



LENT

THROUGH
DARKNESS
TO LIGHT

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Through Darkness to Light

The journey through the 40 days of Lent is one marked by prayer, reflection, self-examination, and self-denial as we remember the suffering and rejection of Jesus. It is a season in which we are intentional about altering our rhythms and entering into the presence of God as we once again journey through darkness to light.

While some embody the disciplines of Lent by denying themselves of something and others by adding a new discipline to their routine, it is my hope that we all create the space to honestly reflect on how we are living as followers of Jesus Christ in this city we call home. The Christian life is not simply about doing as much as it is about being. That is to say it is a transformation of one's whole life, not just our actions. A part of that being involves a willingness to journey through our own brokenness, both personal and corporate, always remembering that we worship a God who conquered death in all its forms. So take the time this Lenten season to join with the members of our community who have contributed prayers and reflections in this book as an invitation to a deeper journey.

It is my prayer that this season be one in which we all grow deeper in our faith, deeper with one another and deeper in mission. May the words of Richard Farrant's wonderful hymn be our common prayer this season:

*Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake,
lay not our sins to our charge,
but forgive that is past,
and give us grace to amend our sinful lives.
To decline from sin and incline to virtue,
that we may walk in a perfect heart before thee,
now and evermore.
Amen*

Grace and peace to you this Lenten season.

Pastor Aaron

HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER MANUAL

If you are wondering what on earth you were just handed, don't panic. This is not one more thing for you to do every day. This is a book designed to walk our community through Lent using Scripture and reflections.

It is a prayer book is based largely on the rhythms and format of The Divine Hours books by Phyllis Tickle whose prayer manuals guide Christians in a modern expression of a very old practice: praying at fixed hours of every day. The outcome of praying the hours is lending your voice to voices of the Church scattered across the world praying together.

This uniqueness of this prayer book is that not only are these prayers or "offices" blending Scripture with traditional Christian prayers, but also included are reflections from our own ResCov community.

You will find printed here daily offices for each day of Lent, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. The morning prayers are designed to start your day, praying between 6 AM and 9 AM. The evening prayers are designed to close your day, praying between 5 PM and 8 PM. The morning prayers are adapted from Phyllis Tickle's book, *Eastertide*. The evening prayers are mediations from our community based on the week's lectionary texts. Prayers from *Eastertide* are denoted with a ¶ next to them. At the beginning of every week, you'll find the lectionary texts for the week, as well as the standard text for the Lord's Prayer. The lectionary text is here to add context to what we are praying. The Lord's Prayer will be prayed daily.

Within the pages, you will find tiny asterisks (*); these are a signal for you to breathe. Deeply. Inhale and exhale. Slow down. These prayers are intended to be prayed while being bathed in Scripture; they're not one more thing to entertain you once *The Red Eye* is skimmed through. Use these little signals to calmly sink into the discomfort of Lent, reaching out to the God who is Mystery, Holiness, Sovereign, and Friend.

Experiment with how you pray these prayers day by day. Pray out loud one day and silently the next. Pray in a group or in solitude. Sing the hymns. Savor these words all day and ruminate on them.

And on that morning when you have woken up late, grumpy and with no clean clothes, and the last thing that you want to do is pray, pray anyway! Refuse the temptation to write off the Holy Spirit's ability to overcome and transform. And remember that you are never praying alone. Remember that. Your community is praying with you every morning - one Church, one voice, and one hope in the Risen Christ who IS and WAS and IS TO COME.

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Give praise, you servants of the Lord*, praise the Name of the LORD.
- Psalm 113:1

THE GREETING

All your works praise you, O LORD* and your faithful servants bless you.
They make known the glory of your kingdom* and speak of your power.
- Psalm 145:10-11

THE REFRAIN

Those who sowed with tears* will reap songs of joy. Those who go out
weeping, carrying seed, * will come again with joy, shouldering their
sheaves.

A READING

Jesus taught us saying, "Be careful not to parade your uprightness in
public to attract attention; otherwise you will lose all reward from your
Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted
before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the
streets to win human admiration. In truth I tell you, they have had their
reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what
your right hand is doing; your alms-giving must be in secret, and your Fa-
ther who sees all that is done in secret will reward you. - Matthew 6:1-6

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and
forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in me a new
and contrite heart, that I, worthily lamenting my sins and acknowledg-
ing my wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect
remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely
to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall
into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the
fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

Week of Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 17 - Saturday, February 20

Lectionary Texts

Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

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 today our daily bread
And forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
AMEN.

Whoever sings, prays twice.
- St. Augustine

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Create in me a clear heart, O God, * and renew a right spirit within me.
- Psalm 51:11

LITANY OF PENANCE

Most holy and merciful Father: I confess to you and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that I have sinned by my own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what I have done and by what I have left undone. I have not loved you with my whole heart, mind and strength. I have not loved my neighbor as myself. I have not forgiven others as I have been forgiven. Have mercy on me, Lord. ¶

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

When I was reflecting on Ash Wednesday and on the season of Lent, the word humility entered my mind. In the passages of scripture for today, I can make a connection (though it's not really directly stated) to submission to God's will in each account, and as I read, it occurred to me just how little humility I have sometimes.

This year is my first year at North Park University, and it's been a trying first two semesters. They have been, in many ways, disappointing academically, socially, spiritually... and last semester, about half way through, I began to wonder what was wrong with me. I thought, "Why can't I seem to get the hang of this college thing?" After a few months of feeling sorry for myself and not sorting out the issues, I finally broke down and approached God for an answer to that very question, and the answer came to me gently, but clearly. I had been clinging to my independence. I realized I'd been making all of my decisions on my own because they were the "logical" ones to make. I had come to North Park on my own terms and hadn't sought the Lord's will in choosing my school, my classes, etc. I had chosen independence over humility, and it had gotten me into a mess of emotional and spiritual turmoil.

In the passage from Psalm 51, the psalmist is truly and humbly praying for mercy and grace. Though David and I didn't commit the same sin, we share a common need for God's forgiveness and grace. "Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love, because of your great compassion, blot of the stain of my sins...Create in my a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me....The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God." These words resonate with a renewed meaning for me. I can feel the brokenness of our human condition in a real way because of my decision to assert my independence rather than submit to the will of God. It is a prayer that I can genuinely pray.

The answers to all my problems, both at North Park and in other aspects of my life, haven't come to me yet. But little by little, as I seek God's will and His plan for my life, I find that each day pieces of the puzzle begin to fit together. I don't know where I'm going and I don't know how I'm getting there, but I know who holds tomorrow, and I know He holds my hand. I pray that in this time of reflection on Lent that we might all empty ourselves of our own plans and expectations so that, in humility through prayer, God's perfect plan might be revealed to us. We can trust Him, for in Him, all we need is supplied.

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

The LORD is King; let the people tremble; * he is enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth shake. - Psalm 99:1

THE GREETING

Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the nations, * that we may give thanks to your holy Name and glory in your praise.
- Psalm 106:47

THE REFRAIN

Let all the earth fear the LORD; * let all who dwell in the world stand in awe. - Psalm 33:8

A READING

With what shall I enter YAHWEH's Presence and bow down before God All-high? Shall I enter with burnt offerings, with calves one year old? Will he be pleased with rams by the thousand, with ten thousand, with ten thousand streams of oil? Shall I offer my eldest son for my wrong-doing, the child of my own body for my sin? You have already been told what is right and what YAHWEH wants of you. Only this, to do what is right, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. - Micah 6:6-8

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in me a new and contrite heart, that I, worthily lamenting my sins and acknowledging my wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous; * and give thanks to his holy Name.
- Psalm 97:12

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Send forth your strength, O God; * establish, O God, what you have wrought for us. - Psalm 68:28

THE SMALL VERSE

But if you will not serve the LORD, choose today whom you wish to serve, whether the gods that your ancestors served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are now living. As for me and my House, we will serve YAHWEH. - Joshua 24:15

THE VESPERS PSALM

Test me, O LORD, and try me; * examine my heart and my mind. For your love is before my eyes; * I have walked faithfully with you. I have not sat with the worthless, * nor do I consort with the deceitful. I have hated the company of evildoers; * I will not sit down with the wicked. I will wash my hands in innocence, O LORD, * that I may go in procession round your altar, Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving * and recounting all your wonderful deeds. - Psalm 26: 2-7

THE REFRAIN

The hills stand about Jerusalem; * so does the LORD stand round about his people, from this time forth forever more.

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

O Lord our God, too often in our thoughts and actions we seek to bring glory to ourselves, instead of to you. We give our neighbor a place to rest, a cup of water, or a warm meal, and then sing songs of praise to ourselves and not to you. Free us of the chains of our self-righteousness, and help us to shed our skins of pride.

We confess the ways in which we fall short, O Lord, and we ask that you stream your redeeming waters through us. Give us clean hearts and minds, and set our eyes upon you and the example of Christ. We want to give you all the glory, God, and we pray that you would help us to do this.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Proclaim the greatness of the LORD our God and worship him upon his holy hill; * for the LORD our God is the Holy One. - Psalm 99:9

THE GREETING

But you, O LORD my God, oh, deal with me according to your Name; * for your tender mercy's sake, deliver me. For I am poor and needy, * and my heart is wounded within me. - Psalm 109:20-21

THE REFRAIN

The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, * slow to anger and of great kindness. - Psalm 103:8

A READING

The Apostle wrote, saying: "...we have never failed to remember you in our prayers and ask that through perfect wisdom and spiritual understanding you should reach the fullest knowledge of his will and so be able to lead a life worthy of the Lord, a life acceptable to him in all its aspects, bearing fruit in every kind of good work and growing in knowledge of God." - Colossians 1:9-10

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in me a new and contrite heart, that I, worthily lamenting my sins and acknowledging my wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

I will call upon God, * and the LORD will deliver me. In the evening, in the morning, and at the noonday, I will complain and lament, * and he will hear my voice. He will bring me safely back... God, who is enthroned of old, will hear me. - Psalm 86:11

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Our sins are stronger than we are, * but you will blot them out.
- Psalm 65:3

THE SMALL VERSE

As far as the east is from the west, * so far has he removed our sins from us. - Psalm 103:12

THE VESPERS PSALM

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? * And are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; * by night as well, but I find no rest. Yet you are the Holy One, * enthroned upon the praises of Israel. Our forefathers put their trust in you; * they trusted and you delivered them. They cried out to you and were delivered; * they trusted in you and were not put to shame. - Psalm 22:1-5

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Father,
We try to follow you. We try to live worthy of your calling, worthy of the relationship you give us. We try to love our neighbor as ourselves. We try to tell the truth. And yet we fail. Like violence in a movie, our lives are violent. We use sarcasm to tear down rather than build up. We fast and secretly hope that we'll lose those five extra pounds. We look less for the resurrection of the dead and the world to come, and more for the latest news story, fashion, tidbit. We break. We exploit. We hurt.

Forgive us. Create in us pure hearts, purge us clean. Cut deep into our skin and peel back the layers that keep us from knowing you and knowing one another. When the darkness surrounds us, let our light break forth like the dawn. When we call, answer us, "I am here! I am your God! I am mighty to save!"

And Lord, strengthen us in your mighty power so that when pressed we will not be destroyed; when criticized, we will not be demoralized. In everything, help us be satisfied in you, never mistaking success for victory or failure for defeat. Bring us home.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his Name; * worship the LORD in the beauty of his holiness. - Psalm 29:2

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; * my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in barren and dry land where there is no water.
- Psalm 63:1

THE GREETING

We have heard with our ears, O God, our forefathers have told us, * the deeds you did in their days, in the days of old. - Psalm 44:1

THE REFRAIN

Rescue the weak and the poor; * deliver them from the power of the wicked. - Psalm 82:4

A READING

Jesus taught us, saying: "You have heard how it was said, You will love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike." - Matthew 5:43:45

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Christ have mercy.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in me a new and contrite heart, that I, worthily lamenting my sins and acknowledging my wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

The LORD is my strength and my shield; * my heart trusts him, and I have been helped; therefore my heart dances for joy, * and in my song I will praise him. - Psalm 28:8-9

A READING

The Apostle wrote, saying: "I have accepted the loss of all other things, and look on them all as filth if only I can gain Christ and be give a place in him, with the uprightness I have gained not from the Law, but through faith in Christ, an uprightness from God, based on faith, that I may come to know him and the power of his resurrection." - Philippians 3:8-10

THE VESPERS PSALM

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, * the world and all who dwell therein. For it is he who founded it upon the seas * and made it firm upon the rivers of the deep. "Who can ascend the hill of the LORD? * And how can stand in his holy place?"

"Those who have clean hands and a pure heart, * who have not pledged themselves to falsehood, not sworn by what is a fraud. They shall receive a blessing from the LORD * and a just reward from the God of their salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, * of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob." - Psalm 24:1-6

THE REFRAIN

Remember me, O LORD, with the favor you have for your people, * and visit me with your saving help.

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Heavenly Father,
Thank you for your glorious creation and all the magnificent blessings you have bestowed upon me. Great is thy faithfulness, O Lord. I know that in my sinful nature I am unworthy of your love and grace. I stumble along, continually choosing my own will over yours. Yet you remain patient with me, lifting me up even after I have made the most grievous of errors.

Lord, provide me with ears to hear and eyes to see so that I may know your voice and follow your lead. Strengthen me so that when I am faced with my tempters I can resist them with fierce determination. Thank you Lord for your gift of salvation; may I always stride towards your perfect example. In your holy name, Amen.

First Week of Lent

Sunday, February 21 - Saturday, February 27

Lectionary Texts:

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Romans 10: 8b-13

Luke 4:1-13

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 today our daily bread

And forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

AMEN.

Whoever sings, prays twice.

- St. Augustine

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let the peoples praise you, O God; * let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, * for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all nations upon the earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; * let all the peoples praise you. - Psalm 67:3-5

THE GREETING

Hosanna, LORD, hosanna!* LORD, send us now success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD; we bless you from the house of the LORD. - Psalm 118:25-26

THE REFRAIN

I was glad when they said to me, * "Let us go to the house of the LORD."
- Psalm 122:1

A READING

Jesus said: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is master even of the Sabbath.

THE MORNING PSALM

Oh, how good and pleasant it is, * when brethren live together in unity! It is like fine oil upon the head * that runs down upon the beard; upon the beard of Aaron, * and runs down upon the collar of his robe. It is like the dew of Hermon * that falls upon the hills of Zion. For there the LORD has ordained the blessing: * life for evermore. - Psalm 133

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God! Come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help me.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept my prayers; and because in my weakness I can do nothing good without you, give me the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments I may please you in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O God, you make me glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son my Lord: Give me this day such blessing through my worship of you that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ¶

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let the Name of the LORD be Blessed, * from this time forward for evermore. From the rising of the sun to its going down * let the Name of the LORD be praised. - Psalm 113:2-3

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, * and the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to you, O LORD our God. - Adapted from Psalm 123:2-3

A READING

The past is out of reach, buried deep- who can discover it? But I have reached the point where, having learned, explored and investigated wisdom and reflection, I recognize evil as being a form of madness and folly as something stupid. - Ecclesiastes 7:24-25

THE VESPERS PSALM

I wait for the LORD; my soul waits for him; * in his word is my hope. My soul waits for the LORD, more than watchmen for the morning, * more than watchmen for the morning. - Psalm 130:4-5

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

The devil is always lurking, tempting us and is relentless. He will never stop trying to take our hearts from God. But we must focus on God, letting the Holy Spirit lead us from temptation. If we trust God with all our hearts and all that is given us, God will be our greatest Advocate and never leave our side. As he has delivered many from the grasp of Satan, he will do likewise for us. Give God your all and there will be no sword sharp enough to pierce us and no chains strong enough to hold us. We will have our share in the land of milk and honey and live with God forever!

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

The LORD is King; let the earth rejoice; * let the multitude of the isles be glad. - Psalm 97:1

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

I long for your salvation, O LORD, * and your law is my delight. - Psalm 119:174

THE GREETING

The LORD lives! Blessed is my Rock! * Exalted is the God of my salvation! - Psalm 18:46

A READING

He went back to the far side of the Jordan to the district where John had been baptizing at first and he stayed there. Many people who came to him said, "John gave no signs, but all he said about this man was true"; and many of them believed him. - John 10:40-42

THE MORNING PSALM

But as for me, this is my prayer to you, * at the time you have set, O LORD: "In your great mercy, O GOD, * answer me with your unfailing help. Save me from the mire; do not let me sink; * let me be rescued from those who hate me and out of the deep waters. Let not the torrent of waters wash over me, neither let the deep swallow me up, * do not let the Pit shut its mouth upon me. Answer me O LORD, for your love is kind;* and in your great compassion, turn to me." - Psalm 69:14-18

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come Lord Jesus!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept my prayers; and because in my weakness I can do nothing good without you, give me the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments I may please you in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Open my lips, O Lord, * and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, * but you take no delight in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; * and a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. - Psalm 51:16-18

THE VESPERS PSALM

Long may he live! And may there be given to him gold from Arabia; * may prayer be made for him always, and may they bless him all day long. May there be abundance of grain on the earth, growing thick even on the hilltops; * may its fruit flourish like Lebanon, and its grain like grass upon the earth. May his Name remain forever and be established as long as the sun endures; * may all the nations bless themselves in him and call him Blessed. - Psalm 72:15-17

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Serve God Alone

Having answered the call to repentance on Ash Wednesday, we begin the Lenten journey with this dramatic set of readings. A beautiful telling of our history as a wilderness people in Deuteronomy is brought full circle to Luke's account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Forty years in the desert for the Israelites become 40 days for Jesus, where he, too, comes face to face with the best the devil can offer. The temptations are basically three sides of idolatry: the worship of comfort and gratification; undeserved power and wealth; and false gods. Jesus cuts Satan down to size using carefully selected Deuteronomic laws as his weapons, sacred laws that reaffirm his absolute loyalty to God. These laws are radical at face value; a closer look exposes their even-greater relevance for 21st-century Christians.

Jesus' answers to the tempter are found within Deuteronomy chapters 6 through 8, an outline of the fundamental laws of the covenant. These basic laws, however, are contained within a greater theme that bookends the covenantal teachings in chapters 6-8. This theme is prosperity and its inherent dangers, specifically, fidelity to God in the midst of prosperity (Deuteronomy 6:10 and following verses) and the dangers of prosperity (8:6). Our faith tradition implies that prosperity is an overarching temptation that gives rise to others and threatens our very existence: "Remember then, it is the Lord, your God, who gives you the power to acquire wealth....But if you forget the Lord...! forewarn you...that you will perish utterly" (8:17).

Jesus' temptations thus encapsulate the greatest temptations we will confront on our journey with him. When we freely accept the invitation to discipleship, we must identify and defeat the false gods we have accumulated. As today's scripture demonstrates, we who enjoy material prosperity are uniquely vulnerable to "serving and worshipping" false gods. Let us then begin this journey, reclaiming our birthright as children of the Most High: "God alone shall we serve."

Michaela Bruzzese

Sojourners Magazine March-April 2001

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Praise the Name of the LORD; * give praise, you servants of the LORD.
Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; * sing praise to his Name, for it is lovely. For I know that the LORD is great, * and that our Lord is above all gods. - Psalm 135:1

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning; * so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life. - Psalm 90:14

A READING

He said again to the crowds, "When you see a cloud looming up in the west you say at once that rain is coming, and so it does. And when the wind is from the south you say it's going to be hot, and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the face of the earth and the sky. How is it you do not know how to interpret these times? - Luke 12:54-56

THE MORNING PSALM

Praise the LORD from the earth, * you sea-monsters and all deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and fog, * tempestuous wind, doing his will.
Mountains and all hills, * fruit trees and all cedars;
Wild beasts and all cattle, * creeping things and winged birds;
Kings of the earth and all peoples, * princes and all rulers of the world;
Young men and maidens, * old and young together.
Let them praise the Name of the LORD, * for his Name only is exalted, his splendor is over earth and heaven. - Psalm 148:6-13

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept my prayers; and because in my weakness I can do nothing good without you, give me the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments I may please you in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Sing to the LORD, you servants of his, * give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness. For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye, * his favor for a lifetime. - Psalm 30:4-5

THE HYMN

O for a thousand tongue to sing my dear Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace!

Jesus! The name that charms our fears and bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ear, 'tis life and health and peace.

Glory to God and praise and love be now and ever given,
By saints below and saints above, the Church in earth and heaven.
- C. Wesley (v. 1,3,5)

THE VESPERS PSALM

Blessed by the LORD! * He has not give us over to be prey for their teeth. We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; * the snare is broken and we have escaped. Our help is in the Name of the LORD, * the maker of heaven and earth. - Psalm 124:6-8

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

As we begin the season of Lent, and many of us have decided to fast from something (whether it be food, facebook, or frivolous spending), keep us, Lord, from losing focus on you.

Richard Foster wrote in *Celebration of Discipline*, "More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting these things surface. If pride controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately....Anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear—if they are within us, they will surface during fasting."

Teach us to use fasting as a way to free our bodies, minds, and time of the things we use to hide from and avoid you. Forgive us when we use fasting to get attention and to feel better about ourselves—this is so easy to do. Instead, allow our fasting to bring us together in support, not comparing our skills to others but encouraging one another to continue on.

Through our lenten fast, teach us about ourselves. Reveal our shortcomings and give us the desire to repent and change. If we discover pride, give us humility. If we discover anger, give us love and the ability to forgive. If we find jealousy, give us contentment. If we find fear, give us confidence.

Thank you, Lord, for the season of Lent and for the chance it gives us to grow closer to you.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

I will call upon God, * and the LORD will deliver me. In the evening, in the morning, and at the noonday, I will complain and lament,* and he will hear my voice. He will bring me safely back... God who is enthroned of old, will hear me. - Psalm 55:17

THE REFRAIN

The same stone that the builders rejected * has become the chief cornerstone. - Psalm 118:22

A READING

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "If you had faith like a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." - Luke 17:5-6

THE MORNING PSALM

The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, * until I make your enemies your footstool." The LORD will send the scepter of your power out of Zion, * saying, "Rule over your enemies around you. Princely state has been yours from the day of your birth; * in the beauty of holiness have I begotten you, like dew from the womb of the morning." The LORD has sworn and he will not recant: * "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." - Psalm 110:1-4

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to our assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept my prayers; and because in my weakness I can do nothing good without you, give me the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments I may please you in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let us give thanks to the LORD for his mercy * and the wonders he does for his children. - Psalm 107:8

A READING

For all humanity is grass, and all its beauty like the wildflower's. As the grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord remains forever. And this Word is the Good News that has been brought to you. - 1 Peter 1:24-45

THE VESPERS PSALM

Who is like you, LORD God of hosts? * O mighty LORD, your faithfulness is all around you. You rule the raging of the sea * and still the surging of its waves. - Psalm 89:8

THE REFRAIN

The LORD, the God of gods, has spoken; * he has called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

O God, who knows our temptations and trials, we know that we are often tempted by the same things as Christ was in the wilderness.

We are tempted to rely on our own providence forgetting that it is you who always provides for us.

We are tempted to change society through governmental power from the top-down, yet you remind us that the Kingdom grows organically from the bottom-up, often too slow to see progress in a short span of time.

We are tempted to believe that you are a God who works only in the great and majestic, only through grand miracles and awe-inspiring signs.

We pray that you would open our eyes to the seemingly mundane ways that you are working around us. We pray that when we come to these temptations, you would strengthen us and remind us of your example so we too can not give in to easy answers but give our lives over to you. Amen.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Come, let us sing to the LORD... For the LORD is a great God, * and a great King above all gods. - Psalm 95:1,3

THE GREETING

Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, * and your glory over all the earth. - Psalm 57:6

A READING

Jesus taught the people, saying: "You have heard how it was said, 'Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.' But I say this to you: offer no resistance to the wicked. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer them the other as well; if someone wishes to go to the law with you to get your tunic, let them have your cloak as well. - Matthew 5:38-41

THE MORNING PSALM

My heart is stirring with a noble song; let me recite what I have fashioned for the king; * my tongue shall be the pen of a skilled writer. You are the fairest of men; * grace flows from your lips, because God has Blessed you forever. Strap your sword upon your thigh, O mighty warrior; * in your pride and in your majesty. Ride out and conquer in the cause of truth * and for the sake of justice. Your right hand will show you marvelous things; * your arrows are very sharp, O mighty warrior. The people are falling at your feet * and the king's enemies are losing heart. Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. - Psalm 45:1-7a

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to our assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept my prayers; and because in my weakness I can do nothing good without you, give me the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments I may please you in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Come let us sing to the LORD; * let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving* and raise a loud shout to him with psalms. For the LORD is a great God, * and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the caverns of the earth, * and the heights of the hills are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, * and his hands have molded the dry land. - Psalm 95:1-5

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

To you I lift up my eyes, * to you enthroned in the heavens. - Psalm 123:1

A READING

Again, do not listen to all that people say, then you will not hear your servant abusing you. For often, as you very well know, you have abused others. - Ecclesiastes 7:21-22

THE VESPERS PSALM

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, * then were we like those who dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, * and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, * "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, * and we are glad indeed. Restore our fortunes, O LORD, * like the water-courses of the Negev. Those who sowed with tears * will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed, * will come again with joy. - Psalm 126:1-7

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Almighty God, we are thankful for your promise to redeem all who confess you as LORD. Forgive us when our heart fails to believe and when our mouth betrays our hope in you, O Lord. May you continue to bestow your riches upon all your people. Grant us boldness in our faith, and have mercy on us when we falter, O Lord our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

I will call upon God, * and the LORD will deliver me. God, who is enthroned of old, will hear me. -Psalm 55:17,20

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Our God will come and will not keep silence; * before him there is a consuming flame, and round about him a raging storm. - Psalm 50:3

THE GREETING

For your Name's sake, O LORD, * forgive my sin for it is great.
- Psalm 25:10

A READING

Children, our love must not be just words or mere talk, but something active and genuine. This will be the proof that we belong to the truth, and it will convince us in his presence, even if our own feelings condemn us, that God is greater than our feelings and knows all things.
- 1 John 3:18-20

THE MORNING PSALM

He sent forth his word and healed them * and saved them from the grave. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his mercy * and the wonders he does for his children. Let them offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving * and tell of his acts with shouts of joy. - Psalm 107:20-22

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to our assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept my prayers; and because in my weakness I can do nothing good without you, give me the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments I may please you in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Remember not our past sins; * let your compassion be swift to meet us... Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of your Name. -Psalm 79: 8

THE SMALL VERSE

That day, the root of Jesse, standing as a signal for all the peoples, will be sought out by the nations and its home will be glorious. When that day comes, the Lord will raise his hand a second time to ransom the remnant of his people.
- Isaiah 11:10-11

THE VESPERS PSALM

Who can tell how often he offends? * Cleanse me from my secret faults. Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; * then I shall be whole. - Psalm 19:12-13a

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Lord God, Blessed Father and Redeemer!

Lord, You are unlike anyone else; Your name is great in all the earth.

Let us always turn first to praise You, declaring Your faithfulness and deliverance! You hear our cries and rescue us from suffering; may we eternally rejoice in all that You are.

Thank You, oh Lord my God, for saving me from sin and sorrow!

Lord, we are daily tempted and often fall to the plea of sin.

Rescue us from evil, God; lead us not into temptation.

Provide us with the strength and wisdom to know Your goodness.

God, let us know good in order to recognize evil and hold to Your pure truths with all that we are.

Lord, may the words of our lips proclaim what we truly believe in our hearts.

Let every single breath we take glorify You, oh Lord!

Lord God, God of all, we thank You for Your blessings.

You know what is best for us; help us to see that You are working in our lives.

Give us the ability to trust in Your way and have faith in Your salvation!

God, You pick us up when we are down; You come running to us when we call on Your name.

Let Your name never leave our hearts, but let us meditate always on Your goodness and thank You eternally for the lives with which we have been blessed.

Help us to know and follow the guidance of Your Holy Spirit, praising You and worshiping You in all circumstances!

You are a wonderful, gracious God; guide our every step.

Jesus, may we eternally dwell in Your shelter and rest in Your shadow.

You are my only refuge, my Savior, my Rock, the joy and peace in my heart.

In Your presence, I shall fear none, for You are good!

Lord God, continue to reveal Your love to us in new ways; refresh our hearts and minds.

Your grace is amazing, words alone cannot describe.

Let my whole being never cease to worship You.

May Your name be praised in all the earth!

You alone are God and You alone are good.

Amen.

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let us give thanks to the LORD for his mercy * and the wonders he does for his children. For he satisfies the thirsty * and fills the hungry with good things. - Based on Psalm 107:8-9

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Give ear to my words, O LORD; * consider my meditation. - Psalm 5:1

A READING

As they traveled, they met a man on the road who said, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Another to whom he said, "Follow me," replied, "Let me go and bury my father first." But Jesus answered, "Leave the dead to bury their dead; your duty is to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God." - Luke 10:57-60

THE MORNING PSALM

Create in me a clean heart, O God, * and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence * and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help again * and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. - Psalm 51:11-13

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me.
O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me.
O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, grant me your peace.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept my prayers; and because in my weakness I can do nothing good without you, give me the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments I may please you in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; * there is no end to his greatness. - Psalm 145:3

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Hide not your face from your servant; * be swift and answer me...Draw near to me and redeem me. - Psalm 28:7

THE HYMN

Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore! Mortals, give thanks and sing, and triumph ever more. Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice! Rejoice! Again I say, Rejoice!

The Lord the Savior reigns, The God of truth and love. When he had purged our stains, He took his seat above. Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice! Rejoice! Again I say, Rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail; He rules over earth and heaven. The keys of death and hell, To Christ the Lord are given. Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice! Rejoice! Again I say, Rejoice!

Rejoice in glorious hope! Our Lord the Judge shall come. And take his servants up, To their eternal home. Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice! Rejoice! Again I say, Rejoice!

- C.WESLEY

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Let Your Glorious Light
Shine bring through me.
That Christ through me
The world will see.

Let all who view
Know you are there
To bring a joy
Beyond compare.

May I diminish
As You grow
Till all will see
Your spirit.

Lord, light each spot
Where I may be.
Amen.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise; * give thanks to him and call upon his Name. - Psalm 100:3

THE GREETING

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart; * I will tell of all your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in you; * I will sing your Name, O Most High. - Psalm 9:1-2

THE REFRAIN

In God the LORD, whose word I praise, in God I trust and will not be afraid, * for what can mortals do to me? - Psalm 56:10

A READING

Jesus said: "Can you not buy five sparrows for two pennies? And yet not one is forgotten in God's sight. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. There is no need to be afraid: you are worth more than many sparrows." - Luke 12:6-7

THE MORNING PSALM

Sing to the LORD a new song; * sing his praise in the congregation of the faithful. Let Israel rejoice in his Maker; * let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise his Name in the dance; * let them sing praise to him with timbrel and harp. For the LORD takes pleasure in his people * and adorns the poor with victory. Let the faithful rejoice in triumph; * let them be joyful on their beds. - Psalm 149:1-5

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing. Send your Holy Spirit and pour into my heart your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

Second Week of Lent

Sunday, February 28 - Saturday, March 6

Lectionary Texts:

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Psalm 27

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 13:31-35

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 today our daily bread

And forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

AMEN.

Whoever sings, prays twice.

- St. Augustine

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Praise the Name of the LORD; * give praise, you servants of the LORD. You who stand in the house of the LORD; * in the courts of the house of our God. Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; * sing praises to his Name, for it is lovely.
- Psalm 135:1-3

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Incline your ear to me; * make haste to deliver me. - Psalm 31:2

THE VESPERS PSALM

As the deer longs for the water-brooks, * so longs my soul for you, O God. My soul is athirst for God, athirst for the living God; * when shall I come to appear before the presence of God? My tears have been my food day and night, while all day long they say to me, * "Where now is your God?" I pour out my soul when I think on these things: * how I went with the multitude and led them into the house of God, with the voice of praise and thanksgiving, * among those who keep holy-day. Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? * And why are you so disquiet within me? Put your trust in God; * for I will yet give thanks to him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God. - Psalm 42:1-7

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

In reading Psalm 27, verse 11 stands out to me as a powerful prayer: "Teach me how to live, O LORD. Lead me along the right path, for my enemies are waiting for me." Intended for regular use in both corporate and personal prayer, the book of Psalms has often radically forced me to reconsider my prayer, and the way I am living my life. Countless times I have opened to a psalm and realized that I need to be praying the psalmist's words, not my own.

A few weeks ago I was reading Dale Allison's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. In discussing the fourth beatitude, "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Mt 5:6), Allison defines righteousness as "behavior according to God's will." I was fascinated by the idea of hunger and thirst for behavior according to God's will. What a wonderful thing to thirst for! And the result of this thirst, to be filled, sounds so satisfying. To want conformity to God's will as if it were water... that means you cannot live without conforming to God's will. I think that I hunger and thirst for the hunger and thirst for behavior according to God's will. Overwhelmed by this hunger and thirst, I find clarity in being able to pray using the psalmist's words.

Asking for direction from Yahweh, our Lord, should be a constant prayer of the body. Paul affirms this in writing to the Philippians: "Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example" (3:17). As Christians, and as imperfect beings, we should always be seeking out how to live our faith. Paul encourages us to look toward other members of the body as role models for our actions. The beauty of community is that we can lean on and support each other, as we all reach for the same goal of conforming to our Lord's will. In this Lenten season, as we fast in grief over our sin, let us hunger and thirst for submission to the divine will. Teach us how to live, O Lord.

MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Be strong and let your heart take courage; * all you who wait for the LORD. - Psalm 31:24

THE GREETING

Restore us, O God of hosts; * show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. -Psalm 80:3

A READING

He sat down opposite the treasury and watched people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "In truth I tell you, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury ; for they have all put in money they could spare, but she in her poverty has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on." - Mark 12:41-44

THE MORNING PSALM

Bless our God, you peoples; * make the voice of his praise be heard. Who holds our souls in life, * and will not allow our feet to slip. For you, O God, have proved us; * you have tried us just as silver is tried. You brought us into the snare; * you laid heavy burdens upon our backs. You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; * but you brought us out into a place of refreshment. - Psalm 66:7-12

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing. Send your Holy Spirit and pour into my heart your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

The righteous will be glad... And they will say, "Surely, there is a reward for the righteous; * surely there is a God who rules in the earth."
- Psalm 58:10-11

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Make me understand the way of your commandments, * that I may meditate on your marvelous works. - Psalm 119:27

THE VESPERS PSALM

Great things are they that you have done, O Lord my God! How great your wonders and your places for us! * There is none who can be compared with you. O, that I could make them known and tell them! * But they are more than I can count. - Psalm 40:5-6

THE SMALL VERSE

Children, do not let anyone lead you astray. Whoever acts uprightly is upright, just as he is upright. - 1 John 3:7

THE REFRAIN

My mouth shall speak of wisdom, * and my heart shall meditate on understanding. -Psalm 49:2

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Fear is a strong emotion that can take hold of and control us. Instead of focusing on our fears, we should focus on God, who protects us and keeps us out of harm's way. If we trust him, he will help us conquer our fears.

Almighty Lord, you are my light and my salvation. Too often, I allow my fears to control me. Thank you for protecting me and always being there when I need you. Help me overcome my fears so that I may grow closer to you.

TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; * shout for joy, all who are true of heart. - Psalm 32:12

THE GREETING

With my whole heart I seek you; * let me not stray from your commandments. - Psalm 119:10

A READING

Jesus said to the people: "What king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who was advancing against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to ask for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciples without giving up all that you own.
- Luke 14:31-33

THE MORNING PSALM

Some went down to the sea in ships * and plied their trade in deep waters; they beheld the works of the LORD * and his wonder in the deep. Then he spoke, and a storm wind arose, * which tossed high the waves of the sea. They mounted up to the heavens and fell back to the depths; * their hearts melted because of their peril. They reeled and staggered like drunkards * and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the LORD in their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper * and quieted the waves of the sea. - Adapted Psalm 107:23-26

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing. Send your Holy Spirit and pour into my heart your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting and to everlasting; * and let all the peoples say, "Amen!" - Psalm 106:48

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; * you are my crag and my stronghold. - Psalm 71:3

THE VESPERS PSALM

Open for me the gates of righteousness; * I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the LORD. "This is the gate of the LORD; * he who is righteous may enter." I will give thanks to you, for you answered me * and have become my salvation. The same stone which the builders rejected * has become our chief cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing, * and it is marvelous in our eyes. On this day the LORD has acted; * we will rejoice and be glad in it. - Psalm 118:19-24

A READING

You have not seen him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him you believe in him and are already filled with a joy that is so glorious that it cannot be described; and you are sure of the goal of your faith, that is, the salvation of your souls. - 1 Peter 1:8-9

THE REFRAIN

Truth shall spring up from the earth, * and righteousness shall look down from heaven. - Psalm 85:11

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

You are our light, our salvation and strength.
You provide shelter and safety in the wilderness.
You hear us when we cry out to you for help.
You promise rest - and restoration.

Stand firm in the Lord; be strong and take heart.

We remember your covenant with your people.
We are confident in your goodness and in your mercy.
We strive to follow and imitate you.
We wait and we hope for the resurrection.

Stand firm in the Lord; be strong and take heart.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Wake up, my spirit; awake lute and harp; * I myself will waken the dawn.
- Psalm 57:8

THE GREETING

My lips will sing with joy when I play to you, * and so will my soul, which you have redeemed. - Psalm 71:23

A READING

Jesus said: "In all truth I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent standing in the household, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed."
- John 8:34-36

THE MORNING PSALM

Give praise, you servants of the LORD; * praise the Name of the LORD. Let the Name of the LORD be blessed, * from this time forth forevermore. From the rising of the sun to its going down * let the Name of the LORD be praised. The LORD is high above all nations, * and his glory above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God who sits enthroned on high * but stoops to behold the heavens and the earth? He takes up the weak out of the dust* and lifts up the poor from the ashes. He sets them with princes, * with the princes of his people. He makes the woman who is of a childless house * to be a joyful mother of children. - Psalm 113

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing. Send your Holy Spirit and pour into my heart your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Know that the LORD does wonders for the faithful; * when I call upon the LORD, he will hear me. Tremble, then, and do not sin; * speak to your heart in silence upon your bed. - Psalm 4:3-4

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O LORD, do not forsake me; * be not far from me. - Psalm 38:21

THE VESPERS PSALM

One thing I have asked of the LORD; one thing I seek; * that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life. - Psalm 27:5

A READING

At the signal given by the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and only after that shall we who remain alive be taken up into the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. This is the way we shall be with the Lord forever. With such thoughts as these, then, you should encourage one another.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

THE REFRAIN

Turn again to your rest, O my soul, * for the LORD has treated you well. For you have rescued my life from death, * my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling. - Psalm 116:6-7

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Abba, you look over the city, and we hear the pain in your voice as you cry out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem" and we hear the agony of loss like when David wept, "Absalom! My son!" or the poet over the death of a president, "O Captain, my Captain!" The agony in the cry, the relationship severed by loss. In the not so far off future, Jesus will cry again, "My God, my God, why have you left me?" Father, we cry that, too. We can't help but wonder where you are when children suffer and the innocent are trampled and the evil seem to triumph. You seem to be losing the battles. Sometimes we don't so much see the Kingdom advancing as much as we see the dark clouds swirling in the sky. And yet. And yet. We remain confident because our confidence can only be found in you because of the cross. We are confident that we will see You in the land of the living. We do not fear. We do not lose hope. We do not give up. You ask us to wait and take heart. You have overcome the world, and the powers of hell cannot contain what is to come. Give us peace in our tears, joy in our mourning, and whisper to us in the dark places, "Courage, dear heart, I have overcome!"

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Bless our God, you peoples; * make the voice of his praises to be heard; who hold our souls in life * and will not let our feet slip. - Psalm 66:7-8

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

I will call with my whole heart; * answer me, O LORD, that I may keep your statutes. Hear my voice, O LORD, according to your loving kindness; * according to your judgments, give me life. - Psalm 119:145

THE GREETING

I am bound by the vow I made to you, O God; * I will present to you thank-offerings; for you have rescued my soul from death and my feet from stumbling; * that I may walk before God in the light of the living.
- Psalm 56:11-12

A READING

Jesus taught us saying, "It is someone who is forgiven little who shows little love." - Luke 7:47

THE MORNING PSALM

Be joyful in the LORD, all you lands; * serve the LORD with gladness and come before his presence with a song. Know this: The LORD himself is GOD; * he himself has made us and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise; * give thanks to him and call upon his Name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; * and his faithfulness endures from age to age. - Psalm 100:1-4

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing. Send your Holy Spirit and pour into my heart your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Bless our God, you peoples; * make the voice of his praise to be heard; who holds our souls in life, * and will not allow our feet to slip.
- Psalm 66:7-8

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; from my mother's womb you have been my strength; * my praise shall always be of you.
- Psalm 71:6

THE VESPERS PSALM

Happy are those who consider the poor and the needy! * The LORD will deliver them in the time of trouble. The LORD preserves them and keeps them alive, so that they may be happy in the land; * he does not hand them over to the will of their enemies. The LORD sustains them on their sickbed * and ministers to them in their illness. - Psalm 41:1-3

A READING

In the abundance of his glory may he, through the Spirit, enable you to grow firm in the power with regard to you inner self, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, with all God's holy people you will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; so that, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond knowledge, you may be filled with the utter fullness of God. - Ephesians 3:16-19

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Jesus had come to seek and to save those who were lost, yet in Luke we see the tragic encounter of Jesus being thrown out of Jerusalem, the most 'religious' city in Israel. How ironic that those who thought they were closest to God were rejecting the one and only Son. We can hear the pain in Jesus's voice as His love and devotion for His people are met with rejection and indifference.

O Lord, forgive us for our own rejection of you. You are always willing to intimately engage with us, yet so often we are slow and unwilling to respond. We allow our religiosity and self-reliance to draw us away from you, when in fact you are the only thing we need. Thank you that in the midst of rejection you keep pursuing us. May we eagerly await your coming and yearn for the resurrection. Even now, come Lord Jesus!

FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let us bless the LORD * from this time forth and forevermore.
- Adapted from Psalm 115:18

THE GREETING

You are my hiding place * ... you surround me with shouts of deliverance.
- Psalm 32:8

THE REFRAIN

Behold, God is my helper; * it is LORD who sustains my life. - Psalm 54:4

A READING

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came into being, and not one thing came into being except through him. What has come into being in him was life, life that was the light for all; and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness could not overpower it. - John 1:1-5

THE MORNING PSALM

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; * shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim. In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh, * stir up your strength and come to help us. Restore us, O God of hosts; * show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. - Psalm 80:1-3

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing. Send your Holy Spirit and pour into my heart your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

O tarry and await the LORD's pleasure; be strong and he shall comfort your heart; * wait patiently for the LORD. - Psalm 27:18

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Out of the depths I have called to you, O LORD; LORD, hear my voice. * Let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication. - Psalm 130:1

THE VESPERS PSALM

We have waited in silence on your loving kindness, O God, * in the midst of your temple. Your praise, like your Name, O God, reaches to the world's end; * your right hand is full of justice. Let Mount Zion be glad and the cities of Judah rejoice, * because of you judgments. Make the circuit of Zion; walk round about her; * count the number of her towers. Consider well her bulwarks; examine her strongholds; * that you may tell those who come after. This God is our God forever and ever; * he shall be our guide forever more. - Psalm 48:8-13

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.

THE REFRAIN

Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, Lord, God of Hosts; * let not those who seek you be disgraced because of me, O God of Israel.

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

God, You are my light and my salvation. You are the strength of my life! Though I desire you, though with my lips I proclaim that you are all that I need and that my one desire is to seek you, I often fall so immeasurably short of this. So often, God, I live as an enemy of your cross. Too often, Father, I live with my mind set on earthly things. I elevate myself and my self-centered desires over my desire to see and know your glory and to share it with those around me. I make myself my own god; I live to serve things that are of this earth, things that will die along with my mortal body. All too often, Father, though you long to gather your children unto you, I am unwilling.

But you are my strength, God. I will wait on you! For if I wait upon you, You shall strengthen me, you will transform me into that which you have truly created me to be—one who knows and loves you, one who knows and loves others. I long for the transformation of my lowly, earthly, broken body to be transformed to that of Yours, Father! Strengthen my heart as I wait upon you, Lord, my God and my salvation.

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving * and raise a loud shout to him with psalms. - Psalm 95:2

THE GREETING

I will confess you among the peoples, O LORD; I will sing praise to you among the nations. For your loving kindness is greater than the heavens, and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. - Psalm 57:9-10

A READING

Jesus taught his disciples, saying, "In truth I tell you, when everything is made new again and the Son of man is seated on this throne of glory, you yourselves will sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who had left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or land for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much, and also inherit eternal life. Many who are first will be last, and the last, first." - Matthew 19:28-30

THE MORNING PSALM

Then the LORD woke as though from sleep, * like a warrior refreshed with wine. He chose instead the tribe of Judah * and Mount Zion which he loved. He built his sanctuary like the heights of heaven, * like the earth which he founded forever. He chose David his servant, * and took him away from the sheepfolds. He brought him from following the ewes, * to be a shepherd over Jacob, his people and over Israel, his inheritance. So he shepherded them with a faithful and true heart * and guided them with the skillfulness of his hands. - Psalm 78: 65, 68-72

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing. Send your Holy Spirit and pour into my heart your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Sing with joy to God our strength * and raise a loud shout to the God of Jacob. Raise a song and sound the timbrel, * the merry harp and the lyre. Blow the ram's horn at the new moon, * and at the full moon, the day of our feast. - Psalm 81:1-3

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O God, do not be silent; * do not keep still nor hold your peace, O God.
- Psalm 83:1

THE VESPERS PSALM

Let them praise his Name in the dance; * let them sing praise to him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD takes pleasure in his people * and adorns the poor with victory. Let the praises of God be in their throat * ... this is the glory for all his faithful people. -Psalm 149:4-6, 9

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Have mercy on me, Lord, a sinner.

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Lord, we are fearful.

Seek my face.

Lord, we are slow to trust.

Seek my face.

Do not be afraid, I will carry you through.

Look towards heaven and number the stars,

My glory, I wish, to widen forward from you.

Seek me and you will see that

I am a rock that will not shift.

To wondrous places

You, will I lift.

Light will lead,

Through love you'll stand.

The world will observe

Your silent

strength,

I AM.

Lord, may our eyes be ever seeking.

Lord, may we wait and trust in your faithfulness.

May we find courage in your promises.

May we stand firm in who you are.

Amen.

Third Week of Lent

Sunday, March 7 - Saturday, March 13

Lectionary Texts:

Isaiah 55:1-9

Psalm 63:1-8

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Luke 13:1-9

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 today our daily bread

And forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

AMEN.

Whoever sings, prays twice.

- St. Augustine

SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Sing to the LORD, you servants of his; * give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness. - Psalm 30:4

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

I cry out to you, O LORD; * I say, "You are my refuge." - Psalm 142:5a

THE GREETING

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord; you alone are the Most High; Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father, Amen. (Gloria in Excelsis)

A READING

Jesus said, "I have come to bring fire to the earth and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!" - Luke 12:49-50

THE MORNING PSALM

Let this be written for a future generation, * so that a people yet unborn may praise the LORD. For the LORD looked down from his holy place on high; * from the heavens he beheld the earth; that he might hear the groan of the captive * and set free those condemned to die; that they may declare in Zion the Name of the LORD, * and his praise in Jerusalem, when the peoples are gathered together, * and the kingdoms also, to serve the LORD. - Psalm 102:18-22

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come Lord Jesus!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who cares for us: Preserve me from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from me the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. Amen. ¶

SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Bless the LORD, O my soul, * and all that is within me, bless his holy Name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, * and forget not all his benefits. -Psalm 103:1-2

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

The LORD has heard my supplication; * the LORD accepts my prayer. - Psalm 6:9

A READING

"For me, it will be as in the days of Noah when I swore that Noah's waters should never flood the earth again. So now I swear never to be angry with you and never to rebuke you again. For the mountains may go away and the hills may totter, but my faithful love will never leave you, my covenant of peace will never totter," says YAHWEH who takes pity on you. - Isaiah 54:9-10

THE VESPERS PSALM

Because you are bound to me in love, therefore will I deliver you, * I will protect you, because you know my Name. You shall call upon me, and I will answer you; * I am with you in trouble; I will rescue you and bring you to honor. With long life will I satisfy you, * and show you my salvation. - Psalm 91:14-16

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

I don't like conflict. In movies, I sometimes have to close my eyes because the plot is just too thick and the bad guys are just too strong, and I just don't see how the protagonist could possibly get out alive. But, somehow, it never fails that he or she always does, and there's always a happy ending (at least in the kinds of movies I like to watch!)

These are difficult times. Things in this country, in this world, seem to be in disarray and the future seems vastly and ominously uncertain. Sometimes I wonder how things could possibly end well. I wonder how this story could possibly have a happy ending. In my NIV Bible, a commentary is written on the passage from Isaiah 55. It talks about how this passage describes the future and that "what-ever longings we feel on this earth—for peace, for an end to suffering, for an unspoiled planet—will someday be fulfilled."

It was a tumultuous time when Isaiah was writing, much like it is today, but these words are full of hope. It speaks of a hope because there is a promise that God sees us and knows our struggles. We can rest assured that if we rely on Him, God will bear us through. Therefore, we don't need to fear the future. I pray that in the spirit of Lent, we won't be overcome when we feel defeated or when we don't see how our Protagonist could possibly triumph in the pitiful darkness that surrounds him. For we know that joy returns in the morning and that if we are humble and willing to surrender our lives to God, He is sovereign, and will have victory over the grave! We know the end of the story, and it is indeed a happy ending.

MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Bless the LORD, you angles of his, you might ones who do his bidding, * and hearken to the voice of his word. Bless the LORD, all you his hosts, * you ministers of his who do his will. Bless the LORD, all you works of his, in all places of his dominion; * bless the LORD, O my soul. - Psalm 103:20-22

THE GREETING

Therefore, my heart sings to you without ceasing; * O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever. - Psalm 30:13

A READING

Our homeland is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. - Philippians 3:20

THE MORNING PSALM

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart * in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the deeds of the LORD! * They are studied by all who delight in them. His work is full of majesty and splendor, * and his righteousness endures forever. He makes his marvelous works to be remembered; * the LORD is gracious and full of compassion. The works of his hands are faithfulness and justice; * all his commandments are sure. - Psalm 111:1-4,

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Lord, open our eyes that we may see, our ears that we might hear, our minds that we might know.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who cares for us: Preserve me from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

The righteous will rejoice in the LORD and put their trust in him, * and all who are true of heart will glory. - Psalm 64:10

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Hear my prayer, O God; * give ear to the words of my mouth. -Psalm 54:2

THE HYMN

Now let the earth with joy resound/ And heaven the change re-echo round; Nor heaven nor earth too high can raise/ The great Apostles' -- glorious praise! Praise to the Father, with the Son/ And the Paraclete for ever one: To you, O holy Trinity/ Be praise for all eternity

THE VESPERS PSALM

O LORD, make haste to answer me; my spirit fails me; * do not hide your face from me or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit. Let me hear of your loving kindness in the morning, for I put my trust in you; * show me the road that I must walk, for I lift up my soul to you. - Psalm 143:6-8

THE REFRAIN

Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your cataracts; all your waves and billows have gone over me. By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. -Psalm 42:7-8

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Lift up your voice in joyful refrain.
Forget all your troubles and woes;
If just for a moment you're happy again.
You'll find the way easier to go.
Through you travel through life heavy laden
God knows all of the burdens you bear.
He hears all your prayers and desires—
His spirit abides everywhere.
Even days that are dark and dreary
Still let some sunlight shine through;
And the world becomes brighter and better
As God's love and compassion warms you.
So sing in the face of your troubles
Be strong in your faith and your hope.
For God will take care of the problems
And teach you to easily cope.

TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Our days are like the grass; we flourish, like a flower of the field; when the wind goes over it, it is gone, and its place shall know it no more. -Psalm 103:15-16

THE GREETING

You have set up a banner for those who fear you * ... Save us by your right hand and answer us. - Psalm 60:4-5

A READING

John's disciples and the Pharisees were keeping a fast, when some people came to Jesus and said to him, "Why is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisee's fast, but your disciples do not?" Jesus replied, 'Surely the bridegroom's attendants cannot fast while the bridegroom is still with them? As long as they have the bridegroom they cannot fast. But the time will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then, on that day, they will fast.'
- Mark 2:18-20

THE MORNING PSALM

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? * Who may abide upon your holy hill? Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, * speaks the truth from his heart. There is not guile upon his tongue; he does no evil to his friend; he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor. In his sight, the wicked is rejected, but he honors those who fear the LORD. He has sworn to do no wrong, * and does not take back his word. He does not give his money in hope of gain, * nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. Whoever does these things * shall never be overthrown. - Psalm 15

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who cares for us: Preserve me from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; * let the whole earth tremble before him. - Psalm 31:3

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Your word is a lantern to my feet * and a light upon my path. Accept O LORD, the willing tribute of my lips, * and teach me your judgements.
- Psalm 119:105

A READING

Make sure that no one captivates you with the empty lure of a "philosophy" of the kind that human beings hand on, based on the principles of this world and not on Christ. - Colossians 2:8

THE VESPERS PSALM

Open my lips, O LORD, * and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, * but you take no delight in burnt offerings. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; * a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. - Psalm 51:16-18

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Come.

Drink.

Slurp.

Gulp down the water of life
of eternal health.

Drink until you are full, bursting

Until you must pull your head above the water and gasp.

Shake your head, your hair, your scalp, that droplets and running rivulets
spray

and wash

and cleanse

those around you.

Unbeknownst to them

They receive

The pearl

The seed

The blood

The man.

Free.

It is free.

Come.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Love the LORD, all you who worship him; * the LORD protects the faithful, but repays to the full those who act haughtily. - Psalm 31:23

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O LORD, I call to you; my Rock, do not be deaf to my cry; * lest, if you do not hear me I become like those who go down to the Pit. - Psalm 28:1

THE REFRAIN

Protect my life and deliver me; * let me not be put to shame, for I have trusted in you. - Psalm 25:19

A READING

Jesus taught his disciples; "The Son of man will be delivered into the power of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death, he will rise again." But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him. - Mark 9:31-32

THE MORNING PSALM

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful, for I have taken refuge in you; * in the shadow of your wings will I take refuge until this time of trouble has gone by. I will call upon the Most High God, * the God who maintains my cause. He will send from heaven and save me; he will confound those who trample upon me.; * God will send forth his love and his faithfulness. -Psalm 57:1-3

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even now, come Lord Jesus!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who cares for us: Preserve me from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; * sing praises to the LORD. He rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; * he sends forth his voice, his mighty voice. - Psalm 68:33-34

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Protect me O God, for I take refuge in you; * I have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, my good above all other." - Psalm 16:1

A HYMN

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above, you heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

THE VESPERS PSALM

I will bear witness that the LORD is righteous; * I will praise the Name of the LORD Most High. - Psalm 7:18

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come Lord Jesus!

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

An exquisite enigma
I discover when seeking you each day.
Your mercy exceeds my greatest benevolence,
Your thoughts surpass my thoughtful way.

Please find me here, engulf my mind.

Oh, Lord, I seek and trust to find

Your food so filling,
Your water pure,
Your wings that cover,
Your affection so sure.

I repent of strongholds,

I repent of transgression.

I thank you for steadfast love.

I thank you for infinite compassion.
Amen.

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Wake up, my spirit; * awake lute and harp. * I myself will waken the dawn. - Psalm 57:8

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

You are the LORD; do not withhold your compassion from me; * let your love and your faithfulness keep me safe for ever. - Psalm 40:12

THE REFRAIN

Cast your burden upon the LORD, and he will sustain you; * he will never let the righteous stumble. - Psalm 55:24

A READING

His commandment is this; that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we should love each other as he commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments remains in God, and God in him. And this is the proof that he remains in us: the Spirit that he has given us. - 1 John 3:23-24

THE MORNING PSALM

You have given me your shield of victory; * your right hand also sustains me. You loving care makes me great. You lengthen my stride beneath me, * and my ankles do not give way. - Psalm 18:36-37

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who cares for us: Preserve me from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

O tarry and await the LORD's pleasure; be strong and he shall comfort your heart; * wait patiently for the LORD. - Psalm 27:18

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Open my eyes, that I may see * the wonders of your law. - Psalm 119:18

A REFRAIN

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

THE VESPERS PSALM

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil* for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You spread a table before me in the presence of my enemies. * You have anointed my head with oil and my cup is running over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, * and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. - Adapted from Psalm 23

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Be, LORD, my helper and forsake me not. Do not despise me, O God, my savior.

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Lord, I cannot believe the patience that you give us, when we choose our own way again and again. Even when we know that you are good. Even when we know that your way is better. Even when we know that being with you is a delight. Even when we know that you breathe life into us. Even when we have tasted and seen your kingdom on earth. Even when we have danced with you, we have turned to our selfish decisions.

Even now, Lord, we need you: To show us goodness, to show us your way, to help us delight in you, to breathe new life into us, to share with us your kingdom on earth, and to dance with us.

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Come now and see the works of God, * how wonderful he is in his doing toward all people. - Psalm 66:4

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Satisfy us by your loving kindness in the morning; * so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life. - Psalm 90:14

THE GREETING

Save us, O LORD God, and gather us from among the nations, * that we may give thanks to your holy Name and glory in your praise.
- Psalm 106:47

THE REFRAIN

Mercy and truth have met together; * righteousness and peace have kissed each other. - Psalm 85:10

A READING

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. Anyone who want to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. - Matthew 16:24-25

THE MORNING PSALM

Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, * and your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the strong mountain, your justice like the great deep, * you save both man and beast, O LORD. How priceless is your love, O GOD! Your People take refuge under the shadow of your wings. Continue your loving kindness to those who know you; and your favor to those who are true in heart. - Psalm 36:5-7, 10

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who cares for us: Preserve me from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. Amen. ¶

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Praise the LORD, all you nations; * laud him, all you peoples. For his loving kindness toward us is great. - Psalm 117:1-2a

THE VESPERS PSALM

I lift my eyes to the hills; * from where is my help to come? My help comes from the LORD, * the maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved * and he who watches over you will not fall asleep. Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel * shall neither slumber or sleep; the LORD himself watches over you; * the LORD is your shade at your right hand, so that the sun shall not strike you by day * nor the moon by night. The LORD shall persevere you from all evil; * it is he who shall keep you safe. The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming in, * from this time forth for evermore. - Psalm 121

THE SMALL VERSE

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; on the inhabitants of a country in shadow dark as death light has blazed forth.
- Isaiah 9:1

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

We live in a super-saturated, over-stimulated, filled-to-the-brim culture. Everywhere we turn there are sights and sounds that demand our attention and call for our allegiance. Our schedules are packed, our homes are cluttered with things, and we rarely lack the daily essentials of everyday life. If we are honest with ourselves, most of us have no idea what it means to be in want, and in many ways we have far too much.

With such realities circling around us, I wonder if the poetic words of the psalmist are able to sink in: "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1). When we seemingly lack for nothing, do we know what it means to long for the presence of God in our lives? As we peel back the layers in the midst of Lent this seems to be an important question. Does our existence so depend on the Triune God that we would likewise cry out for more of Him? Are there ways that we might simplify our lives so that there is room for Jesus to take His rightful place as sovereign Lord?

Holy God, we acknowledge that we have too much, and as a result of this reality we often lose sight of what it means to long for You. In this season, help us to strip away what is not of You, that we might not labor for things that will not satisfy. Teach us what it means to "delight in the richest of fare," that we might rightly orient our lives around the things of Your Kingdom.

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

I will call upon God, and the LORD will deliver me. In the evening, in the morning, and at the noonday, he will hear my voice. He will bring me safely back... God who is enthroned of old will hear me.

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Show us your mercy, O LORD, * and grant us your salvation. - Psalm 85:7

THE GREETING

Happy are those whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there! * They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your temple. - Psalm 65:4

A READING

I am coming to put you on trial and I shall be a ready witness against sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers, and against those who oppress the wage-earner, the widow, and the orphan, and who rob the foreigner of his rights and do not respect me, says Yahweh Sabathoh. - Malachi 3:5

THE MORNING PSALM

For my part, I will sing of your salvation; * I will celebrate your love in the morning. For you have become my stronghold, * a refuge in the day of my trouble. To you, O my Strength, will I sing; * for you, O God are my stronghold and my merciful God. - Psalm 59:18-20

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who cares for us: Preserve me from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let the Name of the LORD be blessed; * from this time forth forever more. From the rising of the sun to its going down * let the Name of the LORD be praised. - Psalm 113:2-3

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Let my cry come before you, O LORD; * give me understanding according to your word. Let my supplication come before you; * deliver me, according to your promise. - Psalm 119:169-7

THE VESPERS PSALM

You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to have mercy upon her; * indeed the appointed time has come. For your servants love her very rubble * and are moved to pity even for her dust. The nations shall fear your Name, O LORD, * and all the kings of the earth your glory. For the LORD will build up Zion * and his glory will appear. He will look with favor on the prayer of the homeless; * he will not despise their plea. - Psalm 102:113-17

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.
Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner.
Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Isaiah 55:1-9 - 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 - Psalms 63:1-8 - Luke 13:1-9

As I sit down and reflect on these specific texts, I find myself tempted to attempt pulling as much as I can out of the text, similar to how I sometimes find myself attempting to enlarge my vocabulary usage when praying out loud in front of others.

From these texts, I'm reminded of how easy it is for me to get lost in details and lose sight of what is important. How often I can think of myself reflecting the words of David in the passage from Psalm, but in reality being lost and in need to hear the words of God as voiced in Isaiah. And I know I am not the only one who struggles in this way; Paul briefly accounts for a historical perspective within the passage from Corinthians.

As we observe the season of Lent, both as individuals and as a community, let this be a moment to step back and filter out the details that may be clouding the waters of our faith, that we may experience a clearer connection with God.

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

For who is God, but the LORD? * Who is the Rock except our God?
- Psalm 18:32

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

As the deer longs for the water-brooks, * so longs my soul for you, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, athirst for the living God. - Psalm 42:1-2

A READING

Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who leads us in our faith and bring it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which lay ahead of him, he endured the cross, disregarding the shame of it, and has taken his seat at the right hand of God's throne. Think of the way he persevered against such opposition from sinners and then you will not lose heart and come to grief. - Hebrews 12:2-3

THE MORNING PSALM

O LORD, I am your servant; * I am your servant and the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds. I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving * and call upon the Name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD * in the Presence of his people. In the courts of the LORD's house, * in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!
- Psalm 116:14-17

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

Fourth Week of Lent

Sunday, March 14 - Saturday, March 20

Lectionary Texts:

Joshua 5:9-12

Psalm 32

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

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 today our daily bread
And forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
AMEN.

Whoever sings once, prays twice.
-St. Augustine

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Behold now, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, * you that stand by night in the house of the LORD. - Psalm 134:1

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

For God alone my soul in silence waits; * truly, my hope is in him.
- Psalm 62:6

A REFRAIN

I remember your Name in the night, O LORD, * and dwell upon your law.
- Psalm 119:55

THE VESPERS PSALM

The LORD is in his holy temple; * the LORD's throne ins in heaven. His eyes behold the inhabited world; * his piercing eyes weighs our worth. The LORD weighs the righteous as well as the wicked, * but those who delight in violence he abhors. Upon the wicked he shall rain coals of fire and burning sulfur; * a scorching wind shall be their lot. For the LORD is righteous; he delights in righteous deeds; * and the just shall see his face.
- Psalm 11:4-8

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Walking in the vast emptiness we call life
sinful

Deserving nothing

Yet God is good, showing us mercy

Weak. We fall again

Turning away we walk on our own

Loosing everything

Relying on good works

Gaining nothing but false hopes

We Proclaim "Look at these good things we have done!"

We deserve nothing

Our sins on us like the clothes on our body

We confess our sins to God

The God of Glory

Who created the trees

The animals

The universe

Protector of all

Our God

Forgives us and rejoices

Father, I choose to walk with you

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Show me your ways, O LORD, * and teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, * for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all day long. - Psalm 25:3-4

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O LORD, my God, my Savior * by day and night I cry to you. Let my prayer enter your presence. - Psalm 88:1-2

THE REFRAIN

Deliverance belongs to the LORD. - Psalm 3:8a

A READING

All who are guided by the Spirit of God are sons and daughters of God; for what you received was not the spirit of slavery to bring you back into fear; you received the spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry out, "Abba, Father!" And if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, provided that we share in his suffering, so as to share in his glory. - Romans 8:14-15, 17

THE MORNING PSALM

I proclaim righteousness in the great congregation; * behold, I did not restrain my lips; and that, O LORD, you know. Your righteousness have I not hidden in my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your deliverance; * I have not concealed your love and faithfulness from the great congregation. - Psalm 40:10-11

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Love the LORD, all you who worship him; * the LORD protects the faithful but repays to the full those who act haughtily. - Psalm 31:23

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; * knit my heart to you that I may fear your name. - Psalm 86:11

THE VESPERS PSALM

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, * and the light around me turn to night," Darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day; * darkness and light to you are both alike. For you yourself created my inmost parts; * you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- Psalm 139:10-12

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

We frequently talk and think as if growth is the natural result of the passage of time – an automatic process which takes its course as surely as the days, months, and years go by. In our more honest moments, though, we realize that we are, all too often, fighting the same battles we were yesterday, last month, last year. Old habits die hard; familiar demons return at unexpected hours; the patterns of the world call out to something deep-seated within us. If we will be renewed, we need more than just more of the same; we need an interruption, a future discontinuous with our past. And we should know, by now, that it is always so. A seed will not grow unless broken. We must lose our lives to save them. There is no resurrection before the cross. Repentance just means those first steps toward reconciliation with God and neighbor.

For Israel, 40 years of wandering, back and forth, preceded their arrival in the promised land. It is then, and not before, that they are ready to grow into their future by eating of the fruit of their own land. So too the prodigal son's hope lies in retracing his steps, in humility and repentance. But how much more is the elder son to be pitied, who, with the mere passage of time, seems only to have become accustomed to ingratitude and complacency? Even the worst sinner can, by grace, be sanctified and find the loving dynamism that moves the whole company of the saints, if only she will die daily to herself. But, just as surely, the most splendid virtues turn out to be only vices if they will not submit to this death.

The good news is that God does not wait for us to muster the strength to do this on our own – like the father who runs to his son, seen far away, God's love reaches down to us to enable our loving response. If a human father will run to meet his son halfway on the journey home, how much more will the God of love prepare our way back? He does not ask us to die a death he would not himself; and we would not call upon him, after all, if he were not first calling us.

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Not to us, O LORD, but to your Name give glory; * because of your love and because of your faithfulness. - Psalm 115:1

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Early in the morning I cry out to you, * for in your word is my trust.
- Psalm 119:147

THE REFRAIN

Those who are planted in the house of the LORD * shall flourish in the courts of our God. - Psalm 92:12

A READING

Jesus said to some Sadducees -- who deny the Resurrection, "Surely the reason why you are wrong is that you understand neither the scriptures nor the power of God. Now about the dead rising again, have you ever read the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him and said: 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'? He is God, not of the dead, but of the living. You are very much mistaken. - Mark 12: 18a, 24, 26-27

THE MORNING PSALM

Our days are like the grass * we flourish like a flower in the field; when the wind goes over it, it is gone, * and its place shall know it no more. But the merciful goodness of the LORD endures forever on those who fear him, * and his righteousness on children's children. - Psalm 103: 15-17

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Come, let us bow down and bend the knee, * and kneel before the LORD our Maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. - Psalm 95:6-7

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

To you I lift up my eyes, * to you enthroned in the heavens. - Psalm 123:1

A REFRAIN

Come and listen, all you who fear God, * and I will tell you what he has done for me.
- Psalm 66:14

THE VESPERS PSALM

Our steps are directed by the LORD; * he strengthens those in whose way he delights. If they stumble, they shall not fall headlong, but the LORD holds them by them by the hand. I have been young and now I am old, * but never have I seen the righteous forsaken, or their children begging for bread. - Psalm 37:24-26

THE SMALL VERSE

'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the LORD God, 'who is who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.' - Revelation 1:8

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

God, who sees our past and our future--
We can dwell so much on our past mistakes, past hurts, words we wish we'd never said, things we wish we hadn't done. These things can haunt us, can keep us tied up in the past. Lord, we want new life. We want to see green shoots growing in our lives where there appears to be only withered leaves and dry ground. We want to experience streams of life; the water from You that brings growth, flourishing, healing and joy. We need hope! Help us to look forward, to press on and to hold onto you — the God Who Does New Things.

Standing in the stream,
water jumping over rocks,
I am soaked by hope.

Amen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Sing to the LORD a new song, * for he has done marvelous things. With his right hand and his holy arm * has he won for himself the victory. The LORD has made known his victory. - Psalm 98:1-3

THE REFRAIN

I will confess you among the peoples, O LORD; * I will sing your praises to you among the nations. - Psalm 108:3

A READING

Since he did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for the sake of all of us, then can we not expect that with him he will freely give us all his gifts? Who can bring any accusation against those that God has chosen? When God grants saving justice, who can condemn? Are we not sure that it is Christ Jesus, who died, yes and more, who was raised from the dead and is at God's right hand, who is adding his plea for us?
- Romans 8:32-24

THE MORNING PSALM

My eyes are upon the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me, and only those who lead a blameless life shall be my servants. Those who act deceitfully shall not dwell in my house, * and those who tell lies shall not continue in my sight. I will soon destroy all the wicked in the land, * that I may root out all evildoers from the city of the LORD.
- Psalm 101:6-8

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; * his mercy endures forever.
- Psalm 118:29

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, * and the eyes
of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so my eyes look to you, O LORD my
God. - Psalm 123:2-3

A REFRAIN

But you, O LORD, are gracious and full of compassion * slow to anger
and full of kindness and truth . - Psalm 86:15

THE VESPERS PSALM

You have turned my wailing into dancing; * you have put off my sack
cloth and clothed me with joy. My heart sings to you without ceasing; *
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever. - Psalm 30: 12-13

THE HYMN

Who can hold the stars and my weary heart? Who can see everything?
I've fallen so hard, sometimes I feel so far but not beyond your reach.
I could climb a mountain, swim the ocean or do anything...
Only you can see the good in broken things.
You took this heart of stone, and you made it home.
And set this prisoner free...
But when it's when you hold me that I start unfolding, all I can say is...
Hallelujah, hallelujah, whatever's in front of me,
I'll choose to sing, hallelujah.
Help me to sing, hallelujah.
-B. DILLON

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Lord, build a song in our hearts that helps us find you. We yearn for you
and want to accept your will for our lives. May we be your hands that
work and your feet that go out of our way. Help us mature from being
led by our wants to your desires. We pray that you would give us chal-
lenges to serve in humbling ways and encouragements to celebrate
together in your encompassing love.

Reach out and take ahold of hearts that do not know you yet, Lord. Tell
them your name. Speak through dreams, visions, and whispers. Show
them your grace through trust. Make a way for your servants. Help us
heal rather than hinder. We are blind, Lord, place us gently.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Wake up, my spirit; awake lute and harp; * I myself will waken the dawn. - Psalm
57:8

THE REFRAIN

Send forth your strength, O God; * establish, O God, what you have wrought for
us. - Psalm 68:28

A READING

He said to his disciples, "A time will come when you will long to see one of the
days of the Son of Man and will not see it. They will say to you, 'Look, it is there!'
or 'Look, it is here!' Make no move; do not set off in pursuit; for as the lightning
flashes from one part of heaven lights up the other, so will be the Son of Man
when his day comes. But first he is destined to suffer grievously and be rejected
by this generation.
- Luke 17:22-25

THE MORNING PSALM

O LORD, what are we that you should care for us? Mere mortals that you should
think of us? We are like a puff of wind; * our days are like a passing shadow. Bow
your heavens, O LORD, and come down; * touch the mountains, and they shall
smoke. Hurl the lightning and scatter them; * shoot out your arrows and rout them.
Stretch out your hand from on high; * rescue me and deliver me from the great
waters, from the hand of foreign peoples, whose mouths speak deceitfully * and
whose right hand is raised in falsehood. - Psalm 144:3-8

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

In the evening, in the morning, and at noonday, I will complain and lament, *
and he will hear my voice. - Psalm 55:18

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory
upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his counte-
nance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness
from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this
new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be
overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose,
through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Awake, O my God, decree justice; * let the assembly of peoples gather around you. - Psalm 7:7

THE VESPERS PSALM

The LORD is my shepherd; * I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures * and leads me besides still waters. He restores my soul * and guides me along the right path for his Name's sake. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil * for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me. You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil and my cup is running over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. - Psalm 23

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day. While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year. - Joshua 5:9-12

It comes as no surprise that memory is sensual;
Desert aroma after a rain,
The canyon glowing at dawn
the morning after a day's trek,
the weight of the pack,
and the rice and beans which I have not
been able to make as delicious as they tasted then,
on that day;
when we saw that all is from God
and even the dust reminds us
who we are,
who we follow

There are times in life when God's faithfulness is so tangible, present, and yes, even sensual. It comes in an unexpected paycheck, the beauty of creation, a friend who is healing or simply awakening to a new day. And yet we quickly forget this faithfulness. We forget the past and look forward with doubt. The people of Israel experienced God's faithful deliverance and provision in very tangible, life-saving ways. And they took time to remember who God is and what God had done. It is important for us to remember God's faithfulness with gratefulness and awe. Looking backward to the moments of God's deliverance and provision encourage us to look forward with hope and trust – know who we follow.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let your loving kindness be my comfort * as you have promised your servant. Let your compassion come to me, that I may live, * for your law is my delight. - Psalm 119:76-77

A READING

Jesus said: "Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. In truth I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, is to disappear from the Law until all its purpose is achieved. - Matthew 5:17-18

THE MORNING PSALM

You are the LORD; do not withhold your compassion from me; * let your love and your faithfulness keep me safe forever. For innumerable troubles have crowded upon me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see; * they are more in number than the hairs on my head and my heart fails me. Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; * LORD, make haste to help me. Let them be ashamed and altogether dismayed who seek after my life to destroy it; let them draw back and be disgraced who take pleasure in my misfortune. Let those who say, "Aha!" and gloat over me be confounded * because they are ashamed. Let all who seek you rejoice in you and be glad; * let those who love your salvation continually say, "Great is the LORD!" Though I am poor and afflicted, * the LORD will have regard for me. You are my helper and my deliverer; * do not tarry, O my God. - Psalm 40:12-19

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Search for the LORD and his strength; * continually seek his face.
- Psalm 105:4

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

For God alone my soul in silence waits; * truly my hope is in him.
- Psalm 62:6

THE VESPERS PSALM

The law of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul; * the testimony of the LORD is true and gives wisdom to the innocent. The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart; * the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure and endures forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, * sweeter far more than honey, than honey on the comb. By them also is your servant enlightened; * and in keeping them there is great reward.
- Psalm 19:7-11

THE SHORT VERSE

Let my mouth be full of your praise * and your glory all the day long.
- Psalm 71:8

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 5:16-21:

May we each grasp anew the powerful gift God has given us through Christ: the ministry of reconciliation! How desperate would we be if we had to rely on our own limited abilities to become clean before God, to reconcile ourselves to Him? May we remember that just as God does not count our trespasses against us, he also entrusts us to be reconciled with each other. If we can feel the freedom of having been reconciled to God, by God without any effort on our own part, we should be eager to reconcile with people in our lives, even the strained relationships, without any effort on their part.

How are we to be righteous? How are we to step outside of our own sin and pride to reconcile with people who trespass against us? Just as God made Christ to be sin, though the sin was not Christ's own, he offers the righteousness of Christ, a righteousness that is not our own, to all who believe in Christ. May we become the righteousness of God, recognizing God's gift of reconciliation, and passing reconciliation on as ambassadors of Christ. Amen

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

My eyes are fixed on you, O my Strength; * for you, O God, are my stronghold.
- Psalm 59:10

A READING

Jesus taught us saying, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left.

Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me.' Then the upright will say to him in reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go visit you?' And the King will answer, 'In truth, I tell you, insofar as you did this to one of the least of mine, you did for me.'

Then he will say to those on his left hand, 'Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food. I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink. I was a stranger and you never made me welcome; I was lacking clothes and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me.' Then it will be their turn to ask, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or lacking clothes, sick or in prison and did not come to your help?' Then the King will answer, 'In truth I tell you, insofar as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me.' And they will go away to eternal punishment and the upright to eternal life. - Matthew 25:31-46

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

We will bless the LORD, * from this time forth forevermore. - Psalm 115:18

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; * you set me free when I am hard-pressed; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

- Psalm 4:1

THE VESPERS PSALM

LORD, hear my prayer and let my cry come before you; * hide not your face from me in the day of my trouble. Incline your ear to me * when I call, make haste to me. For my days drift away like smoke, and * my bones are hot as burning coals. My heart is smitten like grass and withered * so that I forget to eat my bread. Because of the voice of my groaning, I am but skin and bones. * I have become like a vulture in the wilderness * like an owl among the ruins. I lie awake and groan; * I am like a sparrow, lonely on a house-top. - Psalm 102:1-7

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

God in Heaven, I have a confession to make... even though you already know my thoughts before I begin to articulate them. I'm your kid who loves to read the last page of a book before I read the rest of the story. I love to know the end before I begin reading to see how the author puts all the pieces together. It's the way I'm built. Silly probably....

So when I read the texts for this fourth week in Lent, I find myself rushing through the laments, rushing through the sad tale of a life wasted in self-centeredness and greed. I find myself lingering on being a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), on the happy reunion between father and son (Luke 15:20), on verses like Psalm 32:7, "You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance."

But somewhere in my hurry to the happy ending, your Spirit whispers for me to stop rushing, to stop ignoring the verses that remind me of my flawed-ness and bent toward sin, of my constant need for your grace. So, here I am, Father, slowing down to embrace the true me because I know that you choose to do the same. In my sin and failure, you are the Father into whose arms I run, you are the Creator who keeps re-creating. So I will slowly journey through Lent... confident of the holy ending but content to let the story unfold in your way instead of mine.

Thank you for loving me in spite of myself! Amen.

Fifth Week of Lent

Sunday, March 21 - Saturday, March 27

Lectionary Texts:

Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalm 126

Philippians 3:4b-14

John 12:1-8

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 today our daily bread

And forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

AMEN.

Whoever sings once, prays twice.

-St. Augustine

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Praise God from whom all blessing flow; Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise him above, you heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. - Traditional Doxology

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; * shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim. - Psalm 80:1

A READING

Of Christ, the Apostle wrote: "... He took to himself the line of Abraham. It was essential that he should in this way be made completely like his brothers so that he could become a compassionate and trustworthy high priest for their relationship to God, able to expiate the sins of the people. For the suffering he himself passed through while being put to the test enables him to help others when they are being put to the test." - Hebrews 2:16-18

THE MORNING PSALM

Happy are they who consider the poor and needy! * The LORD will deliver them in the time of trouble. The LORD preserves them and keeps them alive, so that they may be happy in the land; * he does not hand them over to the will of their enemies. The LORD sustains them on their sickbed * and ministers them in their illness. I said, "LORD, be merciful to me; * heal me, for I have sinned against you." - Psalm 41:1-4

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let all those whom the LORD has redeemed proclaim * that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe. - Psalm 107:2

A REFRAIN

May the glory of the LORD endure forever, * may the LORD rejoice in all his works. - Psalm 104:32

THE VESPERS PSALM

Lift up your heads, O gates; lift them high, O everlasting doors; * and the KING of glory shall come in. "Who is this King of glory?" * "The LORD, strong and mighty; the LORD, mighty in battle." Lift up your heads, O gates; lift them high, O everlasting doors; * and the King of glory shall come in. "Who is this King of glory?" * "The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory." - Psalm 24:7-10

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

The Psalm for the week, Psalm 126 is a celebration of those released from captivity in Babylon. It records the celebration, gratitude and joy that the Israelites felt as they returned home. For many of us, there have been times as a church or as individuals when we have experienced freedom from captivity, healing from brokenness, or something worth celebrating and sharing.

Recall a time when you were liberated or freed from something that bound you. (This could be your conversion, a deliverance from an addiction or harmful way of living or thinking, or a difficult situation that finally came to an end.) Write about it, and then spend time thanking God for setting you free. Recall a time when you were filled with laughter or couldn't help but sing or dance. (This could be a party, graduation, wedding, or a day with friends or family.) Write about it. Then spend some time thanking God for that blessing. In Psalm 126 the singer also remembers those that are still in captivity--that still weep and toil, and prays that they will also have a joyful return home. As a church body, we know that there are brothers and sisters among us that are currently dealing with painful situations. Pray that "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy."

Perhaps you are personally dealing with a painful situation. Spend some time lifting your burden to God, knowing He will not forsake you in your time of need. We also know that there are people around the world that are currently held in captivity, slavery, and other forms of bondage. Take some time to intercede on behalf of Christians around the world who have been persecuted and incarcerated for their beliefs. Pray that God would bring justice and redemption for the 27 million people who are currently in slavery.

As we pray for those that are suffering, remember that God suffers alongside us, but that he also promises redemption and reconciliation when God's kingdom reigns on Earth. We can rejoice that Christ has already conquered death, and promises that someday "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" and he will make all things new (Rev 21:4).

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

The words of the LORD are pure words, * like silver refined from ore and purified seven times in the fire. - Psalm 12:6

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; * you are my crag and my stronghold. - Psalm 71:3

A READING

Ephraim, how could I part with you? Israel, how could I give you up? How could I make you like Admah or treat you like Zeboim? My heart within me is overwhelmed, fever grips my inmost being. I will not give rein to my fierce anger. I will not destroy Ephraim again, for I am God, not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I shall not come to you in anger.

- Hosea 11:8-9

THE MORNING PSALM

Bless the LORD, O my soul, * and all that is within me, bless his holy Name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, * and forget not all his benefits. He forgives all your sins * and heals all your infirmities; He redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with mercy and loving kindness. He satisfies you with good things and your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

- Psalm 103:1-5

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Even so, come Lord Jesus!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come before you; * hide not your face from me in the day of my trouble. - Psalm 102:1

A REFRAIN

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you. -Psalm 25:1a

THE VESPERS PSALM

Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses; * but we will call upon the Name of the LORD our God. - Psalm 20:7

A READING

Jesus taught us saying: "In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit; what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with all who are born of the Spirit. -John 3:5-8

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead." Philipians 3:10-11

Earlier today I let a phone call from a dear friend go to voicemail – her sister committed suicide a few weeks ago. My inbox includes emails about a friend's sisters unexpected death, a request for prayer for a crumbling marriage, news of a baby born prematurely, more tragedy in Haiti, and the usual, more mundane solicitations.

I do not know how to respond to any of this news, and so I have not.

There are so many who are so desperately in need of healing and grace. Choosing to be present with someone in their pain threatens to overwhelm. Too quickly, I say a few words which I hope will placate and move on to whatever is next.

Why Paul wants to share in the sufferings of Christ is a bit of a mystery to me. I wonder how he did it. I admire him for wanting to. In some ways, my approach to Lent has reflected my experiences in sharing in the heartache of my friends and they in mine. I superficially acknowledge the cross and swiftly move on Easter. I do not know if this is right or wrong or even if there even is a right or wrong in this. I do not know which side helps us to become more like Christ. I suspect it might have to do with the willingness to participate in the whole story.

This then, is my prayer for today. Lord, help me to be alive to your presence in me, through me, around me. Lord, help me to participate in your story. Enfold me in your light and in your love. Amen.

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Sing praise to the LORD who dwells in Zion; * proclaim to the peoples the things he has done. - Psalm 9:11

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

May God be merciful to us and bless us, * show us the light of his countenance and come to us. - Psalm 67:1

THE REFRAIN

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; * your dominion endures throughout all ages. - Psalm 145:13

A READING

Jesus taught us, saying, "The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life; they will never be lost and no one will ever steal anything from the Father's hand. The Father and I are as one." - John 10:27-30

THE MORNING PSALM

Hear, O my people, and I will admonish you: * O Israel, if you would but listen to me! There shall be no strange god among you; * you shall not worship a foreign god. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and said, * "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it." - Psalm 81:8-10

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Have mercy on me, Lord, a sinner.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weakness of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. One God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, * O LORD, my strength and my redeemer. - Psalm 19:14

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
O Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
O Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, grant us your peace.

A REFRAIN

When I called, you answered me. * You increased my strength within me. - Psalm 18:2

THE VESPERS PSALM

My God, my rock in whom I put my trust, * my shield, the horn of my salvation, and my refuge; you are worthy of my praise. - Psalm 18:2

A HYMN

Come ye sinners, poor and needy; bruised and broken by the fall. Jesus, ready, stand to save you, full of pity, love and power.

Come ye thirsty, come and welcome, God's free bounty glorified. True belief and true repentance; every grace that brings you now.

I will arise and go to Jesus. He will embrace me in His arms, and in the arms of my dear Savior, O there are ten thousand charms.

THE SMALL VERSE

When we were still helpless, at the appointed time, Christ died for the godless. - Romans 5:6

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

You died to give us new life
You kneeled to help us stand
You gave to help us accept
You loved to give us a chance
You chose pain to heal us
You submitted to free us from debt
It was all you
We can't help but love you

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Bless our God, you peoples; * make the voice of his praise to be heard. Who holds our souls in life; * and will not allow our feet to slip.
- Psalm 66:7-8

THE GREETING

You are my hope, O LORD God; * my confidence since I was young. I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; from my mother's womb you have been my strength. - Psalm 71:5-6a

THE REFRAIN

Be still then, and know that I am God. * I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth. - Psalm 46:11

A READING

Another one said, "I will follow you, sir, but first let me go and say good-bye to my people at home." Jesus said to him, "Once the hand is laid on the plow, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."
- Luke 9:61-62

THE MORNING PSALM

Unless the LORD builds the house, * their labor is in vain who build it. Unless the LORD watches over the city, * in vain the watchman keeps his vigil. - Psalm 127:1-2

THE SMALL VERSE

The Son of Man will be delivered over to the Gentiles to be mocked, scourged, and crucified.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Create in me a clean heart, O God; * and renew a right spirit within me.
- Psalm 51:11

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O God, be not far from me; * come quickly to help me. - Psalm 71:12

A REFRAIN

The LORD, the God of gods, has spoken; * he has called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. - Psalm 50:1

THE VESPERS PSALM

For you, O God, have proved us; * you have tried us just as silver is tried. You brought us in the snare; * you laid heavy burdens upon our backs. You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; * but you brought us out into a place of refreshment. - Psalm 66:9-11

A READING

As the chosen of God, then, the holy people whom he loves, you are to be clothed in heartfelt compassion, in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience. - Colossians 3:12

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

- Psalm 126:5-6
- Philippians 3: 8-10
- Isaiah 43: 18-19

Father, let us hold fast to your truth. Let us press on, that we may lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of us—the prize of the upward call of You, Father, in Christ. Though we walk in darkness, hopelessness, sufferings and sorrow, You will do a new work! You will make roads through our wilderness, rivers through our deserts. Father, give me strength to hold tight to the truth that in and through the wilderness and desert places, You are preparing me for a new thing, to which I will come with rejoicing. Father, these things are rubbish, they are discounted as loss, in comparison to knowing You and the work of eternal salvation and righteousness that You have done through Christ. It is in the brokenness of the valley, the wilderness, the desert place, that I can understand and see even just a glimpse of the power of your resurrection and the might of your restorative work.

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, * and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. - Psalm 43:3

THE GREETING

Who is like you, LORD God of hosts? * O mighty, LORD, your faithfulness is all around you. Righteousness and justice are the foundations of your throne. * Love and truth go before your face. - Psalm 89:8

THE REFRAIN

I will walk in the Presence of the LORD * in the land of the living.
- Psalm 116:8

A READING

Jesus taught us saying, " And the judgement is this: though the light has come into the world people have preferred darkness to light because their deeds were evil... But whoever does the truth comes out into the light, so that what one is doing may plainly appear as done in God."
- John 3:19, 21

THE MORNING PSALM

If the LORD had not come to my help, * I should have soon have dwelt in the land of silence. As often as I said, "My foot has slipped," * your love, O LORD, upheld me. When many cares fill my mind, * your consolations cheer my soul. - Psalm 94:17-19

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy upon us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Come let us bow down, and bend the knee, * and kneel before the LORD our Maker. - Psalm 95:6

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Accept O LORD, the willing tribute of my lips, * and teach me your judgements. - Psalm 119: 108

A REFRAIN

You have been gracious to your land, O LORD, * you have restored the good fortune of Jacob. - Psalm 85:1

THE VESPERS PSALM

Show us your mercy, O LORD, * and grant us your salvation. I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, * for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him. Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, * that his glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; * righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring up from the earth, * and righteousness shall look down from heaven. The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, * and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness shall go before him, * and peace shall be a pathway for his feet. - Psalm 85:7-13

A READING

YAHWEH said: "Can a woman forget the baby at the breast, feel no pity for the child she has borne? Even if these were to forget, I shall not forget you." - Isaiah 49:15

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

In Philippians we see a man who had it all by the world's standards. His lineage set him up for success and he did the rest, following the law to the final letter. He was only missing one thing, but it was the only thing that ultimately mattered. What things do I believe profit me in this life? Is it money, sex, comfort, pleasing others, or something else? Paul had tasted the water from the golden cup that all people strive for, only to realize that it was as bitter as everything else this life could offer.

How do I view Christ? Do I view him as a nice add-on to the rest of my life, or do I view him with such greatness that for the opportunity to know him I gladly give up all that this world holds dear? Paul knew that the power of the resurrection was only attainable by participating in his death. So as we eagerly await for the stone to roll back and life to appear, let us actively share in his death by dying to all those things that hold us back from knowing Him.

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Come now, and look upon the works of the LORD; * what awesome things he has done on earth. - Psalm 46:9

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O LORD, I call to you; come to me quickly; * hear my voice when I cry to you. - Psalm 141:1

THE REFRAIN

O LORD, I cry to you for help; * in the morning, my prayer comes before you. - Psalm 88:14

A READING

Then, speaking to all of them, Jesus said, "If anyone want to be a follower of mine, let them renounce himself and take up their cross everyday and follow me. For if anyone wants to save their life, they will lose it, but anyone who loses their life for me, will save it." - Luke 9:23-24

THE MORNING PSALM

The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty; * yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and we are gone. Who regards the power of your wrath? * Who rightly fears your indignation? So teach us to number our days * that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. - Psalm 90:10-12

THE SMALL VERSE

Today if you shall hear his voice, harden not your heart.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that I, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear my cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

O tarry and wait the LORD's pleasure; be strong and he shall comfort your heart, * wait patiently for the LORD. - Psalm 27:18

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

I have said to the LORD, * "You are my GOD; * listen, O LORD, to my supplication." - Psalm 140:6

A REFRAIN

From my secret sins cleanse me, LORD. And from all strange evils deliver me.

THE VESPERS PSALM

Your word is a lantern to my feet * and a light to my path. I have sworn and am determined * to keep your righteous judgements. I am deeply troubled; * preserve my life, O LORD, according to your word. Accept, LORD, the willing tribute of my lips, * and teach me your judgements. My life is always in your hand, * yet I do not forget your law. The wicked have set a trap for me, * but I have not strayed from your commandments. You decrees are my inheritance forever; * truly, they are the joy of my heart. I have applied my heart to fulfill your statutes * forever to the end. - Psalm 119:105-112

A READING

With so many witnesses in a great cloud all around us, we too, then should throw off everything that weighs us down and the sin that clings so closely and with perseverance, keep running the race which lies ahead of us. - Hebrews 12:1

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Lord, to forget the former things means to relinquish my control and grip on my life... Do you not understand that if I can hold on to the past, I can shape my future... right? Have mercy on my arrogance and on my faulty, earthly logic. Thank you, for your grace and guidance. Help me unclench my fists and show me that what I am holding has dried and crumbled. And as I unclench, help me see. Help me perceive the new thing you are doing. The path you have carved through my desert and the stream you are pouring out in my wasteland may not be what I imagined, but help me hope and have faith that they are better... You have formed me for yourself. Here is my praise.

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free; * incline your ear to me and save me. - Psalm 116:14

THE GREETING

I was pressed so hard that I almost fell, but the LORD came to my help.
- Psalm 118:13

THE REFRAIN

Purge me from sin and I shall be pure; * wash me, and I shall be clean indeed. -
Psalm 51:8

A READING

Jesus said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." - Luke 13:34-35

THE MORNING PSALM

Precious in the sight of the LORD * is the death of his servants. O LORD, I am your servant; * I am your servant and the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds. I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving * and call upon the Name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD* in the presence of his people, in the courts of the LORD's house, * in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. -
Psalm 116:13-17

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weakness of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. One God, forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Proclaim with me, the greatness of the LORD; * let us exalt his Name together. - Psalm 34:8

THE VESPERS PSALM

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; * my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a barren and dry land where there is no water. Therefore, I have gazed upon you in your holy place, * that I might behold your power and glory. For your loving kindness is better than life itself; * my lips shall give you praise. So will I bless you as long as I live * and lift up my hands in your Name. My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, * and my mouth praises you with joyful lips. When I remember you upon my bed, * and meditate on you in the night watches. For you have been my helper, * and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice. My soul clings to you; * your right hand holds me fast. - Psalm 63:1-8

A READING

"Come, let us talk this over," says YAHWEH. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are as red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing to obey, you shall eat the good things of the earth. But if you refuse and rebel, the sword shall eat you instead - for YAHWEH's mouth has spoken." - Isaiah 1:18-20

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

This week's text from Isaiah reminds us to let go of "former things" and "things of old," instead finding peace and comfort in new hope from God. Similarly, the Psalm speaks of laughter and joy emerging out of tears and sadness. Yet how often do we focus solely on past hurts, old wounds, and the sadness that accompanies such difficult moments, losing sight of the joy soon to come? Lent is a season of acknowledging these moments, culminating on Good Friday when we remember the death of Jesus and perhaps feel as if the darkness will never end. But the tension is broken on Easter Sunday, a day when we are reminded year after year that hope, joy, love, and peace will always overcome pain and sadness.

Lord, help us to see the good that is sometimes hidden but always present even in our darkest moments. May we make amends with an estranged friend or family member. May we ask for forgiveness and also forgive. May we admit we cannot solve our problems alone and rely on God and our community. And may we show compassion to all people just as we seek compassion for ourselves. May we do this, Lord, knowing that the promise of hope and joy in the resurrection is always the end result.

SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 2010 - PALM SUNDAY

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Hosanna, LORD, hosanna!*... Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! - Psalm 118:25a, 26a

THE REFRAIN

God is the LORD; he has shined upon us; * form a procession with branches up to the horns of the altar. - Psalm 118:27

THE MORNING PSALM

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let Israel say: "His love endures forever." * ... Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. O LORD, save us. O LORD, grant us success. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the LORD for he is good; his love endures forever. - Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. Hosanna!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE GLORIA

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Assist me mercifully with your help, O Lord, God of our salvation, that I may enter with joy upon contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Almighty and everlasting God, in your tender love for the human race, you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility; mercifully, grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection. Amen. ¶

Holy Week and Easter

Sunday, March 28 - Sunday, April 3

The Gloria

Glory be to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, so it is now, and so it shall ever be, world without end.* Amen.

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 today our daily bread
And forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
AMEN.

*"Alleluia" is always omitted from the GLORIA until Easter.

The readings for each day will be the lectionary text for each day of Holy Week.

Whoever sings, prays twice.
- St. Augustine

SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

You, O LORD, are a shield about me; * you are my glory, the one who lifts up my head. - Psalm 3:3

THE READING

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethpage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'" Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They replied, "The Lord needs it." They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" and "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" He replied, "I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." - Luke 19:28-40

THE GLORIA

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the Gospel of Luke tells us that a crowd gathered and joyfully proclaimed that "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord." This is a triumphal entry, a royal procession, and Jesus was the King who drew the attention and the praise. As we enter Holy Week it seems that Palm Sunday is slightly out of place with the general tone of Lent thus far. A joyful and celebratory event is jarring at this point, especially considering what events happen next.

What we learn from Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, however, is that we often allow our own hopes and desires to cloud the truth. What Jesus meant by King and what that celebratory crowd anticipated as a triumphant king were not the same. If we learn anything during Lent it is that self-examination, repentance and a constant need to adjust our vision are necessary if we are going to see the true Kingdom of God instead of the one we often create ourselves, however well-intentioned it may be. May we be reminded this Holy Week where our hope is ultimately found and may God continue to shape our understanding of what it truly means to be followers of Christ.

MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let my mouth be full of your praise, * and your glory all the day long. Do not cast me off in my old age* or forsake me not when my strength fails. - Psalm 71:8-9

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O LORD, my God and my Savior, * by day and night I cry to you.

THE READING

Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him. - John 12:1-11

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE GLORIA

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Assist me mercifully with your help, O Lord, God of our salvation, that I may enter with joy upon contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. ¶

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Almighty and everlasting God, in your tender love for the human race, you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility; mercifully, grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection. Amen. ¶fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ¶

MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

The righteous will be glad... and they will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; * surely there is a God who rules the earth." -Psalm 58:10-11

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Deliver me from death, O God, * and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my Salvation. - Psalm 51:15

THE HYMN

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Oh! Sometimes, it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree? Were you there when they nailed him to the tree? Oh! Sometimes, it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side? Were you there when they pierced him in the side? Oh! Sometimes, it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? Oh! Sometimes, it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
- African American Spiritual

THE GLORIA

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Loving God, who sent Jesus to show us the way into your heart, grant that we may never be embarrassed by the work of love to which you call us. Keep our feet on the ground but our minds fixed on heaven and our hearts trained on one another. Give us courage to anoint one another with the fragrance of your unbounded and unfailing love. Amen.

Prayer of Mary

Sarah M. Foulger

TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice. - Psalm 51:9

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Early in the morning, I cry out to you, for your word is my trust.

THE READING

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The ones who love their lives will lose them, while the ones who hate their lives in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?" Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The one who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become children of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them. - John 12:20-36

THE LORD'S PRAYER AND THE GLORIA

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty God, who through your only begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen ¶

TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

O tarry and await the LORD's pleasure; * be strong and he shall comfort your heart. * Wait patiently for the LORD. - Psalm 27:18

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Show us your mercy, O LORD, * and grant us your salvation. - Psalm 85:7

THE HYMN

Descend, O Spirit, purging flame, Brand us this day with Jesus' Name!
Confirm our faith, consume our doubt; Sign us as Christ's, within, without.

Forbid us not this second birth; grant unto us the greater worth!
Enlist us in your service, Lord; Baptize all nations with your Word.
-S. Brenner

THE VESPERS PSALM

Save me, O God, * for the waters have risen up to my neck. I am sinking deep in mire, * and there is no firm ground for my feet. I have come into deep waters, * and the torrent washes over me. I have grown weary from looking for my God. Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs on my head; my lying foes who would destroy me are mighty. - Psalm 69:1-5

THE GLORIA

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Jesus knew exactly why He was brought to this earth, and being God He was able to comprehend just how much it would cost Him. The wonderful thing about our Savior is that He was fully God and fully man. We see this in John when Jesus admits that His heart is troubled. Just like us, Jesus had human emotions. But even in troubling times He was able to see the greater good and seek His Father's glory. In this moment Jesus could have chosen to continue living, but He knew that for salvation to happen He would have to die just like a kernel of wheat. Because of His sacrifice, we have the promise of life eternal and the hope of glory. Just as He died, we are called to lose our own life in this world for something far greater.

Lord, thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you that you were able to feel human emotions just like we do. Help us to see the surpassing value of your death and the joy that comes when we lose our own lives for your sake. Father, glorify your name!

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2010

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Blessed be the LORD, the GOD of Israel, * from everlasting to everlasting; * and let all the people say, "Amen!" - Psalm 106:48

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O God of hosts, * show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. - Psalm 80:7

THE REFRAIN

Let them know that this is your hand, that you, O LORD, have done it.
- Psalm 109:26

THE READING

After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me." His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. - John 13:21-32

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE GLORIA

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty God, who through your only begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen. ¶

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

The LORD is near to those who call upon him; * to all who call upon him faithfully.
- Psalm 145:19

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you; * I have said to the LORD, "You are my LORD, my good above all other." - Psalm 16:1

A HYMN

In the cross of Christ I glory, towering over the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story gather round its head sublime.

When the woes of life overtake me, hopes deceive and fears annoy;
Never shall the cross forsake me. Lo! It glows with peace and joy.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, by the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.
- J. Bowring

THE REFRAIN

I will bear witness that the LORD is righteous; * I will praise the Name of the LORD
Most High. - Psalm 7:18

THE GLORIA

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

And it was night. Nothing good happens at night. The darkness might not understand the light, but sometimes it feels stronger than the smoldering wick. It was at night when the cancer came. And it was night when it came back again for the third time. It was at night when the baby miscarried. It was at night when the divorce papers came. It was night when the job was lost. When hope was lost. It was at night when the word of encouragement didn't come. It was night when the phone rang that you jumped out of your skin wondering what news was on the other end. It was night when Jesus was betrayed by a friend. We seem to remember that the darkness is not stronger than the light, but there are some days when night seems to have realized that the roof of the house wasn't quite finished when the storm blew in.

God, in our night, speak to our hearts. Cling to us when we have not the strength and courage to cling to you ourselves. Blow gently on your smoldering wicks so that we might not be extinguished. Grab tightly to our hands as we walk through the dark. Guide our steps and give us the courage to whistle, to sing at the night, if for no other reason, but to remind it and ourselves that dawn is coming. Forgive us for doubting.

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2010 - MAUNDY THURSDAY

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me. - John 14:1

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Even so, come Lord Jesus!

THE READING

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them...When Judas has gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified and God has glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. - John 13:1-17, 31-35

THE LORD'S PRAYER AND GLORIA

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty God, who through your only begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen ¶

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Come and listen, all you who fear God; * I will tell you what he has done for me. - Psalm 66:14

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

O God, be not far from me; * come quickly to help me, O my God.
- Psalm 71:12

A HYMN

Go to dark Gethsemane, you that feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see; watch with him one bitter hour.
Turn not from his grief's away; learn of Jesus Christ how to pray.

See him in the judgment hall, beaten bound, reviled, arraigned;
O the worm-wood and the gall! O the pangs his soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame or loss; learn of Christ to bear the cross.

Calvary's mournful mountain climb; there adoring at his feet,
Mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete.
"It is finished!" hear him cry; learn of Jesus Christ how to die.

Early hasten to the tomb where they laid his breathless clay;
All is solitude and gloom. Who has taken him away?
Christ is risen! He meets our eyes; Savior, teach us so to rise.
- J. Montgomery

THE GLORIA

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

When Jesus had said we must die like the seed
He knew that the Son of Man's hour was in need
The voice from the heavens shouted down "GLORIFY!"
And Jesus said, "That was for you, not for I!"

"Now shall the prince of this world be cast out
Let not the darkness create in you, doubt
Before being overtook by the night
Yet while you have it believe in the light"

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 2010 - GOOD FRIDAY

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

I cry to you, O LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion, in the land of the living. - Psalm 142:5

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? - Psalm 22:1a

THE READING

Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom... Later, knowing that all was now completed... Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water... These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." - Paraphrase John 19

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty God, who through your only begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen ¶

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; * knit my heart to you that I may fear your name. - Psalm 86: 11

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Remember me, Lord, when you come into your kingdom. - Luke 22:42

A HYMN

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it LORD, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charmed me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet; sorrow and love flow mingled
down;
Did e'r such love and sorrow meet? Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine; demands my soul, my life, my all.
- I. Watts

THE STORY

JOHN 18 AND 19

THE GLORIA

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Jesus, we read the passion story many times as if it is just another story. We have grown accustomed to the plot, we know what is coming next, we look forward to the happy end of resurrection. God, we pray that you would help us to see the radical nature of this story. May we see with new eyes the earth-shattering story of God becoming human, of Christ allowing himself to be arrested, beaten, and killed not for any offense he perpetrated but solely out of love for humanity. God, may you not allow us to rush through Lent to get to Easter, to have all the celebration without the recognition of your suffering. We pray that you would help us comprehend the depth and height and breadth of your love for us so that we may have this love for you and others. In the name of the crucified Christ we pray, Amen.

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2010 - HOLY SATURDAY

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

I said in my alarm, "I have been cut off from the sight of your eyes." * Nevertheless, you heard the sound of my plea when I cried out to you. - Psalm 31:22

THE READING

As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb. The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." - Matthew 27:57-66

THE MORNING PSALM

Out of the depths have I called to you, O LORD; LORD, hear my voice.* Let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication. If you, LORD, were to notes what is done amiss, * O LORD, who could stand? For there is forgiveness with you; * therefore you shall be feared. I wait for the LORD; my soul waits for him; * in his word is my hope. My soul waits for the LORD, more than watchman for the morning, * more than watchmen for the morning. O Israel, wait for the LORD, * for with the LORD, there is mercy; with him there is plenteous redemption. * He shall redeem Israel from all their sins. - Psalm 130

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

"Truly, this man was the Son of God!" - Matthew 27:54b

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

Almighty God, who through your only begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the LORD's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen ¶

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2010

EVENING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Let the Name of the LORD be Blessed, * from this time forth forever more. From the rising of the sun to its going down * let the Name of the LORD be praised.
- Psalm 113:2-3

THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE

Let my cry come before you, LORD;*give me understanding, according to your word. Let my supplication come before you; *deliver me, according to your promise. -Psalm 119:169-170

A READING

At least there is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the soil, yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant. But man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more. As water disappears from the sea or a riverbed becomes parched and dry, so one lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep. If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me!

If one dies, will he or she live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come. You will call and I will answer you; you will long for the creature your hands have made. Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin. My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin. But as a mountain erodes and crumbles and as a rock is moved from its place, as water wears away stones and torrents wash away the soil, so you destroy people's hope. You overpower them once for all, and they are gone; you change their countenance and send them away. If their children are honored, they do not know it; if the children are brought low, they do not see it. They feel but the pain of his own body and mourns only for themselves. - Job 14:7-22

THE GLORIA

A REFLECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Silence. Not only is Jesus dead, but He is buried in a rich man's tomb that is sealed and guarded. Graves don't speak. God may have torn the temple yesterday, but today, he is quiet. You can feel the ache between the story's lines.

Andrew Peterson's song, "The Silence of God" says, "There's a statue of Jesus... He's kneeling in the garden, as silent as a stone. All his friends are sleeping, and He's weeping all alone. And the man of all sorrows, He never forgot what sorrow is carried by the hearts that he bought. So when the questions dissolve into the silence of God, the aching may remain but the breaking does not."

Lord, we hurt. We hurt with the homeless and the poor; we hurt for the celebrities that hurt and kill themselves and our society which tracks follows them around; we hurt for ourselves because we are broken, as is our world. Innocent suffer, and it seems Goliath beats David more often than not. In our ache, help us not to break. Give us a peace that does not make sense and a joy that cannot be shaken. Everything we have is yours; do with it, and us, as you will. Amen.

SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 2010 - EASTER DAY

MORNING OFFICE

CALL TO PRAYER

Praise the LORD, all you nations! Laud him all you peoples. For his loving kindness toward us is great, * and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Hallelujah! - Psalm 117

THE CRY OF THE CHURCH

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Alleluia! The LORD is risen indeed!

THE STORY

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " Then they remembered his words. When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. - Luke 24:1-12

THE READING

"Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD. - Isaiah 65:24,25

THE GLORIA WITH ALLELUIA AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WEEK

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; carry out in tranquility the plan of your salvation. Let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things are made, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen ¶

About the cover art, a picture by Andrew Daigle.

"While pondering the meaning of Lent in light of the title "through darkness to light", I came across this photograph which not only seemed visually appropriate but also contextually relevant. Although the photo was taken not with Lent in mind, it encompasses the same spirit, the same marvel or contemplation that enticed me to take the photo.

The photograph is a profile of the stamen of an Amaryllis flower. The flower is surrounded in darkness and uncertainty yet there is a hope of light in the distance seen through the darkness of the flower's stamen. The illuminating sun, the source of hope, is warm in color, contrast, and form. A shape is formed by the relationship of the sun's light to that of the dark withering Amaryllis. The shape formed resembles that of a human heart and the turmoil of doubt and hope within.

Also relevant is this flower's nature and story. An Amaryllis flowers once a year from a bulb of stored energy that lays dormant through the absence of water, light and warmth. It sits discarded, motionless, dry, withered and appearing to be dead for a season of life. Yet there is Life. That bulb endures darkness, drought, cold and neglect... until... Nature tells it when to use its stored energy to grow and bloom again... to thrive on the restored warmth, sun and nutrients from its earth."

Further, this book would not have been possible without the collaboration and encouragement of many people:

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Deepest thanks for all your reflections, psalms, thoughts, prayers, time, and excitement.

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than we can hope or imagine, to Him be all honor and glory and praise forevermore.

Come, Lord Jesus, come!

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