

LENT

A GUIDE FOR
MORNING + EVENING PRAYER



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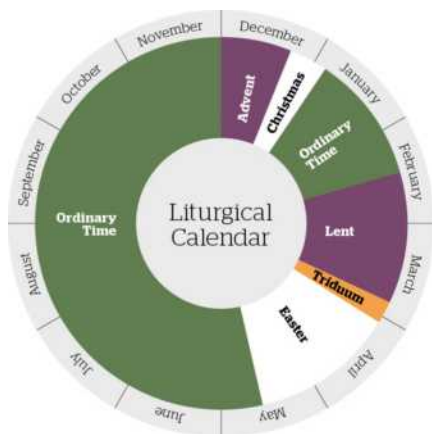
Daily Evening Prayer

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Season of Lent

Lent is a forty-day journey of preparation, self-denial, repentance, and renewal.

It begins on Ash Wednesday and continues through Holy Saturday, when we await the burst of resurrection life that is Easter Sunday. The lenten journey echoes Israel's forty years in the wilderness and Jesus' forty days of testing in the wilderness. The wilderness has a way of softening our hearts and quieting the noise outside us and within us. It's an opportunity to more deeply commune with God and give our attention to Him. It isn't for the spiritually self-satisfied. Every ordinary disciple of Jesus is encouraged to set aside this time to fan the flame of God's grace in our hearts.



Community Practices

Worship. Adjust your schedule to participate in these additional services.

- Ash Wednesday, **February 22** (5 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.)
- Maundy Thursday, **April 6** (5 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.)
- Good Friday, **April 7** (5 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.)
- Easter Sunrise Service, **April 9** (6:45 a.m.)
- Easter Sunday, **April 9** (9 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.)

Fasting. In a fast, we deny ourselves the necessities of food and drink in order to experience a physical lack that points us to our fundamental need for Christ. Sundays always celebrate the resurrection and therefore are never fast days. During Lent, we participate in two types of fasting:

The Lenten Fast involves abstaining, for the entirety of Lent, from some food or drink item we normally enjoy (such as meat, caffeine, alcohol, etc.). The low-grade hunger we feel points us daily to Jesus, the true giver of joy and satisfaction.

A Total Fast is practiced at the beginning and end of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, we fast for the entire day. The second total fast begins on the evening of Maundy Thursday until breakfast during the Easter Sunrise Service or Holy Communion later that morning. During the total fast, we experience real hunger pains, allowing us to turn our attention to our longing and hunger for Christ.

U S I N G T H I S G U I D E

Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer follows an adaptation of Sacred Space, a method of prayer and Scripture reading developed by the Irish Jesuits. This way of praying creates space in our busy lives for stillness, engagement with God's Word, and honest conversation with him. The prompt begins on page 6. Before beginning the prompt, however, flip to the page in morning prayer that corresponds to the week we're in. On that page, you'll find artwork and a reflection that will help you prepare to pray, as well as the Scripture reading for the day. For example, in the second week of Lent, you would begin with the artwork and reflection on page 9 and then flip back to page 6 to pray.

The Sacred Space prompt itself guides you through seven movements. The first four bring us to attentive, listening stillness in God's presence. This prepares us to hear and ingest his Word in the fifth movement. Then we spend time in free conversation with God in response to what he's said today in his Word, and we end by simply enjoying his presence in the conclusion.

The readings follow those found in N.T. Wright's *Lent for Everyone: Matthew, Year A*. You may wish to purchase this guide as well and read it during the "Word of God" section for further inspiration.

Evening Prayer

Evening Prayer takes us through a cycle of different contemplative prayer practices. The word "contemplative" simply indicates attentiveness to God, a posture of expectant listening. The methods found here are useful tools in bringing us to that place before God.

During "Entering Lent" we will spend a few days in an examination of our conscience using the Ten Commandments. After that, we will cycle through three different practices, dedicating two weeks to each: *lectio divina* (using the Psalms as our reading), the Examen, and Centering Prayer. Some or all of these methods may resonate with you, and some may not. Trust this process, and stick with each method for the time given. If at the end of the season you no longer wish to pray in one of the ways given above, there is no wrong in that. However, it takes patient practice for any of these methods to bear fruit. Perhaps after two weeks with each, you may keep one or more of these methods in your tool belt of prayer, so to speak.

A final note: both Morning and Evening Prayer can stretch to meet your level of habit. No matter where you are, however, use this season to press one level further in terms of time and energy given to Scripture reading and prayer. You may wish to observe Morning Prayer alone, while Evening Prayer can be done with friends, roommates, or family.

DAILY
MORNING
PRAYER

EVERY MORNING

SACRED SPACE PROMPT

**Begin by spending some time with the reflection and artwork for the week on the following pages. Then return to this page and begin below.*

The Hospitality of Silence

Take a few moments to become still. Take several deep breaths in, and breathe out more slowly. Detach from hurry as you recognize God's presence with you.

The Presence of God

To be present is to arrive as one is and open up to the other.
At this instant, as I arrive here, God is present waiting for me.
God always arrives before me, desiring to connect with me even more than my most intimate friend. I take a moment and greet my loving God.

Freedom

Lord God, I thank you for the gift of freedom. Help me to use this gift with integrity. I am free to make choices. Help me to choose to follow you, to live in a Christian way by caring for others.

Consciousness

How am I within myself today? Am I particularly preoccupied, down, or tired? If so, can I resist the temptation to pile on anxious thoughts and meet those feelings with stillness and trust?

The Word of God

The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the Word of the Lord stands forever.
Scripture readings are found on bottom of the following pages.

Conversation

What stirs me as I read? Am I calmed and led to patience? Is God teaching me something new? Is my conscience pricked toward repentance? I imagine Jesus sitting with me in the room, and I speak these things to him as a close friend.

Conclusion

I thank God for the moments we have spent together. If I am able, I spend some time simply enjoying him in silence.

ENTERING LENT

ARTWORK & REFLECTION



Ego Sum

William Congdon | 1961

Harassed by life, exhausted, we look about us for somewhere to be quiet, to be genuine, a place of refreshment. We yearn to restore our spirits in God, to simply let go in him and gain new strength to go on living. But we fail to look for him where he is waiting for us, where he is to be found: in his Son, who is his Word. Or else we seek for God because there are a thousand things we want to ask of him, and imagine that we cannot go on living unless they are answered. We inundate him with problems, with demands for information, for clues, for an easier path, forgetting that in his Word he has given us the solution to every problem and all the details we are capable of grasping in this life.

We fail to listen where God speaks: where God's Word rang out in the world once for all, sufficient for all ages, inexhaustible.

– Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Prayer*

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Ash Wednesday, 2.22 • Matthew 1:18–25

Thursday, 2.23 • Matthew 3:1–12

Friday, 2.24 • Matthew 4:18–25

Saturday, 2.25 • Matthew 4:1–11

FIRST WEEK OF LENT

ARTWORK & REFLECTION



Peace, Be Still
James He Qui | 1998

You're the one I want, justice and innocence so beautiful and graceful; I want to enjoy you with honorable eyes and a satisfaction I can't get enough of. Rest is with you, lavishly, and a life without distress. The one who enters into you enters into the joy of his Master, and he won't fear, and he'll do unsurpassably well in the one who's unsurpassed. I flowed abruptly downward from you and wandered off, my God; in my young manhood I went on an awfully erratic course away from your steadfastness, and I turned myself into a famished land I had to live in.

– St. Augustine, *Confessions* (translation by Sarah Ruden)

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 2.26 • Psalm 32

Monday, 2.27 • Matthew 5:1–12

Tuesday, 2.28 • Matthew 6:5–15

Wednesday, 3.1 • Matthew 7:15–23

Thursday, 3.2 • Matthew 8:23–34

Friday, 3.3 • Matthew 9:9–17

Saturday, 3.4 • Matthew 17:1–9

SECOND WEEK OF LENT

ARTWORK & REFLECTION



The Transfiguration

Attributed to Theophanes the Greek

Tempera on panel | 1408

I always begin prayer in silence, for it is in the silence of the heart that God speaks. God is the friend of silence—we need to listen to God because it is not what we say but what he says to us and through us that matters. Prayer feeds the soul—as blood is to the body, prayer is to the soul—and it brings you closer to God. It also gives you a clean and pure heart. A clean heart can see God, can speak to God, and can see the love of God in others.

– Mother Teresa, *A Simple Path*

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 3.5 • Psalm 121

Monday, 3.6 • Matthew 10:1–15

Tuesday, 3.7 • Matthew 10:16–25

Wednesday, 3.8 • 11:1–19

Thursday, 3.9 • Matthew 12:15–21

Friday, 3.10 • Matthew 12:27–32

Saturday, 3.11 • Matthew 13:31–33, 44–46

THIRD WEEK OF LENT

ARTWORK & REFLECTION



Christ Jesus Washing Disciples' Feet | Kim Young Gil (Korean, 1940–2008)

Christian life is at bottom about being continually rejuvenated and re-created by the power of the Spirit; but this cannot happen automatically: we must *want* to be made young and new again and cooperate in this process...

We must pray ... “Lord, send my roots rain,” pray to become like wax before the advancing fire of his holiness, wax that is only too glad to be changed by heat into a new and more useful shape, glad even perhaps to be consumed as it feeds the beauty of a burning, light-giving flame.

– Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, *The Way of the Disciple*

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 3.12 • Psalm 95

Monday, 3.13 • Matthew 14:22–33

Tuesday, 3.14 • Matthew 15:1–9

Wednesday, 3.15 • Matthew 15:21–28

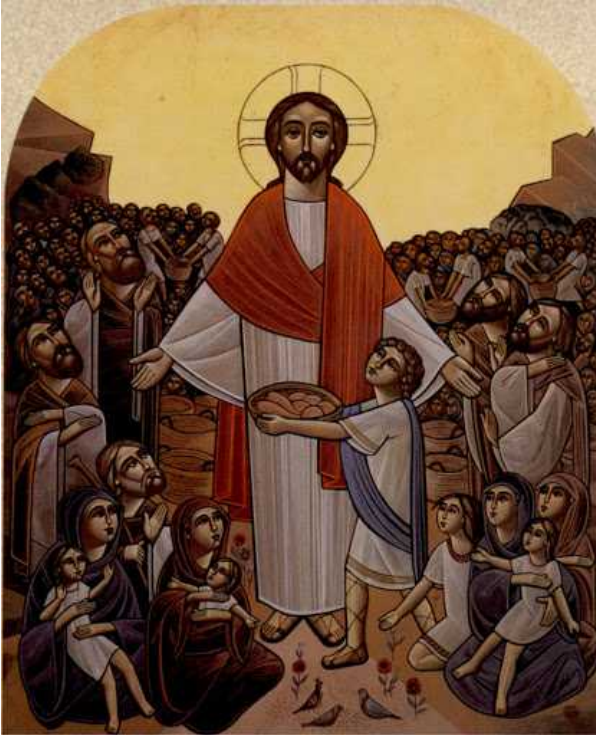
Thursday, 3.16 • Matthew 16:21–28

Friday, 3.17 • Matthew 17:14–20

Saturday, 3.18 • Matthew 18:21–35

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

ARTWORK & REFLECTION



Jesus Feeding the Multitude

Isac Fanous (Egyptian, 1919–2007)

Prayer is nothing else but union with God...in this intimate union, God and the soul are fused together like two bits of wax that no one can ever pull apart. This union of God with the tiny creature is a lovely thing. It is a happiness beyond understanding...

My little children, your hearts are small, but prayer stretches them and makes them capable of loving God.

– St. John Vianney,
Catechetical Talks

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 3.19 • Psalm 23

Monday, 3.20 • Matthew 19:16–26

Tuesday, 3.21 • Matthew 20:1–16

Wednesday, 3.22 • Matthew 21:1–17

Thursday, 3.23 • Matthew 21:33–45

Friday, 3.24 • Matthew 22:1–14

Saturday, 3.25 • Matthew 23:29–39

FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

ARTWORK & REFLECTION



Father, Forgive Them
Jacques Richard
Sassandra
(French, 1932–)
Color woodcut

Frequently our lack is not faith but compassion. It seems that genuine empathy between the pray-er and the pray-ee often makes the difference. We are told that Jesus was “moved with compassion” for people. Compassion was an evident feature of every healing in the New Testament. We do not pray for people as “things,” but as “persons” whom we love. If we have God-given compassion and concern for others, our faith will grow and strengthen as we pray. In fact, if we genuinely love people, we desire for them far more than it is within our power to give, and that will cause us to pray.

– Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 3.26 • Psalm 130

Monday, 3.27 • Matthew 24:15–28

Tuesday, 3.28 • Matthew 24:45–51

Wednesday, 3.29 • Matthew 25:14–30

Thursday, 3.30 • Matthew 25:31–46

Friday, 3.31 • Matthew 26:1–13

Saturday, 4.1 • Matthew 26:14–27:66

HOLY WEEK

ARTWORK & REFLECTION



Crucified Tree Form | Theyre Lee-Elliott
Tempera and gouache on paper | 1959

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand,
the shadow of a mighty Rock
within a weary land;
a home within the wilderness,
a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the
noontide heat
and the burden of the day.

I take, O cross, thy shadow
for my abiding place:
I ask no other sunshine than
the sunshine of his face;
content to let the world go by,
to know no gain nor loss;
my sinful self my only shame,
my glory all the cross.
– “Beneath the Cross of Jesus,”
words by Elizabeth Cecilia
Clephane (1868)

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 4.2 • Psalm 31:9–16

Monday, 4.3 • Matthew 26:14–35

Tuesday, 4.4 • Matthew 26:36–56

Wednesday, 4.5 • Matthew 26:57–75

Thursday, 4.6 • Matthew 27:1–32

Friday, 4.7 • Matthew 27:33–56

Saturday, 4.8 • Matthew 27:57–66

EASTER WEEK

ARTWORK & REFLECTION



Resurrection | Paul Van Dongen
Etching with Watercolor | 2006

In building for the Kingdom now, we must move beyond the goal of fixing things and instead set our hearts on the art of Making. Again, redemption is more than fixing; it is a feast of healing and transformation.

Redemption is being part of God's art toward the New Creation. But the path toward New Creation weaves through the brokenness of our world, our own lives, and the fissures created by various factions of faith institutions....we need to create and make through the fissures of our lives in an authentic way. Then the word "fix" will have a meaning beyond mere repair....The Spirit of the New Creation will lift us toward such a profound reality.

– Makoto Fujimura, *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making*

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, 4.9 • Matthew 28:1–10
Monday, 4.10 • Matthew 28:11–15
Tuesday, 4.11 • Matthew 28:16–20
Wednesday, 4.12 • Matthew 2:1–12
Thursday, 4.13 • Matthew 6:25–34
Friday, 4.14 • Matthew 13:1–23
Saturday, 4.15 • Matthew 22:34–40

DAILY
EVENING
PRAYER

ENTERING LENT

AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

(10 COMMANDMENTS)

We enter this season of repentance by spending a few days examining our own conscience before the Lord. The goal is not to condemn ourselves, but to bring ourselves in openness and honesty to the Lord who loves us and who forgives those who turn to him in repentance.

I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods but me.

Have I treated people, events, or things as more important than God?

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

Have I trusted in something other than God for ultimate hope, comfort, or escape from pain and sin?

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the Church, or people?

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper rest of mind and body? Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday?

Honor your father and your mother.

Do I show my parents due respect? Do I seek to maintain good communication with my parents where possible? Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have?

You shall not murder.

Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation?

You shall not commit adultery.

Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?

You shall not steal.

Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?

You shall not covet.

Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily?

FIRST WEEK OF LENT

LECTIO DIVINA WITH THE PSALMS

† **Reading.** Read the psalm slowly but don't worry about "getting everything out of it." You will interact with the passage at least four times before the practice is over.

† **Meditation.** After reading a second time, say out loud (or internally) words and phrases that jumped out to you. Focus on these words and phrases.

† **Prayer.** After reading the psalm a third time, pray prayers based on the language of the passage. This is your opportunity to take your meditation and talk to God about it. Confess; ask for clarity; be honest. Talk to God as if you are talking to someone as you sit by a fire or in a living room. Resist overly "religious" language. Use the language of the passage to let it shape your understanding of God. Express your emotions. Ask God to clarify your emotions.

† **Contemplation.** Contemplation doesn't mean "thinking about," but rather gazing at God and listening for his voice. After reading the psalm a final time, sit in 3–5 minutes of silence. You might say, "Speak God, your servant is listening." Wait on the Lord. Don't be discouraged if you don't sense something profound happening; the key is to show up.



Suggested Lenten Psalms:

Psalm 103:8–14

Psalm 51:1–12

Psalm 25:4–10

Psalm 36:5–10

Psalm 33:13–22

Psalm 91:9–16

Psalm 16:5–11

Crucifixion | Lindiwe Mvemve | 1977 | Linocut

SECOND WEEK OF LENT

CENTERING PRAYER (SILENCE)

Centuries of Christian teaching highlight the importance of stillness and silence in a healthy spiritual life. Carving out a space for stillness takes effort. This rings especially true in the modern world, where distractions provide a constant hum in our eyes and ears that can drown out any awareness of our interior life.

There are three main components to encountering God in silence.

† **Physical Posture.** Physical stillness lends itself to inner stillness. It's best to sit in a not-too-comfy chair, straight-backed, with your feet flat on the floor.

† **Breath.** The breath plays a major role in any activity that requires concentrated effort; prayer is no different. Begin by taking a deep breath in through the diaphragm. Let it out more slowly than you took it in. Do this a few times before letting your breath return to normal.

† **The Prayer Word.** Distracting thoughts and feelings will inevitably come and go. Simply notice the distraction, and gently bring your attention back to your breathing, silently praying a very simple word or phrase. Many throughout the centuries have turned to some form of the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me,” or even simply “Jesus.”

The goal is simply to be still and silent in God's presence. We are not trying to “make something happen,” but rather to increase our awareness of God's presence and enjoy his company. Begin by practicing this for five to ten minutes a day, and increase your time as you feel able. Come back to your prayer word throughout the day. You will be surprised how this practice, over time, enables us to be more present to God and others.



St. Matthew the Evangelist
Andrei Rublev | c. 1400

THIRD WEEK OF LENT

A PRAYER OF EXAMEN

† Find a quiet place, and begin with a few moments of silence. Breathe. Notice the Holy Spirit noticing you as you review your day.

† Spend time dialoguing with the Lord over **one** of these prompts:

*How did I experience you, Lord, through the presence, words, or actions of another person today?
How did I experience you, Lord, through a weak, poor, outcast, or difficult person today? What gift did you offer me through this person?*

Review each of the places I have been today. How did I experience you, God, in each place?

Reflect upon all the gifts of creation (or “things”) for which you are grateful today, small and large, general and specific — all of the things which sustained your life and enabled your work today. Spend a moment relishing one of the gifts for which you are most grateful today.

Recall the significant moments of today, both the high points and low points. How did I experience you, God, in each of these moments?

Given what’s happened today, who were you, God, for me today? (Lord, Friend, Comforter, Savior, Rock, Shepherd, Spouse, Sustainer, Teacher, etc.) Lord, how did I experience your love today?

† Thank God for his presence and ask him to give you the eyes to see His presence in the days to come.



Zacchaens | Wisnu Sasongko (Indonesian, 1975–) | Acrylic on canvas | 2005

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

LECTIO DIVINA WITH THE PSALMS

† **Reading.** Read the psalm slowly but don't worry about "getting everything out of it." You will interact with the passage at least four times before the practice is over.

† **Meditation.** After reading a second time, say out loud (or internally) words and phrases that jumped out to you. Focus on these words and phrases.

† **Prayer.** After reading the psalm a third time, pray prayers based on the language of the passage. This is your opportunity to take your meditation and talk to God about it. Confess; ask for clarity; be honest. Talk to God as if you are talking to someone as you sit by a fire or in a living room. Resist overly "religious" language. Use the language of the passage to let it shape your understanding of God. Express your emotions. Ask God to clarify your emotions.

† **Contemplation.** Contemplation doesn't mean "thinking about," but rather gazing at God and listening for his voice. After reading the psalm a final time, sit in 3–5 minutes of silence. You might say, "Speak God, your servant is listening." Wait on the Lord. Don't be discouraged if you don't sense something profound happening; the key is to show up.

Suggested Lenten Psalms: *Psalm 27:7–14; Psalm 19:7–14; Psalm 103:1–12; Psalm 122; Psalm 34:1–8; Psalm 51:10–15; Psalm 126*



The Healing of the Blind Man | Anthony Falbo (American, 1953–)

FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

CENTERING PRAYER (SILENCE)

Find a quiet place and time to begin. Recall the following pieces for guidance:



The Holy Trinity | Ivanka Demchuk | Ukrainian
Tempera and acrylic on wood

† **Physical Posture.** Physical stillness lends itself to inner stillness. It's best to sit in a not-too-comfy chair, straight-backed, with your feet flat on the floor.

† **Breath.** The breath plays a major role in any activity that requires concentrated effort; prayer is no different. Begin by taking a deep breath in through the diaphragm. Let it out more slowly than you took it in. Do this a few times before letting your breath return to normal.

† **The Prayer Word.** Distracting thoughts and feelings will inevitably come and go. Simply notice the distraction, and gently bring your attention back to your breathing, silently praying a very simple word or phrase. Many throughout the centuries have turned to some form of the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me,” or even simply “Jesus.”

Bring your attention back to your breath and prayer word throughout the day. You will be surprised how this practice, over time, enables us to be more present to God and others.

HOLY WEEK

A PRAYER OF EXAMEN

† Begin with a minute or two of quiet, breathing deeply and stilling yourself internally.

† Ask for God's Spirit to be with you, assisting your review of the day. Turn your attention and rest in God's gracious presence with you.

† Reflect on your consolations and desolations of the day. You could ask a question. For example, "When did you feel God's presence today?" "When did you live like he was absent today?" See the paragraphs below for more insight on reflecting on a consolation (God's presence) and a desolation (God's absence).

† (Optional) Journal your response. Keep it short and simple.

† Express gratitude for your experience of God's presence and activity in your life.



Christ and the Samaritan Woman | Odilon Redon

Sample questions for consolation:

When was I living in faith, hope, and love today? What was life-giving today? When did I give and receive love today? When did I experience freedom today? For what am I most grateful today? When was I most fully present?

Sample questions for desolation:

When was I living with fear, despair, and condemnation? What was life-draining today? When was I not living in love today? When was I most unfree today? What was I trying too hard to control? When was I ungrateful or entitled? When was I distracted?

EASTER WEEK

PRAY & CELEBRATE

† Find creative ways to celebrate this season. Just as we gave up some food or drink item during our Lenten fast, take up some other thing to enjoy during this season.

† For evening prayer, find the practice that resonated most with you (Examen, Psalms, Centering) and continue that practice this week.



Right panel of ivory diptych depicting the amazement of St. Thomas 10th century

Acknowledgements:

The mode of prayer used in the mornings follows Sacred Space, developed by the Irish Jesuits (sacredspace.ie).

Much of the artwork (or artists from whom other works were found) came from Art & Theology, a site dedicated to “revitalizing the Christian imagination through painting, poetry, music, and more” (artandtheology.org), as well as from the Lent Projects created by Biola University Center for Christianity, Culture, and the Arts (cca.biola.edu).

“An Examination of Conscience” in Evening Prayer for “Entering Lent” is taken from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

A special thanks to Stewart Swain, RUF University of Alabama, for the excellent prompts and questions used in the “Lectio” and “Examen” sections of this devotional.



Seek the LORD while he wills to be found;
call upon him when he draws near.
Let the wicked forsake their ways
and the evil ones their thoughts;

And let them turn to the LORD,
and he will have compassion,
and to our God,
for he will richly pardon.

Isaiah 55:6–7