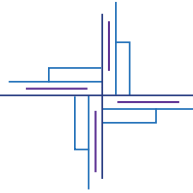


2024 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

STUDY GUIDE



Episcopal
Relief & Development
Working Together for Lasting Change



About the Meditations

The Lenten Meditations prepared by Episcopal Relief & Development are designed to invite readers into a deeper engagement with God’s Holy Word during the season of Lent, the time of preparation leading to Easter. Our 2024 meditations follow the schedule of Scripture readings from the lectionarypage.net, which includes both the Revised Common Lectionary for Sundays and feast days and the daily eucharistic readings.

While the meditations are informed by all the day’s readings, the author focuses on one particular passage for the daily writings. He also leaves readers with a question that encourages deeper reflection. During the season of Lent, Sundays are regarded as “little Easters,” a time to step away from the period of repentance and reflection and remember Christ’s death and resurrection. On these days, we offer a prayer and encourage you to join your worshipping community.

About this Guide

The Lenten Meditations are designed to be read daily by individuals. But you may find them a helpful tool for weekly group study. This guide offers some suggestions for group study; we encourage you to develop a practice that works for your setting. The guide includes the weekly prayers and daily readings, Scripture citations, and reflection questions.

Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and used by permission.

Psalm passages and prayers are from the Book of Common Prayer.

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Tips for the Facilitator

1. It is customary to begin and end each session with a prayer. You can use the prayers included in each week's session, which are collects from the Book of Common Prayer, or you can use prayers of your choosing. You might consider asking for volunteers to prepare or lead the prayers after the first session.
2. You can undertake the weekly study in a way that's best for your group. Some might want to read through each of the six daily meditations and briefly discuss them. Others might prefer to pick one or two meditations and spend time in a deeper exploration.
3. Consider various ways to engage with the weekly Scripture. You might read the same verse from different versions of the Bible: New Revised Standard, King James, the Jerusalem Bible, etc.

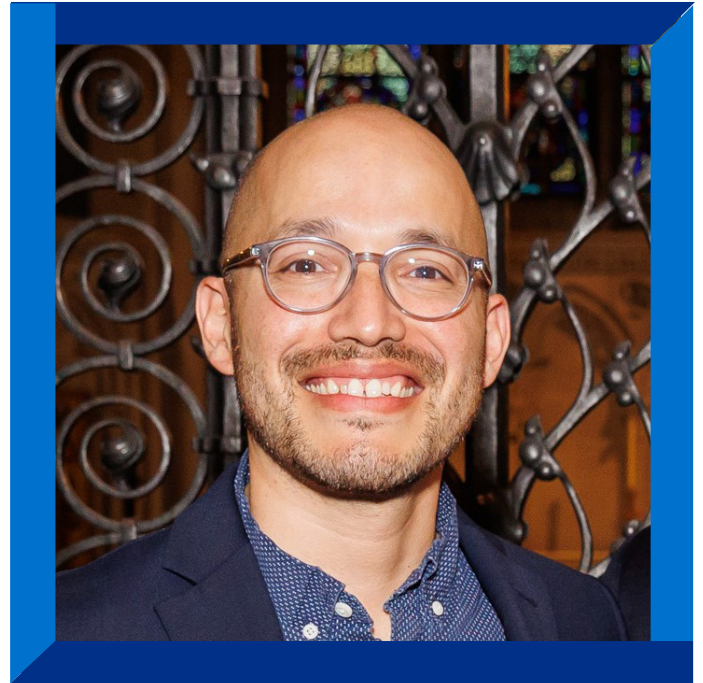
Lectio divina is also a common way to delve into scripture. This process asks the group to read the passage three times. On the first reading, each member should listen carefully for a word or phrase that resonates with them. Invite members of the group to take turns sharing only that word or phrase. On the second, reflect on what God is saying. This time, invite each person to briefly share their reflections on the scripture. As a prompt, you might ask participants: What do you think God is asking you through this passage? On the third reading, listen with the ear of your heart. Notice any prayerful response that arises. After this reading, offer a time of prayerful silence.

About the Author

Miguel Escobar is Director of Strategy and Operations at Episcopal Divinity School. Previously, Escobar served as managing program director for leadership, communications and external affairs at the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF). He earned a master of divinity from Union Theological Seminary in 2007 and served as the communications assistant to then-Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori from 2007 to 2010.

Miguel serves as secretary of the board of directors of Episcopal Relief & Development and the former chair of the board of directors of Forward Movement. He grew up in the Texas Hill Country and attended Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas, where he studied the Roman Catholic social justice tradition and Latin American liberation theologies and minored in Spanish. He is the author of *The Unjust Steward: Wealth, Poverty, and the Church Today*.

Miguel divides his time between two partnered parishes in Brooklyn, New York: All Saints, Park Slope, and San Andres in Sunset Park. He lives with his husband, Ben, and dog, Duke, in Brooklyn and is spending this year working and studying in Barcelona, Spain.



FEBRUARY 14–17

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

—The Book of Common Prayer, p. 264



ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

Isaiah 58:6

Today's readings

Ps 103 or 103:8–14 | Joel 2:1–2,12–17 or
Isaiah 58:1–12 | 2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10
Matthew 6:1–6,16–21

How might the stirring message of Isaiah 58 serve as an invitation to a new way of experiencing the season of Lent?

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?

Luke 9:24–25

Today's readings

Psalm 1 | Deuteronomy 30:15–20

Luke 9:18–25

It is easy, at times, to miss the strange and paradoxical message of the cross. What does it mean to lose one's life for God's sake today? How might the way of the cross be a beginning rather than an end?



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.

Matthew 9:13

Today's readings

Psalm 51:1–20 | Isaiah 58:1–9a

Matthew 9:10–17

Humans judge. At some point, we have all categorized people into good and bad, pure and impure. How might we entertain curiosity—rather than judgment—toward those we have dismissed?

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

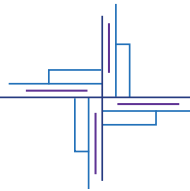
Isaiah 58:9b-10

Today's readings

Psalm 86:1-11 | Isaiah 58:9b-14

Luke 5:27-32

Giving regularly to Episcopal Relief & Development is one of the ways in which my spouse and I strive to “remove the yoke” from people experiencing poverty. We especially enjoy supporting Moments That Matter®, a program partnership of Episcopal Relief & Development, which helps children up to the age of 3 reach their fullest potential. What is one concrete way you can help “remove the yoke” today?



FEBRUARY 18–24

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

—The Book of Common Prayer, p. 264

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, FEBRUARY 18

Today's readings

Psalm 25:1–9 | Genesis 9:8–17 | 1 Peter 3:18–22 | Mark 1:9–15



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

Matthew 25:35–36

Today's readings

Psalm 19:7–14 | Leviticus 19:1–2, 11–18
Matthew 25:31–46

What does it mean to you that in a text on God's judgment, Jesus identifies with "the least of these"?

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Pray then in this way.

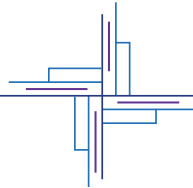
Matthew 6:9a

Today's readings

Psalm 34:15–22 | Isaiah 55:6–11

Matthew 6:7–15

Even as we hold others accountable for their actions, how might we take Jesus' emphasis on personal forgiveness to heart? What does taking a step toward such forgiveness look like today?



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 51:11

Today's readings

Psalm 51:11–18 | Jonah 3:1–10 | Luke 11:29–32

Let's be honest: choosing to follow Christ can occasionally feel like a strange and surprising choice. If it sometimes feels like foolishness, how can this be a way of identifying more deeply with figures like Jonah and Christ, whose journeys with God led them to the margins?



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

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

Matthew 7:12

Today's readings

Psalm 138 | Esther (Apocrypha) 14:1–6, 12–14

Matthew 7:7–12

In many cultures, it is traditional to draw strict boundaries around who we consider family, yet God asks us to consider whether children across the globe are also, somehow, our children. What does it mean to “provide through humanity” for an expanded sense of family?

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison.

Matthew 5:25

Today's readings

Psalm 130 | Ezekiel 18:21–28 | Matthew 5:20–26

Conflicts, large and small, happen all around us every day. How can we be peacemakers today?



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

John 15:7–8

Today's readings

Psalm 15 | Acts 1:15–26 | Philippians 3:13–21
John 15:1,6–16

Amidst so much talk about efficiency and productivity, what does it mean to abide and bear fruit in God's time?

FEBRUARY 25–MARCH 2

Grant to us, Lord, we pray, the spirit to think and do always those things that are right, that we, who cannot exist without you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

—The Book of Common Prayer, p. 232

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT, FEBRUARY 25

Today's readings

Psalm 22:22–30 | Genesis 17:1–7,15–16 | Romans 4:13–25 | Mark 8:31–38



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.

Luke 6:35a

Today's readings

Psalm 79:1–9 | Daniel 9:3–10 | Luke 6:27–38

Why does Jesus talk about poverty so much? What does Jesus mean when he says that giving without interest is a way of loving others? What are the practical implications of this teaching?

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and
all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Matthew 23:12

Today's readings

Psalm 50:7–15,22–24 | Isaiah 1:2–4,16–20

Matthew 23:1–12

If simplicity and humility are key values for Jesus, how might we model this in our daily life?



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

It will not be so among you; but whoever
wishes to be great among you must be your
servant, and whoever wishes to be the 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.

Matthew 20:26–28

Today's readings

Psalm 31:9–16 | Jeremiah 18:1–11,18–20

Matthew 20:17–28

How do we sometimes confuse the true essence of faith and discipleship with worldly success and recognition? What steps can we take to better align our understanding with the teachings of Jesus and his message of selflessness and humility?

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29

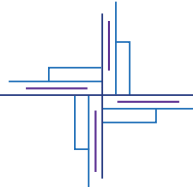
There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus.

Luke 16:19–20

Today's readings

Psalm 1 | Jeremiah 17:5–10 | Luke 16:19–31

Whose experiences and struggles do you pay attention to, and how might this perspective align or diverge from the Gospel's focus on those often overlooked by society?



FRIDAY, MARCH 1

Here comes this dreamer.

Genesis 37:19b

Today's readings

Psalm 105:16–22 | Genesis 37:3–4,12–28
Matthew 21:33–43

What steps can we take to support and uplift the voices of modern-day truth-tellers and visionaries who work for positive change, despite the challenges they face?



SATURDAY, MARCH 2

Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

Luke 15:22b

Today's readings

Psalm 103:1–4(5–8)9–12
Micah 7:14–15,18–20 | Luke 15:11–32

Are there times when we, like the older brother, find ourselves questioning acts of generosity toward those we deem unworthy? Do we struggle to give without conditions? How might this parable challenge us to expand our understanding of generosity and compassion in our lives?

MARCH 3–9

O God, you have taught us to keep all your commandments by loving you and our neighbor: Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that we may be devoted to you with our whole heart, and united to one another with pure affection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

—The Book of Common Prayer, p. 230

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 3

Today's readings

Psalm 19 | Exodus 20:1–17 | 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 | John 2:13–22



MONDAY, MARCH 4

Father, if the prophet had commended you to do something difficult, would you not have done it?

2 Kings 5:13b

Today's readings

Psalm 42:1–7 | 2 Kings 5:1–15b | Luke 4:23–30

Do we sometimes make the journey more complicated than it needs to be? How might embracing simplicity and trusting in God's guidance lead us to healing and a deeper connection with the way of the cross?

TUESDAY, MARCH 5

Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?

Matthew 18:33

Today's readings

Psalm 25:3–10 | Song of the Three Young Men (Apocrypha) 2–4,11–20a | Matthew 18:21–35

Can we identify moments when we have received grace and compassion? When have we struggled to extend the same to others?



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.

Matthew 5:17

Today's readings

Psalm 78:1–6 | Deuteronomy 4:1–2,5–9
Matthew 5:17–19

How can we actively promote and strengthen the understanding of the shared heritage between Christianity and Judaism in our communities and foster mutual respect and unity?



THURSDAY, MARCH 7

They walked in their own counsels, and looked backward rather than forward.

Jeremiah 7:24b

Today's readings

Psalm 95:6–11 | Jeremiah 7:23–28
Luke 11:14–23

How can we both cherish the lessons of our past experiences while remembering to build a more just and hopeful future?

FRIDAY, MARCH 8

We will say no more, “Our God,” to the work of our hands.

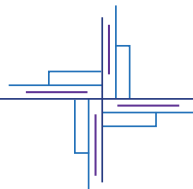
Hosea 14:3b

Today's readings

Psalm 81:8–14 | Hosea 14:1–9

Mark 12:28–34

In a world where technology and wealth often take center stage, how can we ensure that our faith and trust remain firmly rooted in something deeper and more enduring, as emphasized in Scripture?



SATURDAY, MARCH 9

I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other.

Luke 18:14a

Today's readings

Psalm 51:15–20 | Hosea 6:1–6

Luke 18:9–14

How can we observe traditional religious practices and also meet people where they are, recognizing that the authenticity and humility of our approach to God matter more than external expressions of faith?

MARCH 10–16

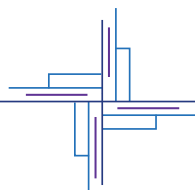
Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—The Book of Common Prayer, p. 823

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 10

Today's readings

Psalm 107:1–3,17–22 | Numbers 21:4–9 | Ephesians 2:1–10 | John 3:14–21



MONDAY, MARCH 11

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

Isaiah 65:21

Today's readings

Psalm 30:1–6,11–13 | Isaiah 65:17–25

John 4:43–54

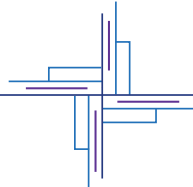
In a world where the dream of Isaiah seems far away, what actions can we take individually and collectively to move closer to that vision of abundance, equality and peace?

TUESDAY, MARCH 12

My Father is still working, and I also am working.

John 5:17

In your life, how do you balance between upholding rules and policies while also recognizing the importance of seeing the larger, transcendent miracles that unfold around you?



Today's readings

Psalm 46:1–8 | Ezekiel 47:1–9,12 | John 5:1–18

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the Voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

John 5:25

How can we strike a balance between embracing abundance and embodying the sense of urgency Jesus displayed in his ministry?



Today's readings

Psalm 145:8–19 | Isaiah 49:8–15
John 5:19–29

THURSDAY, MARCH 14

Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people.

Exodus 32:12b

Today's readings

Psalm 106:6–7,19–23 | Exodus 32:7–14
John 5:30–47

As we reflect on the iconic figure of Moses and his role as a liberator, how does the concept of freedom resonate with your spiritual journey and understanding of faith?

FRIDAY, MARCH 15

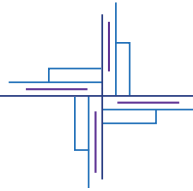
He reproaches us for sins against the law,
and accuses us of sins against our training.
He professes to have knowledge of God, and
calls himself a child of the Lord.

Wisdom (Apocrypha) 2:12b–13

Today's readings

Psalm 34:15–22 | Wisdom (Apocrypha) 2:1a,
12–24 | John 7:1–2,10,25–30

How might Lent be an invitation to become more faithfully strange?



SATURDAY, MARCH 16

God is my shield and defense; he is the savior
of the true in heart.

Psalm 7:11

Today's readings

Psalm 7:6–11 | Jeremiah 11:18–20
John 7:37–52

How do you perceive and experience moments of spiritual guidance during times of adversity?

MARCH 17–23

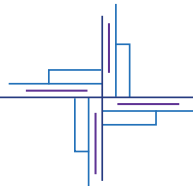
Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated unto you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

—The Book of Common Prayer, p. 832

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 17

Today's readings

Psalm 51:1–13 or 119:9–16 | Jeremiah 31:31–34 | Hebrews 5:5–10 | John 12:20–33



MONDAY, MARCH 18

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

John 8:7

Today's readings

Psalm 23 | Susanna (Apocrypha) [1–9,15–29, 34–40],41–62 | John 8:1–11 or 8:12–20

What is the role of compassion and self-reflection in your own Christian journey, particularly in the face of a history marked by condemnation and judgment?

TUESDAY, MARCH 19

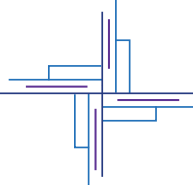
Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.

Luke 2:48b

Today's readings

Psalm 89:1–29 or 89:1–4, 26–29
2 Samuel 7:4,8–16 | Romans 4:13–18
Luke 2:41–52

Joseph wasn't Jesus' father, but he was Jesus' fatherly guardian. Give thanks for the parental guardians in your life who have helped you on your way.



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.

Daniel 3:25

Today's readings

Canticle [2] or 13 | Daniel 3:14–20,24–28
John 8:31–42

What do these stories say about the themes of enduring faith and resilience in Christianity?



THURSDAY, MARCH 21

I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

Genesis 17:7

Today's readings

Psalm 105:4–11 | Genesis 17:1–8
John 8:51–59

In our daily lives, how can we become more aware of those who “dwell at the gates” of our existence? How can we be like Abraham in responding with both compassion and justice?

FRIDAY, MARCH 22

I have become a laughing-stock all day long;
everyone mocks me.

Jeremiah 20:7b

Today's readings

Psalm 18:1–7 | Jeremiah 20:7–13

John 10:31–42

In what ways can the experiences and doubts of individuals like Jeremiah serve as valuable sources of inspiration and guidance in navigating your relationship with faith, calling and community?



SATURDAY, MARCH 23

So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council, and said, “What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.”

John 11:47–48

Today's readings

Psalm 85:1–7 | Ezekiel 37:21–28

John 11:45–53

Do you approach the season of Lent as a time of learning? How can you be more intentional in embracing Lent as a period of catechesis and religious instruction?

MARCH 24–31

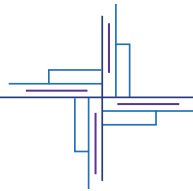
Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

–The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 24

Today's readings

Psalm 31:9–16 | Isaiah 50:4–9a | Philippians 2:5–11 | Mark 14:1–15:47 or 15:1–39,[40–47]



MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 25

You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.

John 12:8

Today's readings

Psalm 36:5–11 | Isaiah 42:1–9

Hebrews 9:11–15 | John 12:1–11

It may seem unusual to broach the topic of financial transparency and safety measures at the beginning of Holy Week. But stewardship and care for the poor are intrinsically bound. It would be a disservice if I did not acknowledge that Episcopal Relief & Development has established such safeguards. As a regular donor to Episcopal Relief & Development, I contribute with complete confidence that my donations to “the least of these” are used as intended.

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 26

While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.

John 12:36a

Today's readings

Psalm 71:1–14 | Isaiah 49:1–7

1 Corinthians 1:18–31 | John 12:20–36

When you feel like darkness is overcoming you, how can you return to the light? Think of a particular passage of Scripture, prayer or a hymn that draws you near to Jesus. Say—or sing—it today.



WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 27

John 13:27

After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.”

Today's readings

Psalm 70 | Isaiah 50:4–9a

Hebrews 12:1–3 | John 13:21–32

What is John's Gospel trying to say to us here? What is the Gospel writer attempting to warn us about? How can it be that sometimes those who are seemingly closest to Christ betray all that he represents?

MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 28

Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

John 13:16–17

Today's readings

Psalm 116:1,10–17 | Exodus 12:1–4,(5–10),11–14
1 Corinthians 11:23–26 | John 13:1–17,31b–35

To what extent have we received Jesus' message? Do we really see our ministry as one of service or are we trapped in the role of waiting to be served?



GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 29

The woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”

John 18:17

Today's readings

Psalm 22 | Isaiah 52:13–53:12
Hebrews 10:16–25 or 4:14–16;5:7–9
John 18:1–19:42

Think of your life and spiritual journey. When have you, like Peter, failed to do what you promised? When have you, like Peter, been a rock for others?

HOLY SATURDAY, MARCH 30

So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

Matthew 27:59–60

Today's readings

Psalm 31:1–4,15–16 | Job 14:1–14 or
Lamentations 3:1–9,19–24 | 1 Peter 4:1–8
Matthew 27:57–66 or John 19:38–42

Reflect on how the Good News of the Resurrection can take away the sting of loneliness. How can you be Christ's hands and feet in that work?



EASTER DAY, MARCH 31

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."

John 20:18

Today's readings

Psalm 118:1–2,14–24 | Acts 10:34–43 or
Isaiah 25:6–9 | 1 Corinthians 15:1–11 or

Acts 10:34–43 | John 20:1–18 or Mark 16:1–8

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Christ has risen indeed.