hine and Manna Music of Swedish Folk Melody

Meter—11 10. 11 10 with Refrain

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.

Psalm 145:3

This is a fine twentieth century hymn of praise that has become a favorite with God's people during the last three decades. Its popularity is due in large part to its wide use by favorite gospel singers, notably

⁶⁹ Osbeck, K. W. (1982). *101 hymn stories*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications

George Beverly Shea. Although introduced to American audiences when Mr. James Caldwell sang “How Great Thou Art” at Stony Brook Bible Conference on Long Island in 1951, it was not until Cliff Barrows and Bev Shea of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Team used it during the famed London Crusade in Harringay Arena that “How Great Thou Art” started to become universally well-known.

The original Swedish text was a poem entitled “O Store Gud,” written by a Swedish pastor, the Reverend Carl Boberg, in 1886. In addition to being one of the leading evangelical preachers of his day, Boberg was also the successful editor of the periodical *Sanningsvitnet*. His inspiration for this text is said to have come from a visit to a beautiful country estate on the southeast coast of Sweden. He was suddenly caught in a midday thunderstorm with awe-inspiring moments of flashing violence, followed by a clear brilliant sun. Soon afterwards he heard the calm, sweet songs of the birds in nearby trees. The experience prompted the pastor to fall to his knees in humble adoration of his mighty God. He penned his exaltation in a nine-stanza poem beginning with the Swedish words “O Store Gud, nar jag den varld beskader.”

Several years later Boberg was attending a meeting in the Province of Varmland and was surprised to hear the congregation sing his poem to the tune of an old Swedish melody.

The subsequent history of this hymn is most interesting. It is thought that soon after Boberg’s version, the text was translated into German by Manfred von Glehn and entitled “Wie gross bist Du.” Later in 1925 the Reverend E. Gustav Johnson of North Park College, Chicago, Illinois, made the first literal English translation from the Swedish text. This translation is quite different from the text that we know today but may still be found in some hymnals. Johnson’s literal translation of the Swedish text is entitled “O Mighty God, When I Behold the Wonder.” In 1927 I. S. Prokhanoff came upon the German version and translated it into the Russian language.

In 1933 the Reverend S. K. Hine and his wife, English missionaries, were ministering to the people of the Ukraine. It was there they learned the Russian translation of “O Store Gud” from a congregation of Ukrainians. They remember singing it as a duet in dark, unevangelized places and the telling effect it had on the unsaved. The thought of writing original English lyrics to this song did not then occur to them—that was to await their crossing into Sub-Carpathian Russia, where the mountain scenery was to play its part. The thoughts of the first three verses in English were born, line upon line, amid unforgettable experiences in the Carpathian mountains. (The fourth verse was written later in England.) Thus, inspired partially by the Russian words, partially by the awesome wonder at the sight of “all the works thy hand hath made,” the thoughts of the first two verses sprang into life in English. As Reverend Hine and his wife continued their evangelizing in the Carpathian mountains and distribution of gospels in village after village, verse three came into being.

When war broke out in 1939, it was necessary for Reverend Hine and his wife to return to Britain; now armed with these three verses, the writer continued his gospel campaigns during the “Blitz years.” The fourth verse did not come until after the war.

The tune for this hymn is an arrangement made of an old Swedish folk melody. It is typically characteristic of many other hymn tunes, i.e., “Day by Day” (No. 17) with its lilting, warm, singable simplicity. With his original English lyrics and his arrangement of the Swedish folk melody, Mr. Stuart K. Hine published what we know today as the hymn “How Great Thou Art.” Assignments of copyrights and publication rights to an American publishing firm in 1954 helped spread the popularity of this hymn. In April

of 1974 the Christian Herald magazine, in a poll presented to its readers, named “How Great Thou Art” the No. 1 hymn in America.⁷⁰

*O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

Chorus:

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

*When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.*

*And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on a Cross, my burdens gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.*

*When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,
And then proclaim: “My God, how great Thou art!”*

3.

27 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Author—Thomas O. Chisholm, 1866–1960

Composer—William M. Runyan, 1870–1957

Meter—11 10. 11 10 with Chorus

Scripture Reference—Lamentations 3:22

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights,
with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

⁷⁰ Osbeck, K. W. (1982). 101 hymn stories. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications

Of the many gospel hymns written in recent times on the theme of God's goodness and faithfulness, this hymn stands out like a beacon light. While many hymns are born out of a particular dramatic experience, this hymn was simply the result of the author's "morning by morning realization of God's personal faithfulness."

Thomas Obadiah Chisholm was born in a humble log cabin in Franklin, Kentucky, on July 29, 1866. Without the benefit of high school or advanced training, he began his career as a school teacher at the age of sixteen in the same country school house where he had received his elementary training. When he was twenty-one, he became the associate editor of his home town weekly newspaper, The Franklin Favorite. Six years later he accepted Christ as personal Savior during a revival meeting conducted in Franklin by Dr. H. C. Morrison. At Dr. Morrison's invitation Chisholm moved to Louisville to become office editor and business manager of Morrison's publication, the Pentecostal Herald. Later Chisholm was ordained to the Methodist ministry but was forced to resign after a brief pastorate because of poor health. After 1909 he became a life insurance agent in Winona Lake and later in Vineland, New Jersey. Thomas Chisholm retired in 1953 and spent his remaining years at the Methodist Home for the Aged, Ocean Grove, New Jersey.

Mr. Chisholm wrote more than 1200 poems, many of which have appeared frequently in such religious periodicals as the Sunday School Times, Moody Monthly, Alliance Weekly and others. A number of these poems have become prominent hymn texts.

In a letter dated 1941, Mr. Chisholm writes, "My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. Although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness."

In 1923 Mr. Chisholm sent several of his poems to the Rev. W. M. Runyan, a musician associated with the Moody Bible Institute and an editor with the Hope Publishing Company until his death July 29, 1957. Mr. Runyan has written as follows:

This particular poem held such an appeal that I prayed most earnestly that my tune might carry over its message in a worthy way, and the subsequent history of its use indicates that God answered prayer. It was written in Baldwin, Kansas, in 1923, and was first published in my private song pamphlets.

This hymn was the favorite of the late Dr. Will Houghton, former beloved president of the Moody Bible Institute. It has since been an all-time favorite with students at the school and as a result its usefulness has spread to evangelical churches everywhere. Bev Shea states that this hymn was first introduced to audiences in Great Britain in 1954 by the Billy Graham Crusades and has since been a favorite there as well.

Thomas Chisholm is also the author of the hymn "Living for Jesus," (101 More Hymn Stories, No. 56).

* * *

"He leads us on by paths we did not know;
Upward He leads us, though our steps be slow,
Though oft we faint and falter on the way,

Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day;
Yet when the clouds are gone,
We know He leads us on.
“He leads us on through all the unquiet years;
Past all our dreamland hopes, and doubts and fears,
He guides our steps, through all the tangled maze
Of losses, sorrows, and o’erclouded days;
We know His will is done;
And still He leads us on.”

Nicolaus L. von Zinzendorf, 1700–1760⁷¹

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be*

Chorus:

*Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me*

*Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love*

Chorus:

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside*

4.

31 Holy, Holy, Holy

Author—Reginald Heber, 1783–1826

⁷¹ Osbeck, K. W. (1982). 101 hymn stories. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications

Composer—John B. Dykes, 1823–1876

Tune Name—“Nicaea”

Meter—11 12, 12 10.

Scripture Reference—Revelation 4:8–11

O come, let us worship and bow down: Let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture.

Psalm 95:6, 7

Reginald Heber was born in the area of Cheshire, England, on April 21, 1783, of scholarly and well-to-do parents. At the age of seventeen he entered Oxford University, where his scholarship and literary abilities received much attention. Following his ordination to the ministry of the Anglican Church, he served for the next sixteen years at an obscure parish church in the little village of Hodnet in western England. Throughout his ministry he was known and respected as a man of rare refinement and noble Christian character. Heber was also noted as a prolific literary writer, making frequent contributions to magazines with his poetry, essays and hymns.

In 1823, just three years before his early death at the age of forty-three, Heber was sent to India to serve as the Bishop of Calcutta. This responsibility included not only India but the Island of Ceylon and all of Australia as well. The pressures of this work along with the humid climate of that area wore heavily upon his health. One Sunday morning, after preaching to a large outdoor crowd of Indians on the subject of the evils of their caste system, he evidently suffered a sun-stroke and died very suddenly. One year after his untimely death, a collection of his fifty-seven choice hymns was published by his widow and many friends. Most of these hymns are still in use today.

This hymn was written by Reginald Heber specifically for its liturgical use on Trinity Sunday, which occurs eight weeks after Easter. The emphasis of this Sunday’s service is to reaffirm the doctrine of the triune Godhead. Though the word “trinity” is not found in the Scriptures, yet the truth of three Persons, equal and eternal with each other, is clearly taught throughout God’s Word.

Reginald Heber is also the author of the hymn, “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains” (No. 25).

The tune for this text has been named “Nicaea.” It was named after the Council of Nicaea held in Asia Minor in 325 A.D., when the doctrine of the Trinity was examined and held to be a true and essential doctrine of the Christian faith. In 1861 this tune was composed specifically for these words by one of England’s leading church musicians of the nineteenth century, Dr. John Bacchus Dykes. This popular composer has contributed more than 300 hymn tunes; most of them are still in use today.

Other hymns by John B. Dykes include “I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say” (No. 35), “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee” (No. 49), “Eternal Father, Strong to Save” (101 More Hymn Stories, No. 22), and “O for a Closer Walk With God” (ibid., No. 67).⁷²

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty
Early in the morning Our song shall rise to Thee
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty
God in three persons Blessed Trinity!*

⁷² Osbeck, K. W. (1982). 101 hymn stories. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications

*Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.*

*Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see
Only Thou art holy there is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, in love and purity*

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty
Oh thy works shall praise thy name In earth and sky and sea
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty
God in three persons blessed Trinity*

5.

44 It is Well With My Soul

Author—Horatio G. Spafford, 1828–1888

Music—Philip P. Bliss, 1838–1876

Meter—11 8 11 9 with Chorus

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 46:1

This beloved gospel song was written by a Chicago Presbyterian layman, Horatio G. Spafford, born in North Troy, New York, on October 20, 1828. As a young man Spafford had established a most successful legal practice in Chicago. Despite his financial success, he always maintained a keen interest in Christian activities. He enjoyed a close and active relationship with D. L. Moody and the other evangelical leaders of that era. He was described by George Stebbins, a noted gospel musician, as a “man of unusual intelligence and refinement, deeply spiritual, and a devoted student of the Scriptures.”

Some months prior to the Chicago Fire of 1871, Spafford had invested heavily in real estate on the shore of Lake Michigan, and his holdings were wiped out by this disaster. Just before this he had experienced the death of his son. Desiring a rest for his wife and four daughters as well as wishing to join and assist Moody and Sankey in one of their campaigns in Great Britain, Spafford planned a European trip for his family in 1873. In November of that year, due to unexpected last minute business developments, he had to remain in Chicago; but he sent his wife and four daughters on ahead as scheduled on the S. S. Ville du Havre. He expected to follow in a few days. On November 22 the ship was struck by the Lochearn, an English vessel,

and sank in twelve minutes. Several days later the survivors were finally landed at Cardiff, Wales, and Mrs. Spafford cabled her husband, "Saved alone." Shortly afterward Spafford left by ship to join his bereaved wife. It is speculated that on the sea near the area where it was thought his four daughters had drowned, Spafford penned this text with words so significantly describing his own personal grief—"When sorrows like sea billows roll ..." It is noteworthy, however, that Spafford does not dwell on the theme of life's sorrows and trials but focuses attention in the third stanza on the redemptive work of Christ and in the fourth verse anticipates His glorious second coming. Humanly speaking, it is amazing that one could experience such personal tragedies and sorrows as did Horatio Spafford and still be able to say with such convincing clarity, "It is well with my soul."

In his late life Spafford experienced a mental disturbance which prompted him to go to Jerusalem under the strange delusion that he was the second Messiah. He died there in 1888 at the age of sixty.

Philip P. Bliss was so impressed with the experience and expression of Spafford's text that he shortly wrote the music for it, first published in one of the Sankey-Bliss Hymnals, Gospel Hymns No. Two, in 1876. Bliss was a prolific writer of gospel songs throughout his brief lifetime. In most cases he wrote both the words and music for his hymns. His songs, like most early gospel hymnody, are strong in emotional appeal with tunes that are easily learned and sung (see No. 46).

Other hymns by Philip P. Bliss include "Hold the Fort" (No. 30), "I Gave My Life for Thee" (No. 34), "Jesus Loves Even Me" (No. 46), "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning" (101 More Hymn Stories, No. 55), and "Once for All" (ibid., No. 72).⁷³

*When peace like a river attendeth my way
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well with my soul*

Chorus:

*It is well (it is well)
With my soul (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul*

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come
Let this blest assurance control
That Christ (yes, He has) has regarded my helpless estate
And has shed His own blood for my soul*

*My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought (a thought)
My sin, not in part, but the whole (every bit, every bit, all of it)
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more (yes!)
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

*And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend
Even so, it is well with my soul!*

⁷³ Osbeck, K. W. (1982). 101 hymn stories. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications

6.

All Creatures of Our God and King

Author—Francis of Assisi, 1182–1226

English Translation—William H. Draper, 1855–1933

Music—From the Geistliche Kirchengesäng of 1623

Tune Name—“Lasst Uns Erfreuen”

Meter—LMA (88.88 with Alleluias)

Scripture Reference—Psalm 145

All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee. They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power.

Psalm 145:10, 11

This inspiring expression of praise found in nearly every hymnal was originally written in 1225 by one of the most interesting figures in all of church history. Giovanni Bernardone, who was better known as Saint Francis of Assisi, was a mystic, medieval monk who spent his lifetime as an itinerant evangelist, preaching and helping the poor people of Italy.

Saint Francis was born in Assisi, Italy, in 1182. After an early indulgent life as a soldier, he reformed his ways dramatically, at the age of twenty-five, and determined to serve God by imitating the selfless life of Christ in all that he did. Although his family were people of considerable means, Francis scorned the possession of material goods, denounced his inherited wealth, denied himself everything but the most meager necessities, and devoted himself completely to moving about his area as Christ’s representative. At the age of twenty-eight Francis founded the influential Franciscan Order of Friars, which developed into a large movement of young men and some women who adopted his religious beliefs and ascetic style of life.

Saint Francis was known as a great lover of nature, seeing the hand of God in all creation. One of the well-known master paintings from this time was done by the famous Italian artist, Giotto, and shows Saint Francis feeding the birds. The following well-known verse was written in tribute to this man:

Saint Francis came to preach—with smiles he met the friendless, fed the poor, freed a trapped bird,
led home a child; Although he spoke no word—his text, God’s love, the town did not forget.

Another familiar verse that has become especially popular in recent years is the thoughtful prayer written attributed to this medieval monk during the early years of his life:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is discord, unity.

Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is error, truth.

Where there is despair, hope. Where there is sadness, joy. Where there is darkness, light.

O divine master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console.

To be understood, as to understand. To be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving, that we receive. It is in pardoning, that we are pardoned.

It is in dying, that we are born to eternal life.

There are many interesting but strange incidents and legends associated with the life of Saint Francis which are difficult to explain. Historical accounts relate various visitations that Saint Francis is supposed to have had with the Lord. One of those occasions was while Francis was fasting for forty days in the lofty mountain of LaVerne. It is said that this encounter left him for the remainder of his life bearing on his hands, feet and body the stigmata or painful wounds of the crucified Lord. Another account, whether fact or fiction, states that as his soul was being committed to the creator, a flock of larks gathered unmistakably about his little hut and rose, singing a beautiful song in the still evening air.

“All Creatures of Our God and King” is from another of Saint Francis’s writings entitled “Canticles of the Sun,” said to have been written one hot summer day in 1225, one year before his death, while Francis was very ill and suffering the loss of his eyesight. Throughout his life Saint Francis made much use of singing and believed strongly in the importance of church music. In all he wrote more than sixty hymns for use in the monastery. This beautiful expression of praise is one that has survived the passing of these several hundred years.

The English translation of this text was made by William Draper, a village rector in England, who prepared this paraphrased version for a children’s choir festival at some time between 1899–1919. The tune for this text first appeared in a Roman Catholic hymnal in Cologne, Germany, in 1623. After being forgotten for a time, the tune was revived in the present century and appeared in the English Hymnal, published in London, England, in 1906. An interesting congregational use of this hymn is to sing it as a two, three, or four part round or canon. This can be done simply by disregarding the hold or fermata at the end of the second line. Another interesting practice is to sing the alternating phrases antiphonally.

Although there is much that is difficult to understand and explain about the author of this text, we certainly can be thankful that God ordained the birth, translation and the preservation of this fine expression of praise for His people to enjoy even to the present time.

* * *

“Art is man’s nature: nature is God’s art.”

Philip James Bailey

“At home with Nature, and one with God!”

Florence Earle Coates

“Nature is but a name for an effect whose cause is God.”

William Cowper

“The man who can really, in living union of the mind and heart, converse with God through nature, finds in the material forms around him, a source of power and happiness inexhaustible, and like the life of angels. The highest life and glory of man is to be alive unto God; and when this grandeur of sensibility of Him, and this power of communion with Him is carried, as the habit of the soul, into the forms of nature, then the walls of our world are as the gates of heaven.”

George B. Cheever⁷⁴

1. *All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!*

*Refrain:
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

2. *Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
Ye clouds that sail in heav'n along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou rising moon, in praise rejoice,
Ye lights of evening, find a voice!*
3. *Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou fire so masterful and bright,
That givest man both warmth and light.*
4. *And all ye men of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care!*
5. *Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One*

⁷⁴ Osbeck, K. W. (1996). *Amazing grace: 366 inspiring hymn stories for daily devotions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

7.

The Love of God

Words and Music by Frederick M. Lehman, 1868–1953

The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)

Never has God's eternal love been described more vividly than in the words of this greatly loved hymn: "measureless," "strong," "evermore endure ..."

The unusual third stanza of the hymn was a small part of an ancient lengthy poem composed in 1096 by a Jewish songwriter, Rabbi Mayer, in Worms, Germany. The poem, entitled "Hadamut," was written in the Arabic language. The lines were found one day in revised form on the walls of a patient's room in an insane asylum after the patient's death. The opinion has since been that the unknown patient, during times of sanity, adapted from the Jewish poem what is now the third verse of "The Love of God."

The words of this third stanza were quoted one day at a Nazarene campmeeting. In the meeting was Frederick M. Lehman, a Nazarene pastor, who described his reaction:

The profound depths of the lines moved us to preserve the words for future generations. Not until we had come to California did this urge find fulfillment, and that at a time when circumstances forced us to hard manual labor. One day, during short intervals of inattention to our work, we picked up a scrap of paper and added the first two stanzas and chorus to the existing third verse lines.

Pastor Lehman completed the hymn in 1917. His daughter Claudia (Mrs. W. W. Mays) assisted him with the music.⁷⁵

- The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled,
And pardoned from his sin.*

*Refrain:
Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
The saints' and angels' song.*

- When hoary time shall pass away,
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,*

⁷⁵ Osbeck, K. W. (1996). *Amazing grace: 366 inspiring hymn stories for daily devotions* (p. 47). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

*When men who here refuse to pray,
On rocks and hills and mountains call,
God's love so sure, shall still endure,
All measureless and strong;
Redeeming grace to Adam's race—
The saints' and angels' song.*

3. *Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.*
-

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.