

*He Has Shown You  
What Is Good*

A Lent Devotional



CHURCH OF THE  
SAVIOR

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## INTRODUCTION

For this season of Lent, our theme at Church of the Savior comes from Micah 6:8: “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Over the next several weeks, I invite you to consider this verse through the lens of Jesus: how has Jesus shown us what is good?

The weekly lectionary readings for this year take us through several familiar episodes in Jesus’ life, from his temptation in the wilderness through the raising of Lazarus from the dead. As we re-encounter these stories, let us consider what it means to Jesus to act justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God – and how we might come alongside Jesus in this good work.

This devotional is divided into six sections, one for each week in Lent (including the half-week after Ash Wednesday). In each you will find a passage of scripture with a suggestion for contemplative reading; an image with instructions for visio divina, or sacred contemplation; and a suggested spiritual exercise for the week. Go through these at your own pace: if one passage or practice grabs your attention, you may spend extra time with it. Likewise if one falls flat for you, feel free to skip it. I pray that, however you use this devotional, God will guide you in both your inward journey and your outward journey during this season of Lent.

—Sarah Lindsay  
Pastor of Adult Formation

# Week of Ash Wednesday

**READING**

**MICAH 6:1-8, NLT**

<sup>1</sup> Listen to what the Lord is saying:

“Stand up and state your case against me.

Let the mountains and hills be called to witness your complaints.

<sup>2</sup> And now, O mountains,

listen to the Lord’s complaint!

He has a case against his people.

He will bring charges against Israel.

<sup>3</sup> “O my people, what have I done to you?

What have I done to make you tired of me?

Answer me!

<sup>4</sup> For I brought you out of Egypt

and redeemed you from slavery.

I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to help you.

<sup>5</sup> Don’t you remember, my people,

how King Balak of Moab tried to have you cursed

and how Balaam son of Beor blessed you instead?

And remember your journey from Acacia Grove to Gilgal,

when I, the Lord, did everything I could

to teach you about my faithfulness.”

<sup>6</sup> What can we bring to the Lord?

Should we bring him burnt offerings?

Should we bow before God Most High

with offerings of yearling calves?

<sup>7</sup> Should we offer him thousands of rams

and ten thousand rivers of olive oil?

Should we sacrifice our firstborn children

to pay for our sins?

<sup>8</sup> No, O people, the Lord has told you what is good,  
and this is what he requires of you:  
to do what is right, to love mercy,  
and to walk humbly with your God.

## **PRAYING SCRIPTURE**

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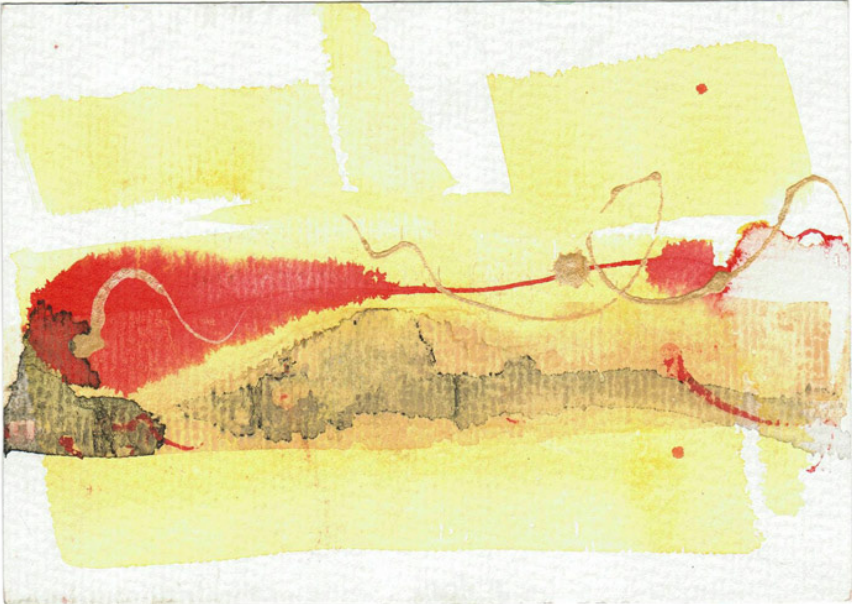
The practice of praying scripture invites us to speak to God through the words of the bible, sometimes through the prayers of others, but also through other passages. To pray this scripture, read the passage above, slowly. As you read, notice where your attention is drawn: use those phrases or images to pray. In this way, the passage will shape your own prayer as you talk to God and listen to God.

## VISIO DIVINA: LEARNING TO SEE

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*Visio divina* is the practice of praying with and through what we see. As you contemplate the image on the next page, use the steps below to guide your prayers.

- Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind: set aside distractions and sit comfortably; you might light a candle to remind you of the presence of God. Invite the Holy Spirit to be with you.
- Look at the piece of art, taking your time. Can you see this scene as God sees it? What do you most notice in the image? What feelings does it evoke? How might this image help you reflect on Micah 6:1-8? How might this image help you see the good that God is showing you?
- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.



## **WEEKLY PRACTICE: PRAYER**

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In this first short week of Lent, spend time asking God to show you what is good: how might you do what is right, love mercy, and walk humbly with God during this season? The prayer below may help you begin.

### **Prayer for Mission**

Almighty God, who creates and sustains all things, help us to notice where you are at work in the world around us and to discern how we can join in the work of your Kingdom. Give us the strength and courage we need to love you and to love others, and give us hearts that seek justice and love mercy. We ask this in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.





# First Week of Lent

## READING

## MATTHEW 4:1-11

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. <sup>2</sup> For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

<sup>3</sup> During that time the devil came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.”

<sup>4</sup> But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say,

‘People do not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, <sup>6</sup> and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,

‘He will order his angels to protect you.  
And they will hold you up with their hands  
so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the Lord your God.’”

<sup>8</sup> Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> “I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.”

<sup>10</sup> “Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say,

‘You must worship the Lord your God  
and serve only him.’”

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

## LECTIO DIVINA

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*Lectio divina* invites us to slow down, pay careful attention, and talk to God about what we notice and experience when we read (or listen to) a section of scripture. Use these traditional steps of *lectio divina* as you read the passage on the previous page:

- *Silencio*: quiet your mind and heart and enter into God’s presence.
- *Lectio*: read the passage slowly, paying attention to the words or images that capture your mind. Hear what God is saying to you.
- *Meditatio*: read the passage again, listening to God’s invitation to you and pondering the words in your heart.
- *Oratio*: respond to God, talking to God about the thoughts and feelings that have arisen in your reading.
- *Contemplatio*: wait in the presence of God, allowing the words of the scripture to sink into your soul.

## VISIO DIVINA: THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

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- Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind: set aside distractions and sit comfortably; you might light a candle to remind you of the presence of God. Invite the Holy Spirit to be with you.
- Look at the piece of art, taking your time. Can you see this scene as God sees it? What do you most notice in the image? What feelings does it evoke? How might this image help you reflect on the story of Jesus' temptation? How might this image help you see the good that God is showing you?
- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.



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Briton Rivière, *The Temptation in the Wilderness*, 1898.

## BONUS REFLECTION

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Read the poem below, then return to the image or the scripture passage. How does this poem add a new dimension to your understanding of the story and the image?

### **“Stones into Bread”**

The Fountain thirsts, the Bread is hungry here  
The Light is dark, the Word without a voice.  
When darkness speaks it seems so light and clear.  
Now He must dare, with us, to make a choice.  
In a distended belly’s cruel curve  
He feels the famine of the ones who lose  
He starves for those whom we have forced to starve  
He chooses now for those who cannot choose.  
He is the staff and sustenance of life  
He lives for all from one Sustaining Word  
His love still breaks and pierces like a knife  
The stony ground of hearts that never shared,  
God gives through Him what Satan never could;  
The broken bread that is our only food.

– Malcolm Guite, 2015

## WEEKLY PRACTICE: CONFESSION

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In the Ash Wednesday liturgy, the priest speaks these words: “I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word.” This week, I invite you to focus on self-examination and repentance by engaging in the practice of confession. This can be private, between you and God; you may also choose to confess to someone you trust, or you may find that in confessing to God you are prompted to make an apology to someone you have wronged.

As you engage in this practice, keep in mind this helpful definition of confession from Adele Calhoun: “Self-examination is a process whereby the Holy Spirit opens my heart to what is true about me. This is not the same as a neurotic shame-inducing inventory. Instead it is a way of opening myself to God within the safety of divine love so I can authentically seek transformation. Confession embraces Christ’s gift of forgiveness and restoration while setting us on the path to renewal and change.”

If you do not already have a practice of confession, the following steps may be helpful:

- Begin by imagining yourself in a safe place, completely surrounded by God’s love.
- Ask for God’s light as you reflect on your life.
- Notice what the Holy Spirit is bringing up for you: perhaps a person who you have hurt or an area where you are prone to sin. Confess your feelings and actions to God.
- You may find it helpful to pray through Psalm 32 or 51, two psalms of confession written by David. Let these ancient words guide and comfort you as you confess to God.

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Adapted from Adele Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downer’s Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2015), p. 103.



# Second Week of Lent

## READING

JOHN 3:1-17

<sup>1</sup> There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. <sup>2</sup> After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

<sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

<sup>4</sup> “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

<sup>5</sup> Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. <sup>7</sup> So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

<sup>9</sup> “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? <sup>11</sup> I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. <sup>12</sup> But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. <sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.



<sup>16</sup> “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.  
<sup>17</sup> God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

## **IMAGINATIVE PRAYER**

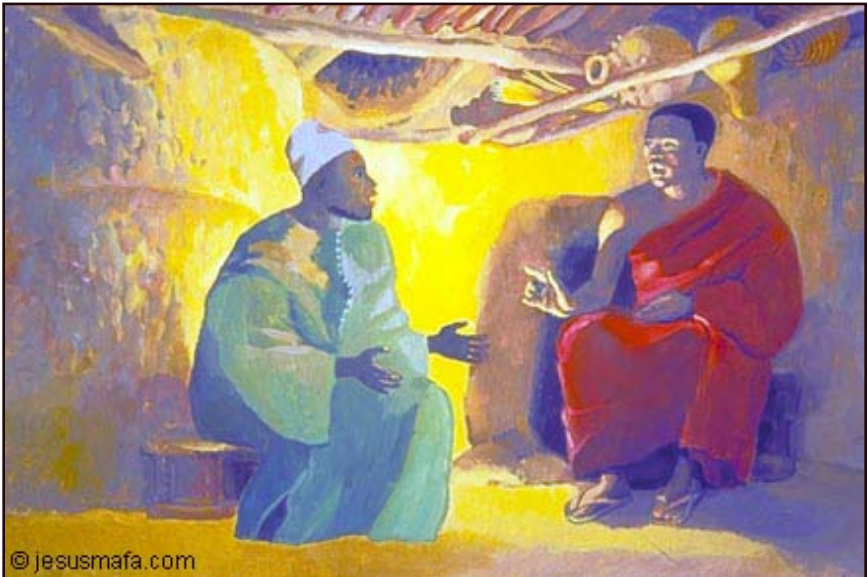
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Imaginative prayer is part of the Ignatian spiritual practice of contemplation. In this practice, begin by imagining what you would see, hear, or feel if you were there with Jesus and Nicodemus. You might then imagine yourself as a bystander, or as one of the characters in the story. As you enter the scene through your imagination, notice how Jesus may be speaking to you — and how you might speak to Jesus — through the story.

## VISIO DIVINA: NICODEMUS VISITS JESUS

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- Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind: set aside distractions and sit comfortably; you might light a candle to remind you of the presence of God. Invite the Holy Spirit to be with you.
- Look at the piece of art, taking your time. Can you see this scene as God sees it? What do you most notice in the image? What feelings does it evoke? How might this image help you reflect on the story of Nicodemus visiting Jesus? How might this image help you see the good that God is showing you?
- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.



## WEEKLY PRACTICE: HUMILITY

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In the passage for this week, Jesus tells Nicodemus that, in order to enter into the Kingdom of God, he must humble himself to the almost unimaginable extent of becoming, once again, a newborn baby. Just like Nicodemus, most of us find humility difficult: we tend either to demean ourselves in the name of (false) humility or to reject humility and place our identity in our achievements. True humility, however, frees us to “honor others by making the others’ needs as real and important as [our] own.” In true humility, we enter God’s Kingdom as beloved children, confident that we are fully loved and thus able to fully love others as ourselves.

This week, ask God to show you ways in which you can practice humility in a way that benefits others. For example, can you draw others out rather than being the center of attention? Can you choose less in some area so others can have more? Are there ways in which you can better love your neighbor as you love yourself? Remember that humility does not mean ignoring our own needs, including our need for validation and approval; it means locating our true selves in God and through this finding the freedom to live as members of the Kingdom of God.

# Third Week of Lent

## READING

JOHN 4:5-42

<sup>5</sup> Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. <sup>7</sup> Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." <sup>8</sup> He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

<sup>9</sup> The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

<sup>11</sup> "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup> And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. <sup>14</sup> But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

<sup>15</sup> "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

<sup>16</sup> "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

<sup>17</sup> "I don't have a husband," the woman replied.

Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—<sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

<sup>19</sup> “Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. <sup>20</sup> So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?”

<sup>21</sup> Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. <sup>24</sup> For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

<sup>25</sup> The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

<sup>26</sup> Then Jesus told her, “I am the Messiah!”

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?” <sup>28</sup> The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, <sup>29</sup> “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” <sup>30</sup> So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, “Rabbi, eat something.”

<sup>32</sup> But Jesus replied, “I have a kind of food you know nothing about.”

<sup>33</sup> “Did someone bring him food while we were gone?” the disciples

asked each other.

<sup>34</sup> Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. <sup>35</sup> You know the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. <sup>36</sup> The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! <sup>37</sup> You know the saying, ‘One plants and another harvests.’ And it’s true. <sup>38</sup> I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.”

<sup>39</sup> Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, “He told me everything I ever did!” <sup>40</sup> When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, <sup>41</sup> long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. <sup>42</sup> Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.”

## PRAYING SCRIPTURE

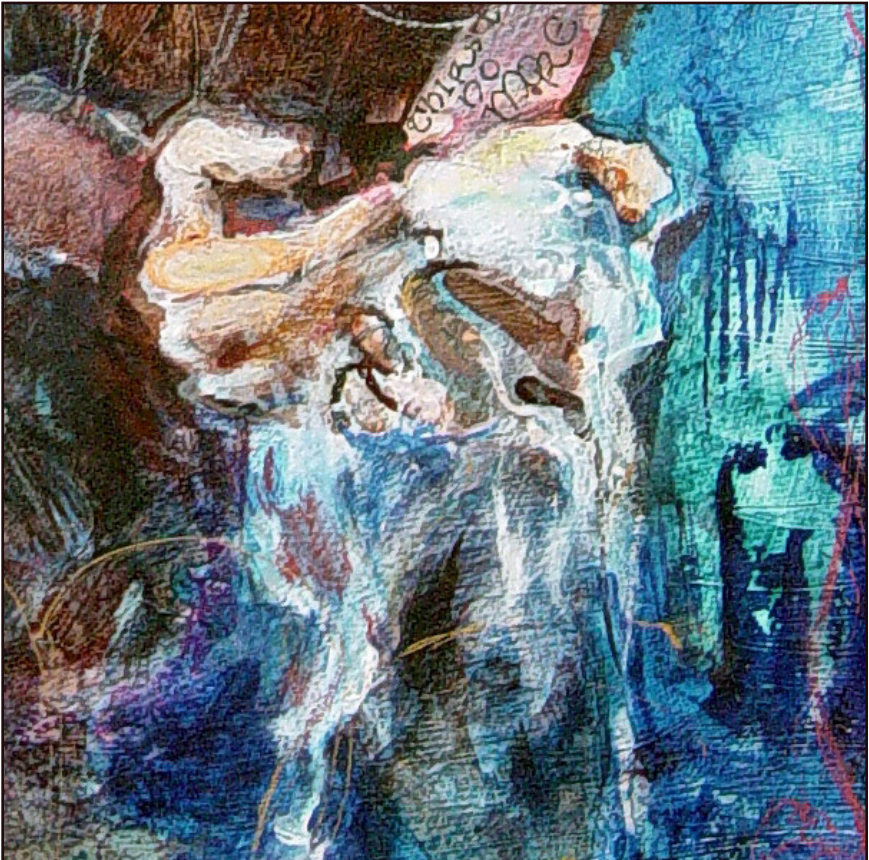
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The practice of praying scripture invites us to speak to God through the words of the bible, sometimes through the prayers of others, but also through other passages. To pray this scripture, read the passage above, slowly. As you read, notice where your attention is drawn: use those phrases or images to pray. In this way, the passage will shape your own prayer as you talk to God and listen to God.

## VISIO DIVINA: HANDS WITH WATER

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- Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind: set aside distractions and sit comfortably; you might light a candle to remind you of the presence of God. Invite the Holy Spirit to be with you.
- Look at the piece of art, taking your time. Can you see this scene as God sees it? What do you most notice in the image? What feelings does it evoke? How might this image help you reflect on the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman? How might this image help you see the good that God is showing you?
- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.



## **WEEKLY PRACTICE: HOSPITALITY**

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In this week's story, Jesus shows us, in a surprising way, how to practice hospitality: although he is the guest – the stranger – at the well, he is the one who offers living water to the Samaritan woman and invites her to join those who worship “in spirit and in truth,” transcending the ethnic divisions that separate Jews and Samaritans. This week, ask God to show you how you might practice hospitality. Hospitality may look like inviting friends into your home for a meal; creating space for others at your school or workplace; serving immigrants; or beginning to explore the process of racial reconciliation.





# Fourth Week of Lent

## READING

JOHN 9:1-41

<sup>1</sup> As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?”

<sup>3</sup> “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. <sup>4</sup> We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. <sup>5</sup> But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world.”

<sup>6</sup> Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man’s eyes. <sup>7</sup> He told him, “Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam” (Siloam means “sent”). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

<sup>8</sup> His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, “Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup> Some said he was, and others said, “No, he just looks like him!”

But the beggar kept saying, “Yes, I am the same one!”

<sup>10</sup> They asked, “Who healed you? What happened?”

<sup>11</sup> He told them, “The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.’ So I went and washed, and now I can see!”

<sup>12</sup> “Where is he now?” they asked.

“I don’t know,” he replied.

<sup>13</sup> Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, <sup>14</sup> because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. <sup>15</sup> The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, “He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!”

<sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, “This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath.” Others said, “But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?” So there was a deep division of opinion among them.

<sup>17</sup> Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, “What’s your opinion about this man who healed you?”

The man replied, “I think he must be a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup> The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents. <sup>19</sup> They asked them, “Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?”

<sup>20</sup> His parents replied, “We know this is our son and that he was born blind, <sup>21</sup> but we don’t know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself.” <sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue.

<sup>23</sup> That’s why they said, “He is old enough. Ask him.”

<sup>24</sup> So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, “God should get the glory for this, because we know this man Jesus is a sinner.”

<sup>25</sup> “I don’t know whether he is a sinner,” the man replied. “But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!”

<sup>26</sup> “But what did he do?” they asked. “How did he heal you?”

<sup>27</sup> “Look!” the man exclaimed. “I told you once. Didn’t you listen? Why

do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

<sup>28</sup> Then they cursed him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! <sup>29</sup> We know God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from."

<sup>30</sup> "Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? <sup>31</sup> We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. <sup>32</sup> Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it."

<sup>34</sup> "You were born a total sinner!" they answered. "Are you trying to teach us?" And they threw him out of the synagogue.

<sup>35</sup> When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

<sup>36</sup> The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

<sup>37</sup> "You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!"

<sup>38</sup> "Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

<sup>39</sup> Then Jesus told him, "I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind."

<sup>40</sup> Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, "Are you saying we're blind?"

<sup>41</sup> "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see."

## **IMAGINATIVE PRAYER**

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Imaginative prayer is part of the Ignatian spiritual practice of contemplation. In this practice, begin by imagining what you would see, hear, or feel if you were present for the events of the story. You might then imagine yourself as a bystander, or as one of the characters in the story. As you enter the scene through your imagination, notice how Jesus may be speaking to you — and how you might speak to Jesus — through the story.

## VISIO DIVINA: JESUS HEALING THE BLIND MAN

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- Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind: set aside distractions and sit comfortably; you might light a candle to remind you of the presence of God. Invite the Holy Spirit to be with you.
- Look at the piece of art, taking your time. Can you see this scene as God sees it? What do you most notice in the image? What feelings does it evoke? How might this image help you reflect on the story of Jesus healing the man born blind? How might this image help you see the good that God is showing you?
- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.



## BONUS REFLECTION

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Read the poem below, then return to the image or the scripture passage. How does this poem add a new dimension to your understanding of the story and the image?

### A “Why” Question Lingers

a “why” question  
lingers:

why do you still call me  
the man born blind,  
the man who used to beg?

why can't you see that now I see?  
why can't you call me

the man who now sees?

are you  
perhaps defining yourself  
in terms of past limitations,  
mistakes and failures?

are you stuck  
in the memories of the blinding challenges  
you experienced yesterday  
or yesteryear?

why don't you feel the moist clay  
on your eyes  
today

and know that your new name is  
the person who now sees!

– Philip Chircop, SJ



## WEEKLY PRACTICE: FACE-TO-FACE PRESENCE

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In this narrative, Jesus gives the gift of sight to a man born blind – and then seeks this man out again in order to have a face-to-face conversation where the man can truly see Jesus. God becomes an incarnate human being so that God can be with us, human face to human face; and as the apostle Paul writes, even though we now see through a glass dimly, we will once again see Jesus face-to-face and know him fully even as we are fully known (1 Corinthians 13:12). This face-to-face connection is deeply important to us: it is how we know others and how we are known in return.

This week, seek out face-to-face conversations when possible (yes, video calls can count!). And as you connect with others, pray that you might be able to see them as God sees them, and that God might bless them and you through your gift of presence.

# Fifth Week of Lent

## READING

JOHN 11:1-45

<sup>1</sup> A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. <sup>2</sup> This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. <sup>3</sup> So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." <sup>5</sup> So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, <sup>6</sup> he stayed where he was for the next two days. <sup>7</sup> Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

<sup>8</sup> But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?"

<sup>9</sup> Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light." <sup>11</sup> Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up."

<sup>12</sup> The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!"

<sup>13</sup> They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

<sup>14</sup> So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. <sup>15</sup> And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him."

<sup>16</sup> Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go,

too—and die with Jesus.”

<sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. <sup>18</sup> Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, <sup>19</sup> and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. <sup>20</sup> When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.”

<sup>24</sup> “Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”

<sup>25</sup> Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?”

<sup>27</sup> “Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.” <sup>28</sup> Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, “The Teacher is here and wants to see you.” <sup>29</sup> So Mary immediately went to him.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. <sup>31</sup> When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus’s grave to weep. So they followed her there. <sup>32</sup> When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

<sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled.

<sup>34</sup> “Where have you put him?” he asked them.

They told him, “Lord, come and see.”<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus wept.<sup>36</sup> The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!”<sup>37</sup> But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

<sup>38</sup> Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance.<sup>39</sup> “Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man’s sister, protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.”

<sup>40</sup> Jesus responded, “Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?”<sup>41</sup> So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.<sup>42</sup> You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.”<sup>43</sup> Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!”<sup>44</sup> And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!”

<sup>45</sup> Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen.

## LECTIO DIVINA

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Lectio divina invites us to slow down, pay careful attention, and talk to God about what we notice and experience when we read (or listen to) a section of scripture. Use these traditional steps of lectio divina as you read the passage on the previous pages:

- *Silencio*: quiet your mind and heart and enter into God's presence.
- *Lectio*: read the passage slowly, paying attention to the words or images that capture your mind. Hear what God is saying to you.
- *Meditatio*: read the passage again, listening to God's invitation to you and pondering the words in your heart.
- *Oratio*: respond to God, talking to God about the thoughts and feelings that have arisen in your reading.
- *Contemplatio*: wait in the presence of God, allowing the words of the scripture to sink into your soul.

## VISIO DIVINA: RESUSCITATION OF LAZARUS

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- Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind: set aside distractions and sit comfortably; you might light a candle to remind you of the presence of God. Invite the Holy Spirit to be with you.
- Look at the piece of art, taking your time. Can you see this scene as God sees it? What do you most notice in the image? What feelings does it evoke? How might this image help you reflect on the story of Lazarus? How might this image help you see the good that God is showing you?
- Talk to God about what the image stirs in you, what you see and experience as you contemplate this work of art.



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János Vaszary, *Resuscitation of Lazarus*, 1912.

## WEEKLY PRACTICE: NEW LIFE

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During the week of Ash Wednesday, I invited you to notice where God is at work around you: in your life, in your home, in your neighborhood, in all your communities. This week, as we reflect on the resurrection of Lazarus and prepare to enter into Holy Week, I invite you to return to what you noticed. Where is God bringing new life? How might you join the work of God as he begins to make all things new? Are there certain spiritual practices – perhaps even confession, humility, hospitality, or presence – that might help you continue to see God at work and to participate in the work of healing and restoration?

We close with this prayer:

O Holy and Immortal One,  
hear us as we pray through Jesus, our high priest:  
heal all our divisions,  
reconcile all who are estranged,  
console all who suffer,  
and finally raise up to new life  
all that is bound by death. Amen.

– Revised Common Lectionary Prayers (2002)



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