

# A Lenten Course in Christian Mystery

## 1. Ash Wednesday: The Mystery of Christ.

Daily Scripture:

“Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness — the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

--- Colossians 1:24-27

This is a Lenten course in Christian mystery. It is for Christians who pray, who read the Bible, and who know their commitment to Christ, His church, and His work, but who feel that a deeper intimacy with Him is lacking. The scriptures hold out some “hope of glory”, but we’ve only rarely tasted it. And other believers seem so convinced of the power and agency of the living God, while we only roll around in doubt and confusion.

All this can be overcome in a heart surrendered to Christ. This is the mystery of Christ: that He already lives in our hearts. Jesus has a hold on our soul that will never be loosened. Since our declaration of faith was made in our weakest moment, our deepest hopes and desires have been conformed to His will and purpose. But in our day to day lives so many other influences hold sway. Above all, our own selfish desires dominate the patterns of our behaviors. We ourselves stand in the way of letting the light of Christ shine brightly in our lives. Even in the world of “Christian” living, we are often motivated to love our neighbors by the admiration it brings, rather than from the pure joy of it. There are many ways that it has occurred to us to trust Christ more deeply in our lives, but we have shied away from them, afraid and confused – but have we really brought these fears or confusions to Him in prayer? Will these fears or confusions turn out to be rooted in selfish desires? Will they stand up to the power of His pure love?

It is our desire, in the run up to this Easter, to know more deeply “the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations”, “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”. This Lenten course in Christian mystery is designed to lead us to know the pure love of Jesus Christ in our hearts, and to live in genuine peace from this place. The seven weeks of this Lenten course develop according to seven themes.

1. The Posture of Prayer.

For few Christians is prayer an enjoyable activity. We sometimes note the feeling of peace and even joy that follows a few hearty prayers, but rarely do we remain in the postures to which prayer has brought us, understanding them to be means of entering into God's presence. More than any utterance of words, prayer is a posture of the heart. The physical postures of having raised or closed hands, having a hand on our hearts, being on our knees, or being prostrate before the Lord represent attitudes of humility, openness, or desperation. The course challenges us to remain in these postures, trusting in their mystery.

2. Dependence on the Spirit of Christ.

Christians are often virtuous people. But we are used to attributing our acts of love or kindness more or less to ourselves. We do not consistently recognize Christ acting through us. In truth, the fruits of the Spirit grow naturally in a heart that is rooted in the good soil which is Christ. No one can muster up love or peace; it can only come naturally from a surrendered heart. And when such fruits do come, and they are attributed to their true source, Christ, then their taste is even sweeter, and our relationship to Christ becomes more intimate.

3. Trusting in the Mystery of Christ.

How can the simple, understandable, practices of meditating on a few words, or placing hands on our hearts, or praying specific prayers, lead one to the treasures of genuine virtue or even power in the spiritual realm? The course gives no guarantee that these questions will be answered, but it does aim to raise them genuinely in the believer, challenging the believer to bring these concerns in a place of honesty in the heart before God its true Father. It feels as if the miraculous works of the Spirit belong to another age, another place, another Christian. But God certainly wants "the glorious riches" of deep peace, love, and assurance, for all His children, if only we would trust Him for them. And what stops us trusting?

4. Desiring the Presence of Christ.

Growing in divine desire is very simple. The more we spend time acknowledging and marinating in the little desire we do have, the more it grows. The more we desire to desire, the more we desire, and that desire finds its object, since the desire itself is Christ. It is Christ in you who longs after the holy things of God. This may sound like an banal truism, but its realization does not fail to provide its portion of satisfaction to the believer. Nevertheless, true desire leaves one deeply hungering. We need to come to terms with what our desire for Christ

is, and what stands in its way, and then simply bring this desire to God in prayer.

5. Recognizing the Reality of Christ.

As the disciples followed Jesus for many months before openly acknowledging that He was the one for whom they had been hoping, so we can live in the true spiritual company of Christ without recognizing Him. However, to see and acknowledge His presence can become the most tremendous blessing. Recognizing our dependence on Christ's Spirit for all our good works, trusting in His mysterious reality, and fostering our heartfelt desire for Him, these all must lead us to the proclamation of our own experience of Christ.

6. Having the Humility of Christ.

We hope to have experienced many blessings along the path of this course by the sixth week of Lent, along with many trials. As over the course of many years, so also over several days: there are ups and downs, and our spirits are left thirsting for the assurance of greater constancy in knowing Christ. Jesus' example shows that this can only be had through great humility. The course provokes us to deeper humility, challenging us to recognize how insidious are the claims of our selfish desires on our daily habits.

7. Dying to Ourselves, Living for Christ.

Noting our dependence on Him, developing our trust, recognizing the truth, deepening our humility – these all leave us at the feet of Christ. There is only so much that the gospel message can do in us, or that any course can achieve through its provocations. It remains to us to lay down our own lives at His feet, in a new and full and final way, trusting in the total agency of the living God and His Son Jesus Christ, and it remains to Him alone to lift us up, fill us with life, and send us on our resurrected way.

If you commit to this course, allow time each morning for a short prayer, and set aside about 30 minutes per day to read and perform its devotional activity. Let this be a regular time in the first half of the day, to allow you to ponder on the exercise and say its prayers for the rest of the day. There is also a component of weekly fasting, giving up all food each Friday. This practice of physical need, when done with consistency and intentionality, alerts us keenly to our spiritual need. But if for any reason you decide not to fast from all food, feel free to join in with the course nonetheless, perhaps refraining from one meal on Fridays, or some other good that you are willing to temporarily renounce. Each week of this course features seven distinct activities:

1. Monday: Meditating.

The meditation that this course prescribes is a focus on the words of scripture, feeling them to be in one's heart. We proceed in the conviction that this ancient practice of meditation truly brings the heart to peace and conviction in the truth. There is no recommendation to a particular breathing technique or posture, nor any prescription for where the mind or emotions should go, nor any punishment for losing focus or dozing off, only the instruction to close the eyes and place a hand on the chest, creating a space to be alert to the effect of true words on one's heart.

2. Tuesday: Journaling.

Journaling is a powerful technique for confronting oneself with the truth of one's own soul. In its rhythms and repetitions, the truths of the heart surface, and then our determined responses can sink back down there again. When our journaling is addressed to God, it cannot fail to become powerful prayer. Each Tuesday, a prompt or question is given, and we are invited to spend 30 minutes writing a response to it. All that is required is honesty. If no words can be honestly written in response, so be it. But if a few true words can be addressed to God on paper, the floodgates may well open up.

3. Wednesday: Prophesying.

To prophesy is simply to speak true words with conviction. True words normally run counter to perceived facts, and counter also to deep inclinations of our own hearts. When we take simple claims of faith that we "believe" to be true, but then speak them over our lives, we challenge our fickle hearts to hear the words and actually respond accordingly. Only the speaking and hearing of words of faith that run counter to perceived facts can really educate our souls about the nature of genuine truth, all of which is divine.

4. Thursday: Walking.

All walking is a microcosm of the great journey of our lives, which for us is a journey of faith. Will we walk uprightly before the Lord? Will we walk with gratitude for the past and confidence in the future? Although this sounds like an impossible or overly grand task, don't we do it all the time: walk with a sure and certain faith in our destination? The walking exercises are designed to alert us to aspects of everyday experience from which our worries and selfish desires normally blind us: the beauty of creation, the preciousness of every other human being, and ultimately the omnipresence of Jesus Christ.

5. Friday: Fasting.

Abstaining from food puts us on the fast-track to spiritual vulnerability. Moreover, pangs of hunger provide us with continual reminders throughout the day to pray and seek the mystery of Christ who lives in our hearts. Finally, it challenges us to be aware of our real desires, our effective desires, the ones that structure our routines and make us who we are. What can seem like an arduous spiritual discipline will truly become a joy if we simply give up the idea that we really need food, and that the discipline is tortuous, and set the mind instead on the need of God, and Christ's constant grace. The state of physical and spiritual vulnerability is the one where the true reality of Christ and His Spirit is made most obvious.

6. Saturday: *Lectio Divina*.

Most Christians' engagement with the scriptures is endlessly intellectual, no matter how little of an "intellectual" we are. We approach the scriptures only in the mode of readiness to assess whether its words are true or false, when there are so many other ways to approach it. The practice of *Lectio Divina*, or divine reading, asks us simply to slow down in our reading, and to be attentive to the thoughts that spring up around the scriptures. It challenges us to identify words or verses that stand out as spiritually significant for that day, and to identify the voice of God in them, praying over them throughout the day. Therefore, the Bible is read not as the attempted communication of theological truth to our minds, but as the attempted creation of spiritual reality in our hearts.

7. Sunday: Worshiping.

Sundays are traditionally excluded from Lenten fasts, but the Sunday exercises of this course are designed to be the most simple and enjoyable. They are exercises of worship in multiple arenas: dance, relation to strangers and friends, and talkative communication with God through creation, amongst other things. Worship, most paradigmatically in singing, combines the intellectual affirmation of the mind with heartfelt agreement. At a psychosomatic level, the exercises of this course can all be seen as worshipful, since they provoke us to move from the head to the heart. The exercises provoke us to take what we think we would like to believe and actually to trust in them in the face of difficult thoughts or situations, and to act on them in the day to day. Christianity is a lifestyle, and Christ is its motive center, by His Spirit. Jesus Christ actually lives in your heart. He would love to reveal Himself more.

If you would like to participate in this little Lenten course, join me in this prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

Daily Exercise:

Repeat the above prayer slowly and intentionally, allowing yourself to come to a posture and attitude of sincere request. Take note of this posture. Are your eyes closed? Are your hands making a specific gesture? Are you stood up or on your knees? Commit to repeating this prayer every morning of Lent upon waking up, in the posture of prayer that you have found yourself in now.

## 2. First Thursday of Lent: Looking Above.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scriptures:

“My son, pay attention to what I say;  
turn your ear to my words.  
Do not let them out of your sight,  
keep them within your heart;  
for they are life to those who find them  
and health to one’s whole body.  
Above all else, guard your heart,  
for everything you do flows from it.  
Keep your mouth free of perversity;  
keep corrupt talk from your lips.  
Let your eyes look straight ahead;  
fix your gaze directly before you.  
Give careful thought to the paths of your feet  
and be steadfast in all your ways.  
Do not turn to the right or the left;  
keep your foot from evil.”  
--- Proverbs 4:20-27

“I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.”  
--- Psalm 121:1-2

### Daily Exercise:

The exercise for today, as for all the Thursdays of Lent, is to take a short 20 minute walk. Feel free to perform the exercise on any walk you were already planning on taking, just extend it to 20 minutes by detours, if necessary. The instructions for today’s walk are very simple:

- Set a timer for 20 minutes
- Walk a little slower than normal.



- Place one hand on your heart.
- Look up at the sky directly ahead of you as much as is possible.

Nothing else is needed, but if you find yourself moved to pray or sing, go for it. However, if silence returns, or no prayers or thoughts arise anyway, remain in a place of quiet contemplation on the sky.

#### Reflection:

Various liturgies regularly exhort us to “lift up our hearts”. Whatever subtle or emotional act we may understand this to mean, nothing is lost by performing this lifting in an outward and obvious way. We hold our heart in one hand, and present it to the God whom Christ called His Father in heaven. We are open to the experience of the Psalmist, that “the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands” (Ps 19:1), and we are willing to trust his saying that “Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty” (Ps 91:1). However, whether any such experience or trust arises in the heart is unimportant today. It is only important that whatever distractions may arise, our eyes return to the sky. We should also place one hand on our hearts, and look straight ahead as much as possible. As the words of the passage from Proverbs quoted above suggest, the intentionality of our walking through the world represents the dedication of our walk with the Lord.

Be encouraged to adopt these habits of walking as much as you like throughout Lent, in whatever way is natural and enjoyable. Although we are setting instructions for 20 minutes of this practice, it should never be forced or burdensome. I hope that its simple playfulness becomes a joy for you, and that its significance as a spiritual practice becomes evident over time.

### 3. First Friday of Lent: Do Not Look Somber.

Morning prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

Daily Scripture:

“As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.”  
--- Psalm 42:1

“When you fast, do not look sullen like the hypocrites, for they make their faces unattractive so that people will see them fasting. I tell you the truth, they have their reward!  
When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others when you are fasting, but only to your Father who is in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.”  
--- Matthew 6:16-18

Daily Exercise:

During today’s fast, follow Jesus’ wisdom: both its specific instruction and its overarching ethos:

- Wash your face, and put a little oil on your head.
- Be as discreet as possible with your fasting, telling no one.

Reflection:

Who sees where no one sees? Who knows that you are fasting when no one else knows that you are fasting? You know, but who are you who have resolved to tell no one? Who are you who, from a place of secrecy, looks out hungrily on the world? Where does your “Father, who sees in secret” live? If these questions mean anything to you, ponder them today. And whether or not they do, dedicate your hunger to Christ. May the hunger, along with the feelings of water on the face and oil on the head, remind you that you are the one in whom Christ dwells, whose secrecy the Father sees.

#### 4. First Saturday of Lent: *Lectio Divina* with Psalm 27.

Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

Daily Scripture: Psalm 27

Daily Exercise: *Lectio Divina*.

Make the following preparations:

- Gather a bible, a notebook, and a pen. Alternatively, use the remaining space on this page of the course to take notes.
- Glance over Psalm 27 in your bible while allowing your body and breath to come to comfort and stillness.
- Place a hand on your heart and pray this prayer of preparation for *Lectio Divina*: “Lord Jesus Christ, let this moment of reading be a moment of intimacy between us. Please speak a message that is specific to me, and for today. Amen.”

For the practice of *Lectio Divina*:

- Maintaining the placement of one hand on your heart, read the passage slowly, out loud or whispering.
- Reading the passage again, this time silently, maintain this questioning prayer in your mind, “Jesus Christ, what are you saying to me today?”
- Reading the passage for a third time, identify a verse that has stood out to you, in even the smallest way. Write it down.

Afterwards:

- Mulling over this verse and its relevance to you, create a short prayer for the day.
- Speak out your memory verse and prayer for the day: first reading it from the paper; then with eyes closed, from memory; then without opening your mouth, but in the inner voice of the heart.
- Allow this to be your memory verse and prayer for the day. Simply repeat it throughout the day, either out loud or in your heart, whenever it comes to mind.

## Reflection:

An example of the product of this exercise is:

“The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear?” Psalm 27:1  
Jesus Christ, cause me to see your light and salvation today, that I may live without fear. Amen.

This practice of slow and contemplative reading challenges us to identify the voice of Christ in our day to day lives, to take it to heart, and to feed on it and grow in it spiritually. How simple the voice of Christ is! From a psychological point of view, the “voice of Christ” is just a name we give to the verse that jumps out to us, perhaps at random. But from a more loving point of view, we recognize that the message that stands out to us bears a relevance for our lives of which we were not fully aware before reading. A truth of life, something actually needed for today, was communicated through the scriptures. Why shouldn’t something so simple also be as profound as the voice of God?

That voice is then echoed in the heart throughout the day, along with a short, sincere prayer. It is important to try to find a distinction within oneself between saying something in the mind and saying it in the heart. The Psalmist wrote “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). This nice turn of phrase has all the implications of falling in love with the words of God in the scripture, of pondering their meanings and drawing out their implications. But it also has a more simplistic, physiological interpretation. To hide the word of God in your heart is to speak it and to feel it being spoken with passion in your chest, but without noise. Consider the difference between reciting a phone number over and over just so as to be able to reproduce it in a few minutes’ time and shouting the name of a loved one in order to call them over to you from the other side of the street. Now imagine doing both of these, but without opening your mouth. Imagine simulating them internally. The one is done in the mind, the other in the heart. When you recite your verse and prayer to yourself throughout the day, do this as much as possible from the heart.

## 5. First Sunday of Lent: Praise the Lord, My Soul.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Praise the Lord, my soul;  
All my inmost being, praise His holy name.”  
--- Psalm 103:1

### Daily Exercise:

Inside or outside, get on your feet, move and flail around, make a fool of yourself, and praise the Lord! Repeat or shout the scripture for the day, exhorting your “inmost being” to praise His holy name!

### Reflection:

What does it mean to you to exhort your inmost being to praise His holy name? Which inoperative parts of your soul look up sheepishly to the instruction and hang limp? Is it your arms or your legs? Is it your emotions or your intellect? And why should you feel silly praising the Lord with claps and jumps when you are alone in your room? Who is there to judge you? We are all ashamed of our faith in so many ways, on so many levels. It is part of our purpose this Lenten course to become aware of this shame and these fears, and to interrogate them.

An intimately related question is: for what do we praise the Lord? When we need to exhort our souls to praise the Lord, where does our mind turn for inspiration? Is it the material blessings of life; the love of friends or family; the wonders of nature or history; or the simple fact of existing? And do doubts immediately arise as to whether the God of these things is truly worthy to be praised? What will truly arouse praise in you? How and why should you in particular exhort your inmost being to praise His holy name? Only you can find out.

## 6. First Monday of Lent: The Fruit of the Spirit.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outburst of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God! But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

--- Galatians 5:16-23

### Daily Exercise:

Meditate on the fruit of the spirit, as described by Paul in the final verse of the passage quoted above. The meditations for this Lent do not require a particular bodily posture or pattern of breathing; these only are the instructions:

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Come to bodily comfort and stillness.
- Close your eyes and place a hand on your heart.
- Pray the prayer for meditation: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Oh Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14)
- Then meditate on this verse for the day “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”, repeating it out loud as frequently or infrequently as is comfortable, but always from the heart (c.f. the first Saturday’s reflection).

- If you catch yourself sleeping or losing concentration, don't give up, return to the meditation for the remainder of the time.
- Continue to meditate on the verse throughout the day, as it comes to mind, whether out loud or under your voice, but always from the heart.

#### Daily Reflection:

The theme for this first full week of Lent is our dependence on the spirit of Christ. On the whole, we all desire to be people of love, joy, peace, and so on. Very often, these states require intentional choices on our parts, acts of dedication that communicate love and goodwill to others. But the venue of our everyday lives often seems to lack opportunity for these intentional acts. Instead, it falls to us to live in a mood of love and kindness towards others, exhibited in the smallest of ways, with the most insignificant of postures and actions. But who can muster up such insignificant kindness to others all day long? Is it not the case that patience, kindness, and goodness can only grow naturally in a character that is rooted in love for Christ? Is it not also the case that all our acts of devotional love actually flower out of hearts that have been moved towards love in the past? As we meditate today and this week on the fruit of the spirit, it will become increasingly obvious that these fruits are rarely characteristics that we can simply choose to have, but instead they grow naturally from a deeper source. But what is this deeper source? What will it take for us to live in the sweetness of these fruit on which we have just meditated? That is for us to discover in our own hearts.

## 7. First Tuesday of Lent: Bearing the Fruit.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outburst of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God! But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

--- Galatians 5:16-23

### Daily Exercise:

Use a journal to reflect on your own character, testing it by the fruit of the spirit:

- Write out the 9 fruits of the spirit from the passage above.
- For each one, identify one scenario or context in which you exhibit and enjoy the fruit well, and one in which you are lacking in that fruit.
- Allow 30 minutes for the exercise, and do not rush it. If the first 25 minutes comprise simply staring at the verse and drawing a blank, still the final 5 minutes may prove productive.

### Reflection:

Where we exhibit the fruit of the spirit, both we and those around us benefit. Is it not the case that we all appreciate the joy and peace of a spirit-filled believer? How good this God is whom we serve, that His effect in us, of love and peace, is His own work, not ours to muster up, and that this effect is such health and well-being for us? Why do we ever turn to anything or anyone else than Him for our relaxation or restoration?



But perhaps we feel devoid of the fruit, and alien to the idea that the fruit of good works should grow all by themselves. Perhaps we are discouraged by scenarios in which we regularly lack patience or kindness towards another person. It occurs to me that the fruit of the Spirit are not only the end-product of a healthy plant, but the starting point of a new one. Where there are contexts in which we lack patience or self-control, why not try planting a seed of love in the upcoming days? Love is the first fruit of the spirit that Paul mentions, and it seems to me that the sequence of virtues that He was inspired to describe develops in maturity and difficulty. Where there is a little love, joy, and peace, the more difficult virtues of patience, kindness, and goodness can ripen, and finally the fruit of faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control can mature. In another place, Paul prays for believers to be “rooted and established in love” (Ephesians 3:17). Even in a painful scenario, with difficult family relatives, or in a hugely stressful work environment, will we allow the Lord to plant little seeds of love, that they may take root and grow? Where no intentional acts of love seem possible, continue in your practices of prayer and meditation, that you may be like the man described in the first Psalm, who “meditates on [God’s] law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers” (Psalm 1:2-3).

Again, God’s promise is to grow these seeds within you all by Himself. To blend biblical images, some responsibility falls on us to be “good soil” (Mark 4:8), but Christ has already been planted in our hearts, and “night and day, whether [we] sleep or get up, the seed sprouts and grows, though [we] does not know how” (Mark 4:27). Even as we have identified areas in our lives where the fruit are lacking, let’s begin with gratitude and encouragement about the contexts in which the fruit is appearing. Are they not joy and life to us? Are they not the very presence of God in our lives? “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” (Psalm 34:8)

## 8. Second Wednesday of Lent: The Land of the Living.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Where would I be if I did not  
believe I would experience  
the Lord’s favor in the land of the living?”  
--- Psalm 27:13

### Daily Exercise:

Set some time aside now to prophesy this verse from Psalm 27 over yourself.

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Get up and on your feet, feel free to engage in some other activity like washing the dishes or looking at your phone.
- Periodically proclaim this verse for today out loud over yourself:  
“Where would I be if I did not believe I would experience the Lord’s favor in the land of living?”
- Continue throughout the day, whenever it comes to mind, to repeat this verse to yourself. Say it with as much conviction and hope as you can.

### Reflection:

Three powerful aspects of the Christian life meet in this wonderful verse: hope, God’s goodness, and God’s presence on earth.

1. All feeling of lack with respect to our faith, all feelings of being apart from God or missing His intimacy, can be diagnosed as a lack of hope. The news, from one side good, from another terrifying, is that our feeling of lack is not God’s fault but ours. This simple diagnosis by no means implies an easy remedy. True and powerful hope, like all the spirit’s fruit, cannot be mustered up on the spot. However, God has provided His people with a powerful means to nurture the seeds of the spirit within us: prophecy. To prophesy is simply to speak true words. But divine truth often runs counter to everyday fact. As I am saying “Where would I be ...”, even with a tone of confidence, I may be shaking in fear on this

inside. But these exercises in prophecy, to be undertaken every Wednesday in Lent, begin with this expression of deep longing: “Where would I be if I did not believe I would experience the Lord’s favor in the land of the living?” Our expressions of divine hope that run contrary to visible fact are rooted in a deep desire. Our words of faith that sometimes seem so strange are rooted in an inescapable longing. Now, you may not find it easy or possible to say today’s verse with much conviction; but I am convinced that this statement of longing will eventually, if only subtly, alert our souls to their deepest desire, and even to the power of the Holy Spirit that already lurks within our spirits to fulfill it. Do we not truly desire to be people full of hope? Not a naïve optimism, but a mature hope that knows what it is willing to live and die for? These prophetic exercises may prove to be the hardest exercises for us. But let’s at least leave a little time open to be confronted and provoked by the words of such a verse as this one. The challenges that each of us are facing with respect to hope will vary in painfulness and confusion. But some clarity may emerge over time. Stick with these exercises, and trust in the Spirit’s power.

2. What we hope for is ultimately the goodness of God. This is what we are in this religion game for. And all things that our souls can most truly and deeply long for, these are images of the goodness of God. Whether reconciliation with estranged friends and family or freedom from addictions and difficulties, all heartfelt hopes are images of God’s goodness. Whether the alleviation of suffering around the world or the enactment of justice amidst corrupt government, all true goodness is a taste of the divine glory. This is what we will live and die for. This is what our religion means.
3. The “hope of glory” that is contained in the Christian mystery does not only belong to an afterlife. It is in the “land of living” that we so deeply hunger to see God’s presence. And the heartfelt cry of God’s people is that His kingdom would come on earth, as it is in heaven. This week’s theme is our dependence on the spirit of Christ. We depend on the activity of the living God in the here and now. But what does this dependence mean? As we rehearse the desperate words of this verse in a prophetic tone, perhaps the Holy Spirit will reveal this dependence on Him amidst our deepest longings.

## 9. Second Thursday of Lent: Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Morning prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

Daily Scripture:

“No when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them. He said:  
Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.  
Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.”  
--- Matthew 5:1-5

Daily Exercise:

On today's walk, quietly proclaim the first three beatitudes over everyone you see.

- Go on a 20 minute walk in a busy place, abiding by as many of the instructions of last Thursday's walk as feels comfortable to you.
- Looking at a passerby, slowly proclaim a beatitude over them, quietly or silently, but from the heart (c.f. the first Saturday's reflection).
- Cycle through the first three beatitudes as you look from person to person. Let your gaze be long without being rude.

Reflection:

The exercises that this course has offered so far have all focused on ourselves and our relationship with God. But no fruit is really born in a Christian heart without a prioritization of others over ourselves. We desire to discover more of “the mystery of Christ” in our hearts, and this week's exercises have been challenging us to uncover our dependence on Christ's spirit within us for all virtues of our relationships with others. But Christ's spirit is more than that of virtue. The spirit of Christ is the gospel.

The gospel is good news to all those who are poor in spirit, who mourn, or who are meek. We may have many opportunities to share the gospel to

others, we may have few, but our hearts are drawn to Christ's if we live in readiness to proclaim God's love to all who suffer or feel distant from Him. And do we not all suffer? Is not everyone whom you looked at on today's walk mourning some tragedy in their lives? For all our differences, we certainly all live in the same world, broken as it is by war, famine, selfish desire, and hatred. But when we see other people on the street, who do we see? Today's exercises forces us to answer that question. Do we see broken people in need of love, or do we see put together people whose glances intimidate us?

Do you find it easy to gaze at people a little longer than normal and to whisper a beatitude over them? All of this course's walking exercises provoke us to face our fear or shame. Even the most subtle shame of the gospel is a sign of deeper waters of fear within us, which Christ longs to call out to, and to calm. Know that if you are intimidated by proclaiming beatitudes over others, then many beautiful waves of healing lie ahead of you. Each of us needs to be healed of hating our neighbor. The most subtle of our reactions to other people in the street, in our workplaces, and in all contexts of our lives, are so deeply structured by fear. But the Christ within us yearns to reach out in self-sacrificial love, and to transform us by transforming how we see others. Not only you but the whole earth must be born again.

## 10. Second Friday of Lent: They Will be Filled.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Blessed are those who hunger and  
thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

--- Matthew 5:6-12

### Daily Exercise:

Whenever you experience a pang of hunger, say the first of these beatitudes over yourself, and then say as many more of the beatitudes as you can remember over people you lay eyes on.

- As with yesterday’s instructions, proclaim the beatitudes slowly, quietly, and from the heart.
- Let your gaze move slowly from person to person, saying one beatitude over each one.

### Reflection:

Christian fasting transfigures physical hunger into spiritual hunger.

Whenever you feel a pang of hunger today, or are reminded of food, this exercise has you imply to yourself that your true desire and deepest need is not for food but for righteousness; and the words of the gospel have you affirm your trust that such a desire, although it can feel like a maddening

pain, is a profound blessing that almost inevitably leads to its own fulfillment: righteous action.

This week's exercises have had the theme of depending on the spirit of Christ for our righteous action. And the first of these beatitudes roots righteous action in a hungering desire. That desire, deep in the heart, called out by the words of the gospel, is the spirit of Christ in you. Learn it, treasure it, and guard it.

And move quickly to seeing the blessings that the gospel proclaims over others. Like yesterday, today we will let our vision linger over others in our vicinity while letting words of blessing be spoken from the heart. Perhaps you have noticed that there is in effect no difference between looking at another while proclaiming blessing over them, and looking at another while proclaiming blessing over your own attitude towards them. The second half of the beatitudes refers to characteristics that might be easier to consider virtuous. Instead of poverty, mourning, and meekness, we are considering the desires for righteousness, purity, peacemaking, and endurance. As you proclaim these blessings over others, does your own heart grow in any of these ways? Are you led to see the child of God within you, who always gazes upon the face of His Father?

## 11. Second Saturday of Lent: *Lectio Divina* with The Sermon on the Mount.

Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

Daily Scripture: Matthew 5-7

Daily Exercise:

Make the following preparations:

- Gather a bible, a notebook, and a pen. Alternatively, use the remaining space on this page of the course to take notes.
- Glance over the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5-7 in your bible while allowing your body and breath to come to comfort and stillness.
- Place a hand on your heart and pray this prayer of preparation for *Lectio Divina*: “Lord Jesus Christ, let this moment of reading be a moment of intimacy between us. Please speak a message that is specific to me, and for today. Amen.”

For the practice of *Lectio Divina*:

- Maintaining the placement of one hand on your heart, read the passage slowly, out loud or whispering.
- Reading the passage again, this time silently, maintain this questioning prayer in your mind, “Jesus Christ, what are you saying to me today?”, and identify a verse that has stood out to you, in even the smallest way. Write it down.

Afterwards:

- Mulling over this verse and its relevance to you, write out a short prayer for the day.
- Allow this to be your memory verse and prayer for the day. Simply repeat it throughout the day, either out loud or in your heart, whenever it comes to mind.



### Reflection:

Can any sincere Christian read the sermon on the mount without being deeply challenged on some aspect of their heart's posture towards God or their neighbors? And can we face the depravity of our own hearts without sensing our total dependence on Christ to do the work of sanctification, since we ourselves are unable? But how could Jesus Christ, a remarkable human being of a time long ago, have any effect in our lives today? How else than by the transmission of His teachings, character, life, death, and resurrection through the words of the scripture, and by their appropriation into a willing heart through prayer and meditation? Is this not simply an extension of how all true communication happens, of how anyone really depends on anyone else?

But what is even more unfathomable is how our *lectio divina* (divine reading) could reveal not only our dependence on a man who lived a long time ago but the truly continual life of that man today in our hearts! Only He Himself could reveal that reality to us. Will we be ready to see it?

## 12. Second Sunday of Lent: Not Judging Others.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

--- Matthew 7:1-2

### Daily Exercise:

Praise God for His willingness to love and forgive anyone who comes to mind, and everyone you see today.

- Set a timer for 10 minutes.
- In any posture, and with any level of volume of voice, repeatedly pray the following prayer.
- Using the names of everyone who comes to mind, say “Thank you God for your willingness to love and forgive \_\_\_\_\_”.
- Then, throughout the day, as it comes to mind, silently praise God from the heart for His love and forgiveness towards everyone you encounter.

### Reflection:

Jesus’ teaching on judgment in Matthew 7:1-2 goes on, drawing implications about judging first oneself, and not teaching others indiscriminately. But surely another implication of His teaching is to replace our judging attitudes towards others with loving attitudes. But since we have learnt over this week how our goodwill and good fruit depends on God’s love, our attempt to avoid judging others must be rooted in an appreciation of God’s desire not to judge them, but to love them and show them His overwhelming forgiveness. Today’s exercises, though focused on others in a sense, direct our praise and love towards God. I pray now that you will genuinely feel the love of God, whether warmly or fiercely, as you pray these prayers over others today.

### 13. Second Monday of Lent: Wait for the Lord.

#### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

#### Daily Scripture:

“Wait for the Lord;  
be strong and take heart  
and wait for the Lord.”  
--- Psalm 27:14

#### Daily Exercise:

Meditate on this final verse of Psalm 27. The meditations for this Lent do not require a particular bodily posture or pattern of breathing; these only are the instructions:

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Come to bodily comfort and stillness.
- Close your eyes and place a hand on your heart.
- Pray the prayer for meditation: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Oh Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14)
- Then meditate on the daily scripture, repeating it out loud, and from the heart (c.f. first Saturday reflection) as frequently or infrequently as is comfortable.
- If you catch yourself sleeping or losing concentration, don’t give up, return to the meditation for the remainder of the time.
- Continue to meditate on the verse throughout the day, as it comes to mind, whether out loud or under your voice, but always from the heart.

#### Reflection:

Why do we come to the Lord intentionally in our hearts and minds? Is it not overwhelming often because of our own needs and desires? Christ desires a more stable intimacy with us. Like any friend or lover, He wants to spend time with us in simple mutual affection and unspoken tenderness. But we so often feel racked with doubts and fears as to how this could be possible, and

what it could require of us. How funny! When, like any friend or lover, all it requires is our willing hearts.

Still, what does it take to have a willing heart that is stilled in tender love for God? The details are for you to work out and experience, but the general truth is that it can only be God's doing. In contrast, the only thing for you to do is to "wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart, and wait for the Lord". Today's meditation is an exhortation to oneself to trust God in quiet stillness. Allow its words to subtly inflect your breathing and posture, your thoughts and your mood. As we grow quickly in dedication to meditation during this course, take the time to notice the effects that words of scripture, and all words of truth in general, have on your heart and mind. And linger with the words throughout the day. Allow them to be an exhortation to patience and trust in all circumstances. The aim of this week's exercises is to cultivate a trust in the mystery of Christ. I pray that you would come to see, in this meditation and over the days ahead, that trust in God is not truly rooted in special experience or clever understanding, as our fearful minds often imagine, but in a simple tenderness of heart.

## 14. Second Tuesday of Lent: Angry at God.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Keep silent and let me speak;  
then let come to me what may.  
Why do I put myself in jeopardy  
and take my life in my hands?  
Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him;  
I will surely defend my ways to His face.  
Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance,  
for no godless person would dare come before Him!  
Listen carefully to what I say;  
let my words ring in your ears.  
Now that I have prepared my case,  
I know I will be vindicated.”  
--- Job 13:13-18

### Daily Exercise:

Write a journal entry expressing your anger towards God.

- Glance back at previous journal entries written on these Tuesdays of Lent.
- Begin this exercise even if no anger towards God comes to mind. Write “God, I am angry at you because of \_\_\_\_\_”, beginning with the most general of life’s difficulties. Further details and stronger emotions can come as you allow yourself to write.
- Allow 30 minutes for the exercise, and do not rush it. If the first 25 minutes comprise simply staring at the page and drawing a blank, still the final 5 minutes may prove productive.

### Reflection:

We rightly hold ourselves back from the expression of anger in many circumstances of our day to day lives. But the altar of God is exactly where our most raw anger should be brought. The Father longs to be the only one to hear our meanest bitterness: He and His Son have already demonstrated

that willingness on the cross. Moreover, no relationship can really grow without the pain of true intimacy. No seed of mystery can grow in the Christian heart without much dying first. And, as with all anger, our frustrations mask deep fear that Christ longs to speak to and to heal. How it is that identifying our anger, writing it out in prayer, and stewing in it to some extent, can lead to healing, all this is revealed to a believer over time. I pray that such an exercise as this will lead to a cultivation of truer trust in the mystery of Christ in us.

## 15. Third Wednesday of Lent: Commitment to the Course.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Hear my voice when I call, Lord;  
be merciful to me and answer me.  
My heart says of You, “Seek His face!”  
Your face, Lord, I will seek.”  
--- Psalm 27:7-8

### Daily Exercise:

Prophecy your commitment to this Lenten course over yourself:

- Standing up, and perhaps performing some other activity as well, spend 20 minutes periodically saying the following to yourself, and with conviction:
- “I will be committed to this Lenten course in Christian mystery, more than that to finding and knowing Christ in me, and more than that to loving God and loving my neighbor”.
- Remember this prophecy throughout the day and repeat it whenever it comes to mind.
- Understand that the exercise only has a point *because* you do not mean the words with full sincerity as you say them. Persist nonetheless, trusting that one or two sincere statements in the day accomplish much in the heart.

### Reflection:

I hope that this course is becoming demanding and strange enough to call into question your motivations for continuing with it. But I also trust God that your simple intention and devotion have opened the door for lessons to be learnt and intimacy to be gained with God so far this Lent. The rest of this course, as with the rest of your life, will require sincere commitment to the mystery of Christ. Such commitment is actually established through proclamations like today’s.

## 16. Third Thursday of Lent: Walking By Faith.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

--- 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

### Daily Exercise:

On today's walk, have your eyes closed as much as possible.

- Go on a 20 minute walk.
- See if you can open your eyes only every 5 steps, then only every 10 steps, and so on.
- Pay attention to your own emotions, and see what it takes to grow in courage in this small way.

### Reflection:

In the history of Protestant Christianity, faith's natural opposite has often been taken to be works. In the history of Western philosophy, faith's natural opposite has often been taken to be reason. What these opposites have in common is sight. The person of faith is of course willing to have their eyes open, but they are equally willing to have them closed. Faith sees in the dark. Faith sees the things of the spirit with the heart. Perhaps you have experienced this kind of sight in your meditations or prayers. It is equally possible on the streets, and, as playful and silly as today's exercise is, within its joy and play lies a freedom of faith that I pray you taste.



## 17. Third Friday of Lent: Man Does Not Live On Bread Alone.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. The tempter came and said to Him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

--- Matthew 4:1-4

### Daily Exercise:

With every pang of hunger during today’s fast, repeat this verse for the day:

- “I do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”
- As much as possible, speak this verse from the heart and with conviction, all the while understanding that this exercise would have no point if you already understood and believed the verse’s meaning in a natural and sincere way.

### Reflection:

Think back over your experience of fasting so far this Lent. How does the hunger make you feel? Do you become lethargic or tired? Are you more susceptible to anger, to sadness, or discouragement?

All Christian fasting is related to Jesus’ epic fast in the wilderness. We are therefore challenged to ask whether or not “every word that comes from the mouth of God” is life to us. The truth is that the Christ, who already lives as desire and trust and words “from the mouth of God” in your heart, is more your source of life than any food. This may not yet be apparent to you, “but when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:4). This Lent, continue to let physical hunger be transfigured into spiritual hunger, knowing that your hunger for Christ is simultaneously a hunger for your true self to appear “with Him in glory”.

## 18. Third Saturday of Lent: *Lectio Divina* with Mark 1-3.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture: Mark 1-3

### Daily Exercise:

This *Lectio Divina* practice follows the same structure as on previous Saturdays, but note the addition of a greater watchfulness of thought in the instructions below. Make the following preparations:

- Gather a bible, a notebook, and a pen.
- Glance over the first three chapters of Mark in your bible while allowing your body and breath to come to comfort and stillness.
- Place a hand on your heart and pray this prayer of preparation for *Lectio Divina*: “Lord Jesus Christ, let this moment of reading be a moment of intimacy between us. Please speak a message that is specific to me, and for today. Amen.”

For the practice of *Lectio Divina*:

- Maintaining the placement of one hand on your heart, read the passage slowly, out loud or whispering.
- Any time that your eye is drawn away from the text, and your mind wanders from the reading, make a quick note in your journal of what you were thinking about.
- Reading the passage again, this time silently, maintain this questioning prayer in your mind, “Jesus Christ, what are you saying to me today?”, and identify a verse that has stood out to you, in even the smallest way. Write it down.

Afterwards:

- Mulling over this verse and its relevance to you, write out a short prayer for the day.
- Allow this to be your memory verse and prayer for the day. Simply repeat it throughout the day, either out loud or in your heart, whenever it comes to mind.

### Reflection:

The first mystery of the gospel according to Mark occurs at Jesus' baptism. He "saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased"" (Mark 1:10-11). Christ's definitive and foundational experience was to hear the voice of God as that of a loving Father. He knew Himself to be the divine Son. And when, a little later, a few friends tore open the roof of his house and a paralytic descended on Him, Jesus passed on this experience of divine childhood, saying to him "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5).

Did not Christ, the divine Son, live in the heart of that healed paralytic from that day on? And as much as we may long for miraculous experiences such as the healing of a paralytic to confirm us in our faith, isn't Jesus communicating that the real definitive and foundational experience of our life with Him, by which we know Him in our hearts, is to know the forgiveness of our sin? In truth, miraculous changes of body are made possible by miraculous changes of heart, just as "words from the mouth of God" are more sustaining than bread.

You, in whose heart Christ lives, have already experienced the forgiveness of your sins. The feeling that this forgiveness does not continue as a tangible experience, even the feeling of God's love abandoning us, to put this message starkly again, is caused by our lack of trust, and not by our loving Father in heaven. But do not hear this as a rebuke, rather as an invitation to deepen in the trust that your heart already has in Him. His life and love in us are truly a mystery. Let's trust them.

## 19. Third Sunday of Lent: Who Satisfies Your Desires?

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Praise the Lord, my soul;  
all my inmost being, praise His holy name.  
Praise the Lord, my soul,  
and forget not all His benefits —  
who forgives all your sins  
and heals all your diseases,  
who redeems your life from the pit  
and crowns you with love and compassion,  
who satisfies your desires with good things  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”  
--- Psalm 103:1-5

### Daily Exercise:

Praise God today for the satisfaction of any of your desires and needs, especially in the smallest of things.

- Thank God: “Thank you God for this coffee”, “Thank you God for this breath of air”, “Thank you God that my body is healthy and recovered”.
- Affirm with the Psalmist that God satisfies our desires: “God you alone satisfy my desire to be loved by others”, “God you alone satisfy my desire for rest and relaxation”, “God, you alone satisfy my desire for stimulating work”.
- If there is a desire that you note in yourself for which you cannot in good conscience thank God, then affirm the reorientation of your desire before Him, in a similar way to the practice of fasting. For example, say: “God, I do not want to get drunk as much as I want to be drunk in your Spirit.”
- Pray these prayers in freedom, as often as is comfortable.

### Reflection:

At the end of the parable of the prodigal Son, the elder Son feels left out of his Father's celebrations, and even feels abandoned by God (Luke 15:29). But the Father replies that everything that belongs to the Father belongs to the Son. The elder Son had not considered the context of his daily life and work to be blessings from his Father. Perhaps it has occurred to him, but he had not been sustained by or in gratitude.

The Father truly sustains us. Not only is everything He has ours, but everything we have is His. These may feel like weak platitudes, and so they are, without a certain gentle discipline in affirming the Lord's presence in the satisfaction of our smallest needs and desires, and remaining grateful for the most meagre provision. This perspective of total dependence on and gratitude towards God is what has caused believers of the ages to say grace before every meal, or to sing songs with lines such as "you are the air I breathe". Visions of this perspective may not come to us overnight, or without trials and difficulties, but does truly come easily, which is to say by simple recognition. No special experience or understanding is necessary.

How good it is that we can grow in the Lord by growing in gratitude! What a peaceful and gentle path He has placed in front of us. Somehow, some reservation appears to the mind when setting out on that journey, you may be scratching your head right now, but it really is a simple, easy, and effective practice. Granted, the pain that we feel over difficulties in our everyday lives, pain we have repressed, can sometimes reappear in the light of gratitude, but this itself is of benefit to the heart who is ready to surrender that pain to the Lord. Be committed to the practice of this course, even where it seems strange and unbelievable, be committed to being a person of gratitude, and, above all, be committed to our hugely generous God, who satisfies all "your desires with good things".

## 20. Third Monday of Lent: One Thing I Ask.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“One thing I ask from the Lord,  
this only do I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord  
and to seek Him in His temple.”  
--- Psalm 27:4

### Daily Exercise:

Meditate on this verse from Psalm 27. The meditations for this Lent do not require a particular bodily posture or pattern of breathing; these only are the instructions:

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Come to bodily comfort and stillness.
- Close your eyes and place a hand on your heart.
- Pray the prayer for meditation: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Oh Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14)
- Then meditate on the daily scripture, repeating it out loud, and from the heart (c.f. first Saturday reflection) as frequently or infrequently as is comfortable.
- If you catch yourself sleeping or losing concentration, don’t give up, return to the meditation for the remainder of the time.
- Continue to meditate on the verse throughout the day, as it comes to mind, whether out loud or under your voice, but always from the heart.

## Reflection:

We human beings whose hearts are open to belief, to acceptance, and therefore to reconciliation, are nonetheless contradictory creatures. We do not know what we want, and even when we do, we do not do what we want to do (c.f. Romans 7).

So much healing and direction can be found in life through the evaluation, ordering, and pursuit of our desires. I am confident that each of you most deeply desires Christ, not only in theory, but in reality. God's love and goodness has a hold over your soul that He will never let go. But our desires get forgotten in the chaos of life, and they conflict and they rub up against each other. It is therefore a powerful practice to stand firm in our true desire for God, proclaiming it to ourselves and to Him.

It interests me how David elaborates on his "one" desire with two further descriptions: to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and seek Him in His temple. As we proclaim this "one" deepest desire of our hearts, we trust that our other real desires find their elaboration and contextualization within it. In God's love, all other projects find their ultimate purpose and their guiding light. It also interests me that David asks the Lord that he may "seek Him". He doesn't ask to find God, but to keep on looking. Our desire for Christ is part of dwelling in His house, it's the engine of longing in our hearts that actually finds expression as love, trust, and endurance in concrete situations. And so, oddly, we can know that our desire finds its immediate answer in itself. God answers our prayers for Him with an ever deepening hunger and thirst. All stability in faith is also a deep and even turbulent need for the Lord, which makes saints willing to live and die for the goodness of God.

It is with this understanding that the exercises of this week focus on maturing in our desire for the presence Christ. May our desires find right expression, not get submerged in the noise of life, and come into harmony and right ordering with the other projects of our lives.

## 21. Third Tuesday of Lent: Whom have I in Heaven but You?

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Yet I am always with you;  
you hold me by my right hand.  
You guide me with your counsel,  
and afterward you will take me into glory.  
Whom have I in heaven but you?  
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.  
My flesh and my heart may fail  
but God is the strength of my heart  
and my portion forever.  
Those who are far from you will perish;  
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.  
But as for me, it is good to be near God.  
I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge;  
I will tell of all your deeds.”  
--- Isaiah 73:23-28

### Daily Exercise:

Write a journal entry describing your reasons for desiring Christ.

- Glance back at previous journal entries written on these Tuesdays of Lent.
- Rather than trying to describe what you hope to gain from knowing Christ better in the future, let this writing period be focused on the past, and the concrete events and experiences that led you to desire Christ more today. What inspired you? What educated you? Where does this leave you now?
- Allow 30 minutes for the exercise, and do not rush it. If the first 25 minutes comprise simply staring at the page and drawing a blank, still the final 5 minutes may prove productive.



### Reflection:

An authentic desire for Christ, free of the weeds of selfishness, is rooted in who Christ has already proved Himself to be. Your journaling today may refer to situations in which the presence of Christ has been very clear to you. The exercises of this course challenge us to desire Christ in new ways, perhaps looking for His presence in new places, but it is good to remain rooted in what we have already experienced and tasted. Praying over such memories can confirm that an intimate knowledge of Christ is possible, a direct experience even, even if we know that such an experience might not mean much to another person. Holding onto these experiences and insisting that God repeat them will rarely be helpful, but it is good to understand that God can reveal Himself, all the while abiding in gratitude for such experiences.

## 22. Fourth Wednesday of Lent: Ask, Seek, Knock.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

--- Matthew 7:7-8

### Daily Exercise:

Proclaim this promise from Jesus course over yourself:

- Standing up, and perhaps performing some other activity as well, spend 20 minutes periodically saying the following to yourself, and with conviction:
- “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”
- Remember this promise from Jesus throughout the day and repeat it whenever it comes to mind.

### Reflection:

This promise of Jesus’ is one of His most elusive, while being one of His most attractive. What does it mean? Ask Him. Seek Him. Knock on the doors that present themselves. This saying gives some hope to the one who desires Jesus strongly. If we ask Him, seek Him, and knock on His door, He will answer. However, this is not just a singular promise, but one developed in three stages. It is as if, when we ask Him where He is, He will give us the answer, but only in the form of a clue; as if, when we seek for Him using this clue, we will find only a locked door; and as if only ardent knocking on this door will open the path to a closer walk with Him.

The door we need to find is the door of our hearts. And it is not truly we who knock, but Him: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me” (Revelation 3:20). Let your desire for Him be encouraged and challenged by these promises.

## 23. Fourth Thursday of Lent: Not Going Without Him.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Moses said to the Lord, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people’, but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Then Moses said to Him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

--- Exodus 33:12-7

### Daily Exercise:

Pray this prayer of Moses over your walk today, walking slowly and intentionally before the presence of the Lord.

- Before stepping outside, pray ardently “Lord, please grant me an awareness of your Presence.”
- Then pray Moses’ prayer: “If your Presence does not go with me, do not send me up from here.” Continue to pray this prayer throughout the duration of your walk.
- If you feel distressed, or lacking in an awareness of His Presence, be willing to wait, praying the prayer above until the awareness returns.
- Walk slowly for 20 minutes, eyes down, maintaining a humble awareness of the Presence of the Lord.

## Reflection:

Today's exercise may feel like putting God to the test. But if we are willing to actually remain indoors or to remain still without a sense of His Presence, then it is only ourselves that are being put to the test. We rely on His faithful willingness to reveal Himself to those who ask and seek after Him, according to Jesus' promise remembered yesterday.

Even though, in Moses' day, the Presence of the Lord was visible to the Israelites as pillars of cloud and smoke, no such grand manifestation need be expected in our prayers for today. Remember that God is omnipresent; remember that Moses prayed that all God's people become prophets, people attuned to the leading power of the Spirit (Numbers 11:29); and remember the ways that Christ has already revealed His presence to you. It is really our own attentiveness, not His presence, that needs to be maintained throughout today's walk, and throughout our lives.

Most religious ritual leaves the impression that attentiveness to God's reality, God's presence, and the Spirit of Christ require diligent effort, whether by prayers, songs, or holy attitudes. But how simple could today's walk be? Can we proceed in a slow and silent and easy attentiveness to God's goodness? Can we recognize that God demands nothing of us, nothing whatsoever? We are His children, and He our loving Father. He has put the Spirit of Christ in our hearts, and no amount of work is needed to drum up holiness or authentic spirituality. As much as we may desire Him wholeheartedly, the Christian journey is much more about letting go, remaining quiet in His presence, and trusting that He produces the fruit of the Spirit within us.

## 24. Fourth Friday of Lent: You Shall Find Rest For Your Souls.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

--- Matthew 11:28-30

### Daily Exercise:

Eliminate hurry from your day. In every way possible, let the hunger of fasting remind and encourage you to slow down.

### Reflection:

God’s demand on us is not “more, more, more”, but “less, less, less”. We must become less, He must become more (John 3:30). And though fasting can feel like a trial, can we also come to see it as a blessing? As we put less “fuel” into our bodies, less is expected of us, and the stage is set for rest on deeper physiological and spiritual levels. We have done a little bit to cultivate and ask for so many virtues and fruits of the spirit so far this Lent. But do we often rush by the answers to these prayers that God is providing? If we can walk through our neighborhoods slowly, eat slowly, and talk slowly, then so much more space can be made for gratitude for the little blessings that the Lord sends our way every day.

That being said, this is an intense course, and many different thoughts and experiences are being touched on every day. In contrast, and in truth, we can only slow down slowly. The pace of western life means that those who are on the spiritual journey home to the Lord of their hearts will normally slow down to great extents, disburdening themselves of many worthless activities and worldly desires. This process can only be done gradually, over time. If this Lenten season is inspiring you to declutter your life of certain activities or possessions, then why shouldn’t now be the time? Commit to it and allow the Lord to bless you through it. Allow the elimination of hurry to have a greater impact on your life than just today.

## 25. Fourth Saturday of Lent: *Lectio Divina* with Mark 4-6.

Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

Daily Scripture: Mark chapters 4-6

Daily Exercise:

Make the following preparations:

- Gather a bible, a notebook, and a pen.
- Glance over Mark 4-6 in your bible while allowing your body and breath to come to comfort and stillness.
- Place a hand on your heart and pray this prayer of preparation for *Lectio Divina*: “Lord Jesus Christ, let this moment of reading be a moment of intimacy between us. Please speak a message that is specific to me, and for today. Amen.”

For the practice of *Lectio Divina*:

- Maintaining the placement of one hand on your heart, read the passage slowly, out loud or whispering.
- Any time that your eye is drawn away from the text, and your mind wanders from the reading, make a quick note in your journal of what you were thinking about.
- Reading the passage again, this time silently, maintain this questioning prayer in your mind, “Jesus Christ, what are you saying to me today?”, and identify a verse that has stood out to you, in even the smallest way. Write it down.

Afterwards:

- Mulling over this verse and its relevance to you, write out a short prayer for the day.
- Allow this to be your memory verse and prayer for the day. Simply repeat it throughout the day, either out loud or in your heart, whenever it comes to mind.

### Reflection:

The apostle Peter wrote something remarkable: “whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.” (1 Peter 4:1). Like the woman in Mark chapter 5, many people are driven to Jesus by their suffering, not only in the desire to be healed by the miracle-worker, but in complete exhaustion with sin and unholiness. Physical frailty is often only the catalyst for highlighting the suffering caused by our ill-will towards each other, and by our fear and faithlessness. On the other hand, the pain of suffering, when taken up into the loving arms of Christ in beautiful moments, can be transfigured into a deep longing for Him that is actually satisfying in itself. When we reach out for Him in our moments of suffering, He is truly able to heal us, and send us away in peace. Is your desire for Him spurred on by any forms of suffering? Have you made this explicit to Him in prayer?

## 26. Fourth Sunday of Lent: I Need Thee.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

--- John 15:5-8

### Daily Exercise:

Throughout the day, sing the words of this famous hymn:

I need thee, Oh I need thee,  
Every hour I need thee.  
Oh bless me now my Savior  
I come to thee.

### Reflection:

This has been a week of attuning our desires to Christ and deepening those desires into needs. It has also been a week of hoping for rest in Him. As we sing the words of this hymn, let’s identify the Lord in all our needs, those that have been met and those that have not, and let’s affirm that our deepest need is for the Lord. He is the great “thee”, the One to whom our souls are open whenever they say “you”. To need Him is to need love. To need Him is to need rest. And He stands at the doors of our hearts, willing to enter into our lives, if only we would welcome Him.



## 27. Fourth Monday of Lent: Be Still and Know.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth.”  
The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.”  
--- Psalm 46:10-11

### Daily Exercise:

Meditate on these verses from Psalm 46.

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Come to bodily comfort and stillness.
- Close your eyes and place a hand on your heart.
- Pray the prayer for meditation: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Oh Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14)
- Then meditate on the daily scripture, repeating it out loud, and from the heart (c.f. first Saturday reflection) as frequently or infrequently as is comfortable.
- If you catch yourself sleeping or losing concentration, don’t give up, return to the meditation for the remainder of the time.
- Continue to meditate on the verse throughout the day, as it comes to mind, whether out loud or under your voice, but always from the heart.

### Reflection:

In the spirit, confidence comes through peace. In truth, knowledge comes through stillness. Now, you may perform these meditations and feel no sense of confident knowledge. It is beneficial to continue through the meditations, whether by desperation or sheer self-discipline. But I am confident that Christ will make Himself known to you this Lent, in deeper ways than ever before, because, in truth, this is happening all the time. Whether in a particular exercise, through something specifically Christian, or through

some other event in life that may have otherwise seemed completely disconnected from God, He will make Himself known to you in a way that is particularly appropriate for you. And though you may feel that meditation and stillness are not your thing, the word of the Lord endures forever (1 Peter 1:25), and God's goodness always brings you to peace and stillness, allowing you to practice the words of Psalm 46, and to know His coming exaltation like never before.

## 28. Fourth Tuesday of Lent: One of Us.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

““Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

“Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.”

--- Mark 9:38-41

### Daily Exercise:

Write a journal entry describing your resentments against other Christians.

- Glance back at previous journal entries written on these Tuesdays of Lent.
- This exercise can go in deep into one frustration, or can simply become a list. Include whatever comes to mind, even the smallest of negative emotions: “I still feel hurt by the church of my youth because of \_\_\_, I am annoyed by Western Christians over \_\_\_”.
- Allow 30 minutes for the exercise, and do not rush it. If the first 25 minutes comprise simply staring at the page and drawing a blank, still the final 5 minutes may prove productive.

### Reflection:

Many of our hesitations over following Christ are rooted in fears of being associated with other Christians. This exercise has two distinct intended consequences. The first is to open up a space for forgiving other Christians. In accordance with Jesus’ words from Mark 9 quoted above, the smallest acts of Christian service entitle people to the compassion and collaboration of other believers. Secondly, it is necessary to disassociate our image of Christ from our image of the church, lest we make an idol of Christianity. As indebted to the church as we may be, such a dissociation is a part of the direct perception of Christ in our hearts. Therefore, after completing the

journaling exercise for today, and whether or not there is any feeling of forgiveness and resolution in your heart (these only come with time anyway), see if you can sincerely pray “Jesus Christ, though there may be no Christians whom I can look up to, I will still follow you; and though there may be no believers with whom I want to associate, I want always to dwell in your house”.

The good news is that there is no obligation on you to impress any other believers, or abide by their expectation of you, in order to please Christ, and abide in His overwhelming grace. The other good news is that knowing this may free you up to forgive other Christians, and sense even more the sweetness of Christ’s compassion.

## 29. Fifth Wednesday of Lent: Where are You, Lord?

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Why, Lord, do you stand far off?  
Why do You hide yourself in times of trouble?  
In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak,  
who are caught in the schemes he devises.”  
--- Psalm 10:1-2

### Daily Exercise:

Cry out “Where are you Lord?”

- Standing up, and perhaps performing some other activity as well, spend 20 minutes periodically asking “Where are you Lord?”
- Even if you feel content in the Lord’s presence, recall contexts in which you know you are disposed to despair of His presence, asking Him “Where are you, Lord, in this personal problem?”, “Where are you Lord, in this national crisis?” Name the contexts.

### Reflection:

One way to encourage our faith to rest less on mood and more on, well, faith, is to encourage our despair to rest less on mood too. In truth, so long as we are in this body, there will be parts of the soul which naturally trust and parts that despair of His company. We have spiritual agency when it comes to where to direct our attention.

The theme of this week is recognizing the reality of Christ. We have so far aimed to depend on Him, trust in Him, and desire Him. My prayer is that we will be able to perceive His presence clearly, in our lives, and in our hearts. This will not be possible without the simple question: “Where are you, Lord?” His presence is the answer to our question.

## 30. Fifth Thursday of Lent: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of His hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they reveal knowledge.”  
--- Psalm 19:1-2

### Daily Exercise:

On today's 20 minute walk, be the mouth-piece of the heavens' declaration of the glory of God.

- Walk slowly, with hand on heart, and keeping your gaze on the sky ahead of you as much as possible (see the first Thursday).
- Every now and again, say “The heavens declare the glory of God”, whether as a whisper, or for all the world to hear, but always from the heart (see the first Saturday).

### Reflection:

Ages and generations of believers and spiritual seekers have found God in the skies, in the heavens. Perhaps angels appear to some in a glance, and perhaps some have seen doves descending at random moments, but many have simply been awed by the clouds and stars and spent months in meditation on the great expanse above. At all moments of our lives outdoors, half of our potential field of vision is basically blank and blissful, but we normally choose to occupy ourselves with the minutiae of the next few steps of the journey ahead of us. However, when we look at the sky, we look at the bigger picture of our own lives. Our sins and frailties are highlighted like the edges of clouds at sunset, but also wiped away by the glide of the wings of a bird. And the lives of others shine with importance and significance, while the space of the divine is opened up before us, if only we have eyes to see it. The heavens truly declare the glory of God.

### 31. Fifth Friday of Lent: Giving to Those Who Ask.

#### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

#### Daily Scriptures:

“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

--- Matthew 5:42

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
to loose the chains of injustice  
and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free  
and break every yoke?  
Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?  
Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear;  
then your righteousness<sup>[a]</sup> will go before you,  
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.  
Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;  
you will cry for help, and He will say: Here am I.”  
--- Isaiah 58:6-9

#### Daily Exercise:

During today’s fast, give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

#### Reflection:

The reality of Christ is self-sacrificial love. Although we hope in Him to provide us greater evidence of His presence, from the outside so to speak, it often falls to us to exhibit His presence on the inside with intentional and self-sacrificial love. We all know the challenges of living up to Christ’s words. Beggars ask for money, but we only have so much of it. People want to borrow from us, but not everyone can be trusted to return the goods.

However, it is also true that we all long at a deep level to follow Christ's words; to simply give them a go. Whether or not you run into anyone making requests of you today, set aside the time to give a whole-hearted interpretation of Christ's words a go. No theological back and forth, no second guessing, just a willingness to obey Him, just a hunger for His reality.



## 32. Fifth Saturday of Lent: *Lectio Divina* with Mark 7-9.

Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

Daily Scripture: Mark 7-9.

Daily Exercise:

Make the following preparations:

- Gather a bible, a notebook, and a pen.
- Glance over Mark 7-9 in your bible while allowing your body and breath to come to comfort and stillness.
- Place a hand on your heart and pray this prayer of preparation for *Lectio Divina*: “Lord Jesus Christ, let this moment of reading be a moment of intimacy between us. Please speak a message that is specific to me, and for today. Amen.”

For the practice of *Lectio Divina*:

- Maintaining the placement of one hand on your heart, read the passage slowly, out loud or whispering.
- Any time that your eye is drawn away from the text, and your mind wanders from the reading, make a quick note in your journal of what you were thinking about.
- Reading the passage again, this time silently, maintain this questioning prayer in your mind, “Jesus Christ, what are you saying to me today?” and identify a verse that has stood out to you, in even the smallest way. Write it down.

Afterwards:

- Mulling over this verse and its relevance to you, write out a short prayer for the day.
- Allow this to be your memory verse and prayer for the day. Simply repeat it throughout the day, either out loud or in your heart, whenever it comes to mind.

### Reflection:

The healing of a blind man in Bethsaida is a prophetic foreshadowing of Peter's declaration of Christ (Mark 8:22-30). Seeing Christ for who He is requires a detachment from our normal lives (the village), and an intentional washing of the eyes of our heart (with mud). Jesus may stand before us in all clarity, but we may still not know who He is to and in our hearts. Is He the one we trust to save us and lead us in school and at work, in the bedroom and in the kitchen, at church and on the streets, when all is well and when all is in turmoil? Is He our closest friend, our one companion, our only hope? Who is He? Can we see Him clearly? Have we made this sight an ambition of our spiritual lives, more than that, a necessity of our everyday existence?

Christ is truly there to be seen. And he is not complicated. He is love. He is peace. He is a grace that overrides all difficulty and confusion. He accompanies you through all moments, whether you feel it or not, whether you accept Him or not. And, though we have noted that faith is contrasted with sight, spiritual sight is simply and really an act of faith. To see Him is to believe in Him. To believe in Him is to entrust ourselves to Him, with self-sacrificial love. To do this is to open our hearts to all the fruit of the Spirit, and to a truly transformed life.

### 33. Fifth Sunday of Lent: Every Good and Perfect Gift.

#### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

#### Daily Scripture:

“Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created.”

--- James 1:16-18

#### Daily Exercise:

Affirm the goodness of creation, recognizing through it the good creator.

- Take a moment of stillness now to visually scan the space you are in.
- As you pass your eyes over individual objects or people, say in a whisper: “This woman is good”, “This man is good”, “This food is good”, “This light is good”.
- Do not intentionally exclude anything from your affirmation, but look for an aspect of everything whose goodness you can affirm.
- Throughout the day, notice the goodness of creation, and intentionally bring it to the Father in praise: “Thank you God for this good piece of clothing, this good friend, this good meal”.

#### Reflection:

The idea here is not that we should change our mind on the goodness of creation or become happier or more appreciative; far from it. The goodness of creation is more or less obvious. But there is an intentionality of awareness of this goodness, fostered through praise and meditation, that opens up a genuinely new state of awareness, which transcends description. The transcendent creator is known in this space. This may all sound rather high-falutin or “mystical”, but believers have experienced it many times. However, only rarely have we considered that these experiences are genuinely beneficial, and that they require our intention.

## 34. Fifth Monday of Lent: My Heart is not Proud.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“My heart is not proud, Lord,  
my eyes are not haughty;  
I do not concern myself with great matters  
or things too wonderful for me.  
But I have calmed and quietened myself,  
I am like a weaned child with its mother;  
like a weaned child I am content.  
Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore.”  
--- Psalm 131

### Daily Exercise:

Memorize and meditate on this Psalm.

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Come to bodily comfort and stillness.
- Close your eyes and place a hand on your heart.
- Pray the prayer for meditation: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Oh Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14)
- Then meditate on the daily scripture, repeating it out loud, and from the heart (c.f. first Saturday reflection) as frequently or infrequently as is comfortable.
- If you catch yourself sleeping or losing concentration, don’t give up, return to the meditation for the remainder of the time.
- Continue to meditate on the verse throughout the day, as it comes to mind, whether out loud or under your voice, but always from the heart.

### Reflection:

The amazing grace of the Christian path is that we advance along it the more we realize that we do not deserve to. The more we tell God that we are content where we are, the more He pulls us towards Himself. Humility is the engine of spiritual growth. And another beautiful thing is that humility before God does not require self-abasement, unless picturing yourself as a child with its mother is a self-abasing image to you. God longs to give us peace of heart and mind by removing our pride, as the words of Psalm 131 describe. We have lifted up our eyes to the heavens this Lent, but the lowered eyes of humility are in a more blessed state.

Whether or not we have felt any intimacy with Christ so far this Lent, it is beneficial to recognize that we do not deserve any of His blessings. This is especially important for the one who has received some inward touch of His spiritual love. And so humility is the theme of this penultimate week of Lent. In psychological terms, this virtue extricates our minds from patterns of self-justification and explanation, opening them to the Spirit that lies beyond all thought. And in relational terms, humility before God multiplies into humility before others, which leads to more natural kindness and love. True humility is Christ's humility, and we will enter more into His dwelling-place the less we treat spirituality as our own activity or achievement, and the more we leave it all to Him.

## 35. Fifth Tuesday of Lent: In the Name of God.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scriptures:

“Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

--- Matthew 12:30-32

“But woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You keep locking people out of the kingdom of heaven! For you neither enter nor permit those trying to enter to go in.

--- Matthew 23:13

### Daily Exercise:

Write a journal entry to the question “What is the worst thing you have ever done in the name of God, Christ, or Christianity?”.

- Glance back at previous journal entries written on these Tuesdays of Lent.
- Take at least 5 minutes to consider the question for today, asking God to help you see clearly.
- Allow 30 minutes for the exercise, and do not rush it. If the first 25 minutes comprise simply staring at the page and drawing a blank, still the final 5 minutes may prove productive.

### Reflection:

So many of us are drawn to Jesus by His uncompromising stance on hypocrisy. He values love and justice so much more than ceremony or good standing. But we have sinned against Him and His values, and in His name! Let’s humbly confess our sins to Almighty God in journaling today.

## 36. Sixth Wednesday of Lent: Be Alert.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” — Ephesians 6:18

### Daily Exercise:

Pray for everyone that comes to mind, for something you genuinely want for that person.

- Set aside 20 minutes for this time of prayer.
- Feel free to get up and do something at the same time.
- Pray for everyone who comes to mind, intentionally passing over no one, with a brief prayer of blessing.
- Avoid praying simply “God bless X”, “God bless Y”, and instead pray for some genuine good that you wish for that person, whether peace, health, joy, love, success, or something else.

### Reflection:

Humility is less a matter of thinking less of yourself than thinking of yourself less. A life of love is filled with concern for others, but our concern for others often runs so thin. We may have a sense of people’s obvious needs and desires, and sometimes we wish or pray these for them, but just as our own deepest desires are much more significant than our day to day needs, so the real concern for the spiritual well-being of all those around us puts us in a much more profound connection than can any habitual routine.

We all deeply need to grow in concern for others. But that is what the others most deeply need too. What we all really need is the togetherness of love, compassion, and mutual respect. So there is no way to have our attention and desire focused on others more without having our intention and desire drawn upwards towards the transcendent goodness of God, who is the very togetherness of love and compassion.

## 37. Sixth Thursday of Lent: This Love That Surpasses Knowledge.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

--- Ephesians 3:16-19

### Daily Exercise:

On today’s 20 minute walk, inwardly proclaim your fear but Christ’s love over whomever you see.

- As you lay eyes on someone, whisper “I am afraid of this man, but Christ loves him enough to die for him”, “I am afraid of this woman, but Christ loves her enough to die for her”.
- Let your gaze linger on the person for as long as it takes you to make the gentle proclamation. Reflect on what emotion you feel as you look at each person.

### Reflection:

This exercise pushes our perception to extremes. Our habitual patterns of mental evaluation of people make us shy away from proclaiming the overwhelming love of God for others. We would sooner say “God loves X, but maybe a little less than Y because of Z”, or “God loves X, but hates the fact that X is doing Y”. We’re quick to move away from the love. It’s intimidating. It can sometimes leave us with an overwhelming feeling of responsibility for all others. But that is in God’s hands.

On the other hand, it is not often that we identify our relation to other people as fearful. Children are afraid, people going through crises are afraid, but we are indifferent if anything. But the proclamation of “fear”, since it is such a



strong word, quickly attunes us to any negative attitudes towards others, whether intimidation, shame, envy, or hatred. The language of the proclamation is much less important than the clear perception of our own attitudes towards others. Just the brief, intentional pause, after the acknowledgment of fear, in which our gaze lingers and we proclaim the love of Christ, this does so much to disorient us, when done with sincerity. I pray that our eyes would be opened to how different our hearts could become, and will become, by God's grace. I pray that we would each humbly desire to be much more deeply rooted in Christ's love.

## 38. Sixth Friday of Lent: I Am Not Worthy.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, asking for help. “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.”

Jesus said to him, “Shall I come and heal him?”

The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.””

--- Matthew 8:5-8

### Daily Exercise:

During today’s fast, whenever you feel a pang of hunger, be reminded to simply say “I am not worthy”.

### Reflection:

We have emphasized the fact that a humble character is rooted in concern for others, but there has to also be a measure of combat taken against our selfish desires, in which we speak against our prideful self-assertion. The Centurion proclaimed that he was not worthy to have Jesus come under his roof, but we will be implicitly claiming that we are not worthy to be doing whatever we are doing, thinking whatever we are thinking, living however we are living. It’s simple really; this life is not a matter of worth or desert, but an overwhelming grace. Nonetheless, there can be something belittling and affronting about today’s exercise. That risk is intentionally taken.

However, there can be times of distress in which the humility of Christ is immediate salvation. Humility is certainly the cure for humiliation, depression, and self-hatred. The self-abandonment of Christ is ultimately the relief from the at times overwhelming responsibility of living this life.

### 39. Sixth Saturday of Lent: *Lectio Divina* with Mark 10-12.

Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

Daily Scripture: Mark 10-12.

Daily Exercise:

Make the following preparations:

- Gather a bible, a notebook, and a pen.
- Glance over Mark 10-12 in your bible while allowing your body and breath to come to comfort and stillness.
- Place a hand on your heart and pray this prayer of preparation for *Lectio Divina*: “Lord Jesus Christ, let this moment of reading be a moment of intimacy between us. Please speak a message that is specific to me, and for today. Amen.”

For the practice of *Lectio Divina*:

- Maintaining the placement of one hand on your heart, read the passage slowly, out loud or whispering.
- Any time that your eye is drawn away from the text, and your mind wanders from the reading, make a quick note in your journal of what you were thinking about.
- Reading the passage again, this time silently, maintain this questioning prayer in your mind, “Jesus Christ, what are you saying to me today?” and identify a verse that has stood out to you, in even the smallest way. Write it down.

Afterwards:

- Mulling over this verse and its relevance to you, write out a short prayer for the day.
- Allow this to be your memory verse and prayer for the day. Simply repeat it throughout the day, either out loud or in your heart, whenever it comes to mind.

### Reflection:

Put yourself in the shoes of those welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem, as told in Mark chapter 11. So much gossip about Jesus had spread around the region, and everyone had their own idea about who this man was. But a certain crowd gathered that day, saying with one accord, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (Mark 11:9).

The word of Christ has come to us in so many ways, from so many angles, after so many years. So many of these have been confusing, humiliating, even traumatizing to us. Christ is like a wound in our pasts. It takes a great humility and innocence to welcome this Christ into our hearts (Mark 10:15). It takes an abandonment of concern that is simply glad to be alive, here and now, that is glad to be me, simply me, that is glad to have heard of Christ, in the infinity of ways that we have. Let’s open ourselves to Him today, in heart and mind, in word and deed, in everything.

## 40. Palm Sunday: Build Each Other Up.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scriptures:

“So when Jesus had washed their feet and put His outer clothing back on, He took His place at the table again and said to them, “Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and do so correctly, for that is what I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you too ought to wash one another’s feet.”

--- John 13:12-14

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

--- 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

### Daily Exercise:

Send a message to another believer, encouraging them and building them up.

### Reflection:

We are, in fact, always building each other up. We are, in fact, always growing in Christ, since this is what God has appointed to us. This is all the more reason to continue in intentional growth. There is so much to enjoy, so much to consider, so much to aspire to, so much to learn. Though it is overwhelming at times, following Christ is the truly the sweetest and easiest journey. Praising God for another encouraging believer can sometimes remind us of this fact. The humility that we have been practicing this week is, in truth, this easy enjoyment of the sweetness of the Spirit of Christ, which stands over us, yes, but so unimposingly, so graciously, and so compassionately.

## 41. Sixth Monday of Lent: Do Not Reject Me.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Do not hide your face from me,  
do not turn your servant away in anger;  
you have been my helper.  
Do not reject me or forsake me,  
God my Savior.”  
--- Psalm 27:9

### Daily Exercise:

Meditate on this line from Psalm 27: “Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior”.

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Come to bodily comfort and stillness.
- Close your eyes and place a hand on your heart.
- Pray the prayer for meditation: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Oh Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14)
- Then meditate on the line for the day, repeating it out loud, and from the heart (c.f. first Saturday reflection) as frequently or infrequently as is comfortable.
- If you catch yourself sleeping or losing concentration, don’t give up, return to the meditation for the remainder of the time.
- Continue to meditate on the verse throughout the day, as it comes to mind, whether out loud or under your voice, but always from the heart.

Reflection:

Christ gives us a license to the full range of our emotions before God. The Christian religion can often prescribe certain exercises and remedies for our temporary problems, but the Spirit of Christ transforms our lives eternally, changing our minds and our hearts, bringing us into fullness of relation to God, just as we are, yet wholly renewed. Even the Spirit of Christ in us pines for the company of the Father. Let's not be afraid of activating this longing with such meditations as today's. Let's not hold back from diving into our need for God, our need for supernatural help amidst our feeling of abandonment, for only there will we really find the Christ who went to the cross for us.

## 42. Sixth Tuesday of Lent: The Lord Will Receive Me.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“Though my father and mother forsake me,  
the Lord will receive me.”  
--- Psalm 27:10

### Daily Exercise:

Write a letter to someone who has abandoned you.

- Glance back at previous journal entries written on these Tuesdays of Lent.
- Take at least 5 minutes to consider the question “By whom do I feel most abandoned?” Ask God to help you see clearly.
- Write a letter to this person, laying out your feelings towards them.
- Feel no need to send this message to the person. Instead, offer it to God in prayer.
- Allow 30 minutes for the exercise, and do not rush it. If the first 25 minutes comprise simply staring at the page and drawing a blank, still the final 5 minutes may prove productive.

### Reflection:

Does the one who made heaven and earth really have the power to meet me in my abandonment? Only if we take God down into that place, into those feelings, will we find out. How can one “take” the omnipresent God anywhere? In truth, we do not move Him anywhere, but we open our own hearts to Him who stands at the door and so humbly knocks. He is willing to wait outside as we carefully guard our deepest wounds.

Let’s not hold back in opening our hearts to Him. If not now, when? Let’s not hold back in pleading with Him for a depth of healing and wholeness. If not here, where? The theme of this final week is dying to ourselves and living for Christ. But we know that the hope is that, as we hold nothing back from Him, He will reveal His total power in resurrecting us with Him.



## 43. Seventh Wednesday of Lent: Though I Die, I Will Live.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scriptures:

“Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will grant you.”

Jesus replied, “Your brother will come back to life again.” Martha said, “I know that he will come back to life again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even if he dies, and the one who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She replied, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who comes into the world.”

--- John 11:21-27

“My aim is to know Him, to experience the power of His resurrection, to share in His sufferings, and to be like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

--- Philippians 3:10-11

### Daily Exercise:

Prophecy over yourself: “I give my life for Christ; and even though I die, I will live.”

- Take at least 20 minutes, perhaps while doing some other chore or activity, to periodically say this prophecy over yourself, with conviction and from the heart.

### Reflection:

The craziest prophecy, entirely contrary to experience and fact, is wholly unbelievable in relation to almost anything else, except by faith in the historical resurrection. If we die, we die not only because of Him, but with Him. Our death is with and for Him, His was with and for us. By faith, we know His death to be ours.

“If we died with Him, we will also live with Him” (2 Timothy 2:11). Our lives and deaths are related, giving significance to each other. If in dying our lives are intertwined, perhaps then, somehow, in living will our deaths be intertwined. If there is a spiritual life through love in the pain of death, could that life possibly endure death in this realm? This is the deepest mystery of Christ, where only Jesus fully reveals the full character of God: that in dying with Him there is life, that in being fully abandoned in and with Him, there is, somehow, if you can believe it, resurrection.

## 44. Maundy Thursday: I Have Sought Out Your Precepts.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scriptures:

“If your law had not been my delight,  
I would have perished in my affliction.  
I will never forget your precepts,  
for by them you have preserved my life.  
Save me, for I am yours;  
I have sought out your precepts.”  
--- Psalm 119:92-94

### Daily Exercise:

Go on today's 20 minute walk barefoot.

- Periodically bring your attention back to the final words of the scripture quoted above, saying out loud “Save me, for I am yours; I have sought out your precepts.”

### Reflection:

As Moses removed his sandals before the burning bush in response to the holy presence of God (Exodus 3:5), so our walking barefoot acknowledges that all ground is holy ground. Walking barefoot represents and creates a gentle state of heightened awareness, in which we are brought before the presence of the Lord. These final days of Lent are a time to cry out to God for help. The words of the Psalmist in the passage quoted above recognize God's enduring faithfulness while being frank about the need for further salvation. Telling the Lord that “I have sought out your precepts” walks a narrow path between a desperate cry for help and arrogant self-assertion. But God wants to and always will hear us where we are.

## 45. Good Friday: Why Have You Forsaken Me?

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture:

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?  
My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.  
Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises.  
In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.  
To you they cried out and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.”  
--- Psalm 22:1-5

### Daily Exercise:

On this Good Friday fast, let your hunger remind you to pray periodically

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

- Pray this out loud and from the heart.

### Reflection:

There's no true experience of Good Friday in our contemporary world without the believer's full embrace of atheism. More than an intellectual declining from grand propositions, our atheism needs to be an embrace of the experience of being without God. What is it like to really acknowledge the feeling of abandonment by God that so many have felt for centuries? What is it like to do that with the very words of Christ on the cross (Mark 15:34)?

## 46. Holy Saturday: *Lectio Divina* with Mark 13-15.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture: Mark 13-15

### Daily Exercise:

Today's *Lectio Divina* practice is done in silence, with no creation of a prayer for the day. Make the following preparations:

- Gather a bible, a notebook, and a pen.
- Glance over Mark 7-9 in your bible while allowing your body and breath to come to comfort and stillness.
- Place a hand on your heart and pray this prayer of preparation for *Lectio Divina*: “Lord Jesus Christ, let this moment of reading be a moment of intimacy between us. Please speak a message that is specific to me, and for today. Amen.”

For the practice of *Lectio Divina*:

- Maintaining the placement of one hand on your heart, read the passage slowly and silently.
- Reading the passage again, maintain this questioning prayer in your mind, “Jesus Christ, what are you saying to me today?” and identify a verse that has stood out to you, in even the smallest way. Write it down.

### Reflection:

We have poured so much intentionality into our relationship with the Lord this Lent. Meditations, writings, prayers, and prophecies have all spent so much of our energy, and may have even left us feeling empty and foolish. But God and His kingdom are a reality that no one could must up or create. His being is uncreated truth, which our intentionality does nothing to secure and nothing to understand. This Holy Saturday, all intention is removed. All attempt to make life be a certain way is ended. The bible may have said something to you today, but there's no saying what happens now. There's no saying what we're supposed to expect from this centuries old story. There's no saying what a resurrected life might look like. There is only watching and waiting.

## 47. Easter Sunday: He Is Not Here.

### Morning Prayer:

“Almighty God, over the course of this Lent, please reveal more to me of the mystery that you have kept hidden for ages and generations; which is Christ in me, the hope of glory”.

### Daily Scripture: Mark 16

### Daily Exercise:

Read Mark 16, and then, with Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, go looking for the living Christ.

- Wherever you cannot see Christ today, frankly acknowledge, out loud, “He is not here”.

### Reflection:

Be ardent in your search today. If Christ is not alive today, then all this religion is worthless. And if we cannot see Him, what good is His life to us? Search for Him today. Whenever you are aware of being without Him, let that same Easter angel say in you “He is not here” (Mark 16:6). “Why are you looking for the living amongst the dead?” (Luke 24:5) Why attend to anything in which you cannot see Him? Why continue with dead work, dead relationships, dead identities, if the living Christ is not there to be seen? Why continue in dead religion, dead habits, dead routines, if there is no life of love to be found there?

And where will you look if He is nowhere to be found? Will you search your own heart, with diligent prayer and meditation, with watching and waiting, for the mystery of Christ? This Lent, have you even begun the long journey home, the journey inward, to the Lord of your heart? And if you have, has a hope arisen in you this Easter that Jesus Christ is alive today, and that His life means glory?