



*Springtime
of the Soul
Lent 2026*

 *St. Joseph*

Lent 2026

INTRODUCTION

It's that time of the year.

"Put on your sackcloth and ashes," says our most wise Creator.

Sack cloth and ashes, really? I only buy clothes and cosmetics that I try on and are tested.

OK, so where is the nearest fitting room and cosmetic counter? I'm also pretty fussy about the product's creators. And most of all I never try on new clothes alone.

So, would you go to our SPRINGTIME OF THE SOUL Lenten Boutique? Clothes and cosmetics have been named over the centuries by Hebrew and Christian partners: specially created sackcloth and ash products. These creators have a long and rich life-giving history; their creations are certainly worth a try, don't you think?

So, every day that I'm in the fitting room I'll try on Scripture. I'll pray and I'll accept the personal challenges; I'll wear the daily choices in union with you, reflectors, who have also accepted the invitation to be a wearer of sackcloth and ashes.

I heard that after 40 long days in the Lenten fitting room, the sackcloth and ashes are really a clean heart and full life, partnering with the risen Jesus Christ who has been in the fitting room the whole time. Jesus, through his Spirit, knows that we are with Him to bring peace and beauty to the whole of creation as we wear our baptismal robe from the Easter Boutique. Alleluia!

*Carol Crepeau, CSJ
Burr Ridge, IL*

ASH WEDNESDAY - FEBRUARY 18

SCRIPTURE

Joel 2: 12-18

Ps 51: 3-6 and 12-14, 17

2 Cor 5: 20-6: 2

Mt. 6: 1-6, 16-18

REFLECTION

“Even now, says the Holy One, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Holy One, your God.” (Joel 2:12)

Here we are beginning Lent on another Ash Wednesday; another opportunity to smudge our foreheads with ashes, remembering that we are made of earth, cosmic dust, and God’s breath. It is our annual time of re-turning to God with our whole heart. A time for fasting, for weeping and mourning, for rending our hearts, as we look around our world at the losses, the violence, the injustice that surround us on every side; even as we trust that our God is with us, sees us whether in public or in secret, and holds us close always.

So, what shall we fast from this year? Perhaps from the negative news, discouragement at all that is being undermined in our democratic institutions, the temptation to despair at all the harm being done to Earth. Instead, recognizing all this, we can look for where we see the Holy present and be sources of hope, sparks of light and positive energy in and for those around us and for our world.

PRAYER

As we enter this season of Lent, be with us, Christ, in our being and doing. Open our hearts and minds to your call to fast, to give freely, to walk with you, and to follow where you lead.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Today when you hear God’s voice, in life and the world, open your heart and life to the call to be present and act with love and justice wherever there is need.

*Christine Parks, CSJ
Kalamazoo, MI*

THURSDAY – FEBRUARY 19

SCRIPTURE

Deut 30: 15-20

Ps 1: 1-4, 6

Lk 9: 22-25

REFLECTION

“...Today I have set before you life and good, death and evil...”

Deut 30:15

“Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.” Ps 1

“...whoever loses their life for my sake will save it...” Lk 9:24

There is no mistake putting these readings the day after Ash Wednesday because today's scripture sets the tone for the spiritual journey: the invitation (Deut), the journey (Psalm), the depth (Luke). These are not easy readings to live, and what the Holy One calls you to depends on how open you are to transforming and letting go of what is comfortable. So, I ask:

What do you choose – life and prosperity or death and doom?

How open are you to completely place your hope in the Holy One?

How willing are you to open yourself to the transformation into unconditional love – agape Love?

Sounds simple enough, especially choosing life over death, good over evil, and placing hope in the Holy One. However, the challenge of agape love (“the highest, selfless form of love, defined as unconditional, sacrificial, and rooted in action rather than emotion”) and opening your mind, heart, and soul for transformation is difficult. Letting go of being comfortable, especially in this chaotic world, is to open yourself up to the paradoxes scripture sets before us today. Welcome a deeper conversion experience while walking with Jesus...Your authentic self awaits you and the Holy One is ready to guide.

PRAYER

Holy One...As we begin this Lenten journey of new life and prosperity, grace me with the desire to become the authentic person you invite me to be while placing my hope in You.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Sit quietly or take a walk and listen deeply to what the Holy One invites you to during your Lenten journey. You might want to write down what you hear along with your response.

What is the grace you need today?

*Juli de Tarnowsky, CSJ
La Grange Park, IL*

FRIDAY – FEBRUARY 20

SCRIPTURE

Is 58: 1-9a

Ps 51: 3-6, 18-19

Mt 9: 14-15

REFLECTION

“This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and homeless; clothing the naked and not turning your back on your own.”

Is 58: 6-7

When I was a campus minister, people were always curious to know what others had chosen to give up for Lent. The office would be buzzing with folks discerning what to choose. While others, opting not to fast, might say that it felt pointless or performative to fast from things like chocolate or social media. This begs the question, what does it mean to fast? Today’s scripture proclaims that the fasting God desires disrupts systems of thought, actions, and words that feed into cycles of oppression, violence, or disconnection with God and one another. To abstain from something that is part of our daily habits is difficult, yet it can be a catalyst to reflect on our participation in unjust systems and how we might grow in solidarity with our dear neighbor. When it feels like our church and country are becoming more polarized, how can fasting re-orient us towards Christ’s mission of unity? When you choose to go without something that feels essential, does its absence invite you to turn towards God and God’s people with your whole heart?

PRAYER

God of Great Love, open my heart to the things that do not serve your mission of unity in my thoughts, in my words, and in my actions. May Christ’s love liberate each one of us and bring us all into union.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Reflect on the ways in which your Lenten fast helps you to reconnect with God or to embody God’s great love in a new way.

*Erin McDonald, CSJ
Detroit, MI*

SATURDAY – FEBRUARY 21

SCRIPTURE

Is 58: 9b-14

Ps 86: 1-6

Lk 5: 27-32

REFLECTION

“If you deprive yourself for the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, your light will rise in the darkness, and your darkest hour will be like the noon.” Is. 58: 10

“I have come to call, not the upright, but sinners to repentance.” Lk. 5:32

Jesus said to the tax collector “Follow me” and he immediately did. How do I hear the Call and why do I respond or fail to do so.? It is comforting to know that we, the sinners, are called, but if it requires repentance, am I easily able to ignore the calling as being just too hard?

Am I fasting from food and habits to feed the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted? Or am I mostly going for self-improvement? Why am I doing what I am doing?

I like the image of light and darkness in Isaiah. Why wouldn't I repent of my sins that contribute to the woes of the earth, such as structural poverty, while I live in comfort? I have to concede that maybe I am not firmly among the upright and must repent and atone for my own actions. I can see my darkest hour brightening like the light before the dawn and rising toward the beautiful glare of noon!

PRAYER

Merciful God, you have called me over and over again.

Grant me an open spirit to hear, repent, and act by spreading your love.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

I will listen for God's calling today and ask myself how I might feed the hungry and satisfy the afflicted.

*Tony Bezouska, CSJ Associate
La Grange Park, IL*

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – FEBRUARY 22

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7
Ps. 51: 3-6, 12-13, 17
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11

REFLECTION

*“The serpent asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?” ... “No, just this one.”... “God knows that the moment you eat of it, you will be like Gods...” Gen. 3:1-5
“Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.”
Mt. 4:1*

Eve was duped! The cunning serpent twisted the truth and planted seeds of doubt and she “bit.” Similarly in the Gospel: wouldn’t you be tempted to “turn stones into bread” after a 40 day fast! Twice more the devil tempts Jesus’ susceptible heart. Fresh from his Baptism when he heard: “this is my beloved Son,” he needs to really believe that the angels will save him. One more try – this one so seductive – is all about power. Again, Jesus resisted, clinging to his deep faith in his Father.

In Abiding Word: Sunday Reflections for Year A Barbara Reid reflects: “The real temptations are the ones that are just close enough to the truth that they appear good and beneficial.”

While not directly, perhaps the Gospel also invites us to consider what happened to and for Jesus during those 40 days in the desert. As we begin our own Lenten journey of 40 days what will happen to and for us?

PRAYER

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Help me become more aware of my vulnerable places.
Do I need (look for) affirmation?
Am I too quiet when I need to speak?

*Marguerite O’Brien, CSJ
Wheeling, WV*

MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT – FEBRUARY 23

SCRIPTURE

Lev 19: 1-2, 11-18

Ps 19: 8-10, 15

Mt 25: 31-46

REFLECTION

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

...nor shall you stand by idly when your neighbor’s life is at stake.” Lev 19

“Behold, now is ...time; behold, now is the day” Ps 19

“Amen, I say to you, whatever you did

for one of these least brothers/sisters of mine, you did for Me.” MT 25

From the Old Testament to the New we hear “...speak to the whole assembly of the children of Israel...” to “and all the nations will be assembled before Him.” From “Thou shalt not” to “you cared for...” From “neighbor” to “the least.” From “...love your neighbor as yourself” to “...you did for Me.”

Do we understand our directive for this Lenten season to deepen our relationship with our Creator/Savior/ Sanctifier by deepening our relationship with the least? We are to “Stand Up” to enable each to “stand up.”

In the words of Irenaeus, “Become Fully Alive.” Martin Luther King, “...for righteousness, for justice, for truth.” Bob Marley “...for your rights.” For Sylvain Bataille “being a Christian means being a person who stands up.” In the words of Pope Leo, “Lebanon, stand up. Be a home of justice and fraternity. Be a prophetic sign of peace...” Now is the time! Now is the day!

PRAYER

Generous God, you have gifted me over and over again.

You are oh, so patient as I refocus once again.

Open my eyes that I may see, my ears that I may hear, my lips that

I may sing your glory,

my heart that I may love as You love, and strengthen my legs, that

I may stand up. Amen.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Where is the one person with whom I am to stand up today?

*Pat Warbritton CSJ
Kalamazoo, MI*

TUESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT – FEBRUARY 24

SCRIPTURE

Is 55: 10-11

Ps 34: 4-7, 16-19

Mt 6: 7-15

REFLECTION

*“Thus says the Lord: ...My word
that goes forth from my mouth;
It shall not return to me void,
but shall do my will,*

achieving the end for which I sent it.” (Is 55:11)

“Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” (Mt 6:8)

It is easy to slip into hopelessness these days. Each news cycle is more disturbing than the one before. Glimmers of hope emerge only to be squashed. Yet the prophet Isaiah reminds us of the promise that God’s word will achieve the end for which it was sent.

As CSJs and Associates we know and trust in the Great Love that calls all into union. It might feel like a failed experiment at times like these, but Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, looking at life with an evolutionary lens and a mystical heart, reminds us that the Universe is born of Love, and drawn forth by Love into greater union until the fullness of the Christ is manifest. The evolutionary story teaches us that stability leads eventually to cataclysm and over time into MORE life – achieving the end for which God sent it.

Jesus shows us how to stand in the face of chaos and injustice. We rely on his promise that God knows what we need before we ask – perhaps even before we know what we need.

PRAYER

You who know what we need even before we ask, please open our ears and quiet our hearts that we might hear only your voice. May we be able to process and release our many emotions until we are able to sit in deep silence. May that silence open us to what you, O Holy One, are calling forth from us.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Notice what you are feeling. Ask:

- Is this emotion mine?
- Is this emotion someone else’s?
- What is under this emotion?
- What is mine to do?

*Bridget Sperduto, CSJ Associate
Bend, OR*

WEDNESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT – FEBRUARY 25

SCRIPTURE

Jonah 3:1-10

Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19

Luke 11:29-32

REFLECTION

"...Every person shall turn from... the violence they have in hand.

Who knows, God may relent and forgive..." Jonah 8b-9a

*"My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit, a heart contrite and humbled,
O God, you will not spurn..." Ps 51:19*

"This generation is an evil generation..." Luke 11:29

We are now a full week into Lent. Is there a Jonah in your life, telling you what needs to change? We are all too familiar with the evil and violence currently in our world. Can we own our part in it? Hearing the need to repent, what is our version of being covered in sackcloth and ashes? Might it be repairing a relationship that has been broken too long? Or getting help to heal from an addiction? Can I be honest enough with myself to admit that I've been avoiding my friends, or God? How do I develop a contrite heart, a humble spirit other than by approaching God and asking for a clean heart? Jesus says "no sign will be given to this evil generation." Do I choose to stay part of the evil generation, or do I trust that God does relent and forgive me, us?

PRAYER

Have mercy on me (us), O God, in your goodness,
in the greatness of your compassion
wipe out my (our) offense. Cast me (us) not out from your
presence and your Holy Spirit,
take not from me (us). A humble, contrite heart O God, you will
not spurn

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

I will take an honest look at my words and actions, to discern what I need to develop a humble spirit and contrite heart.

*Sue McCreery, CSJ
Kalamazoo, MI*

THURSDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT – FEBRUARY 26

SCRIPTURE

Esther C: 12, 14-16, 23-25

Ps 138: 1-3, 7-8

Mt 7: 7-12

REFLECTION

*“Queen Esther, seized with mortal anguish,
had recourse to the LORD” Esther C: 12*

“The LORD is with me to the end.

LORD, your mercy endures forever.” Ps 138: 7-8

*Jesus said to his disciples: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you
will find; and “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you.*

This is the law and the prophets.” Mt. 7: 7, 12

As I write this, my guess is that many of us cannot help but think about and pray for Liam Conejo Ramos, the five-year-old detained by ICE while wearing his school backpack and blue bunny hat. Like Queen Esther, I and so many others, are “seized with mortal anguish” by the daily acts of cruelty and inhumanity. The Psalmist says “The LORD is with me to the end,” but in desperate moments, as more people disappear, are harmed, or killed, I wonder where God is. As so many of us pray for peace and for relief, I wonder about the promise of asking and “it will be given to you.” And then I think about the Golden Rule of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, and am awed by the outpouring of support, kindness, mutual aid, and personal risk-taking by neighbors in Minneapolis as they daily live the Golden Rule and know that the LORD is with us to the end.

PRAYER

God of Love, thank you for the blessing of this life. Please awaken in each of us the spirit of love that lives within so that we may turn to each other in love, see each other in love, and work to relieve the suffering of all people. Amen.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

To remember that God lives in every cell of every being, even those engaging in acts of cruelty, and to pray for the awakening of God’s love in all.

*Heather Alderman, CSJ Associate
La Grange, IL*

FRIDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT – FEBRUARY 27

SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 18: 21-28
Psalm 130: 1-5, 7-8
Matthew 5: 20-26

REFLECTION

*“You have heard it said, ‘you shall not kill.’ But I say, whoever is angry with their relative will be liable to judgment... If you bring your gift to the altar, and recall that your relative has anything against you, leave your gift, go and be reconciled. Then come, offer your gift.” Mt. 5.
“With the Lord is kindness, and plenteous redemption.” Ps. 130*

Have you watched, “The Chosen?” I am enjoying and being challenged as “backstories” of Jesus’ disciples unfold. As he practices the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls on Matthew, the tax collector, portrayed as a young man possibly on the autism spectrum, to take notes and give feedback. After days of preparation, Jesus preaches. As he speaks, the camera zooms in on listeners, whose facial expressions change with Jesus’ words. The camera zooms in on Matthew as Jesus says, “go and be reconciled.”

Afterwards, all are exhausted. Jesus gives them some time off, and as the disciples return to their families, we watch the sermon’s effect. Matthew initially sleeps in a tent, believing he cannot go home. Viewers know that Matthew’s father disowned him after nearly being arrested for taxes owed. But Matthew summons his courage and knocks on his father’s door. Perhaps out of respect or even feelings of disgrace, Matthew does not say “father” when the door opens. His father, however, greets Matthew with “son,” and the two embrace.

PRAYER

O God, as my own life unfolds, give me the courage to recognize and make amends when necessary. May I believe that I am forgiven, even as I extend forgiveness.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

I trust that Jesus’ way of humility and love is my own path to freedom and redemption.

*Theresa Pitruzello, CSJ
New Orleans, LA*

SATURDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT – FEBRUARY 28

SCRIPTURE

Deut. 26: 16-19

Ps. 119: 1-2, 4-5, 7-8

Mt. 5: 43-48

REFLECTION

*“...you will be a people holy to your God,
as God promised.” (Deut. 26:19)*

*“Blessed are those who...seek God with all their heart...
following God’s ways.” (Psalm 119:2-3)*

*“God causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good,
and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Mt. 5:45)*

How unrighteous I am, yet God rains blessings on me, loving me unconditionally. When I internalize God’s love for me, I want to respond; not out of duty or command, but because my heart becomes so full.

My hope is in surrendering to God’s love that is ever before me, within me, surrounding me, working through me.

“...you will be a people holy to your God, as God promised.” My actions follow God’s promise. Becoming aware and surrendering to God’s promise fills me with the desire to love. And as I recognize my unrighteousness before such love, I turn my eyes to others that I see as “falling short” and want to show mercy as I am shown such mercy and love.

Yes, when I “seek God with all my heart,” I feel drawn to follow God’s ways and am blessed, and the pure and perfect love of God comes through.

PRAYER

Generous God, help me to surrender to your love in me that I might desire to love as you love.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Reflect on God’s great love for you.

Consider the dear neighbor who comes to mind as you reflect.

*Dianne Hanley, CSJ Associate
Baton Rouge, LA*

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT – MARCH 1

SCRIPTURE

Gen 12: 1-4a

Ps 33: 4-5, 18-20, 22

2 Tim 1: 8b-10

Mt 17: 1-9

REFLECTION

*“Beloved: Bear your share of hardship for the gospel
with the strength that comes from God.”*

2 Timothy 1:8b

Where and with whom am I standing? Looking around at our world, I see hardships hitting so many communities: immigrant communities facing increased risk of detention and deportation; transgender youth facing new barriers to receiving life-saving medical care; and millions of people in the US facing food insecurity. People are suffering, and I wish they did not have to bear it. When I see the struggle of my siblings on the margins, whose identity or circumstance in an unjust world leads to suffering, I find in Paul’s words the invitation to struggle with them. Paul is not praising suffering for no reason, but “for the sake of the gospel” I am called to embrace hardship for and with those who struggle for justice in this life, so as to make the Kingdom of God more present on earth. I live in the hope that where and with whom I am standing, God may be well-pleased.

PRAYER

Gracious and Ever-Loving God, give me wisdom to know
where and with whom you are inviting me to stand,
and the strength to struggle alongside them.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Whom do I see facing hardship because of their identity
or circumstance today?

Where am I willing to embrace hardship
to bring about the Kingdom of God?

*Julia Erdlen, CSJ Candidate
Brookfield, IL*

MONDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 2

SCRIPTURE

Dan 9: 4b-10

Ps 79: 8-9, 11, 13

Lk 6: 36-38

REFLECTION

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned.

Forgive and you will be forgiven.” Lk 6: 36-38

I’ve noticed myself being quite judgmental of those that I see as condemning and judgmental of others. Fr. Greg Boyle says that working at Home Boy Industries with thousands of gang members, they have two principles, “Everyone is unshakably good (no exceptions)” and “We belong to each other (no exceptions).” I can find the “unshakably good” part a lot easier to believe about gang members than some more publicly known individuals. Thus, my challenge to “judge not.” Fr. Greg points to moving from a right and wrong to healthy and unhealthy view of others, can be a tool to move into a space of curiosity and compassion. It does make sense to me, knowing the healing needed within myself, that others also may act out of their need for healing. In my attempt to live out of the forgiveness and unconditional love God gives me, I see my invitation as being one to approach others with a sense of curiosity and understanding rather than judgment and condemnation.

PRAYER

Forgiving God, welcome me and those that I find challenging to forgive into your loving presence, so that, being filled with your gratuitous love, we may share that abundant love and forgiveness with others.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Can I spend some time today sitting in the healing, unconditionally loving presence of God, knowing God sees me as unshakably good?

*Rose Ann Hefner, CSJ
Charleston, WV*

TUESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 3

SCRIPTURE

Is 1: 10, 16-20

Ps 50: 8-9, 16-17, 21, 23

Mt 23: 1-12

REFLECTION

*“I will let him whose way is steadfast look upon
the salvation of God.” Ps 50:23*

*“Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes;
cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the
wronged, hear the orphan’s plea, defend the widow. Come now, let us
set things right, says the LORD.” Is 1: 16-18*

The readings today reflect the disposition with which one might take on the action required of the foundational principles of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Psalm 50 speaks of one who is steadfast as having the opportunity for salvation and has harsh reprimands for the wicked, undisciplined, and deceitful. Remaining steady in the way of the Lord allows for closer alignment to God, allows for us to see things the way God sees them, and respond as God would respond. Isaiah Chapter 1 calls for us to “Wash (y)ourselves clean” and “put away (y)our misdeeds” (Is. 1:16), focusing on justice and that which is right. Setting our hearts on the path of the Lord allows us to be more attuned to the need for fasting and almsgiving and where these practices might be needed. We are called to be the hands and feet of Christ; this time of prayer and reflection inspires us to deepen our connection to the work of Jesus.

PRAYER

God of Justice, as we seek alignment to your mission, may we set things right, remain steadfast in our aims, and humbly walk with you. May our hearts be made clean and our arms open wide to those in need.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

How can I do justice and right wrongs in the work of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving this Lenten season?

*Sara Conneely, D. Min
Chicago, IL*

WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 4

SCRIPTURE

Jer 18: 18-20

Ps 31: 5-6, 14-16

Mt. 20: 17-28

REFLECTION

“Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mt. 20: 26-28

In today’s gospel, Jesus tells his disciples that they need to serve one another, just as he has come to serve. Sometimes we may be confused as to what the word serve means. We may think of a servant as someone held in bondage working for a small wage. Jesus isn’t talking about this kind of servant. Serving is giving of your time, your talents, your blessings: expecting nothing in return. Jesus set the greatest example of what it means to serve others. Serving others brings Joy to our lives and those we serve. We can serve our family, friends, and strangers. We all know of many volunteer groups where we can serve others. Sometimes we may forget small ways to serve others every day with words of kindness, a smile, a compliment, or just listening to someone. Today let us ask Jesus to show us ways we can serve one another. Let us find Joy in serving others.

PRAYER

Dear God,

Help me to see the needs of those around me and be willing to step in and help in any way I can. Whether it’s offering a kind word, a listening ear, or a helping hand, please give me the courage and compassion to serve others selflessly.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Think of one small way you can serve others today.

Try to make it a daily practice.

Thank God for all the blessings He has given to you.

*Nancy Leonard, CSJ Associate
La Grange, IL*

THURSDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 5

SCRIPTURE

Jer 17:5-10

Ps 1:1-4, 6

Lk 16:19-31

REFLECTION

“Blessed is the one who trusts in God, whose hope is in God.” (Jer 17:7)
Luke 16:19-31

I recently read a reflection where the author invited readers to “take a clear-eyed look at the world around us and how we participate in its healing or harm.” It is hard to look at the world today. It is difficult to watch the news, open social media, read a newspaper. Whether on our streets, in our neighborhoods, in our country, or around the world, it is impossible to escape the intensity of division, anger, intolerance, violence, greed, injustice, lack of respect for human life. Daily we see such fear and pain on the faces of our vulnerable dear neighbors and perhaps feel it in ourselves.

In the Gospel, the sin of the rich man was not that he had abundant riches, but in how he allowed his self-indulgence, his pride and comfort in his riches to make him unable to see or respond with compassion to Lazarus lying at his door every day. Perhaps the message of Jesus for us here is to keep our eyes open far enough to really see – to see as God sees. Certainly, God sees the suffering, the evil, the persecution, the denial of life. But we know that God also sees beyond, to the beauty, compassion, the goodness, the love and care of so many for the dear neighbors and Earth herself.

PRAYER

Jesus, in these dark times, help us to keep our eyes open, to see the realities of the world around us, to see as you do, and to respond with open hearts and willing lives. We place our hope and trust in You.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Let me continually take a clear-eyed look at the world around me, discern how I participate in its healing or harm, and boldly act in accord with our spirit of unifying love.

Janet Fleischhacker, CSJ
Kalamazoo, MI

FRIDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 6

SCRIPTURE

Gen 37: 3-4, 12-13, 17-28

Ps 105: 16-21

Mt 21: 33-43, 45-46

REFLECTION

*“...before he came up to them, they plotted to kill him. “Gen 37:18
“Come on, let us kill him and throw him into one of the cisterns here.”
Gen 37:20*

*“But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they
killed, and a third they stoned.” Mt 21:35*

“Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.” Mt 21:38

News of killings fills our TV, social media, email box, conversations, etc. We are surrounded by the news. I have never understood a person's need to kill another. How can people be filled with such hate that they can kill their brother, parents, people on a beach, people in a church, people they know and people that they don't know? There were 408 mass shootings in 2025; we see our government carrying out mass executions. These things appear in the news daily. Is that causing a normalization of killing? And yet today's scripture readings delineate the same type of behavior over 3000 years ago in Genesis and 2000 years ago in Matthew.

I've heard it argued that there is no such thing as hate, it is simply a lack, or removal of love. It appears to me that there is a huge lack of love in the world and in the hearts of all those who think the answer is to kill.

PRAYER

Gracious God, you are a God of love, not of hate or violence. May we remember that you reside within each of us and we are created in your image. We are created for loving, not killing or hurting. Please make us an instrument of your love.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

During this weekend, where in your world can you intervene with love to prevent violence/aggression?

Be vigilant, stay aware, and look for the opportunity.

*Mary Frances Ross, CSJ Associate
Kalamazoo, MI*

SATURDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 7

SCRIPTURE

Micah 7:14-15, 18-20

Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12

Lk 15:1-3, 11-32
Is 29: 17-24

REFLECTION

“God delights in showing faithful love” (Micah 7: 18)

“... you are always with me. All I have is yours” (Luke 15:31)

Resurrection is happening! A Love Feast deep in all creation (Our Deepest Self) is always on the look-out for an opportunity to rise in us and our faith communities, nations, and species. Yet I keep forgetting Divine Delight is our inheritance. Lured from my Deepest Self, I squander my inheritance in selfish pursuits, invade and plunder the revelation of God in creation, while self-righteously pointing the finger of separation at others, leaders, nations, corporations who are doing the same. Comparison, judgment, hard heartedness . . . become my face – no thought of loving. Suddenly, in my darkest hour, Lavish Love from deep within floods me with compassion. My Deepest Self (who never leaves me) awakens to know I am loved just as I am! Delight fills me, sending me to be God’s abounding delight, compassion, and forgiveness. This resurrection happens over and over in me (in us) until every creature, leader, nation, and faith community are robed in delight, and welcomed to feasting on compassion and belonging!

PRAYER

O Lavish Love, Our Deepest Self, keep pursuing every part of our reckless and arrogant selves, revealed in leaders, nations, and faith communities. Awaken us to your presence. Flow through every part of us to robe all in affection, to welcome all to belonging, and to feast on compassion.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

I pray to notice what I resist, to recognize this as part of me, and to celebrate the privilege of feasting on compassion.

*Pat Bergen, CSJ
Westchester, IL*

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT – MARCH 8

SCRIPTURE

Ex 17: 3-7

Ps 95: 1-2, 6-9

Rom 5: 1-2, 5-8

Jn 4: 5-42

REFLECTION

“I will be standing there in front of you....Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink.” Ex 17: 6

“Whoever drinks the water I give them will never be thirsty. No, the water I give them shall become a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Jn 4: 14

Both the Old and New Testament readings speak of the basic human need for water. But what first appears to be merely a request for a drink of water to quench thirst becomes a deeper act of faith and trust in God’s never-ending presence and love. Moses strikes the rock with the assurance of God’s presence, trusting that he and the Israelites will not be thirsty any longer. The Samaritan woman’s encounter with Jesus at the well is a great act of faith in who he is and what he promises. Both Moses and the Samaritan woman are touched by God’s desire to reach deeper into their hearts, well beyond the immediate situation, to be a continuous and ongoing source of life to them.

God’s presence in our lives is not occasional, situational, or “as needed.” It is the living water that is constantly welling up and moving deep within us, becoming the root and source of all grace. We are not dependent on circumstance, but rather draw from and rely on the ongoing spring of God’s love.

PRAYER

Loving God, You are the source of life and goodness within us. May every prayer and work of ours be guided by Your inspiration and carried out with Your gracious assistance.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Is there a part of my life where I am looking to quench a thirst?
Be aware of the living water of God’s love within and draw on this grace to respond.

*Jim Boyd, CSJ Associate
Chicago, IL*

MONDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 9

SCRIPTURE

2 Kings 5: 1-14

Ps 42: 2-3; 43: 3-4

Lk 4:24-30

REFLECTION

*“My soul is thirsting for the living God:
when shall I see God face to face?” Ps 42:3*

“My father,” they said, “if the prophet had told you to do something extraordinary, would you not have done it? All the more now since he said to you, ‘Wash and be clean,’ should you do as he said.” 2 Kings 5:13

Psalm 42 invites us to trust in our thirst for the living God, and in our trusting to be open to see God face to face! The invitation to trust and see the action of God is central to the story of Naaman, his conversion and healing. For the psalmist, for Naaman, and for us, thirst for the living God can open us to encounter God’s saving action in all life’s moments, in all of creation.

In the second book of Kings, Naaman, a commander of the army of the King of Syria, is thirsting also! He needed healing that medical science could not provide. He needed a healing that could only come through trust in the miracle working power of God. Naaman was sent to Elisha, a man of God, a prophet, in Israel to be miraculously healed. Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan River seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you, and you shall be clean.” Naaman’s pride was bruised because he expected Elisha to greet him, lay hands on him and miraculously heal the leprosy. He wanted special treatment for his faith. He had decided how God should heal a man as important as himself. He was not about to wash in the dirty Jordan River! Naaman was about to lose his blessing when he was entreated by his servants to obey the prophet. Naaman’s choice to believe in the word of the man of God brought him to be plunged into the River Jordan seven times and be healed.

Naaman’s cure came through a most unlikely water source with counsel from a most unlikely person, indicating to us that God’s ways of responding to our thirst for God are never exhausted, and that opportunities to see God face to face continue to unfold.

PRAYER

God, all inclusive, outpouring, unifying love, let my thirst for You become an ever-expansive expression of your love for all without distinction.

Amen

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Take a moment to reflect on your thirst for God and unite it with all who thirst for what has been lost through the suffering and violence of war and ignorance.

*Rita Ann Teichman, CSJ
Kalamazoo, MI*

TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 10

SCRIPTURE

Daniel 3: 25, 34-43

Psalm 25: 4-9

Matthew 18: 21-35

REFLECTION

“...stood up in the fire and prayed aloud “ Daniel 3:25

“Guide me in your truth and teach me” Ps 25: 5

“Because of your faith, it will be done.” Mt 9:29

Today, I stand up in the fire and pray aloud. A fire of division, injustice, and unrest consumes us as we strive to love our dear neighbor and to create justice and peace.

We all watched as Jonathon Ross murdered Renee Nicole Good. It is easy for me to condemn this ICE agent; however, today's readings are calling me to a different response. Locally, I am faced with divisions between friends and family of differing political views, and I struggle to show mercy in the face of hate and hurt.

Yet, we are called to Acatamiento, a reverent awe of others, to cherish EVERYONE with love and belonging. Pope Leo and Sr Helen Prejean remind us that ALL life (immigrants, prisoners, and yes even ICE agents) deserves reverence, not just innocent life.

The gospel calls us to return God's mercy to our neighbor, showing that God's mercy is patient, does not shame or burden, is gentle and compassionate, and sees Christ in everyone.

PRAYER

God of mercy, transform my heart to love as You love. In the fire of division, injustice, and unrest, teach me patience, gentleness, and compassion. Give me courage to see Christ in every person and to embody mercy that heals, cherishes, and unites.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Stand and pray aloud from the fire,
“Guide me in your truth and teach me,” so I may learn
to love as you do.

*Brenda Leroux Babin, CSJ Associate
Houma, LA*

WEDNESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 11

SCRIPTURE

Deut 4: 1, 5-9

Ps 147: 3-4, 15-16, 19-20

Mt 5: 17-19

REFLECTION

*“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.
I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.” Mt 5: 17*

Jesus seems to be contrasting what we might call “the letter of the law” with what it means to *fulfill*.

In our moment, the letter of the law feels zeroed in on investigations, subpoenas, under-oath testimony, under-appeal judicial decisions. In the chaos of it all, we see that democratic, letter-of-the-law processes and institutions are weak or failing in ways previously unimaginable. They aren’t advancing peace and justice or even maintaining the public order, and it feels as if we live amid a daily toggling between egoic one-upmanship and dangerous brinkmanship.

What if all of us started to acknowledge that the letter of the law as we know it—however righteous and egalitarian it’s written and intended to be—can never be enough? What if we began to understand what Jesus was trying to teach us? *To fulfill* happens in the human heart where the separation between heaven and earth passes away; it’s where every neighbor—which is to say, every person, creature, and being—is welcome and honored. It’s where we will create and discover the Kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER

Wait! Dear Jesus, it’s already happening! Americans by the millions, with awakened and ever-expanding hearts, are coming not to abolish the law *but to fulfill*. We are pouring into and lining the streets, showing up in neighborhoods and at detention centers, going house-to-house and to small businesses in order to defend and offer care and comfort to all our new-found neighbors.

Praise be!

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Hold on to hope!

*Barbara Foreman, CSJ Associate
La Grange, IL*

THURSDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 12

SCRIPTURE

Jer 7: 23-28
Ps 95: 1-2, 6-9
Lk 11: 14-23

REFLECTION

*“Listen to my voice: then I will be your God
and you shall be my people.” Jer. 7: 23*

“If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” Ps 95: 8

We are God’s people only if we do NOT harden our hearts when we hear God’s voice. I know there are times when I cannot hear God’s voice. The noises of daily life (family situations, the news, social media, neighborhood news) create so much interference. On many days when I sit for prayer, I struggle to quiet all that noise. Maybe I need to check in with my heart. Is it hardened, blocking God’s voice?

Who or what am I forgetting to include as my sister or brother?

What am I ignoring so I don’t have to get involved in a mess?

Why do I fail to believe that Jesus brought the Kingdom of God to us here and now?

When I set my heart to see the world around me with truly open eyes, I can hear God calling me to love with God’s generosity; to remember that all are my family; to use my gifts to bring God’s love to the world around me.

PRAYER

Loving God, You call to us, asking to see your Kingdom
alive in our world.

Soften our hearts so that we hear your voice.

Strengthen our hearts so that we can build that kingdom.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Check the state of your heart and determine to whom or what
God is calling you to bring special love.

*Sue Martin, CSJ Associate
Westchester, IL*

FRIDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 13

SCRIPTURE

Hosea 14: 2-10

Ps 81: 6-11, 14, 17

Mk 12: 28-34

REFLECTION

“I will heal their waywardness.

I will make a fresh start with Israel.” Hosea 14: 4

“I took the world off your shoulders,

freed you from a life of hard labor” Psalm 81: 6-7

*“Love God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence
and energy and being.*

Love others as well as you love yourself” Mk.12:30

What is Lent about? Is it about doing something, like giving up chocolate, or a time of being with God in healing the brokenness in ourselves and in the world? We all know that healing requires a diagnosis of what needs to be healed, acceptance of the process, time, and pain. Where is Lent inviting us to be part of that process? How do we respond to the Love that is healing? How do we continue on that path and not go back to the way we walked before? When something happens to us physically, we know what we need to do to allow healing to happen. Do we always know what healing we need when it is an attitude or a way of being with the rest of Creation? The message is love.

God says: “I freed you from hard labor – took the world off your shoulders.”

Do we really believe that and allow it to happen? Do we see that loving is the path to healing?

PRAYER

Generous and loving God, your love is overwhelming,
Your generosity beyond measure. Help me to be open to
Your love and trust You to keep me at the fresh start You promise.
Help me to love more.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

To be still enough, and listen enough, and aware enough
to hear God’s voice in all of Creation and respond in love.

*Mary Ellen Gondeck, CSJ
Kalamazoo, MI*

SATURDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 14

SCRIPTURE

Hosea 6: 1-6

Ps 51: 3-4, 18-21

Lk 18: 9-14

REFLECTION

“I thank you, Oh God, that I am not like the others.” Lk 18: 11

This is a fairly easy parable to understand, for a change. I get it! I am so grateful I am not like the others! It is pretty easy to say that but, really? In all honesty? I so easily slip into the mode of comparison, judgment of others, and arrogance. I can make quite a list of what I am not. I pray that my list doesn't get so packed that I become so self-assured and arrogant that I am completely out of relationship. And for Jesus, the justified person, the righteous person, is the one who is in right relationship. God is blind, God makes no distinctions. Smart, wealthy, a board member, owning the latest model iPhone, articulate; none of these matters to God.

We are all one in Christ Jesus and that is how we are to behave. Our love for God is shown by treating every person with respect and with the same generosity we treat ourselves and the best of our friends.

PRAYER

“God, be merciful to me a sinner. “ Lk 18: 13
May God's mercy bring me into right relationship with my
neighbors (all of them!),
with the world, with God, and with all creation.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Do I find the source of my life in my relationship with...
or, do I seek to live by pretending to be better?

*Jackie Schmitz, CSJ
Burr Ridge, IL*

SUNDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 15

SCRIPTURE

1 Sam 16: 1b, 6-7, 10-13a

Ps 23: 1, 3-6

Ephesians 5: 8-14

Jn 9: 1-41

REFLECTION

*“...the LORD does not see as mortals see;
they look at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Sam 16: 7b)
“I am the light of the world.” (Jn 9:5b)*

The theme of vision and light/sight appear across the scriptures for today, which tell the story of Samuel’s unlikely anointing of David as king and of Jesus healing a man born blind. Both illustrate how the world looks different in the light of God’s justice and love, which sees past external appearances and cultural assumptions. In the ancient world, misfortune and illness/disability (such as blindness) were generally seen as signs of hidden sin and divine judgment, and so those who suffered in these ways were doubly excluded and maligned. As in many of the gospel stories, the Pharisees’ fixation on external conformity with the law, not only blinds them to its true meaning and purpose, but also to how the works of God are made visible in the world. In contrast, Jesus is the light of the world, illuminating “what is pleasing to God” (Eph. 5:10) through offering mercy and compassion to the vulnerable.

PRAYER

God of Light, may we see the people and events of our world as you do, with eyes open and spirits attentive to the needs of our neighbors. Help us to see beyond appearances and assumptions so that we can share your love and light with the world.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Ask God to illuminate any blindness, prejudice, or assumptions you hold that get in the way of loving God and neighbor truly and without distinction.

*Jessica Wroblewski, CSJ Associate
Cleveland, OH*

MONDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 16

SCRIPTURE

Is 65: 17-21

Ps 30: 2, 4-6, 11-13

Jn 4: 43-54

REFLECTION

“Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.” Jn 4:48

A father implores Jesus to heal his dying son. Unexpectedly Jesus’ response seems like a reprimand, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.” Filled with angst, the father pleads, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus assures him, “Your son will live.” The man returns home, realizes his son was healed at the very moment Jesus made the promise, and he, with his whole household, becomes a believer. Jesus’ words ring true, “Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe.”

This is the second of the seven signs in John’s Gospel. The “signs” are not meant to astonish nor amaze, but rather to reveal Jesus to the world and to those who would follow him. The signs are meant to call us to deeper faith in the creative and transforming work of Jesus, so that even when we cannot see, we still believe. The reading from Isaiah proclaims a God that will create new heavens and a new earth, create rejoicing and happiness, create our place to be a joy. This is what Jesus was and is about – even now. Even though we may not see it, do we still believe?

PRAYER

Jesus, Word made flesh, give me the courage during these last weeks of Lent to believe You continue to create anew our world, our country, our congregation, and even me.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Make an act of faith today that God will make all things new through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
Live that truth today.

*Marcella Clancy, CSJ
Detroit, MI*

TUESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 17

SCRIPTURE

Ezech 47: 1-9, 12

Ps 46: 2-3, 5-6, 8-9

John 5: 1-16

REFLECTION

“Come, see the works of the Lord, who has done fearsome deeds on earth.” Ps 46: 8-9

Today’s scripture readings are an invitation to be hopeful even in the midst of challenging times. Ezechiel stresses the absolute majesty of God and the new heart and spirit that affirm God’s work among us. The psalmist reminds us, “though nations rage and kingdoms fall...the Lord of hosts is with us.” John’s gospel describes the incredible joy of the man who was unable to move into the healing pools at Bethesda until Jesus comes along, heals him, and sends him on his way.

There is something very contagious about good news, about hope, and about unexpected kindness. However, too often our hearts are heavy with worry, discouragement, and pessimism. Today’s readings urge us to take a breath, look around, and perhaps discover not only how we can be more hopeful, but also how we might bring joy and hope to others.

Today is St. Patrick’s Day, traditionally a day to celebrate the values of faith, family, and friendships; so important, not only to those of Irish ancestry, but also to all who know the gift and strength of community. Allow the parades and parties to lighten your heart and open your eyes to the goodness of God who will never disappoint.

PRAYER

God of promise and possibility, remind me to look for sparks of hope and opportunities for spontaneous kindness, especially on days when I am feeling discouraged or too worried about the state of our nation.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

I will try to be more faithful to the practice of keeping a gratitude journal.

*Jean McGrath, CSJ
Chicago, IL*

WEDNESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 18

SCRIPTURE

Is 49: 8-15

Ps 145: 8-9, 13-14, 17-18

Jn 5: 17-30

REFLECTION

*“The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.*

*The LORD is good to all
and compassionate towards all his works.”*

Ps 145: 13-14

It is hard these days to avoid political and ideological judgment, surrounded as we are by very loud, angry, and resentful voices, voices that *exclude* rather than *include*. Daily conversations become exercises in ferreting out hidden meanings and measuring others by our own “truths.”

We pass judgment on our own or others’ actions or inactions, laying claim to the high road.

That is not how God works! God, over and over, reaffirms inclusive and unconditional love. In today’s first reading, the Lord speaks of nothing but love, saying, “Can a mother forget her infant...? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.” The beautiful words of Psalm 145 remind us the Lord is compassionate towards *all of God’s works*, not just those people with whom we agree or causes we personally champion. Our passionate beliefs and opinions need to be shared, but not our judgments. We are called to unifying love of God and the dear neighbor without distinction.

PRAYER

Gracious God, your message of kindness and compassion calls us to be ambassadors of unifying love. Help us to carry your message through our actions on behalf of *all* of your Creation.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

My challenge is to constantly remind myself that I am not called to judge others, but to work towards a community of love where “all may be one.”

*Tess Bezouska, CSJ Associate
La Grange Park, IL*

THURSDAY – MARCH 19

ST. JOSEPH'S DAY

SCRIPTURE

2 Sam 7: 4-5, 12-14, 16

Ps 89: 2-5, 27, 29

Rom 4: 13, 16-18, 22

Mt 1: 16, 18-21, 24a

REFLECTION

*“Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.
For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child
has been conceived in her.” (Matt. 1:20)*

Joseph

Just and gentle man
who trusts God-sent dreams of
Wisdom's promised One
present now,
deep in Mary's womb.

Joseph

Mary's strongest midwife,
helper, lover, friend
who bears with woman
'nigh unbearable birthing pains
'til Wisdom's Child bursts forth
'midst agony and ecstasy
now somehow one.

Joseph

Descendent of patriarchs
yet Wisdom-Child's protector
from patriarchal power
from which you flee, as refugee.

Joseph

Be now our midwife friend.
Labor with us so we too can bear
Christ's birthing pains of all-inclusive love
too slow bursting forth 'midst
agony of waiting.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

How will you labor to bring forth Christ's
all inclusive love this week?

*Christine Schenk CSJ
Cleveland, OH*

FRIDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 20

SCRIPTURE

Wis 2: 1, 12-22

Ps 34: 17-21, 23

Jn 7: 1-2, 10, 25-30

REFLECTION

*“For if the just one be the son of God, he will defend him
and deliver him from the hand of his foes.” Wis.2:18*

“But we know where he is from.

When the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from.” Jn.7:27

The guidebook for Choanji Temple in Hakone, Japan mentions that visitors will probably see someone familiar there. When I visited, I fully expected to see one of the several Japanese visitors who had graced our home over the years. But, as we walked through the Temple, I realized it was the spirit of each of 500 individual enlightened Buddhist monk statues, rakan, who reminded me of loved ones who had died. I did see familiar persons, not with my eyes but with my heart. My pre-conceived idea of literally meeting someone could have kept me from having the profound encounter with Spirit that I had that day.

The Hebrews in today’s readings had preconceived ideas of Jesus as Messiah. Their guidebook, the Hebrew Scriptures, pointed to an unknown person as Messiah. They were fixated on this idea even though Jesus healed, raised persons from the dead, and preached the Gospel to the poor. It had always been this way. They remained blind and closed-hearted. They missed the Messiah in their midst.

PRAYER

Spirit, keep my heart open to your promptings.

Help me to see your Truth. Help me to cling to you alone,
not to my comfortable ideas of you.

Immerse me in your Love.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Spend time with today’s Scripture readings.

Ask yourself, “Where am I set in my ways?”

Can you let the Lord surprise you?

Can you let God reveal God’s self to you?

*Denise Waytes, CSJ Associate
Dexter, MI*

SATURDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 21

SCRIPTURE

Jer 11: 18-20

Ps 7: 2-3, 9-12

Jn 7: 40-53

REFLECTION

“So a division occurred in the crowd because of him (Jesus).” Jn 7:43

When the crowd hears Jesus’ words division rises immediately, revealing how people can hear the same message and respond with affirmation, suspicion, or denial. Some acknowledge Jesus as the promised one, while others allow fear, pride, or expectations to control their interpretation. This division still exists within Christianity today.

This passage offers hope to anyone living amid conflict. Faith has always unfolded in contested spaces. Jesus is not deterred by misunderstanding, nor diminished by rejection; he continues to proclaim God’s word. There is tenderness here as well. Jesus allows honest questions, cultural and religious limits, and human fear to surface. This recognizes the greater struggles that influence people’s reaction to truth and invites deeper reflection.

In our lives, instead of trying to seize control or force agreement in conflicts, we are called to mirror Jesus’ patience and perseverance. People are always drawn to authentic voices, words that ring true rather than manipulate. Genuine truth has a way of standing out, even when people don’t yet fully understand it.

PRAYER

Jesus, amid chaos and divided voices, help us to hear your living word. When we choose love over fear, hope over despair, and compassion over judgment, we create space for God’s truth to be heard and received, knowing it still has the power to transform lives.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Remember that love calls us to resist labeling others, even when we strongly believe we are right, and that God is still at work in confused and resistant hearts.

*Theresa Hafner, CSJ
Rocky River, OH*

SUNDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 22

SCRIPTURE

Ez 37: 12-14

Ps 130: 1-8

Rom 8: 8-11

John 11: 1-45

REFLECTION

*“Master, if You had been here, my brother
would not have died.” John 11:21*

The Gospel story of Lazarus’s death challenges me. Jesus delayed, knowing that his dear friend had died. Really? Many of us get sad news and take action. Not Jesus, in this case; he waited for days for his own reasons. What a reminder to trust that moments of grace will not always come immediately, microwave-style, but often marinate and cook in slow cooker crock pots! Teilhard de Chardin’s advice applies to many scenarios: “Trust in the slow work of God.”

So, what helps us trust patiently? Often, it’s working and praying together in community. Jesus didn’t roll away the stone himself but invited the community to “take away the stone.” Many of us have lived long enough to learn that we have greater impact when we work together to remove whatever entombs life. Regrettably, these days there are multiple examples of life being entombed by unjust economic systems, institutional corruption, and feelings of powerlessness and overwhelm.

PRAYER

God of Life, help us trust your life already stirring.

Give us wisdom and courage to identify
and roll away the stones that entomb life.

Remind us that we are not alone, but in community acting to co-
create new life for our church, country, world, and planet.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

To remember and be patient as together we
“trust in the slow work of God.”

*Mary Jo Hazard, CSJ Associate
Naperville, IL*

MONDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 23

SCRIPTURE

Daniel 13: 41c-62

Psalm 23

John 8:1-11

REFLECTION

“The LORD is my Shepherd...I fear no evil for you are at my side.”

Psalm 23-1-6

The Responsorial Psalm in today’s liturgy was not chosen by chance, but as a meditative reflection on the readings, connecting them and inviting us to a deep engagement with the Scriptures.

Psalm 23 presents the Good Shepherd who walks with both women and frees them from their enemies. Focusing on these women, who were both “trapped” and “caught,” we can identify with them, praying the Psalm’s refrain: “You are at my side.”

Focusing on the Good Shepherd, we see that Jesus also was wrongly accused. While through tears, Susanna “trusted in the LORD wholeheartedly,” Jesus trusted to the point of shedding blood. When the woman caught in adultery was put before him, Jesus responded with the compassion of the cross:

“They know not what they do.”

Our Good Shepherd is the Lamb of God. As this Shepherd is always **with us**, we are called **to be with** him, giving our lives for the sake of the world.

PRAYER

Loving God, though we walk in the valley of darkness, no evil do we fear, for we follow in faith the call of the Good Shepherd. Lead us in the path of compassion that we may know the strength of your outstretched arm and remain with you forever.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

During this week spend some time reading Jesus’ description of the Good Shepherd. *John 10: 1-10*

*Lucy Silvio, CSJ
Baton Rouge, LA*

TUESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 24

SCRIPTURE

Num 21: 4-9

Ps 102: 2-3 16-21

John 8 21-30

REFLECTION

*“Hear, O Lord, my prayer: and let my cry come to you.
Turn not your face away from me...” Ps 102 2-3*

Turn not away...

Your face...

Our lives are filled with faces. They are the defining human trait.

The faces of family and friends we embrace.

Faces of neighbors we see in passing or rare moments of connection..

The person next to you at worship or in a restaurant. A momentary connection.

Our doctor, our dentist. Faces we come to trust.

These faces we rarely turn away from.

We can easily hold them in prayer.

We will not turn away.

Turn not away...

Your face...

The faces in the news.

A barrage of hate-filled faces and voices. The focus on their anger and manipulation.

The masked faces of ICE. They don't seem to see the faces of the people they take.

An angry driver's face glaring at you from their car for some unknown reason.

The impatient face of a grocery store shopper if you are taking too long to choose an item.

These faces we turn away from.

We won't think of holding them in prayer?

We will turn away?

We plead in the Psalm for our prayers to be heard. For God's face not to be turned away.

Then whom must we hold in prayer?

Whom must we not turn our face from?

PRAYER

We pray for open hearts and open minds.

We pray not to turn away.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

To see all faces as children of a loving God.

*Linda Matonich, CSJ Associate
La Grange, IL*

**WEDNESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 25
FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION**

SCRIPTURE

Is 7: 10-14; 8:10

Ps 40: 7-11

Heb 10:4-10

Lk 1:26-38

REFLECTION

The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at his words. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus... And now, your relative, Elizabeth, in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Mary answered, “I am the Lord’s servant, May your word to me be fulfilled.” Lk 1:28-31;36- 38

Have you ever been tempted to ask God for a sign? Were you ever unsure if something was of God? Mary was troubled by the angel’s words that she would conceive a son. The angel gave her a sign, “Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son...” Lk 1:36, and that enabled Mary to trust God working in her life.

Thirty years ago, on Super Bowl Sunday, I was faced with a very difficult task involving a close friend who on two occasions had already attempted to take his life. His therapist and I went to his house to talk with him about seeking help. I had been praying for words that would penetrate his heart. While driving home a most vibrant rainbow appeared in the dry winter sky. It was at that moment I knew my friend would be ok. Do you recognize God at work in your life? What enables you to name and trust these signs?

PRAYER

Generous God, keep my eyes open to notice You at work in the world around me. Help me to trust that nothing is impossible for you and you are close to me, to us, on this journey.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Pay attention to the signs of God working in and around you today.

*Paula Terese Pilon, CSJ
Cleveland, OH*

THURSDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 26

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 17: 3-9

Psalm 105: 4-9

John 8: 51-59

REFLECTION

“I will maintain my covenant with you (Abraham) and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an everlasting pact, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.” Genesis 17: 7

“Rely on the mighty God, constantly seek God’s face.” Ps 105: 4

Recently I was lamenting to a friend how upset I was that God was not listening to my many pleas to stop the horrendous happenings that tear at my heart. She simply stated, “Do you think you care more than God?” I was stunned into silence. I don’t know that her intention was to humble me the way her question did, but I needed humbling.

Beginning with Abraham, God promised that He would be our God and the Psalmist reminds us to always seek the face of God.

I continue to beg God to stop the injustices that are rampant, but I am no longer angry towards the Creator. Rather, I recommit myself to God each day, not for God’s sake, but to remind myself to always “seek the face of God,” even amidst the atrocities that continue. I desire that my relationship with God be strengthened and my trust in God’s covenantal promise be deepened.

PRAYER

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day
for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart
in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world,
the reparation of sins, the intention of all my associates,
and in particular for the intentions of Pope Leo this month.
Amen.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Where might I need to be humbled?

*Ann Letourneau, CSJ
Westchester, IL*

FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 27

SCRIPTURE

Jer 20: 10-13

Ps 18:2-7

Jn 10:31-42

REFLECTION

“Yahweh is at my side. Yahweh Sabaoth, you probe with justice.

Sing to Yahweh, Praise Yahweh for Yahweh

has delivered the soul of the needy

from the hands of evil ones.” Jer 20:11-13

“Yahweh is my rock and my bastion; my deliverer is my God” Ps 18:2

Each morning our cell phones announce to us headlines that describe yet another injustice. We also see instant images of climate change that have a devastating impact on our dear neighbors across the globe. Daily we see how our democracy is being deconstructed, as leaders exercise unjust power and focus on economic gain, with a lack of care and respect for the common good, especially care for the poor/vulnerable. Courageous people, in big cities and small communities, protest and stand up for the underserved and the unjustly treated. Today's scripture readings draw us to trust that God is with us as we seek ways to articulate shared perceptions and hopes. Like you, I ask for clarity in “what is mine/ours to do?” God's presence is visible amidst the darkness of this time. God is calling us to deeper understanding. How is God calling you to embrace differences with love and compassion? How will you listen to and challenge those whose actions and judgments are expressions of hatred, create chaos, and appear evil? Like you, I want our mission of God's unifying love to transform and heal all creation. Together let us do our part as people of inclusive love to make a positive difference one relationship at a time, one faithful prayer at a time!

PRAYER

God of Inclusive Love, teach me to be your presence
amidst the darkness of this time.

Ground me amidst the daily chaos, as I place my trust in you.

Guide me to make choices and choose words that are
unifying and loving.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

For the remainder of Lent, choose to trust that
God's transforming love is alive in YOU!

At the end of each day, name how you participated
in God's transforming love.

*Linda Bronersky, CSJ Associate
Bolingbrook, IL*

SATURDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT – MARCH 28

SCRIPTURE

Ezek. 37:21-28

Jer. 31:10-13

Mt. 11:45-56

REFLECTION

“I will be their God, and they will be my people.” Ezek. 37: 27-28

“God will guard us as a shepherd guiding his flock” Jer. 31:10

*“If we let him go on like this, the whole world
will believe in him.” Mt. 11: 47-48*

As we approach Holy Week we find readings that are very hopeful and optimistic from two of the great prophets. First, Ezekiel assures the Israelites (us), that God will reunite the 2 kingdoms and live in the land he promised with David as their king. God will make with them a “covenant of peace” and “I will be their God and they will be my people.”

Then the response today is not from the Psalms but from another prophet, Jeremiah. He proclaims that “God will guard us, like a shepherd guarding his flock.” Is this not a frequent reference to Jesus?

Why do we so often doubt that God is on our side? Maybe the gospel passage can give us a glimpse. When Jesus appears doing all sorts of godly miracles and the people are listening and finding joy and hope in Jesus’ message, the religious leaders only hear a challenge to their authority. They simply see Jesus as a threat to their own power, and instead look to apprehend him.

Today with so much division and hate in our world with political leaders seeking to gain more power and money at the expense of ordinary people, it is easy to lose hope. But now is the time to remember, **“God is on our side.”**

PRAYER

Loving God, renew our faith and hope in your love and presence with us every day. Help us see beyond the darkness to your Light that is always shining.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

What can I do today to bring more trust and hope
in my heart and our world?

One small act of kindness can change someone’s day...
even our own.

Mary Ann Wyllie, CSJ
Kalamazoo, MI

PALM SUNDAY – MARCH 29

SCRIPTURE

Is 50:4-7

Ps 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24

Phil. 2:6-11

Mt 26: 14-27:66

REFLECTION

“Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God...emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness, and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him... Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God...” Phil. 2 excerpts

Palm Sunday uniquely features two Gospel readings, one for the joyful procession of palms into Jerusalem, and a longer gospel detailing the somber passion of Christ. The Greek word kerygma, resurfaced with Vatican II reminding us of the core Gospel proclamation of Christ’s saving work. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Joy of the Gospel, formulated it with these simple words: “Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen, and free you. “

Our Philippians passage brilliantly connects Jesus’ self-emptying in the kenosis of Incarnation, with his total outpouring in passion and death, and with the surprisingly inevitability of Resurrection. In *The Universal Christ*, Richard Rohr reminds us that “the Risen Christ is not a one-time miracle, but the revelation of a universal pattern that is hard to see in the short run...Love is the energy that sustains the universe, moving us toward a future of resurrection.”

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of History, you show us the direction and meaning of the human journey. May my faith increase in the belief that creation is going somewhere and going somewhere good.

May my actions bring hope.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

I will find a quiet moment to listen to the hymn “At the Name of Jesus” and offer praise and thanks to God.

*Cynthia Sabbathier, CSJ
Baton Rouge, LA*

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK – MARCH 30

SCRIPTURE

Is 42: 1-7

Ps 27: 1-3, 13-14

Jn 12: 1-11

REFLECTION

*“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice
to the nations...” Is 42: 1*

There is tension in the air with these readings. Something mystical and sacred is calling us. Isaiah says it beautifully; the psalm says it eloquently: “though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident” Ps 27: 3; and John 12: 8 reminds us:” You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

Isaiah, David, and Jesus ask us to see how we are servants to each other, our world, and our earth. Servanthood invites us to pray for *humility*: seeing the needs of the Dear Neighbor; having *compassion* for all those around us; living the *courage* to feel others’ pain; being grounded in empathy and non-judgmentalism; *moving out of our comfort zones*; and taking seriously our *Gospel responsibility* to be open and to serve all of the Creator’s Daughters and Sons and, indeed, all of Creation. It is not a “once on a Cross” moment, but, rather it is a way of life.

When feeling alone, remember: “I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people ... to open eyes that are blind and to free captives from prison...” Is 42 5ff.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to be your servant in all that I do.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Let us examine how we have served others today.

*Robert Labadie Funaro, CSJ Associate
Grand Rapids, MI*

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK – MARCH 31

SCRIPTURE

Is 49: 1-6

Ps 71: 1-6, 15, 17

Jn 13: 21-33, 36-38

REFLECTION

“Master, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

Jesus answered,

“Will you lay down your life for me? Amen, amen, I say to you the cock will not crow before you deny me three times.” Jn 13: 37-38

When I reflect on this passage, I feel somewhat sad and discouraged. Perhaps because I see myself in Peter. Maybe you do, too. In Peter’s encounters with Jesus, he appears at times to be a bit weak and over-zealous. But we also recognize that Peter loves Jesus and has a deep desire to follow him. This love motivates him to proclaim, *“I will lay down my life for you.”* Because Peter was a close and trusted friend, I imagine Jesus desperately wanted to believe him. But Jesus knew that the unconditional love which he was called to give and be, would cost him everything...everything! This prompts his response to Peter, *“Will you lay down your life for me...I say to you the cock will not crow before you deny me three times.”* I can almost see the look of dejection on Peter’s face because, well...I’ve been there too. Discipleship costs us plenty and at times it’s beyond what we are able to give. However, Peter’s journey with Jesus doesn’t end there. His story will continue to unfold as will ours. So, maybe it’s enough just to be Peter’s companion... a bit weak and over-zealous at times yet filled with love for Jesus and the desire to be a faithful disciple... remembering that with intention and genuine love, there is always great possibility.

PRAYER

God of our journey, your call to discipleship challenges us every day. Give us courage for unconditional love. Strengthen our weakness that we may lay down our lives for peace, Justice, relationship, and unity in our fractured world. Deepen our trust and belief that, with You, everything is possible.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

In the morning find a quiet place. Place hands open on your lap. Pray with the question, *“What is Love asking of me today?”*

*Kathy Sherman, CSJ
Westchester, IL*

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK – APRIL 1

SCRIPTURE

Is 50: 4-9a

Ps 69: 9-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34

Mt 26: 14-25

REFLECTION

“I have become an outcast...a stranger. Insult has broken my heart, and I am weak. I will praise the name of God in song, and I will glorify him with thanksgiving. For the Lord hears the poor.”

Ps 69: 8, 21, 31, 34

This psalm sounds like the voice of someone who feels alone, misunderstood. Even family seems far away. What should have been comfort becomes pain. What should have been food becomes bitterness. How many people know this taste? What does it feel like to be faithful and still not belong? How does doing the right thing cost more than we expected? Why does love sometimes lead to suffering? At the end of the psalm, God is praised...not because suffering is ended... but because God is still God. The psalmist believes that God still sees, and he trusts that the cries of the poor will reach heaven.

PRAYER

God of the brokenhearted, you know what it is to be misunderstood. You know the loneliness of being faithful when it is hard. Teach us how to praise you even when our hearts are heavy. Help us to trust that our pain matters to you, that you do not forget those who feel trapped or silenced. Lift up all who are poor in spirit and let your love reach all of creation.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Stay with a line from this psalm. What part of my life knows this line? Who else seems to feel like a stranger and what would it be like to move a little closer to them? What kind of praise is possible for me right now?

*Bea Boyd, CSJ Associate
Chicago, IL*

HOLY THURSDAY EVENING MASS – APRIL 2

SCRIPTURE

Ex 12: 1-8, 11-14

Ps 116: 12-13. 15-16bc, 17-18

1Cor 11:23-26

John 13: 1-15

REFLECTION

“He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end.” Jn 13:1b

In the Gospel reading for Holy Thursday Jesus uses the close camaraderie of the Passover meal to describe by action and word what establishing the kingdom of God on earth requires of us. Washing his disciples’ feet – something that would not be required of the lowliest slave- is to be the measure of loving our neighbor, including those who oppose us. In the next five chapters of this Gospel Jesus’ instructions continue. He encourages their faith, describes a togetherness like the vine and branches, introduces the Advocate who will be with them. Finally, Jesus prays for them. Today we are called to continue building the kingdom of God on earth using all of the support Jesus promised his disciples. Some years ago, my mother gave me a card with a quote from Pope John XXIII. For me these words summarize Jesus’ teaching while acknowledging our human condition. “See everything. Overlook a great deal. Improve a little.”

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, on the night before you willingly sacrificed your life, you gave us the promise of eternal life with you through the Sacrament of your Body and Blood. May we receive this gift with thanksgiving as we also strive to love one another as you love us.

Amen.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

See everything. Overlook a great deal. Improve a little.

John XXIII

*Marianne Race, CSJ
Brookfield, IL*

GOOD FRIDAY – APRIL 3

SCRIPTURE

Is 52: 13 - 53: 12

Ps 31: 2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25

Heb 4: 14-16; 5: 7-9

Jn 18: 1-19: 42

REFLECTION

“Father, I put my life in your hands.” Luke 23:48

Jesus answered [Annas], “I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area where all the Jews gather, and in secret I have said nothing.” (John 18:20)

Of course I defended myself. I had nothing to hide. But they weren't really looking for truth. It was an exercise in futility. I was trying to stay calm, but I was scared to death.

“Father, I put my life in your hands.” Luke 23:48

Pilate said to him, “Then you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” (John 18:37)

I could tell Pilate was nervous when I talked about my kingdom, but he was afraid of the Jews who brought me before him. My fate was sealed; there was no backing down. I said I would do this.

“Father, I put my life in your hands.” Luke 23:46

PRAYER

My biopsy revealed cancer.

Father, I put my life in your hands.

We got out of the house just before the water rushed in.

Father, I put my life in your hands.

We can't afford the new insurance rates.

Father, I put my life in your hands.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

I will imitate the Teacher and put my life in God's hands.

*Jeanne Cmolik, CSJ
Cleveland, OH*

SATURDAY – APRIL 4
THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

SCRIPTURE

Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, Baruch, Ezekiel
Romans 6:3-11

REFLECTION

*Jesus met the women on their way and said:
“Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”*

The Easter Vigil is the one grand ritual of the liturgical year. It begins with the lighting of the new fire with procession proclaiming “Christ our Light,” and then settling in for seven readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, recounting God’s wondrous deeds from Creation to Exodus to Exile. All of these are in anticipation of God’s greatest work: raising Jesus from the dead. The Gospel then speaks of the women’s encounter with the risen Christ and his instruction to tell the brothers to go home to Galilee. We, too, meet the risen Christ “on our way” in our daily lives and hear the instruction to “go home” where we will see him.

As we celebrate this grand ritual, we are reminded of all of God’s wondrous deeds in ancient Israel and in our own lives. We trust that the risen One will meet us “on the way” of our lives. And we, too, are commissioned to encourage others to find the Christ at home in our lives and world.

PRAYER

Open my mind and heart, Oh God, to notice the risen Christ
in my heart, in my life.

Inspire me to live in his way of love for you
and for our dear neighbors.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Take notice of the risen Christ appearing in your life and world. . .
in extraordinary acts of loving kindness that we are
privileged to observe.

Sallie Latkovich, CSJ
Ft. Myers, FL

MASS ON EASTER DAY – APRIL 5

SCRIPTURE

Acts 10: 34a, 37-43

Ps 118: 1-2, 16-17, 22-23

1 Corinthians 5: 6b-8

Matthew 28: 1-10

REFLECTION

“Then Jesus met them, stopping them in their tracks. ‘Good morning!’ he said. They fell to their knees, embraced his feet, and worshiped him.” Mt 28:9

As a woman, I am particularly drawn to Matthew’s account of the Resurrection. In it the women (Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary”) are established as the first witnesses and messengers of this transition. Leave it to Jesus, not only to rise from the dead, but to appear first to women, validating their role and reversing social stigma, emphasizing that the gospel is for everyone and that social standing does not limit significance nor service to God.

These women are commissioned by Jesus to tell the disciples that he is alive and heading to Galilee, marking the beginning of the Church’s mission to spread the Good News. Mary Magdalene: present at the crucifixion, found the empty tomb, the first to see the risen Jesus, and instructed by him to tell the others. No wonder Thomas Aquinas calls Mary Magdalene the “apostle to the apostles,” highlighting her unique role in scripture.

This year I noticed something new: when the women met Jesus on the road and heard his voice, they immediately knew him, fell to their knees and embraced his feet. Unlike the disciples on the Road to Emmaus, Matthew tells us they recognized Jesus when he greeted them. Am I that attuned to the voice, the movement, the spirit of Christ in me? Do I run to share the good news with others in these times when good news is desperately needed?

PRAYER

God of new life, may we embody the courage of these women witnesses, entrusted by Jesus to carry the message of his victory over death. May this empower each of us to announce this news to a hurting world.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Carrying the resurrection message today involves intense political polarization and an apathetic culture focused on gratification rather than hope. How do I embody the message of new life and not just preach it?

*Judith Minear, CSJ
Cleveland, OH*



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