

LECTIO 365 Day Prayers

is a daily devotional resource that helps you pray the Bible every day.

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Written by leaders from the 24-7 Prayer movement, and produced in partnership with CWR, this resource helps you engage with Scripture to inspire prayer and shape your life.

Journey through the year with Pete Greig, Carla Harding, Phil Togwell, Jill Weber and international guest writers.

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Mar 2022

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Audio for Each Day in MP3 Format

Month of Mar 2022

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March 01 2022 (click for audio)

The Power Of Prayer

Today is Tuesday the 1st of March; the last day of this series of praying through the Gospel of Mark. Together we will pray **(P.R.A.Y.)** – ‘**P**’: **PAUSING** to be still. ‘**R**’: **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on Jesus’ story. ‘**A**’: **ASKING** God to help us and others and ‘**Y**’: **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, choosing to follow Him, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today, would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s compassion today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 107...

*“LORD, help!” they cried in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.
He sent out his word and healed them,
snatching them from the door of death.
Let them praise the LORD for his great love
and for the wonderful things he has done for them.
Psalm 107:19-21 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the final part of the story of a father who asked Jesus and His disciples to help his spirit-possessed son...

*When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. ‘You deaf and mute spirit,’ he said, ‘I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.’
The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, ‘He’s dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.
After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, ‘Why couldn’t we drive it out?’
He replied, ‘This kind can come out only by prayer.’
Mark 9:25-29 (NIV UK)*

I find Jesus' answer to the disciples' question infuriatingly simple. I want to know more! Had the disciples not thought of praying? Did Jesus mean that they needed a focused time of prayer before seeing the boy? Or was Jesus talking about a special kind of prayer the disciples hadn't tried? *

*Some manuscripts also mention fasting.

I don't know for sure but, as I read Jesus' words again today, another possibility occurs to me: in the busyness of ministry, had the disciples neglected their personal prayer rhythms? Was the discipline of private prayer needed to release God's power in this public moment?

Ask

What are my private prayer rhythms like at the moment? How regularly do I make time to listen to God and how present am I in our conversation?

Pause and pray

Jesus, I name the Christian leaders I know. Many work tirelessly to serve Your family. Interrupt the busyness of their ministry today and give them a private, powerful and restorative encounter with you.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...

When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. 'You deaf and mute spirit,' he said, 'I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.'

The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, 'He's dead.' But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why couldn't we drive it out?' He replied, 'This kind can come out only by prayer.'

Mark 9:25-29 (NIV UK)

Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, didn't politely ask the evil spirit to leave. Jesus commanded it, and it obeyed. It blows my mind that the same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus to command this freedom, is the same Spirit at work in and through me today.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Holy Spirit, I am reluctant to take risks, and I often forget Your authority. I want to grow more and more like Jesus. I give you full and free reign in my life today. Lead me into greater courage.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew's Gospel:

...with God all things are possible.

Matthew 19:26b (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

March 02 2022 (click for audio)

Ash Wednesday

Today is Wednesday the 2nd of March, also known as Ash Wednesday. Many Christians around the world will be marking today as the first day of Lent, a season for fasting, examining our lives and preparing ourselves for Easter. Together we will listen to Jesus' words and respond to His invitation to follow Him.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

*Father God, today I remember that I came from dust, and to dust I will return. I greet You with gratitude and welcome Your Spirit who gives me life.**

*Prayer inspired by Genesis 3:19 and Romans 8:2

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's mercy today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 103...

*Let all that I am praise the LORD;
may I never forget the good things he does for me.
He forgives all my sins
and heals all my diseases.
He redeems me from death
and crowns me with love and tender mercies.
Psalm 103:2-4 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

In the Bible, ashes symbolize mortality (Gen. 3:19), are used to express grief (Isa. 61:3), and are also a sign of repentance (Luke 10:13). At the beginning of Lent, some Church traditions burn palms used in the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration and use the ash to mark a cross on the forehead of members of their congregation. This reminds them of their mortality, and prompts them to examine their hearts and get right with God.

Whether I am from a church that takes part in Ash Wednesday or not, I pause today to join with my brothers and sisters around the globe, to reflect on my life, and to repent and ask God for forgiveness.

Ask

I welcome You Spirit of Truth. Help me to look inward and see myself clearly today.

I use the final lines of Psalm 139 and pray:

Search me, God, and know my heart...
Psalm 139:23a (NIV UK)

Where is my heart set on something other than God?

Pause and pray

Returning to Psalm 139, I pray:

...test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Psalm 139:23b (NIV UK)

I bring my worries to God and I ask for peace.

Pause and pray

Continuing through the Psalm, I pray:

See if there is any offensive way in me...
Psalm 139:24a (NIV UK)

Where have I sinned and failed to walk in God's way of Love?

Pause and pray

Yield

For many Ash Wednesday is the beginning of a season of fasting. Some people give up sugary or fatty foods, while others choose a well-loved treat, social media, alcohol or TV to go without for the 40 days of Lent. Whenever I give something up it tastes all the sweeter when I finally sink my teeth into it at the end of my fast. Is God inviting me to give something up this Lent to help make resurrection Sundays all the sweeter to celebrate?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I yield to Your work in my life with the words of Psalm 51...

*Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*
Psalm 51:10-12 (NIV UK)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John's 1st letter:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 03 2022 (click for audio)

Journey To The Cross

Today is Thursday the 3rd of March and it's the second day of Lent. Between now and Easter Sunday many Christians around the world will be fasting, praying and preparing their hearts to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. Whether you usually engage with Lent or not, join us as we pray through Jesus' journey to the cross.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's enduring love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 100...

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the LORD is good.
His unfailing love continues forever,
and his faithfulness continues to each generation.
Psalm 100:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on what Jesus knew about what was to come...

*Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!'
Matthew 20:17-19 (NIV UK)*

This was actually the third time that Jesus warned His disciples that He would die; and this time His warning was incredibly specific. Jesus knew that He would be betrayed, he knew that He would suffer, and He knew how He would be executed. Yet, all this foreknowledge didn't shake His resolve. Jesus chose to continue on to Jerusalem. He chose to walk toward torture and the tomb.

Ask

Jesus, I do everything in my power to avoid pain and escape suffering but, fueled by love, You chose to endure it all, You chose to embrace death so that I could live right with God. Today I say thank you for not turning back.

Pause and pray

I name someone I know who has no idea of the depth of Jesus' passion and love for them.

Jesus, reveal Yourself to them and give me an opportunity to share the story of Easter with them.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...

Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!'
Matthew 20:17-19 (NIV UK)

In this moment Jesus is not just being prophetic, he is also being deeply pastoral as he tries to prepare His closest friends for the trauma they're about to experience. Even in the midst of His own fear and turmoil, Jesus takes the time to care for those He loves.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, Son of Man, this Lent I choose to pick up my cross and follow You. Help me to stop selfishly climbing the ladder of success and instead walk humbly with You, wherever You lead me.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Romans:

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.
Romans 6:5 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

March 04 2022 (click for audio)

Into The Unknown

Today is Friday the 4th of March, and this week we are embarking on our Lent series on Jesus' journey to the cross, captured in the Gospel of Matthew.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's rule and reign today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 93...

The LORD is king! He is robed in majesty.

Indeed, the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength.

The world stands firm

and cannot be shaken.

Your throne, O LORD, has stood from time immemorial.

You yourself are from the everlasting past.

Psalm 93:1-2 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on a mother's ambition for her sons...

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

'What is it you want?' he asked.

She said, 'Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.'

'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?'

'We can,' they answered.

Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.'

Matthew 20:20-23 (NIV UK)

This mother has no idea what she is asking. Jesus won't come into His kingdom by claiming an earthly throne in a luxurious palace. Instead, Jesus will be proclaimed King when He stretches out His arms to embrace the world from the cross (Matt. 27:37).

Ask

Though this mother's request was misguided, Jesus listens and takes it seriously. If I had the opportunity to kneel before Jesus and ask for one thing, what would it be?

Pause and pray

I pray for someone I know who feels pressured to live up to their parents' ambitions for their life.

Jesus, lift from them the burden of expectation; may they know the unconditional love and approval of their Father in Heaven.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I choose to take the place of James and John, Jesus' disciples and Zebedee's sons. I imagine myself kneeling before Jesus, listening to His words spoken to me...

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

'What is it you want?' he asked.

She said, 'Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.'

'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?'

'We can,' they answered.

Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.'

Matthew 20:20-23 (NIV UK)

I wonder, when Zebedee's sons declared that they could drink from the same cup as Jesus, did they have any idea that His cup was full of suffering? Yet, despite their lack of foresight, James and John followed through. James went on to be martyred (Acts 12:2) and John would endure exile – both for the sake of Jesus.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I don't know what tomorrow holds, let alone next week, the coming year or the next decade. But today, knowing You and all You've done for me, I choose to follow You into the unknown.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew:

*'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.
For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.
Matthew 16:24-25 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 05 2022 (click for audio)

To Serve Or Be Served?

Today is Saturday the 5th of March, and this week we are embarking on our Lent series, journeying with Jesus to the cross.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God alone today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 27...

*Let all that I am wait quietly before God,
The one thing I ask of the LORD—
the thing I seek most—
is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
delighting in the Lord's perfections
and meditating in his Temple.
Psalm 27:4 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

James' and John's mother had asked Jesus to give them positions of power in His coming kingdom. Today, I am reflecting on the response of the rest of the disciples...

*When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'
Matthew 20:24-28 (NIV UK)*

The way to measure greatness in God's kingdom is completely different from what I'm used to. In Jesus' upside-down kingdom, greatness increases with each decision to serve, and with every unselfish, and unseen choice.

Ask

As I think through the day ahead, I bring to mind the people I will meet.

Jesus, help me put theory into action, and show me a specific way I can serve someone today.

Pause and pray

I think of someone who regularly serves me – maybe it's a family member, a friend or a colleague; maybe it's the person who welcomes me or makes me a cup of tea at church each week.

God, I ask You to give back to them a double portion of the energy and care that they have given out. Give me a word of encouragement to share with them Today.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Matthew 20:24-28 (NIV UK)

What word or phrase jumped out at me from these verses?

I was struck by the phrase 'they were indignant'. I wonder whether the disciples were upset because they thought it was wrong for their friends to ask Jesus for prominence, or because they wished they had thought to ask Him first!

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I am ambitious, but today, I set aside my desires and follow Your lead. You loved me so much that You laid down Your life as a ransom for mine. Help me take the first step by laying down my preferences in favor of others as an act of worship to You.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Galatians:

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.
Galatians 2:20a (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

March 06 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer For Lent

Today is Sunday the 6th of March, a day of rest on which we interrupt our weekday pattern with a shorter, simpler time of prayer.

During the season of Lent, Sundays are considered a day off in anticipation of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday, just six weeks away today. Throughout the past week we have explored Jesus' Passion in the book of Matthew, but today we anticipate and celebrate the living Lord Jesus Christ who makes all things new...

'Sabbath is not primarily about [me] or how it benefits [me];' writes the author Eugene Peterson, 'it is about God and how God forms [me]. It is not, in the first place, about what [I] do or don't do; it is about God completing and resting and blessing and sanctifying. It means stopping and being quiet long enough to see, open-eyed with wonder – resurrection Wonder'*

* Eugene Peterson, Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places (p. 116-117)

Reflecting on Jesus' death and resurrection, the Apostle Paul writes:

Christ Jesus:

who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death –

even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:6-8 (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

Father God, thank You that you gave Your only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He is risen! I am risen! Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

Jesus, You are the Living One; You were dead, and now, You are alive for ever and ever! And behold, You are making all things new. You are risen! I am risen! Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

Holy Spirit, thank You that You, the same Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead, live in me today, giving life to my mortal body. He is risen! I am risen! Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

I take a moment now to root these prayers in my life and my community. I pray now for someone I know who needs to experience resurrection life today.

Pause and pray

Paul goes on to say in Philippians:

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV UK)*

He is risen!

I am risen!

Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

Sabbath blessing

May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.**

** Pete Greig, A Sabbath Blessing, www.petegreig.info

March 07 2022 (click for audio)
Cruciformity – A Cross Shaped Life

Today is Monday the 7th of March, and this week we are reflecting on Jesus' resolute journey to the cross in the book of Matthew.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's rescuing love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 40...

*I waited patiently for the Lord to help me,
and he turned to me and heard my cry.
He lifted me out of the pit of despair,
out of the mud and the mire.
He set my feet on solid ground
and steadied me as I walked along.
He has given me a new song to sing,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Psalm 40:1-3a (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Jesus enters Jerusalem, and causes a stir as He leads a procession into town and turns the temple tables. Anticipation is high. Is it time for the Messiah to take his rightful place?

*When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 'As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.'
Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. 'But not during the festival,' they said, 'or there may be a riot among the people.'
Matthew 26:1-5 (NIV UK)*

I wonder what the disciples felt when Jesus told them the end was near; and not the end they were

hoping for? Have there been times when I've followed Jesus' leading in my life and expected some glorious result, only to find that he's leading me to the cross instead?

Ask

God, give me the courage to follow You wherever You go; no matter how low, no matter the cost. May I live a cruciform life: a life shaped by the cross, and given for others.

Pause and pray

The author Jimmy Davis writes, 'The most distinct feature of...cathedrals was their cruciform or "cross-shaped" floor plan. The central doctrine the church building communicated was the gospel, the message of the cross.'*

*Jimmy Davis, *Cruciform: Living the Cross-Shaped Life*. p.7

Lord, I pray for my church and Your Church across the world. May we be shaped by the cross. May we be a people who no longer live for ourselves, but give our lives away in obedience and joyful abandon

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 'As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.' Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. 'But not during the festival,' they said, 'or there may be a riot among the people.'
Matthew 26:1-5 (NIV UK)

Author and educator Robert Mulholland says: 'The experience of God's nature as cruciform love, as an unfathomable divine self-abandonment, calls us to...abandonment of self in love. We become "rooted and grounded" in a love of mutual self-abandonment.'*

*Robert Mulholland, *The Deeper Journey*. p 90

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I step into the mystery of a God who gave Himself for me in unfathomable self-abandonment. I receive Your invitation of love, and Your invitation to love. Today I pick up my cross and follow You.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew:

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.
Matthew 16:25 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

[March 08 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

What A Waste

Today is tuesday the 8th of March. It is International Women's Day, and today we are reflecting on the radical devotion of one of Jesus' female followers. Together we will pray (P.R.A.Y.) very simply each day – '**P**': **PAUSING** to be still. '**R**': **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. '**A**': **ASKING** God to help us and others and '**Y**': **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's justice and joy today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 45...

Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever.

You rule with a scepter of justice.

You love justice and hate evil.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you,

pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.

Psalm 45:6,7 17 (NLT)

Pause and pray

It's been a busy and intense time in Jerusalem, and Jesus retreats to nearby Bethany to eat with friends...

While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. 'Why this waste?' they asked. 'This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.'

Matthew 26:6-9 (NIV UK)

Many spend a lifetime accumulating their 'nest egg'; whether building equity in their home or a hefty balance in their pension account. Tucked away for a rainy day. This alabaster jar was the first century equivalent; it would have been this woman's financial security for her future. Security that she wastes in a single, shocking act of devotion.

Ask

Would my level of devotion to Jesus shock anyone?

Jesus, I confess that I can take You for granted; that my heart is often lukewarm; my devotion dim. Often it doesn't even occur to me to pour out myself and my resources as a gift to You.

Pause and pray

God, would you raise up a generation of extravagant lovers? Those who would waste their lives and spend themselves recklessly and heedlessly just because You are worthy; just because You are beautiful.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...

While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. 'Why this waste?' they asked. 'This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.'
Matthew 26:6-9 (NIV UK)

Confession time. I hate waste. I can be compulsively productive; I want to make every moment count, every resource of mine to be leveraged to maximum impact. I can see myself in the disciples who are shocked at the wasteful display.

God, help me to understand, and to become, the kind of offering that pleases You.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I yield today with the words of a song I wrote in my youth:

*I'm like the jar of alabaster, broken to anoint my master
Precious oil, my life's perfume, is all I have to bring.
I see it gently trickle down, onto your head, your beard, your gown.
I'll spend it all, I'll give it all
I want to be an offering.**

**Jill Weber, Make My Life a Prayer.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in the book of Daniel...

But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it for ever – yes, for ever and ever.

Daniel 7:18

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 09 2022 (click for audio)

Outrageous Love

Today is Wednesday the 9th of March, and this week we are with Jesus in Bethany and in Jerusalem, leading up to Passover, and to His crucifixion

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 54...

But God is my helper.

The Lord keeps me alive!

I will sacrifice a voluntary offering to you;

I will praise your name, O Lord,

for it is good.

For you have rescued me from my troubles

and helped me to triumph over my enemies.

Psalm 54:4,6,7 (NLT)

Pause and pray

A woman has crashed Jesus' dinner party and shocked and appalled the disciples by pouring out her life's savings, in the form of perfume, on Jesus...

Aware of this, Jesus said to them, 'Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.'

Matthew 26:10-13 (NIV UK)

Has my devotion to God ever been misunderstood? Have I felt the weight of other's discomfort and disapproval? Have I been marginalized and overlooked because I'm 'just a little bit too overboard' for Jesus?

Ask

Jesus, I pray that as I love and serve You that my eyes would be locked on Yours alone; that my ears would be attuned to Your words alone. Give me scandalous courage, extravagant generosity and outrageous love.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for Your church. Forgive us for the way we domesticate the gospel, for the way we attempt to leverage You to make us comfortable. Lord, let Your kindness lead us to repentance, and awaken in us outrageous love

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...

Aware of this, Jesus said to them, 'Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.'

Matthew 26:10-13 (NIV UK)

Somehow this woman understood what the disciples did not; that it was time for Jesus to prepare for His death. I wonder how many times I'm either not paying attention, or have my preconceived notions about what is going on, and miss what God is up to.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus again today I give You my attention, I give You my affection. I give You my allegiance. I offer up all that I am and have, and with gratitude and worship I receive all that You are.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Luke...

Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

Luke 10:23b, 24 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 10 2022 (click for audio)

Harriet Tubman: Hero of Justice

Today is Thursday the 10th of March, Feast of the abolitionist Harriet Tubman, who died on this day in 1913. On Feast Days we pause to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: Prayer and Creativity, Justice and Hospitality, Learning and Mission. Today therefore, we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of Harriet Tubman, a hero of Justice.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

Father God, open my eyes, stir my heart and teach me how, 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with...' You today. (Micah 6:8)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's saving power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 18...

*I love you, Lord;
you are my strength.
The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;
my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me,
and my place of safety.
I called on the Lord, who is worthy of praise,
and he saved me from my enemies.
Psalm 18:1-3*

Pause and pray

Araminta Ross was born a slave sometime around 1820 in Maryland in the USA. She never learned to read or write, but her mother filled her head with Bible stories. Author and historian Catherine Clinton writes:

*'As she grew up, her faith and her fate became powerfully entwined. The year 1849 became a turning point. To best fulfill her destiny, [she] realized, she must actively seek a role in God's plan, rather than letting others dictate her path... she could no longer be a supplicant and trust in prayer for deliverance. She needed to combine faith with action. By escaping to the North, she felt she would be doing God's will.'**

*Catherine Clinton, Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom.(Little, Brown and Company). Kindle Edition. Loc 587

In a remarkable escape, she made her way to freedom in Pennsylvania, and as was common for escaped slaves, took a new name: Harriet Tubman. Harriet had been helped along the way by the Underground Railroad.

Not content to leave her extended family behind in slavery, Harriet became a ‘conductor’ on the Railroad, rescuing many of her family members, and hundreds of others and escorting them to freedom. She was given the code name Moses and became a leading abolitionist in her day. Her success led slave owners to post a \$40,000 reward for her capture or death.

Thomas Garret was a stationmaster in the Underground Railroad, and his observation of Harriet was:

*‘I never met with any person of any color who had more confidence in the voice of God spoken direct to her soul.’***

**Lillie B. Chase Wyman, The Story of Harriet Tubman p114.

*‘She could elude patrols and pursuers with as much ease and unconcern as an eagle would soar through the heavens. She “had faith in God”; always asked Him what to do, and direct her, “which,” she said, “He always did.” She would talk about “consulting with God,” or “asking of Him,” just as one would consult a friend upon matters of business; and she said, “He never deceived [me].”****

***Robert Clemens Smedley, The History of the Underground Railroad, p250.

During the Civil War she served as a scout and as a nurse. She is considered the first African American woman to serve in the military. In her later years she continued to champion justice; this time joining the struggle for women’s rights.

Harriet is attributed as saying,

*‘It wasn’t me, it was the Lord! I always told Him, I trust you. I don’t know where to go or what to do, but I expect You to lead me. And He always did.’*****

****Robert C Plumb, The Better Angels; Five Women Who Changed Civil War America, (2020) p158

Ask

Is there a situation I have been struggling with, something that I have been praying about, where I now need to combine faith with action?

Using Harriet’s prayer as my own, I pray, ‘God I trust you. I don’t know where to go, or what to do, but I expect you to lead me.’

Pause and pray

God, I pray that You would continue to raise up abolitionists to combat the slave trade in our day; those who would boldly and sacrificially go behind enemy lines and lead people to freed I’m.

Pause and pray

Yield

Harriet often preached the power of persistence:

*'If you are tired, keep going; if you are scared, keep going; if you are hungry, keep going; if you want to taste freedom, keep going.'*****

*****Catherine Clinton, Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom. Loc 3840

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, today I lean into the grace that is sufficient for me; Your power that is made perfect in my weakness (2 Cor. 12:9), and today, I keep going.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 32...

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

Psalm 32:8 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

March 11 2022 (click for audio)

Sold Out!

Today is Friday the 11th of March, and this week we are following Jesus to the cross, and to the resurrection.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's attentive care today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 55:

*But I will call on God,
and the Lord will rescue me.
Morning, noon, and night
I cry out in my distress,
and the Lord hears my voice.
He ransoms me and keeps me safe
from the battle waged against me,
though many still oppose me.
Psalm 55:16 – 18 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

The dinner party at Simon the Leper's house is over. Judas has left early. I wonder what he is up to?

*Then one of the Twelve – the one called Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests and asked, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?' So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.
Matthew 26:14-16 (NIV UK)*

The scriptures are not clear as to Judas' motivation for betraying Jesus. Perhaps Jesus didn't fulfill his expectations. Perhaps he was trying to compel Jesus to act? Was it the woman wasting her inheritance instead of lining Judas's money pouch; the pouch that he pilfered from? Was that the last straw?

Ask

Have I ever tried to force God to act, to fulfill my expectations?

Lord, I'm so sorry for my impatience and willfulness. For the times when I have attempted to force Your hand so that I could get what I wanted, when I wanted it. Please forgive me.

Pause and pray

God I pray for those, like You, who have been betrayed by close friends or family. Would you comfort them? Would you right the wrongs done. Would you change hard hearts and restore broken relationships, rebuilding both trustworthiness and trust?

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...

*Then one of the Twelve – the one called Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests and asked, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?' So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.
Matthew 26:14-16 (NIV UK)*

Dr. Paula Gooder, Canon Chancellor of St. Paul's Cathedral, makes this observation:

*[Judas'] action was doubly problematic not only because it led to Jesus' death but because of the inappropriate use of the silver coins by the Priests. The reference to the coins being silver strongly suggests that they were ... used to pay the Temple tax for the upkeep and maintenance of the Temple. Judas' money, therefore, was meant to enhance the worship of God – and was instead used to bring about Jesus' death.**

**Dr. Paula Gooder. Pieces of Silver: An Exploration of Corruption, Bribery, Transparency and Justice in the Christian Scriptures:*

http://www.theology-centre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Thirty_pieces_of_silver.pdf

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I know that at various times I've been not only the betrayed but the betrayer. I place myself in Your hands and I ask for mercy and restoration.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord reminds me in Psalm 9:

*Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you
Psalm 9:10 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 12 2022 (click for audio)

Unexpected guests

Today is Saturday the 12th of March, and this week we have been reflecting on the Passion of Jesus; His last days in Jerusalem before His death and resurrection as written in the book of Matthew.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's hospitality today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 36...

*How precious is your unfailing love, O God!
All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings.
You feed them from the abundance of your own house,
letting them drink from your river of delights.
For you are the fountain of life,
the light by which we see.
Psalm 36:7-9 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

It's time for Passover: the Jewish feast that celebrates the historical deliverance of God's people, a deliverance that features the sacrifice of a lamb...

*On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?'
He replied, 'Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, "The Teacher says: my appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house."' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.
Matthew 26:17-19 (NIV UK)*

I love how cheeky Jesus is in this instance, how confident He is that He will be received with hospitality. The problem with inviting Jesus into your home is that often He brings His friends with Him!

Ask

Jesus, would You expand my willingness and my ability to receive You in my home, in my personal space, even if You do bring Your friends with You! You honor my home with Your presence. Come, Lord Jesus.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for Jewish people across the world as they celebrate Passover. As they recount the story of Your goodness to them as a people, as they ponder the lamb that was slain on their behalf, may their homes and their hearts be opened to you, Jesus, Messiah, Lamb of God.

Pause and pray

Yield

*As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He replied, 'Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, "The Teacher says: my appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house."' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.
Matthew 26:17-19 (NIV UK)*

'My appointed time is near', Jesus says. He has been waiting for this, preparing Himself and His followers, walking and working towards this moment. But just before He steps over the abyss into the darkness of trial, torture, and crucifixion, He wants to enjoy one last meal with his friends.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, help me to be aware of the appointed times in my life, be they times of celebration or challenge. I yield myself to Your timing and to Your purposes and I am comforted by Your friendship.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Revelation 3:

*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 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 13 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer for Lent

Today is Sunday the 13th of March, a day of rest on which we interrupt our weekday pattern with a shorter, simpler time of prayer.

During the season of Lent, Sundays are considered a day off in anticipation of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday, just five weeks away today. Throughout the past week we have explored Jesus' Passion in the book of Matthew, but today we anticipate and celebrate the living Lord Jesus Christ who makes all things new...

'Sabbath is not primarily about [me] or how it benefits [me];' writes the author Eugene Peterson, 'it is about God and how God forms [me]. It is not, in the first place, about what [I] do or don't do; it is about God completing and resting and blessing and sanctifying. It means stopping and being quiet long enough to see, open-eyed with wonder – resurrection wonder'*.

* Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* (p.116-117)

Reflecting on Jesus' death and resurrection, the Apostle Paul writes:

*Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death –
even death on a cross!*

Philippians 2:6-8 (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

Father God, thank You that you gave your only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He is risen! I am risen! Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

Jesus, You are the Living One; You were dead, and now look, You are alive for ever and ever! And behold, You are making all things new. You are risen! I am risen! Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

Holy Spirit, thank You that You, the same Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead, lives in me today, giving life to my mortal body. He is risen! I am risen! Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

I take a moment now to root these prayers in my life and my community. I pray now for someone I know who needs to experience resurrection life today.

Pause and pray

Paul goes on to say in Philippians:

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name above every other name,
so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the Glory of God the Father.
(Phil 2:9-11 NIV UK)*

He is risen!

I am risen!

Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

Sabbath blessing

*May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.
May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.
May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.
May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.
May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come. ***

** Pete Greig, A Sabbath Blessing, www.petegreig.info

[March 14 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Betrayal

Today is Monday the 14th of March, and this week we are reflecting on the events that took place on the day before Jesus' crucifixion, as recorded in the gospel of Matthew.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's care today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 55...

As for my companion, he betrayed his friends;

he broke his promises.

His words are as smooth as butter,

but in his heart is war.

His words are as soothing as lotion,

but underneath are daggers!

Give your burdens to the Lord,

and he will take care of you.

Psalm 55:20-22a (NLT)

Pause and pray

Having found a place to celebrate the Passover meal, Jesus and His friends sat around the table together and began to eat. It was all going well until Jesus made a disturbing announcement...

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.'

They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, 'Surely you don't mean me, Lord?'

Jesus replied, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.'

Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, 'Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?'

Jesus answered, 'You have said so.'

Matthew 26:20-25 (NIV UK)

I wonder why Judas betrayed Jesus? Perhaps he was disappointed that Jesus was not living up to his expectations? Or maybe it was simply greed; he wanted those thirty pieces of silver. Or perhaps it was shame; earlier in Matthew's gospel, Jesus had rebuked Judas along with the other disciples for despising the woman who had washed Jesus' feet with perfume.

The uncomfortable truth is that there's more of Judas in me than I'd like to admit.

Ask

Who am I disappointed with right now? Who do I feel has let me down or hurt me? Lord Jesus, I ask You to help me let go of these feelings. I don't want them to take root in my heart and ruin the relationship. Using the words of today's Psalm, I give these burdens to You, and I receive Your care for me. (Psalm 55:22a)

Pause and pray

Who do I know that has left the Church because they are angry with God; or left God because they are angry with the Church?

Lord Jesus, I ask You to reach out to them. Show me if there's some way that I can reach out to them too.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.'

They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, 'Surely you don't mean me, Lord?'

Jesus replied, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.'

Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, 'Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?'

Jesus answered, 'You have said so.'

Matthew 26:20-25 (NIV UK)

When Jesus said that one of them would betray Him, the disciples didn't all turn and stare at Judas. And why would they? Judas was one of them, a trusted friend. He'd witnessed Jesus' miracles, and listened to Jesus' teaching. In that moment, instead of focusing on Judas, each of the disciples wondered if Jesus was talking about them.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I'm uncomfortably aware of the times when I have let you down; in my actions, my words and my thoughts. As I surrender my sense of shame to You today, I pray the famous words of the former slave trader, John Newton:

'Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found
Was blind but now I see.'

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Jude that He is:

*...able to keep [me] from stumbling and to present [me] before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.
Jude 1:24 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

[March 15 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Forgiveness

Today is Tuesday the 15th of March, and this week we are reflecting on the events that took place on the day before Jesus' crucifixion, as recorded in the book of Matthew.

Together we will pray **(P.R.A.Y.)** very simply each day – **'P': PAUSING** to be still. **'R': REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. **'A': ASKING** God to help us and others and **'Y': YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's forgiveness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 51...

*Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

*Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.*

*Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.*

*Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.*

Psalm 51:7-10 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today, I am reflecting on a significant moment during the meal that Jesus shared with His friends, which Christians around the world now celebrate as the Last Supper, Holy Communion, or the Eucharist...

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.'

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of

sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

Matthew 26:26-29 (NIV UK)

The author Eugene Peterson writes, 'Without the Eucharist it is very easy to drift into a spirituality that is dominated by ideas about Jesus instead of receiving life from Jesus. The Eucharist says a plain 'no' to all that. The Eucharist puts Jesus in his place, dying on the cross and giving us that sacrificed life. And it puts us in our place: opening our hands and receiving the remission of our sins, which is our salvation.'*

*Eugene Peterson, 'Christ Plays In Ten Thousand Places', p.203

Ask

Has my faith drifted into learning about Jesus instead of receiving life from Him?

Lord Jesus, as I open my hands in front of me, I receive life from You today: forgiveness, hope, healing, and peace. Life to the full.

Pause and pray

Jesus said, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' (John 10:10, NIV UK).

Who do I know that really needs to experience this 'full life' in some way? I pray for them now.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.'

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

Matthew 26:26-29 (NIV UK)

Jesus had just told his disciples that one of them would betray him. I wonder if Jesus glanced at Judas a few moments later, when He took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and passed it around, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Remembering the sacrifice of Jesus, I use the words of the Anglican Service of Communion as my own prayer today:

*'Almighty God, I thank You for feeding me with the body and blood of Your Son Jesus Christ. Through Him I offer you my soul and body to be a living sacrifice. Send me out in the power of Your Spirit to live and work for Your praise and glory.'***

**Adapted from Holy Communion Service, Order One. Prayer after

Communion <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/holy-communion-service>

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Ephesians that:

*He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased [my] freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave [my] sins.
Ephesians 1:7 (NLT)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 16 2022 (click for audio)

Faith Grown Cold

Today is Wednesday the 16th of March, and this week we are reflecting on the events that took place on the day before Jesus' crucifixion, as recorded in the book of Matthew.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's grace today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 103...

*The Lord is compassionate and merciful,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.
He will not constantly accuse us,
nor remain angry forever.
He does not punish us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.
For his unfailing love toward those who fear him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.
Psalm 103:8-11 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the aftermath of the Last Supper, as Jesus and His disciples left the place where they'd been eating together...

*When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
Then Jesus told them, 'This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:
"I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."
But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.'
Peter replied, 'Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.'
'Truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'this very night, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times.'
But Peter declared, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the other*

disciples said the same.

Matthew 26:30-35 (NIV UK)

The disciples were disturbed and confused. Their meal together hadn't been the Passover celebration that they'd been expecting, and Jesus had said and done some strange things. And then, to top it all, He told them, 'this very night, you will all fall away.'

The truth is that I have 'fallen away' many times. Maybe I haven't flatly denied that I am a follower of Jesus, like Peter was about to do. And maybe I haven't run away in fear, like the other disciples soon will. But I have let my faith grow cold sometimes.

Ask

How do I feel right now? Am I full of faith- 'on fire' for Jesus – or has the fire dwindled? Have I 'fallen away' from following Jesus in some way?

Pause and pray

Who do I know that seems to have 'fallen away' from following Jesus? Maybe a friend or a relative? Maybe a child that seems less interested now that they've reached their teenage years?

Lord Jesus, I name these loved ones quietly before You now and I intercede for them. I pray that their love for You would be rekindled.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus told them, 'This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

"I will strike the shepherd,

and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.'

Peter replied, 'Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.'

'Truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'this very night, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times.'

But Peter declared, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the other disciples said the same.

Matthew 26:30-35 (NIV UK)

Having celebrated the Passover together, it's likely that the hymn that Jesus and His disciples sang was Psalm 118. Given that Jesus is shortly going to be arrested, tortured and crucified, the words of the Psalm are even more poignant: 'Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, his love endures forever...' (Psalm 118:1, NIV UK)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Using a few more verses from Psalm 118 as my prayer, I yield to God's goodness:

'When hard pressed, I cry to You, Lord, and You bring me into a spacious place. You are with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? You are with me... I give thanks to You, for You are good, Your love endures forever.'

(Adapted from Psalm 118: 5-7a,1, NIV UK)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 1 Peter that:

the God of all grace, who called [me] to his eternal glory in Christ, after [I] have suffered a little while, will himself restore [me] and make [me] strong, firm and steadfast.

1 Peter 5:10 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

March 17 2022(click for audio)

St. Patrick: Hero of Prayer, Mission and Justice

Today is thursday the 17th of March. We're taking a break from reflecting on the events that took place on the day before Jesus' crucifixion, to celebrate the Feast Day of St Patrick.

On Feast Days we pause to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: Prayer and Creativity, Justice and Hospitality, Learning and Mission. Today therefore we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of St Patrick, a true hero of prayer, mission and justice.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Father God, open my eyes, stir my heart and teach me how, 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with' You today (Micah 6:8, NIV UK).

Rejoice and Reflect

I rejoice in God's faithfulness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 71...

*O God, you have taught me from my earliest childhood,
and I constantly tell others about the wonderful things you do.
Now that I am old and gray,
do not abandon me, O God.
Let me proclaim your power to this new generation,
your mighty miracles to all who come after me.
Psalm 71:17-18 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Patrick is known as the apostle of Ireland. When he was a teenager, he was captured and taken from Britain to Ireland as a slave, but he was rescued and returned home in a ship that he had seen in a vision from God. Later, as a free man, Patrick heard an Irish voice say to him in a dream: 'Come back and walk once more among us.' So he returned.

In The Confession of St Patrick, translated by John Skinner, Patrick wrote about his time as a slave in Ireland...

I would pray all the time, right through the day. More and more the love of God and fear of him grew strong within me, and as my faith grew, so the Spirit became more and more active, so

*that in a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers, and at night only slightly less. Although I might be staying in a forest or out on a mountainside, it would be the same; even before dawn broke, I would be aroused to pray. In snow, in frost, in rain, I would hardly notice any discomfort, and I was never slack but always full of energy. It is clear to me now, that this was due to the fervor of the Spirit within me.**

*The Confession of Saint Patrick, Saint Patrick, translated by John Skinner (pp38–39)

Patrick is describing his time as a slave, forced to shepherd the flocks of his captors. Instead of residing in bitterness or hopelessness, he turned his heart constantly to the Lord. This redeemed his time and caused him to grow in faith and prayer. It prepared him to receive a vision of the ship that would take him to freedom, and developed in him a shepherd's heart for Ireland.

Ask

I think of my current situation now: Do I feel joyful or sorrowful? Am I busy or inactive? Is my heart turned to the Lord?

I ask You Lord to redeem my time and shape me for good things.

Pause and pray

I wonder how Patrick felt when God called him to shepherd the people who had enslaved him?

Where or to whom are You calling me, Lord? Is there a person or people that You want me to bless? I ask You show me who is on Your heart, even if they are the last people I would expect.

Pause and pray

Yield

In St Patrick's letter to the soldiers of Coroticus, he wrote:

*May God inspire these men sometime to come to their senses in regard to God again, so that they may repent, however latter day, of their grave crimes, namely homicide against the brothers of the Lord, and that they free these baptized women whom they have taken, so that then they may deserve to live to God and be made whole once more, here, now and for eternity.***

**A Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus, Saint Patrick, translated by John O'Donohue (p16)

Patrick campaigned fiercely for the liberation of slaves in Ireland, standing up to gangs who killed men and captured women. His faith was not just an internal matter of piety, but a justice-loving ethic that longed to see all of Ireland – including the soldiers – transformed by the beauty, freedom and love of Christ.

How might my faith be moved into action for those enslaved and oppressed in my world today?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I take a moment of silence to reflect on what You're saying to me through the life of Patrick.

Lord, show me how my faith could be moved to action, and consume my heart with Your love for those in danger.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me tells me in Isaiah 56 to:

*'Maintain justice
and do what is right,
for [His] salvation is close at hand
and [His] righteousness will soon be revealed.
Isaiah 56:1 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

[March 18 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Gethsemane

Today is Friday the 18th of March, and this week we are reflecting on the events that took place on the day before Jesus' crucifixion, as recorded in the book of Matthew.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's presence today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 23...

*Even when I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid,
for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff
protect and comfort me.
You prepare a feast for me
in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.
Psalm 23:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, we're reflecting on the darkest, most difficult night of Jesus' life...

*Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.'
Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'
Matthew 26:36-39 (NIV UK)*

'Gethsemane' literally means 'the oil press', which is fitting, because it is here that Jesus experiences the most intense, crushing pressure of his life; spiritually, emotionally and psychologically. Jesus begs for another way, an alternative to the terrifying death ahead. But there is none.

In that moment, the Father doesn't give Him the answer that He is praying for, but God does give of Himself. In Luke's version of this story, he writes that God sends an angel to strengthen Jesus. (Luke 22:43, NIV UK)

Ask

What unanswered prayers am I carrying right now?

Father God, I offer these hopes; these longings; these battles to You once again. And where there are no answers, for whatever reason, I choose to open my heart and receive the gift of Your presence with me.

Pause and pray

Who do I know that seems to be experiencing intense, or even crushing pressure right now?

Good Shepherd, I ask You to draw near to them as they walk through their dark valley. Protect them and comfort them. Lead them beside quiet waters and restore their souls.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again...

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.'

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'

Matthew 26:36-39 (NIV UK)

One of the most popular activities in the Prayer Spaces in Schools resource library* is called 'Big Questions'. Children and young people are invited to write one question for God onto a piece of torn-up cardboard. Many of the questions sound a lot like Jesus' prayer:

'God, if all things are possible for You, why can't You take suffering away?'

*<https://prayerspacesinschools.com/product-category/prayer-activity>

What would my Big Question for God be today?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Heavenly Father, I use Jesus' prayer of surrender as my own today:

Yet not as I will, but as You will.

In my career: yet not as I will, but as You will.

In my relationships: yet not as I will, but as You will.

In every part of my life: yet not as I will, but as You will.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 23 that:

The Lord is my shepherd;

I have all that I need.

Psalm 23:1 (NLT)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

March 19 2022 (click for audio)

Watch With Me

Today is Saturday the 19th of March, and this week we are reflecting on the events that took place on the day before Jesus' crucifixion as recorded in the book of Matthew.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

Today I join in with the ancient cry of all God's people echoing the longing and the lament of Psalm 88...

*O Lord, God of my salvation,
I cry out to you by day.
I come to you at night.
Now hear my prayer;
listen to my cry.
For my life is full of troubles,
and death draws near.
Psalm 88:1-3 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus had taken his friends, Peter, James and John, to be nearby while He wrestled in prayer alone. Today, I'm reflecting on what Jesus found when he went back to them...

*Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter. 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'
He went away a second time and prayed, 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.'
Matthew 26:40-42 (NIV UK)*

I'm familiar with the story of the disciples in Gethsemane because I replay it in my own life almost every day. My spirit is willing to be true to Christ, to be kind to people, to speak and be good news wherever I go; but so often my flesh is weak.

The apostle Paul shared this same struggle. 'I want to do what is good, but I don't,' he wrote. 'I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.' (Romans 7:19, NLT)

Ask

What good have I wanted to do, but not done? What wrong have I done, even though I didn't want to?

Pause and pray

Jesus asked his disciples; 'Could you not watch and pray with me?' Is there someone that Jesus is asking me to 'watch and pray' for at the moment?

As I name them before You, Lord, I ask You to give me strength to pray persistently until something happens.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter. 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

He went away a second time and prayed, 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.'

Matthew 26:40-42 (NIV UK)

Jesus knew that He was about to die. As His follower, I can suffer too. I can grieve, and one day I will die. And yet, as the apostle Paul says, I do not 'grieve like people who have no hope'. (1 Thessalonians 4:13b, NLT)

My grief is tempered by hope because, as C.S. Lewis said, '[Death is] only the beginning of the real story... the Great Story, which no-one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.'*

**C.S. Lewis, The Last Battle, p.172*

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, sometimes I find it hard to look beyond my present circumstances, especially when life is difficult, and remember the hope awaiting me in the chapters ahead. Help me to fix my eyes on You and follow You.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John 10:

'I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else.'

John 10:28-29a (NLT)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

[March 20 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

A Sabbath Prayer for Lent

Today is Sunday the 20th of March, a day of rest on which we interrupt our weekday pattern and return to our shorter, simpler time of prayer.

During the season of Lent Sundays are considered a day off in anticipation of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday, just four weeks away today. Throughout the past week we have explored Jesus' Passion in the book of Matthew but today we anticipate and celebrate the living Lord Jesus Christ who makes all things new.

*'Sabbath is not primarily about [me] or how it benefits [me];' writes the author Eugene Peterson, 'it is about God and how God forms [me]. It is not, in the first place, about what [I] do or don't do; it is about God completing and resting and blessing and sanctifying. It means stopping and being quiet long enough to see, open-eyed with wonder – resurrection wonder.'**

* Eugene Peterson, Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places (p.116-117)

Reflecting on Jesus' death and resurrection, the Apostle Paul writes:

*Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death –
even death on a cross!
Philippians 2:6-8 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

Father God, thank You that you gave your only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He is risen! I am risen! Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

Jesus, You are the Living One; You were dead, and now look, You are alive for ever and ever! And behold, You are making all things new. You are risen! I am risen! Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

Holy Spirit, thank You that the same spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead lives in me today, giving life to my mortal body. He is risen! I am risen! Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

I take a moment now to root these prayers in my life and my community. I pray now for someone I know who needs to experience resurrection life today.

Pause and pray

Paul goes on to say:

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the names above every other name,
so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the Glory of God the Father.
Phil 2:9-11, (NIV UK)*

He is risen!

I am risen!

Hallelujah!

Pause and pray

Sabbath blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

*May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come. ***

**** Pete Greig, A Sabbath Blessing, www.petegreig.info**

March 21 2022 (click for audio)

The Hour Has Come

Today is Monday the 21st of March, and with Matthew's Gospel as our guide through this season of Lent, we are continuing our journey with Jesus towards the cross and resurrection. We left Jesus praying in Gethsemane. This week we are exploring how he was arrested.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's constant care today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 121...

*He will not let you stumble;
the one who watches over you will not slumber.
Indeed, he who watches over Israel
never slumbers or sleeps.
Psalm 121:3-4 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the third time Jesus returned to his disciples. Alone, he has prayed, 'My Father, if this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.'

*When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.
Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!'
Matthew 26:43-46 (NIV UK)*

'Jesus had to fight his battle all alone.' writes William Barclay. 'That also is true of everyone. There are certain things I must face and certain decisions I must make in the awful loneliness of my own soul; there are times when other helpers fail and comforts flee; but in that loneliness there is the presence of the One who, in Gethsemane, experienced it and came through it.'*

* William Barclay, The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2. [Revised Edition] (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1957 [1975]) p.349. Adapted.

Ask

Is there something today which I must face in the loneliness of my soul? A decision I need to make? A tough conversation I can no longer avoid?

Lord Jesus, You know what it feels like to be utterly alone, so please stand with me today. 'When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.' (Psalm 56:3)

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for Christians who are truly alone; brothers and sisters who are shunned by their own families who are opposed to faith in Jesus or persecuted by hostile regimes and imprisoned. May they find joy and strength in You.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!'

Matthew 26:43-46 (NIV UK)

There is a time to pray, but the hour comes when I must get up off my knees and face the challenges of life before me. I don't pray to escape reality. I pray so that, having prayed, I can stand and face the battle, whatever it may be.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield to Your call to get up and face life head-on, as you say to me, 'Rise! Let's go!'

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Isaiah 54:

...no weapon turned against you will succeed.

You will silence every voice

raised up to accuse you.

*These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the Lord;
their vindication will come from me.
I, the Lord, have spoken!
Isaiah 54:17 (NLT)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 22 2022 (click for audio)

With A Kiss

Today is Tuesday the 22nd of March, and this week, as we continue our Lent series in the Gospel of Matthew, we are exploring the events around Jesus' arrest in the garden of Gethsemane.

Together we will pray **(P.R.A.Y.)** very simply each day – '**P**': **PAUSING** to be still. '**R**': **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. '**A**': **ASKING** God to help us and others and '**Y**': **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's helping presence today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 73...

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.

Psalm 73:25-26 (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on what happened when Jesus met Judas on that fateful night in Gethsemane.

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.' Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him.

Jesus replied, 'Do what you came for, friend.'

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

Matthew 26:47-50 (NIV UK)

There was nothing strange about the signal Judas had arranged. It was normal for a disciple to greet his Rabbi with a kiss; but it was unusual to arrive with an armed mob. Did Judas just want money, or did he imagine that now, at last, Jesus would prove himself to be the warrior Messiah he was expecting?

Ask

Is there a bit of Judas in me? Have I taken up my cross to follow Jesus come what may, or am I hoping that Jesus will satisfy my desires and fulfill my agenda?

In the words of an old Greek Orthodox liturgy, I pray now:

*O Son of God... I will not kiss Thee as did Judas; but as the thief, I will confess Thee: Lord, remember me in Thy kingdom.**

**"Troparion 'Of Thy Mystical Supper', from "The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom" in Rev. Nicholas M. Elias, The Divine Liturgy Explained (Athens: Papadimitriou Publishing Co., 1966, 4th ed. 2000)*

Pause and pray

Lord Jesus, I pray for someone I know who is hurting from the wound of betrayal by a beloved friend. May they find consolation, knowing that You too have walked this way

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.' Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him.

Jesus replied, 'Do what you came for, friend.'

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

Matthew 26:47-50 (NIV UK)

I am struck by Jesus' reply to his betrayer, 'Friend,' he says, using the word meaning 'comrade', or 'companion', rather than one dearly loved, 'do what you are here to do.'

Having said to the Father, 'not my will, but yours be done', Jesus has reconciled himself to the painful path ahead. Now he seems anxious to get on with the work which will bring about the salvation of the world.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to Your purpose for my life; may I walk boldly however painful the path may be. 'I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.' (Psalm 40:8)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Philippians 4:

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13 (NRSVA)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 23 2022 (click for audio)

Put Your Sword Back

Today is Wednesday the 23rd of March, and this week, as we continue our Lentr series, we are exploring what happened when Jesus wqas arrested.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's creation today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 103...

*Praise the Lord, you angels,
you mighty ones who carry out his plans,
listening for each of his commands.
Yes, praise the Lord, you armies of angels
who serve him and do his will!
Praise the Lord, everything he has created,
everything in all his kingdom.
Let all that I am praise the Lord.
Psalm 103:20-22 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on what happened while Jesus was being arrested by the armed temple mob who had arrived with Jesus' betrayer, Judas Iscariot...

*With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.
'Put your sword back in its place,' Jesus said to him, 'for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?'*
Matthew 26:51-54 (NIV UK)

John's Gospel tells us it was Peter who wielded his sword.(John 18:10) This was not the weapon of a soldier, but perhaps the dagger a traveler might carry for protection, or a fisherman's filleting knife.

Peter had woken from his slumber, ready to take on the mob alone and fight to the death to protect Jesus. But Jesus knows that one drawn sword will inevitably meet another, and violent resistance is not the way of His kingdom.

Ask

Do I tend to act in haste like Peter? I may not use a sword, but do my words sometimes slash and tear at people's ears and do more harm than good; especially when I think I'm acting in the cause of justice and helping Jesus?

Lord, help me to keep my 'sword' in its place.

Pause and pray

Lord, You are the one who makes 'wars cease to the ends of the earth' (Psalm 46:9), I pray for communities and nations at war right now, living and dying by the sword.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

'Put your sword back in its place,' Jesus said to him, 'for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?'

Matthew 26:51-54 (NIV UK)

Jesus doesn't need Peter's small sword to save him; not when he could command an army of angels. But Jesus isn't seeking safety, He is pursuing God's purpose. To heal a wounded world, He must walk the way of the cross. There is no other path.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, You who are the way, the truth and the life, I yield myself to Your way – the way of the cross and true resurrection life.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 2 Corinthians:

We who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.

2 Corinthians 4:11 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

March 24 2022 (click for audio)

Oscar Romero, Hero of Prayer and Justice

Today is Thursday the 24th of March, Feast of Oscar Romero who was assassinated on this day in 1980. On Feast Days we pause our usual **P.R.A.Y.** rhythm to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: **Prayer and Creativity, Justice and Hospitality, Learning and Mission.** Today therefore we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of Oscar Romero, a hero of prayer and justice.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Father God, open my eyes, stir my heart and teach me how, 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with...' You today. (Micah 6:8)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's glory today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 113...

*Everywhere—from east to west—
praise the name of the Lord.
For the Lord is high above the nations;
his glory is higher than the heavens.
Psalm 113:3-4 (NLT)*

Oscar Romero was the archbishop of San Salvador during a time of terrible violence, warfare, and oppression in the nation of El Salvador. By nature and training he was a bookish, conservative man, but Romero became a beacon of hope to the poor. He was a fierce opponent of economic inequality and of the kidnapping, torture, and murder of his people. Oscar Romero was assassinated during mass on March 24, 1980, a result of his gospel stance against the unjust powers of his day.

In James R Brockman's compilation of Romero's teaching, *The Violence of Love*, he writes,

*'The violence we preach is not
the violence of the sword,
the violence of hatred.
It is the violence of love,
of brotherhood,
the violence that wills to beat weapons
into sickles for work.'* *

*Oscar Romero, The Violence of Love, compiled and translated by James R. Brockman, (SJ Copyright 2003 by The Bruderhof Foundation. Inc., Farmington, PA) p.3

Love is not theoretical.
Neither is it soft or weak.

According to Romero there is a violence to love. Not a violence that hurts people, but a violence that resists all that hurts people. It stands up to the powers that exploit and destroy God's beloved children. It is a violent passion that shouts, "No more! In the name of Christ, no more!" This is the kind of love that Jesus demonstrated on the cross.

Ask

Do I feel this intense and sacrificial kind of love for others? What might loving like this cost me?

Jesus, I ask You to give me the courage to love like You do.

Pause and pray

I think of those who face threats, violence and injustice around the world today.

God, I ask You to demonstrate Your love by protecting the vulnerable and raising up peacemakers.

Pause and pray

Yield

In The Violence of Love, Oscar Romero continues,

'All of us, if we really want to know the meaning of conversion and of faith and confidence in another, must become poor, or at least make the cause of the poor our own inner motivation. That is when one begins to experience faith and conversion: when one has the heart of the poor, when one knows that financial capital, political influence, and power are worthless, and that without God we are nothing. To feel that need of God is faith and conversion.' **

**Oscar Romero, The Violence of Love, compiled and translated by James R. Brockman (SJ Copyright 2003 by The Bruderhof Foundation. Inc., Farmington, PA) p.135

Romero believed that God has a bias for the poor, not because the poor never sin, but because they understand their own needs and are often powerless to meet them. Those who are wealthy can easily become self-sufficient, and lose sight of their need of others; and their dependency on God.

Can I let go of my striving for wealth, power and influence and instead recognize my utter dependence on God's love, mercy and salvation?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, You know that deep down I like to be, or at least appear to be, self-sufficient. I find it easy to pretend that I don't need others, or even You sometimes. But I know this isn't true. Lord, show me my

utter need for You. Show me the poverty of my own heart. Show me how to make the cause of the poor my own. I yield my heart, my all, to You now.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew's Gospel,

*For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.
Matthew 16:25 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 25 2022 (click for audio)

At A Distance

Today is Friday the 25th of March, and this week, as we continue our Lent series, we are exploring what happened when Jesus was arrested.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's nearness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 73...

*As for me, how good it is to be near God!
I have made the Sovereign Lord my shelter,
and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do.
Psalm 73:28 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on what the disciples did immediately after Jesus was arrested...

*In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, 'Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.
Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.
Matthew 26:55-58 (NIV UK)*

Every day Jesus had taught openly in the Temple. Now an armed mob has captured him like a terrorist. Are the disciples wondering if there had always been a more dangerous side to Jesus that they never knew about? Have they been caught up in a secret revolution?

I imagine myself feeling the adrenaline of that moment, and, as all the disciples ran away, I wonder what I would have done.

Ask

Lord Jesus, fill me with Your Spirit, that I may have courage to stay true to You in every circumstance.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for Christians living in nations where to identify as a follower of Jesus immediately puts them in danger of arrest or violent attack: countries like Afghanistan, North Korea, and Somalia. Give them great wisdom, joy, and boldness in the midst of persecution.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, 'Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

Matthew 26:55-58 (NIV UK)

The disciples all abandon Jesus and run away into the night. Then I notice that the Gospel writer adds, 'But Peter followed him at a distance.' Peter has come back to see what will happen to Jesus; but he is hedging his bets; distancing himself; he is no longer 'all in'.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I yield myself once again to Your call to follow. With the Psalmist may I always say, 'I follow close to you – my soul clings to you' (Psalm 63:8 CSB, NRSVA).

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in James 4:

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

James 4:8 (NRSVA)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

March 26 2022 (click for audio)

Jesus Remained Silent

Today is Saturday the 26th of March, and this week we are exploring the events which took place when Jesus was arrested.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the silent eloquence of the universe today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 19...

*The heavens proclaim the glory of God.
The skies display his craftsmanship.
Day after day they continue to speak;
night after night they make him known.
They speak without a sound or word;
their voice is never heard.
Yet their message has gone throughout the earth,
and their words to all the world.
Psalm 19:1-4 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

The Jewish ruling council were determined to find Jesus guilty. Today I am reflecting on what happened when those who should have upheld the law lost all concern for truth...

*The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.
Finally two came forward and declared, 'This fellow said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days."
Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, 'Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?' But Jesus remained silent.
Matthew 26:59-63a (NIV UK)*

When Jesus drove the money-changers from the temple, John's Gospel says that, when asked for a sign to prove his authority to do this, Jesus replied, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days' (John 2:19).

Now his words have been twisted against him.

Ask

Lord, I ask You to protect the words I say and hear. May I always speak truthfully and with kindness. And may I listen to others clearly, not jumping to hasty, judgmental, or false conclusions.

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who is prominent on social media; perhaps someone with a significant public platform.

Lord, may they write clearly and, as much as possible, may their good intentions not be misunderstood. When they are, may they know how to respond with wisdom.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward and declared, 'This fellow said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days."'

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, 'Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?' But Jesus remained silent.

Matthew 26:59-63a (NIV UK)

The phrase which jumps out at me from this passage is: 'Jesus remained silent.'

Surely Jesus must have longed to explain himself; to correct the misunderstanding; to make his case. But no, 'he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth' (Isaiah 53:7).

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord, I come to You in the quietness of my heart, saying in the words of the hymn, "Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come."**

**Charlotte Elliot (1789-1871), "Just as I Am"*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 23:

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
Psalm 23:1-2 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

March 27 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer for Mother's Day

Today is Sunday the 27th of March, the fourth Sunday in the season of Lent. For those of us praying in the UK, Ireland and Nigeria, today is also Mother's Day. Whether you celebrate the mothers in your life today; or on International Women's Day; or in the month of May, we take this opportunity to interrupt our usual sabbath rhythm to pray for mothers on this special day of rest.

I pray 'The Magnificat', a song composed by Mary, the mother of Jesus, and inspired by her own miraculous pregnancy:

*Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.
How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!
For He took notice of His lowly servant girl,
and from now on all generations will call me blessed.
For the Mighty One is holy,
and He has done great things for me.
Luke 1:46–49 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

I take time now to give thanks for my own mother, or those who have been like a mother to me. What qualities of God's heart has she revealed to me?

Pause and pray

The Bible describes many maternal, as well as paternal, traits in the heart of God. The book of Deuteronomy describes God giving birth (Deuteronomy 32:18). The prophet Isaiah compares God to a woman in labor, and to a mother comforting her child (Isaiah 42:14; 66:13). Jesus describes His affection for Jerusalem's children maternally: 'How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings' (Matthew 23:37). And I love the tenderness of parental yearning as God speaks through the prophet Hosea:

*When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
taking them by the arms;
but they did not realize
it was I who healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness,
with ties of love.
To them I was like one who lifts
a little child to the cheek,
and I bent down to feed them.
Hosea 11:1,3–4 (NLT)*

I make the words of Pete Greig's Mother's Day Blessing my own:

'Lord, for mothers today, we pray for joy.

For orphans, comfort.

For not yet mothers, hope.

For single mothers, grace.

For those who are lonely, family.

We ask for grace today

For the mothers of prodigals,

And for those who have lost children,

And for those who don't know where their children are.

May the embrace of grace displace shame

For mothers in prison,

For those who can't feed a baby,

For those who miscarried

Or had an abortion.

And Lord, may those who never held their own child,

For whom today is sadder than it is happy,

Know the love and joy of parenting

In the family of God.

*Amen.**

*Pete Greig, Mothers' Day Blessing, petegreig.info

Sabbath blessing

May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.**

** Pete Greig, A Sabbath Blessing, www.petegreig.info

March 28 2022 (click for audio)

Quiet Courage

Today is Monday the 28th of March, and we are continuing our journey through the Passion of Jesus in this season of Lent. This week we are reflecting on Jesus's trial before the religious leaders.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the strength God gives today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 62...

*Let all that I am wait quietly before God,
for my hope is in him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress where I will not be shaken.
Psalm 62:5-6 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today we are looking at Jesus' trial before the religious leaders following his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Many false accusations have been brought against Him as the high priest attempts to find something that will convince the people that Jesus is dangerous...

*The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."
"You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."
Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"
"He is worthy of death," they answered.
Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?"
Matthew 26:63b-68 (NIV UK)*

Jesus could have defended Himself against these false accusations. Yet He simply quotes two prophetic texts which speak of the Messiah and go on to talk about the enemies of God (Daniel 7:13, Psalm 110:1).

It is a bold and dangerous statement. His audience would have known these scriptures. Jesus was not only declaring Himself the Messiah, but by referencing these prophecies, He was also calling out the High Priest, for misusing his position of power, comparing him to the “enemies of God”.

Ask

Jesus, I am challenged by Your example. I can be too concerned about protecting and defending myself and miss opportunities to point towards You.

Is there a situation in my life where I need to speak the truth, even if it's risky and uncomfortable?

Pause and pray

I think now of those who give their lives to speaking the truth and working towards exposing injustice and establishing integrity in places of power.

Jesus, fill them with Your courage and give them wise words that result in freedom for those trapped in unjust systems of power.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

“You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

“He is worthy of death,” they answered.

Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said,

“Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?”

Matthew 26:63b-68 (NIVUK)

I am captured by Jesus' quiet confidence in His identity and his unwavering commitment to His purpose. He knew who He was, He knew what He was there to do, so the accusations, the mockery, abuse and impending death did not stop him from speaking.

Sometimes I allow fear to shake my sense of identity, to distract me from God's purposes for my life.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I give You my fears and insecurities today; both big and little. Would You remind me of who You say I am, restore my sense of purpose and root me more deeply in Your love.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Ephesians 3:

May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Ephesians 3:19 (NLT)

Closing prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

[March 29 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Fear and Denial

Today is Tuesday the 29th of March and this week we're reflecting on the trial of Jesus before the religious leaders as part of our journey through the Passion in this season of Lent.

Together we will pray (**P.R.A.Y.**) very simply each day – '**P**': **PAUSING** to be still. '**R**': **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. '**A**': **ASKING** God to help us and others and '**Y**': **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's unfailing love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 23...

*You prepare a feast for me
in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.
Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the Lord
forever.
Psalm 23:5-6 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today and tomorrow, I'm reflecting on one of my favorite disciples - Peter - and how he responds to the confusion, fear and uncertainty around the arrest and trial of Jesus...

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with

Jesus of Galilee,” she said.

But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.

Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!”

Matthew 26:69-72 (NIV UK)

Throughout the Gospels, Peter has been this passionate, all-or-nothing man of action, always up for it; often willing to take risks. He was the disciple who got out of the boat in a storm to walk on water with Jesus.

But now fear and pressure descend on Peter, and he seems to forget who he really is. He does what he swore he would never do.

Ask

Am I feeling under pressure or fearful in any area of my life? Is it causing me to speak or act differently from who God made me to be?

Help me, Jesus, to be true to You and true to who You made me to be.

Pause and pray

I think now of those who live in places around the world where they are oppressed and persecuted for their faith in Jesus.

Jesus, I name a specific nation now. Give the Church in that place Your courage and remind them that You are with them.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said.

But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.

Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!”

Matthew 26:69-72 (NIV UK)

Peter must have been feeling not just frightened, but shocked and confused. This is not what he expected to happen to the Messiah. He had expected Jesus to take a physical throne and overthrow Israel's oppressors. Instead Jesus was being tried and could be executed by the people He was meant to lead. Everything Peter believed was being shaken.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I can spiral into confusion and fear when things don't happen the way I expect. I surrender my expectations to You again today. Help me to remember Your words and to trust You even if I don't understand.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Proverbs 3:

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.
Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)*

Closing prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.*

March 30 2022 (click for audio)

Tears of Transformation

Today is Wednesday the 30th of March and this week we're reflecting on the trial of Jesus in this season of Lent.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Through this season of Lent, as I reflect on Your holy Passion, may my love be rekindled, that I might live sacrificially and wholly for You.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the closeness of God's presence today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 34...

The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help.

He rescues them from all their troubles.

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted;

he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

Psalm 34:17-18 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I return to reflecting on Peter's fear, uncertainty and confusion around the trial of Jesus. Peter has been recognized as a follower of Jesus by several people but has denied it twice...

After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."

Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Matthew 26:73-75 (NIV UK)

My heart aches for Peter here. I can imagine him feeling sick the moment that rooster crows and he realizes what he has just done. I too have felt that same sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. There have been times when I too have denied being a follower of Jesus through the words, actions and choices I have made.

Ask

Is there an area in my life where I am feeling tempted to deny Jesus? Maybe it's not as obvious as Peter, but am I being tempted to compromise my integrity, to be unkind, or to act unjustly out of fear or self-preservation?

Pause and pray

I think of someone who loves Jesus and works in a high-pressure environment, in the public eye or carries great influence.

Jesus, strengthen them; increase their courage and deepen their love for You. Help them to remain true to You in all they Do.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."

Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Matthew 26:73-75 (NIV UK)

Peter's tears are a beautiful reflection of his deep love for Jesus, even in his weakness and fear. It is a devastating moment of coming face to face with himself. Yet Peter must have allowed this experience to shape and transform him deeply, because in the future it is his courage and boldness that causes people to 'recognize [him] as [a man] who had been with Jesus.' (Acts 4:13 NLT)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I humbly give You my areas of weakness today. I invite Your transforming work in my life. Would these areas of weakness one day be the very areas that reveal You to others around me.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 103:

He has removed our sins as far from us

as the east is from the west. The Lord is like a father to his children,

tender and compassionate to those who fear him.

For he knows how weak we are;

he remembers we are only dust.
Psalm 103:12-14 (NLT)

Closing prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.*
*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.*
*Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*
Amen.

March 31 2022 (click for audio)

John Donne: Hero of Prayer and Creativity

Today is Thursday the 31st of March, Feast of the poet John Donne who died on this day in 1631. On Feast Days we pause from our usual rhythms to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: Prayer and Creativity, Justice and Hospitality, Learning and Mission. Today therefore we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of John Donne – a hero of prayer and creativity.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Creator God, who formed us from dust, breathe in me again. Give me a new imagination to perceive new possibilities today.

Rejoice and Reflect

I rejoice in God's help today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 121...

*I look up to the mountains—
does my help come from there?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth!
He will not let you stumble;
the one who watches over you will not slumber.
Psalm 121:1–3 (NLT)*

John Donne was born in 1572. At the age of 43 he was ordained and six years later he was made Dean of St Paul's in London, a post he held until his death. Donne is known for his masterful sermons, his profound reflections on sickness and mortality but mainly for his poetry. He wrote passionate love poetry as well as profound reflections on life, faith and salvation. Donne's writing helped shape the English language and the world's spiritual imagination.

One of John Donne's most famous poems reads:

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,*

*Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee. **

*Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, an excerpt from Meditation XVII by John Donne,
p36<http://www.public-library.uk/ebooks/28/27.pdf>

I live in a fractured world, severed and isolated into political, cultural and religious enclaves. The danger, which Donne understood, is in believing that I don't need anyone else: that I am self-sufficient and removed from the struggle of others. Donne reveals that community is not just a good idea but that it is bound up into our very nature. I am made for connection, and my humanity is somehow wounded when I fail to acknowledge this.

Ask

To whom am I connected?

I ask You, God, to remind me today of the connection between my brothers' and sisters' experiences and my own.

Pause and pray

Lord, help us, Your Church, to see how we are connected to one other. Save us from the temptations to isolate and cut ourselves off from others, especially from those we see as different. Help the churches in my area unite around Jesus, loving one another in all our diversity.

Pause and pray

Yield

John Donne also wrote:

*Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for you
As yet but knock; breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town, to another due,
Labor to admit you, but O, to no end.
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;*

*Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me. ***

****Holy Sonnets: Batter my heart, three-person'd God by John**

Donne<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44106/holy-sonnets-batter-my-heart-three-persond-god>

This is a terribly beautiful, and beautifully terrifying, poem and prayer. Donne asks the Lord to be more forceful in His transformative work in him, knowing that a gentler method is not enough. It is a poem of incredible openness and vulnerability. Donne confesses both his rebellious nature and his desire to be captivated by God's love. The intensity of the confession is matched by the beauty of the verse. Donne teaches me through art to become enraptured by the divine artist.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I often lack the courage to be so honest and vulnerable. Do I really want Your love if it means tearing down the protective walls around my heart? With fear and trembling, I invite Your redemptive work in me.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in the Psalms that:

*[He is] well-known as good and forgiving,
bighearted to all who ask for help.
Psalm 86:5 (MSG)*

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.*